

A NEW GRAMMAR OF
BIBLICAL HEBREW



ALSO BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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Proverbs. The Complete Biblical Library. Old Testament Study Bible. Springfield, MO: World Library Press, 1998.

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(with James C. Pakala). *Directory & Profile: Collection Evaluation & Development Section of the American Theological Library Association*. Collection Evaluation and Development Committee of the ATLA, 1986.

A NEW GRAMMAR OF
BIBLICAL HEBREW

Frederic Clarke Putnam

וְיִהְיֶה נֶעַם אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ
וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ
וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

*And may the favor of the Lord our God be upon us;
And the work of our hands establish for us;
And the work of our hands, establish it.
Psalm 90.17*



Sheffield Phoenix Press

2010

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Published by Sheffield Phoenix Press
Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield
Sheffield S3 7QB England

www.sheffieldphoenix.com

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A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Typeset by Vikatan Publishing Solutions (P) Ltd., Chennai, India
Printed by Lightning Source Inc.

ISBN 978-1-907534-03-4 (hardback)
ISBN 978-1-907534-04-1 (paperback)

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To Emilie,
with thanks for unfailing
love & support

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LIST OF ENRICHMENT SECTIONS
(AT THE END OF EACH LESSON)

Section	Topic
1.4	Acrostic Poetry
2.8	Implicit/Assumed Information
3.8	The Divine Name
4.11	Hendiadys
5.10	Translation & the Exercises
6.11	Narrative Backbone (& Ancillary Information)
7.11	Directions
8.10	Verbal Euphony in Poetry
9.6	Semantic Clusters
10.8	The Perfect as Performative?
11.8	Reading a <i>Bulla</i>
12.6	Participles & Poetic Compression
13.8	Disjunctives in Poetry
14.8	Ruth 3.16
15.8	Genesis 13.2
16.7	Gerundive Infinitives Construct
17.7	Irrealis
18.8	<i>Nifal</i> vs. <i>Hitpael</i> ?
19.8	The Nature of D/ <i>Piel</i>
20.8	Modality
21.5	Nominal Formation
22.11	Vocabulary
23.5	Using the Lexicon
24.8	Narrative Aperture
25.10	Pre-reading Ruth 2.1-7
26.7	Participant Reference
27.7	Reading a Poem
28.8	Dating Haggai
29.6	The <i>Masora Marginalis</i> to Genesis 37.18-22
30.6	Pay Attention While Reading

PREFACE

The flood tide of introductory grammars of Biblical Hebrew since c. 1990 raises the question: “Why another?” This grammar exists, first, because I needed a grammar from which to teach that would reflect a discourse- and genre-based understanding of Biblical Hebrew¹. When the supplementary handouts overtook the regular textbook that I was using, I realized that it would be simpler just to fill in the gaps; this book is the result.

Secondly, students who pursued postgraduate studies encouraged me to persevere in seeking to have it published by reporting that they were better-prepared in Hebrew than their classmates (and even, in some cases, were as well-prepared as their professors). A number of people downloaded earlier permutations from my website (www.fredputnam.org) and reported using it to learn to read Hebrew. The learning and preparation of all of these students was, of course, their own responsibility; I am honoured to have had some part in it.

The positive response of others whom I respect, including linguists, translators, and professors of Hebrew, likewise encouraged me to bring it to fruition.

1. Unless otherwise qualified, the terms “Biblical Hebrew” and “Hebrew” refer interchangeably to the language of the biblical text (MT as represented by *BHS*); “Classical Hebrew” refers to both biblical and epigraphic materials.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful for the suggestions and corrections of many students through the years, especially Linda Dietch (whom I also thank for her marvelous family story in footnote 39), Chris Drager, John Muhlfeld, Abigail Redman, and Robert Van Arsdale; for those offered by Rick Houseknecht of Biblical Seminary and Michael Hildebrand of Toccoa Falls College, both of whom have used this text to teach Biblical Hebrew; and for the extensive editorial help of Julie Devall and Jordan Siverd of Gregorian Publishing (although not even all of these together could catch all of my errors).

Most of all, I thank my wife and our daughters for their patience through the years with “Daddy’s writing”.

My goal in this, as in all things, is that people of the Book might grow in their ability to read it, and thus to delight in its beauty and truth. *S.D.G.*

Frederic Clarke Putnam
Hatfield, Pennsylvania
Epiphany MMX

ABBREVIATIONS

BIBLICAL BOOKS				GRAMMAR	
Canonically ²		Alphabetically		Verbal Stem	
Genesis	Gn	Am	Amos	D	<i>piel</i> (doubled stem)
Exodus	Ex	Dn	Daniel	Dp	<i>pual</i> (passive doubled stem)
Leviticus	Lv	Dt	Deuteronomy	Dt	<i>hitpael</i> (t-prefix doubled stem)
Numbers	Nu	Ec	Ecclesiastes	H	<i>hifil</i> (h-prefix stem)
Deuteronomy	Dt	Es	Esther	Hp	<i>hofal</i> (passive h-prefix stem)
Joshua	Js	Ex	Exodus	N	<i>nifal</i> (n-prefix stem)
Judges	Jg	Ezk	Ezekiel	Q	<i>qal</i> (“simple” stem)
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Ezr	Ezra	Qp	<i>qal passive</i> (passive of the “simple” stem)
2 Samuel	2 Sam	Gn	Genesis	Verbal Conjugation Coh Cohortative F Imperfect (<i>yiqtol</i> , imperfective) J Jussive NC Infinitive Construct NA Infinitive Absolute P Perfect (<i>qatal</i> , perfective) Pr Preterite (<i>wayyiqtol</i> , imperfect with <i>waw</i> -consecutive/conversive)	
1 Kings	1 Kgs	Hb	Habakkuk		
2 Kings	2 Kgs	Hg	Haggai		
Isaiah	Is	Ho	Hosea		
Jeremiah	Jr	Is	Isaiah	Ptc	Participle
Ezekiel	Ezk	Jb	Job	V	Imperative
Hosea	Ho	Jg	Judges	Person, Gender, Number 1 first person (“I, me, my”; “we, us, our”) 2 second person (“you”; “your”) 3 third person (“he, she, it, they”, “him, her”, &c.) f feminine m masculine p plural s singular	
Joel	Jl	Jl	Joel		
Amos	Am	Jn	Jonah		
Obadiah	Ob	Jr	Jeremiah		
Jonah	Jn	Js	Joshua	Person, Gender, Number 1 first person (“I, me, my”; “we, us, our”) 2 second person (“you”; “your”) 3 third person (“he, she, it, they”, “him, her”, &c.) f feminine m masculine p plural s singular	
Micah	Mi	La	Lamentations		
Nahum	Na	Lv	Leviticus		
Habakkuk	Hb	Ma	Malachi		
Zephaniah	Zp	Mi	Micah	Person, Gender, Number 1 first person (“I, me, my”; “we, us, our”) 2 second person (“you”; “your”) 3 third person (“he, she, it, they”, “him, her”, &c.) f feminine m masculine p plural s singular	
Haggai	Hg	Na	Nahum		
Zechariah	Zc	Ne	Nehemiah		
Malachi	Ma	Nu	Numbers		
Psalms	Ps	Ob	Obadiah	Person, Gender, Number 1 first person (“I, me, my”; “we, us, our”) 2 second person (“you”; “your”) 3 third person (“he, she, it, they”, “him, her”, &c.) f feminine m masculine p plural s singular	
Job	Jb	Pr	Proverbs		
Proverbs	Pr	Ps	Psalms		
Ruth	Ru	Ru	Ruth		
Song of Songs	SS	SS	Song of Songs	Person, Gender, Number 1 first person (“I, me, my”; “we, us, our”) 2 second person (“you”; “your”) 3 third person (“he, she, it, they”, “him, her”, &c.) f feminine m masculine p plural s singular	
Lamentations	La	Zc	Zechariah		
Ecclesiastes	Ec	Zp	Zephaniah		
Esther	Es	1 Chr	1 Chronicles		
Daniel	Dn	1 Sam	1 Samuel	Person, Gender, Number 1 first person (“I, me, my”; “we, us, our”) 2 second person (“you”; “your”) 3 third person (“he, she, it, they”, “him, her”, &c.) f feminine m masculine p plural s singular	
Ezra	Ezr	1 Kgs	1 Kings		
Nehemiah	Ne	2 Chr	2 Chronicles		
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	2 Sam	2 Samuel		
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	2 Kgs	2 Kings		

2. As the books are arranged in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.

INTRODUCTION

This grammar of Biblical Hebrew, the language of the religious literature of ancient Israel, and the expressive medium of religious texts held dear by those of several of the world's major religions, seeks to inculcate in students the conviction that language makes sense, that the forms of Biblical Hebrew and their functions are not random, but rather motivated by the constraints of their linguistic medium, including both the genre within which they are used and the discourse structures of that genre.

Characteristics

1. *Frequency.* As much as possible, those aspects of the language which are most frequent, common, or “usual” are studied before the less common. The **verb** is presented beginning with the two conjugations (imperfect and preterite) whose parallel morphology (common subject affixes) accounts for more than forty percent of all verbal forms in Biblical Hebrew. **Vocabulary** is introduced in approximate order of frequency, allowing, of course, for the order of topics. The combined “supplementary” vocabulary lists (Appendix A) and those in the chapters introduce all words used fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew (approximately 650 words in all). The verbal stems are the exception to this pattern of frequency; I find it more helpful pedagogically to link these by form and function rather than frequency. Furthermore, students find it helpful to interrupt the cascade of weak verbal roots with non-morphological topics in order to allow students time to assimilate the characteristics of each type of root.

There are a number of *statistics* scattered throughout the lessons, such as how often a particular conjugation, stem, or other form occurs. They are not intended to imply or establish a form's relative importance or significance; they are included because students frequently ask how often they can expect to see this or that phenomenon. Most are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

2. *Simplicity.* First-year students need to learn enough grammar and syntax to get them into the text. Beginning to understand a language comes from extensive interaction with the language *as it occurs*, not from memorizing paradigms and vocabulary, necessary as that is. This text presents basic grammar as quickly as has proven practical, with the goal that students begin reading the text fairly early in their first semester of study. Noun formation is described very simply, and primarily in terms of recognition. For example, the guttural verbal roots are presented in one brief lesson, rather than a half-dozen lengthy ones.

This is also the reason for offering explanations that are “pedagogical” rather than “technical” or “technically accurate” (e.g., footnotes 20, 34, 80). Most students tend to find technically precise explanations or definitions less than helpful; these explanations offer enough information for them to progress in their understanding without bogging them down in technical detail. The teacher or faculty member can always direct interested students to the appropriate discussions for further information.

3. *Continuity with previous language study.* Semiticists traditionally arrange verbal charts (paradigms) from the third to the first persons (3rd-2nd-1st [e.g., she/he-you-I]), and pronominal paradigms in the opposite order (1st-2nd-3rd). This is both contrary to the experience of students who have studied other languages in high school or college (where all paradigms are arranged 1st-2nd-3rd person), and confusing to beginning students (who need to remember that the order varies according to the type of paradigm). This text uses the order

1st-2nd-3rd for all paradigms. Students who pursue advanced studies in Hebrew or Semitics will need to orient themselves to the academic paradigms.

4. *A linguistic orientation.* Explanations in this grammar assume that language in general is an aspect of human behavior. Hebrew was a human language, a form of behavior that—like every other language—can be more or less (and more rather than less) understood by other human beings. This reflects the further conviction that languages—and the utterances in which they are incarnate—thus exist and function within larger societal patterns and systems; each part of any such system must, as much as possible, be understood in relation to the system of which it is a part, upon which it depends, and to which it contributes.

This text therefore aims at inculcating this understanding of language in general, and of Biblical Hebrew as an example of a particular stage of a specific language. Furthermore, since language is an aspect of *human* behavior, Biblical Hebrew is an example of the linguistic behavior of human beings—authors and speakers—in a particular time and place, and therefore must be read as an example of normal human communication, regardless of the speaker's [author's] understanding of his or her mission or purpose in writing, and equally, without regard for the reader's view of the Bible as human or divine (or human and divine) in origin. Biblical Hebrew is not some extraordinary language, chosen for its ability to communicate at or beyond certain levels of human understanding. It was merely one aspect of an everyday human language, and should be read as such.

A specific application of this idea is that verbal conjugations are explained in terms of their function in biblical genres. The string of preterites (*wayyiqtol*, “waw-conversive/consecutive plus imperfect”) in a biblical story outlines the backbone of the narrative, or the narrative chain; it is a form with a discourse-level function that is related to the discourse-level functions of verbal conjugations, types of clause, etc.

At the same time, however, I have tried to avoid linguistic jargon and trivia, or at least to explain them when they are introduced. The term “function” tends to replace the word “meaning,” and verbal conjugations are explained in terms of their contextual function (rather than “defined” by a list of possible translation values). There is a glossary of terms in Appendix C.

5. *Exercises.* Most of the exercises are biblical texts taken from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). In order to allow teachers to assign texts that best suit the purposes and goals of their particular course and program, there are often more exercises than can be completed. [§5.10 explains the purpose and function of the exercises.]
6. *Appendices.* Appendices include supplementary vocabulary lists (above); an alphabetical list of proper nouns (persons and places) that occur fifty times or more in the Hebrew Bible; pronominal and verbal paradigms, including a table of some easily confused verbal forms; a glossary of morphosyntactic terms; and an annotated bibliography.
7. *Schedule & Workload.* This grammar was designed for two semesters (twenty-six weeks). The lessons assume that an average student who follows a normal schedule of eight to twelve hours of study per week in addition to time in class will achieve an average grade in the course.

The lessons introducing the “weak” verbal roots begin in Lesson 24. They are interspersed with lessons on reading biblical genres (25, 27) and the *Masora* (29), because students found it helpful to have “buffers”—time in which to absorb one set of forms before encountering the next.

Students and I have found it practical to work through Lessons 1-22 in one semester, meeting twice per week; in the second semester we alternate studying a lesson with working through an extended biblical text, for example, the story of Abraham (“Additional Resources Online”, below). This makes them encounter verbal forms and vocabulary in the text before meeting them “formally” in the grammar, which in turn lets them connect the more abstract presentation with a biblical passage. We also begin reading at sight from the biblical text about one-third of the way through the first semester, usually in an extra “reading session” of 30-45 minutes before or after the official class.

After completing this study, students should be able to develop their understanding of Hebrew grammar and syntax by reading the biblical text with the aid of standard reference works. By the end of their second semester/term of Hebrew, students should have read at

least ten chapters directly from the Hebrew Bible, in addition to many partial and whole verses in the exercises.

8. *References.* References to HBI are to the *Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student's Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew* (Putnam 1996), a booklet covering nominal, adjectival, pronominal, verbal, and clausal syntax, the “major” masoretic accents, and verbal paradigms.
9. *Additional Resources Online.* Reading notes on Abraham (Gn 12-25), Ruth (1-4), Jonah (1-4), and other materials may be downloaded without charge from www.fredputnam.org

Notes for Teachers

1. My courses entail many “discussions” or “conversations”—which appear *ad hoc* and *ad lib* to students, but are in fact carefully planned—that would make this work too long, tedious, and “chatty”. An example of this is the all-too-brief discussion of vocabulary (Lesson 2), which merely hints at a discussion of lexical and theoretical semantics and translation that resurfaces throughout their first year of study. In order to avoid this tediousness, and to protect other teachers from the need to disavow (at least some of) my idiosyncracies, I leave to you the task of filling in the gaps that are thereby necessarily created. In other words, because schools, teachers, and students are individual, what is effective in the context of a particular course, its teacher, and the curriculum of which they are part may not be in another, as all good teachers know.
2. Students and I have occasionally found it helpful to combine the lessons on resources (#23), reading (#25, 27), and the *masora* (#29) in order to fit a changed schedule.

Part I

INTRODUCTION & LESSONS 1-3

READING & PRONOUNCING HEBREW

This section introduces the writing system of Biblical Hebrew (alphabet, vowels), and how to pronounce words (accent, syllables). It also addresses the nature of vocabulary (gloss and meaning). By the end of these three chapters, you should be able to look at a Hebrew word, spell and pronounce it, analyze its parts (syllables, *dageš*, *šewa*), and recognize more than thirty of the most common words in Biblical Hebrew.

One of the biggest barriers to learning to read Hebrew is moving our eyes from right to left. Indo-European culture assumes a left-to-right orientation that affects our perception and experience of just about everything.

If you are asked to write a comic strip for Hebrew- or Arabic-speaking readers, be sure to put the punch line in the left-most (first, to us) panel!

In the USA, highway signs list the town to the left of the distance, again based on the assumption that people read left to right, and that “where” you are going is more important than “how far”—we don’t usually ask “What is forty-three miles from here?” but “How far is it to ...?”

This cultural pattern means that reading right-to-left is a major hurdle for most students—a hurdle that is not merely physical, but mental and emotional—because reading right-to-left *feels* wrong (especially for those who have learned reading techniques such as quickly returning the eyes to the beginning of the next line ... at the *left* margin).

When we add to this the non-alphabetic nature of the vowel symbols, and sounds that are not part of the vocal system of most English speakers, the task becomes daunting. The importance of the material in these opening chapters, and the value of pronouncing Hebrew aloud as much as possible, therefore, can hardly be overstated. Accordingly, you should read the examples in the chapters aloud, and read the exercises aloud, in order to attune both eye and ear to the patterns of Hebrew.

INTRODUCTION

These reformatted biblical quotations³ illustrate some of the similarities and differences between Hebrew and English, which you will notice as soon as you try to read them.

- .dg m dg ry dn̄ lpp m b llš lpp ry .1
o y o ou :a eeo y e :a eeo ou
- .sl̄ knrd slmc ry vg llw̄ n̄ dn̄ knrd .2
O:a :i: :e a ou:i :i i a :i:
- .uoy ssruc tht h s̄ dsruc dn̄ ouy sssl̄b tht h s̄ dssl̄b .3
e: a e i e: a e:e: a e i e:e:
- .lluf tn̄ s̄ s ht ty s ht tn̄ nur sr̄vr ht ll̄ .4
: o iea e eea e o:i :e i e a
- .rp ht sr̄dsnc tht h s̄ dssl̄b .5
oo e :e i: o a: e i e:e:
wo
- .tpw dn̄ nd ts w nlbb f̄ sr̄vr ht b .6
:e a a e oya o :e i e y

Although they are certainly not written in Hebrew, these sentences exemplify some of the main differences between Hebrew and English orthography [writing].

1. Hebrew is read from right to left.
2. Hebrew vowels are written around (mainly below, but also above and beside) the consonants; they are mainly dots (called “points”) and dashes that are much smaller than the consonants.
3. Words cannot begin with a vowel—there must be a consonant, even if it is silent to our ears (e.g., the **n̄** (*alef*) in these sentences).
4. Hebrew has a sign (**·**) that shows that there is no vowel between two consonants (e.g., the last vowel point in #4 and #6).

At the same time, however, there are significant differences between this example and Biblical Hebrew (apart from the obvious difference of using English [Latin] symbols):

1. The vowels are [much] smaller signs, not part of the Hebrew alphabet (i.e., they are not “letters”).
2. Biblical Hebrew has no capital letters.
3. Biblical Hebrew is punctuated by accent marks that correspond more or less indirectly to English [European] punctuation (see Lesson 25.3).

3. P.H. Mason & Hermann Hedwig Bernard, *Gently Flowing Waters: An easy, practical Hebrew grammar: with exercises for translation...arranged in a series of letters from a teacher of languages to an English duchess in two volumes: To which is attached Ma'eyney ha-Yeshū'ah: The fountains of salvation, being a translation, with notes critical and explanatory of Isaiah LIII. Also: Ha-Mafteah, key to the exercises*. Vol. 1, Letters I-XV (Cambridge: J. Hall & Son, 1853).

Lesson 1

THE HEBREW ALPHABET

The Hebrew alphabet has twenty-two letters, some of which have more than one form. Two letters distinguished only by the position of a dot (𐤀, 𐤁) were a single sign until the Masoretes added the points (lines in Ps 119.161-68, the “𐤅” section, begin with both).

Follow your teacher’s example	Pronunciation	Trans- literation ⁴	Final Form	Form	Name (accent is bolded)
	silent	’		א	alef
boat	b	b		ב	bet
vent	v	b/v		ב	(“bait”)
goat	g	g		ג	gimel
		g/g		ג	
door	d	d		ד	dalet
		d/d		ד	
hope	h	h		ה	he (“hay”)
vent	v	v or w		ו	vav / waw
zoo	z	z		ז	zayin
Hugh	ch (loch)	h		ח	het
title	t	t		ט	tet
yet	y	j or y		י	yod
keel	k	k		כ	kaf
hew	ch (loch)	k	ך	כ	
liquid	l	l		ל	lamed
moon	m	m	ם	מ	mem
night	n	n	ן	נ	nun
sigh	s	s		ס	samek
	silent	‘		ע	ayin
paper	p	p		פ	pe
ford	f	p	ף	פ	(“pay”)
eats	ts	s	ץ	צ	sade
keel	k	q		ק	qof
r-right	r (flapped)	r		ר	reš (“raysh”)
sigh	s	ś		ש	sin (“seen”)
shall	sh	š		ש	šin (“sheen”)
tonight	t	t		ת	tof
		t		ת	

4. Transliterating represents the sounds of one language with the letters of another. There is no universal transliteration scheme for Hebrew (see Jg 21.25). Once you can read and pronounce Hebrew, you should be able to “read” any transliteration scheme.

This “square script”—in contrast to the cursive found in manuscripts and the “archaic” forms used in inscriptions—was standardized after the invention of the printing press. Adapted from the Aramaic alphabet, this alphabet is found in published Hebrew Bibles and prayerbooks, as well as in academic books and journals. Most of these comments (below) on the shapes of the letters do not apply to extra-biblical inscriptions or original biblical manuscripts (no biblical author would easily recognize these letters!). These comments, some of which overlap, are intended as guidelines, not as rules for memorization.

1. Hebrew is written and read from *right to left*. Practice writing and reading the alphabet *in that order*.
2. There is only *one* alphabet; i.e., there are no “capital” or “small” letters.
3. Like some other Semitic scripts, this alphabet is “consonantal”—i.e., none of the letters of the alphabet directly represent vowels (cf. “a”, “e”, “i”, “o”, “u”), although a few consonants could be used to indicate the presence of long vowels.
4. The letters listed with and without a dot (ב/בּ, ג/גּ, ד/דּ, כ/כּ, פ/פּ, ת/תּ) are called the *bēgad-kēfat* letters (בגד כפת), a nonsense phrase made up of the letters themselves (the rabbis were fond of such mnemonic devices). At one time these letters had two pronunciations, distinguished by the presence or absence of the *dageš lene*, but only ב/בּ, כ/כּ, and פ/פּ are distinguished in modern Hebrew. When spelling a Hebrew word with English letters (transliterated), the letter without *dageš* is either underlined or followed by “h” to show that it is “soft” (e.g., “b/bh”, “k/kh”, “p/ph”).

This difference is sub-phonemic, i.e., it does not distinguish one word from another in Biblical Hebrew. In English, on the other hand, this same difference would be quite meaningful (phonemic): one’s response to “Come to su__er!” would probably be affected by whether the middle consonant was *f* or *p*!

5. Four letters are called “gutturals” (א, ה, ח, ע), so-called because they represent sounds made in the throat (Latin *guttur*).
6. Since some pairs of letters *sound alike*, you will need to learn to recognize Hebrew words by both sight and sound, and to distinguish them by sight.

א	ע	silent	
ס	ש	s	as in sigh
ח	כ ך	ch or h	as in loch, Bach or hew, Hugh
ב	ו	v	as in vent
כ	ק	k	as in keel
ט	ת תּ	t	as in tough

7. Five letters have a special form used only at the end of a word. Four of these *final forms* have “descenders”; note their length relative to other letters.

Initial/Medial Form		Final Form	
כבר	כ	ך	אך
מלך	מ	ם	אדם
נביא	נ	ן	אבן
פלא	פ	ף	אלף
צדה	צ	ץ	ארץ

8. Some pairs of letters are *similar* in appearance:

To distinguish them, note the ...		
ד	ר	tittle—the small extension of the horizontal stroke—on <i>dalet</i> and <i>bet</i>
ב	כ	
ה	ח	left side—open or closed
ם	ס	lower corners—square or round
ט	נ	open at top or bottom
ג	נ	shape of bottom—“arched” or flat
ח	ת	shape of left leg—straight or bent; tittle on right side of <i>het</i>
ו	ז	shape of top
צ	ע	
ש	ש	dot on left or right; this is a later (medieval/Masoretic) distinction
ך	ן	<i>šewa</i> + tittle in final <i>kaf</i> (which also has a longer [wider] top stroke)

9. The Dead Sea (Qumran) Scrolls also reveal that Hebrew scribes often inscribed a line onto the parchment, and then suspended the text from the line (rather than resting the letters on the line, as in English). This is why so many letters have a horizontal stroke near the top of the letter, and why Hebrew tends to use descenders rather than ascenders.

Sixteen letters fit within a “square” and several of these are roughly square in appearance, i.e., roughly the same height and width. Listed alphabetically (from right to left), they are:

א ב ד ה ח ט כ מ ס ע פ צ ר ש ת

Three non-final forms (י, ל, ק) and the four final forms with descenders (#9, above) differ from the standard in *height*. The non-final forms are:

- *yod* is only half of the height and width of the other letters (its top is even with the others) ויהי
- *lamed* extends above the other letters⁵ לילה
- *qof* [and four final forms (#9, above)] extend below the others מקרא

Five letters are also narrower than the standard *width* (נ י ז ו ג). Each is roughly one-half as wide as the square. *Yod* (the “jot” of Mt 5.18), at roughly one-fourth of the square, is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

10. The names of the letters are transliterated into English. Disyllabic names are accented on the first syllable (e.g., *a'lef*, *gi'mel*). [Transliteration is usually italicized.]

1.2 Concepts

acrostic	ascender	descender	medial form	tittle
alphabet	consonant	final form	square script	transliteration

5. In the Dead Sea (Qumran) Scrolls, the height of the ascender on the *lamed* is often greatly exaggerated, so that their location is obvious (also obvious at a glance is whether or not a photograph in a book or article is correctly oriented).

1.3 Exercises

1. Practice *reciting* the Hebrew alphabet, and *writing* it from right to left, with the final forms following their medial forms.
2. Esther 3.13 is one of twenty-six verses that contain every letter in the alphabet.⁶ Copy it in Hebrew; practice *spelling* the words by naming the Hebrew letters from right to left (words linked by a horizontal line, called *maqef*, are considered separate words); and *find* all ten final forms. Which final form does not occur in this verse?

ונשלוח ספרים ביד הרצים אל-כל-מדינות המלך
להשמיר להרג ולאבל את-כל-היהודים מנער ועד-זקן טף ונשים ביום אחד
בשלושה עשר לחדש שנים-עשר הוא-חדש אדר ושללם לבוי:

3. Discuss the significance of Jesus' statement in Matthew 5.18.
4. This is an alphabetical list of most of the proper names that occur more than 175 times in Biblical Hebrew ("c", "d", "h" are titles and generic nouns). Write their *English form*, and practice spelling them aloud in Hebrew. Use the references—the first time that name occurs—to check your work.

Example:	גד	"gimel-dalet"	"Gad"	
Gn 25.26	יעקב	m.	Gn 17.5	אברהם a.
Gn 13.10	ירדן	n.	Ex 4.14	אהרן b.
Josh 10.1	ירושלם	o.	Gn 14.20	אל c.
Gn 32.28	ישראל	p.	Gn 1.1	אלהים d.
Gn 9.18	כנען	q.	Gn 41.52	אפרים e.
Gn 29.34	לוי	r.	Gn 10.10	בבל f.
Gn 19.37	מזאב	s.	Gn 35.18	בנימן g.
Ex 2.10	משה	t.	Jg 2.13	בעל h.
Gn 10.14	פלשתי	u.	1 Sam 16.13	דוד i.
Gn 12.15	פרעה	v.	Gn 29.35	יהודה j.
Gn 36.37	שאול	w.	Ex 14.13	יהושוע k.
2 Sam 5.14	שלמה	x.	Gn 30.24	יוסף l.

N.B.: When transliterated, some of these will not resemble their English counterparts, for one or more of these reasons. [This grammar uses the "received" transliteration.]

- a. The "J" that begins many names in English Bibles represents initial י; within names י often appears as "i" or merely indicates the presence of a vowel (see, e.g., exercises d, r, u [above]), but there are exceptions (below). This is because Latin used the letter "i" to transliterate י (as the corresponding Greek letter *iota* had been used centuries earlier in the Septuagint), and also because the letter "j" was not distinguished orthographically from "i" until the 17th century. The English Bible has inherited the transliteration of biblical names from these two sources. (In some ecclesiastical traditions, for example, "Jesu", representing an older "Iesu" is pronounced "Yesu" or "Yezu".)

6. The complete list: Ex 16:16; Dt 4:34; Js 23:13; 2 Kgs 4:39; 6:32; 7:8; Is 5:25; 66:17; Jr 22:3; 32:29; Ezk 17:9; 38:12; Ho 10:8; 13:2; Am 9:13; Zp 3:8; Zc 6:11; Ecc 4:8; Est 3:13; Ezr 7:28; Ne 3:7; 2 Chr 26:11; Dn 2:45; 3:22; 4:20; 7:19 (all Daniel references are in Aramaic). If, however, *sin* and *šin* are counted separately there are only fourteen vv. (Dt 4:34; 2 Kgs 7:8; Is 66:17; Jr 22:3; 32:29; Ezk 17:9; 38:12; Ho 10:8; 13:2; Zc 6:11; Est 3:13; Ecc 4:8; Ezr 7:28; 2 Chr 26:11). Two vv. include all five final forms (Ezk 38.12; Zp 3.8).

י > “j”			י > “i”		
יוֹסֵף	<i>jôsēf</i>	Joseph	יֵרֵמְיָהוּ	<i>yirmēyāhû</i>	Jeremiah
יְהוּדָה	<i>yēhūdā</i>	Judah	אֱלֹהִים	<i>ēlōhîm</i>	Elohim
אֲחִיהוּ	<i>ʾhayyāhû</i>	Ahijah	הַלְלֵי-יָהּ	<i>halʾlû-yāh</i>	Halleluiah

- b. The gutturals (א, ה, ח, ע) are either ignored when names are transliterated (יחזקאל > Ezekiel) or represented by a second vowel (אֶהְרֹן > **Aaron**), reflecting the transliterations of the Septuagint and Vulgate.
- c. Two forms of *waw* represent long vowels (note the dots):

ו > “û”			ו > “ô”		
שָׂאוּל	<i>šā’ûl</i>	Saul	יוֹסֵף	<i>jôsēf</i>	Joseph

- d. The letter צ is often represented by “z” in traditional biblical transliteration, by either *ts* or *s* in academic transliteration.

צ > “z”		
צִיּוֹן	<i>siyyôn</i>	Zion
צִדְקִיָּהוּ	<i>šidqyhû</i>	Zedekiah
מֶלֶךְ-צִדְקָה	<i>malki-šedeq</i>	Melchizedek

- e. The letter ש is often represented by “s” in traditional biblical transliteration, but by *š* in academic transliteration.

ש > “s”		
שְׁלֹמֹה	<i>šʾlomo</i>	Solomon
יְרוּשָׁלַּיִם	<i>jerûšālaim</i>	Jerusalem

1.4 Enrichment: Acrostic Poetry

No one knows why the biblical poets wrote acrostic [alphabetically organized] poems (the most famous is Ps 119); perhaps they were a type or style of poem, like sonnets in English. Other acrostics are, e.g., Lam 1-4 (each chapter), Pr 30.10-31, Ps 9-10 and Ps 37. Psalms 111 and 112 are also acrostics. After the opening “Halleluiah” (1a), each line (not each verse) begins with the next letter of the alphabet:

PSALM 112		PSALM 111	
הִלְלוּ יְהוָה	1a	הִלְלוּ יְהוָה	1a
אֲשֶׁר־אִישׁ יֵרָא אֶת־יְהוָה	b	אֹדָה יְהוָה בְּכָל־לֵב	b
בְּמַצּוֹתָיו חָפִיץ מְאֹד:	c	בְּסֹדֶר יִשְׁרָיִם וְעֵדָה:	c
גִּבּוֹר בְּאַרְצָן יְהוָה זִרְעוּ	2a	גְּדֹלִים מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה	2a
דּוֹר יִשְׁרָיִם יְבָרֶךְ:	b	דְּרוֹשִׁים לְכָל־חַפְצֵיהֶם:	b
הוֹן־וְעֶשֶׂר בְּבֵיתוֹ	3a	הוֹדוּ־וְהָדָר פָּעִלּוּ	3a
וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמֻדַת לְעַד:	b	וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמֻדַת לְעַד:	b
זָרַח בַּחֲשֶׁךְ אֹר לְיִשְׁרָיִם	4a	זָכַר עֲשֵׂה לְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו	4a
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק:	b	חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה:	b
טוֹב־אִישׁ חוֹנֵן וּמְלֹוֹה	5a	טָרַף נָתַן לִירְאָיו	5a
יִכְלֹכַל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט:	b	יִזְכֹּר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ:	b
כִּי־לְעוֹלָם לֹא־יִמּוֹט	6a	כַּח מַעֲשָׂיו הַגִּיד לְעַמּוֹ	6a
לְזָכַר עוֹלָם יְהוָה צַדִּיק:	b	לְתַת לָהֶם נַחֲלַת גּוֹיִם:	b
מִשְׁמוּעָה רָעָה לֹא יִירָא	7a	מַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיו אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט	7a
נִכּוֹן לְבוֹ בֶּטֶח בִּיהוָה:	b	נֶאֱמָנִים כָּל־פְּקוּדָיו:	b
סָמוּךְ לְבוֹ לֹא יִירָא	8a	סְמוּכִים לְעַד לְעוֹלָם	8a
עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִרְאֶה בְּצָרָיו:	b	עֲשׂוּיִם בְּאֵמֶת וַיִּשְׁר:	b
פֶּזֶר נָתַן לְאֲבִיוֹנִים	9a	פְּדוֹת שְׁלַח לְעַמּוֹ	9a
צִדְקָתוֹ עֲמֻדַת לְעַד	b	צִוָּה־לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ	b
קָרְנוֹ תְּרוּם בְּכַבּוֹד:	c	קָדוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא שְׁמוֹ:	c
רָשַׁע יִרְאֶה וְכָעַס	10a	רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה יִרְאֵת יְהוָה	10a
שָׁנָיו יַחֲרֹק וְנִמָּס	b	שָׁכַל טוֹב לְכָל־עֲשִׂיהֶם	b
תֵּאֵפוֹת רָשָׁעִים תֵּאֲבֹד:	c	תִּהְיֶינָה עֲמֻדַת לְעַד:	c

- Lines in biblical poetry are conventionally referred to by verse number and a letter, so that, e.g., the three lines of v. 10 are referred to as Ps 111.10a, 10b, 10c.
 - Which line recurs three times in these two psalms with only the difference of one letter?
 - Which lines begin with letters distinguished by only the position of a dot?
- If you have a Hebrew Bible, look at Ps 119.161-168. These eight lines are grouped together under one letter, even though some begin with *sin* and some with *šin*. Which verses begin with which letter? [This incidentally demonstrates that these were originally one letter; the distinguishing dots were added by the Masoretes in the medieval period.]
- The “colon” at the end of each verse (which is actually two “diamonds”—look closely!) is called *sof pasuq*, which means “end of *pasuq*”; *pasuqim* (plural of *pasuq*) correspond to verses in English.

Lesson 2

THE VOWELS

Like English, Hebrew has a full range of vowel symbols. Unlike English, Hebrew vowels are not “letters” (i.e., they are not part of the alphabet) but are small signs placed under, between, or above consonants. The Masoretes—scribes who added the vowel markings—were unwilling to change the consonantal text, and so, apparently following the example of other Semitic languages, devised a system of “dots” and “dashes” to represent the various vowel sounds, which were added to the consonantal text. The vowel points were intended to eliminate ambiguity in pronunciation—all but three points represent only one sound each. [Contrast the variety of sounds represented by “ou” in English: *cough*, *though*, *rough*, *through*, *gouge*, etc.] The Masoretes used another set of signs (§2.2) to represent half-vowels (e.g., *beautiful*), whereas English uses the regular vowel signs (a, e, i, o, u) to represent both full- and half-vowel sounds.⁷

2.1 Full Vowels

The Full Vowels

Vowel Class	Name of Vowel	Vowel Point	וּ + Vowel Point	Transliteration & Pronunciation		Length: L(ong) or S(hort)
A	<i>qameṣ</i>	ֿ	וֿ	mā	father	L
	<i>pataḥ</i>	ֿ	וֿ	ma	rot	S
E	<i>ṣere-yod</i>	ֿ	וֿי	mê	they	L
	<i>ṣere</i>	ֿ	וֿ	mē		
&	<i>segol</i>	ֿ	וֿ	me	bet	S
I	<i>ḥireq-yod</i>	ֿ	וֿי	mî	mean	L
	<i>ḥireq</i>	ֿ	וֿ	mî	mean	L or
				mi	bit	S
O	<i>ḥolem-waw</i>	וּ	וּו	mô		L
	<i>ḥolem</i>	וּ	וּ	mô	moan	
&	<i>qameṣ-ḥatuf</i>	ֿ	וֿ	mô		S
U	<i>ṣureq</i>	וּ	וּו	mû	moon	L
	<i>qibbuṣ</i>	וּ	וּ	mû	moon	L or
				mu	moot; book	S

7. Pronunciation of vowels, full and half, varies from one teacher to the next according to, for example, which variety of modern Hebrew one prefers. You will need to listen closely to your teacher’s example, which may not be quite the same as those listed here.

1. The vowel is read *after* the consonant that it is *under* (i.e., that it follows). In other words, the vowel is either below or to the left of its consonant (cf. the first column under “pronunciation”).
2. A vowel that includes a letter of the alphabet—called a “vowel letter”—(ׁ, ׃, ׅ, ׇ) is always long.
3. Apart from the qualitative distinction between long and short *hireq* (/ee/ v. /i/), “length” refers primarily to duration (how long the sound of the vowel is maintained) rather than to vowel quality. For example, the difference between *šureq* and *qibbuš* is more like the difference between “boon” and “boot” than between “boon” and “bun” (English long and short /u/). Their tonal quality is the same, but their duration differs (in the English words this is due to the nature of the following consonants).
4. Although there are five “classes” of vowels (a, e, i, o, u), the “o/u”, and “i/e” vowels are so closely related that they often interchange, leaving three functional classes (a, i, u).
5. Some long vowels do not sound like their English counterparts, for example, “long e” sounds like English *a* as in “way”, so check the “pronunciation” column carefully. You must learn their Hebrew sounds and names.
6. *Qameš* and *qameš-ḥatuf* look alike. *Qameš-ḥatuf* is quite rare, and occurs only in unaccented, closed syllables (Lesson 3, below).
7. *Pataḥ-yod* and *qameš-yod* at the end of a word are both pronounced as the diphthong *ai*, as in *aisle*.
8. When ׁ, ׃, and ׅ follow a vowel, but are not themselves followed by another vowel, they are called “vowel letters” or *matres lectionis* (“mothers [i.e., helpers] of reading”). This practice started many centuries before the vowel points were used (c. below). When used as a vowel letter, the ׁ, ׃, and ׅ are considered vowels, not consonants (e.g., ׁ is referred to as a single unit of spelling: *šere-yod*).

	Vowel Letter or Consonant?	Explanation	Transliteration	Pronunciation
אֵשׁ	<i>yod</i> = vowel letter (mater)	<i>yod</i> is not followed by a vowel	ʾīš	<i>eesh</i>
אִשָּׁה	<i>he</i> = vowel letter (mater)	<i>he</i> ends the word (is not followed by a vowel)	ʾiššā	<i>isha</i>
בַּיִת	<i>yod</i> = consonant	<i>yod</i> followed by a vowel	<i>bayit</i>	<i>bayit</i>
עַיִן	<i>yod</i> = consonant	<i>yod</i> is the first letter of the word (& followed by a vowel)	ʾayin	<i>ayin</i>
יּוֹם	<i>waw</i> = vowel letter (mater)	<i>waw</i> is not followed by a vowel	<i>yôm</i>	<i>yôm</i>

- a. When they begin a word, or are followed by a vowel point, they are consonants (not *matres*).
- b. When they are written with the vowel letter (*mater*), they are called “full” (Hebrew *malēʾ*, Latin *plene*, “full”).
- c. When *holem* lacks *waw*, and *šere* and long *hireq* lacks *yod*, they are called “defective” (Hebrew *ḥaser*, “lacking”).
- d. Forms with and without *matres* are pronounced alike. This discussion may sound excessively technical, but all of these terms are routinely used in commentaries and reference works dealing with the Hebrew text.
- e. Inscriptions show that *matres* were in use by the 10th century BCE, but they were not used consistently. When the Masoretes began to add the vowel points (c. CE 800), they incorporated the vowel letters that were already present in the text into their system, but did not add more vowel letters to the consonantal text, since that would have entailed changing the biblical text. Many words thus occur both with and without a vowel letter.

- f. This lack of standardization also explains why *hireq* and *qibbuṣ* have more than one value. If there was no vowel letter in the text, the Masoretes simply used the “defective” form of the vowel, which is why *hireq* and *qibbuṣ* can be either long or short.

2.2 Half-Vowels

Both Hebrew and English have half-vowels, e.g., “i” in “beautiful” and “a” in *sofa* (in regular conversation, not exaggeratedly, as “bee-yoo-**tee**-ful”). English orthography does not distinguish full and half vowels; the Masoretes distinguished them by using different signs.

The Half-Vowels

Type	Name	Sign	Consonant + Sign	Length	Sound
<i>šewa</i>	<i>šewa</i>	◌ְ	מְ	m ^e	
a	<i>ḥatef-pataḥ</i>	◌ֲ	הֲ	h ^a	Half <i>uh</i>
e	<i>ḥatef-segol</i>	◌ֳ	הֳ	h ^e	
o	<i>ḥatef-qames</i>	◌ִ	הִ	h ^o	

1. The *ḥatef*-vowels combine one of the full vowel signs with vocal *šewa* (◌ְ).
2. *Ḥatef*-vowels mainly occur after the gutturals (below) instead of vocal *šewa*. The *ḥatef*-vowels are most important when discussing guttural verbs (below).
3. The half-vowels all sound alike (“uh”, as in “Uh-huh”).
4. Vocal *šewa*, which is also a half-vowel, is the first vowel point in the Bible: בְּרֵאשִׁית, “in the beginning” (Gn 1.1). It is also the sound in the first syllable of its own name: *šh^eva*. It is thus the almost necessary sound between some combinations of consonants—a sound that is usually ignored in English orthography (cf. the slight separation between, e.g., the first two letters of “break” or “pray”).

2.3 A Brief History of Hebrew Orthography

Hebrew was first written with consonants and perhaps an occasional vowel letter. This meant that a cluster of consonants was potentially ambiguous. [These examples exaggerate the difficulties, since a word’s function is largely determined by the context.]

מֶלֶךְ ^s *king, he reigned / was / became king, she reigned, they reigned, queen, one who rules [male or female], “her / his [act of] ruling, Be king!, or to be / come king*

As inscriptions show, by the 10th century BCE, *matres lectionis* were being used to indicate the presence of long vowels. This first took place at the end of words, and simplified reading by reducing a word’s potential function:

מֶלֶךְ *his king, the one ruling him, they reigned, his [act of] ruling, or Reign! (masc. pl.)*
מַלְכָּה *her king, queen, she reigned, her [act of] ruling, or Reign! (masc. sg.)*

Although many biblical books were written after the *matres lectionis* had begun to be used, spelling was never standardized, and so the *matres* were inserted haphazardly. In the 7th–9th centuries CE, the Masoretes began adding “points” to the consonantal text in order to preserve traditional

8. The archaic (“paleo-Hebrew”) alphabet did not use final forms; they were, however, in use by the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

pronunciation,⁹ but they did not attempt to standardize the use of *matres* before adding the vowel points, even though this meant inconsistencies in spelling (they considered the *matres* part of the “consonantal” text). The vowel points eliminated most of the ambiguity:

מֶלֶכָּה	≈ queen	מֶלֶךְ	≈ Be king! (masc. sg.) or She reigned [was queen]
מֶלֶכָּהּ	≈ her king	מֶלֶכָּהּ	≈ she [the one] who reigns or the reigning one [female]

This overview helps explain the general scholarly freedom to suggest different pointings—repointing a word is not considered to be “changing the text”, since the vowel points were not original. It also explains why the same word can be spelled with and without a vowel letter, since the Masoretes were unwilling to add *matres* to the consonantal text.

Biblical texts may be “unpointed”, “consonantal” (both without vowel points), or “pointed” (often called “Masoretic”). Pointing is largely restricted to printed (typeset) Bibles and Hebrew prayer-books; Modern Hebrew is largely unpointed.

2.4 Regarding Vocabulary

The vocabulary lists include all the words that occur more than fifty times in the Hebrew Bible, except proper names of persons and places (which are listed in Appendix B). Words are introduced *very generally* in order of descending frequency, so that words that occur more frequently in the biblical text are learned first. A complete Hebrew–English glossary for this grammar appears in Appendix B. Learning vocabulary is a process of familiarization through repetition—some students learn best by repeatedly writing the list until the glosses are learned, others by reviewing them orally or by means of cards (Hebrew on one side, English on the other). It also helps to learn word by a biblical context in which it occurs.

Each list consists of Hebrew words alongside one or more suggested English *glosses* for that word. A gloss is merely a word used to translate a word—it is *not* a definition or meaning. The gloss(es) listed with each word are English words that frequently represent that Hebrew word in translations—they are *not* the word’s “basic” or “central” or “real” meaning. Words represent referential ranges, so that many glosses may be appropriate for a given word (although not every gloss will fit every context in which that word occurs).

In general, words have ranges of reference (also called their “semantic range”). The only apparent exceptions are highly technical terms, whether medical (*pneumococccys*), mathematical (*cosine*), theological (*hypostatic union*), etc.¹⁰ The more limited a word’s area of reference, the more “technical” or specialized it is, and *the more its content is determined by what it refers to*. The less specific a term is—the broader its range of reference—the *more its content is determined by its context* (linguistic, cultural, etc.). “Dog”, for example, conveys less information than [is less specific than] “Labrador”, and so can fit a larger variety of contexts. The latter expression is limited to contexts that refer to a Labrador (again, unless it is being used metaphorically).

In addition to semantic range, words also have what might be called a “load”, as in the expression “a loaded word”. “Semantic load” refers to the combination of their denotation (“dictionary meaning”) and connotation (associated emotive function). In English, for example, “beefy”, “chunky”, “heavy”, “solid”, “big-boned”, and “fat” could all be used to refer to a person’s build, but many people would consider “solid” a compliment (or at least a polite euphemism) and “fat” a deliberate insult, even though “insulting” is not part of the dictionary’s definition. This point probably refers more to issues of translation than to the Hebrew lexicon, since we know the semantic load of words that we use in our own languages far more instinctively than we can know those in another language no longer spoken.

Furthermore, when comparing the vocabularies (lexicons) of different languages, the greater the extent to which words’ ranges overlap, the more they appear to “mean the same thing”. Since Biblical

9. There were several centers of scribal activity, where competing systems of pointing (and thus of pronunciations) developed; this one is called the “Tiberian”. Each group of Masoretes was therefore attempting to preserve the pronunciation that it had “received”. Nor did the Masoretes consider points to “add to” the biblical text, perhaps because the points do not affect its consonantal shape.

10. Many of these, however, can also be used metaphorically.

Hebrew is a textual language—i.e., there are no longer any native speakers of Biblical Hebrew—we are left to make educated guesses about the semantic range of some words, and the corresponding semantic range in English. These are “educated” guesses, however, based on its biblical use and the evidence from cognate Semitic languages, such as Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Aramaic, from its use in rabbinic (Mishnaic) Hebrew, and from medieval rabbinic commentators and grammarians.

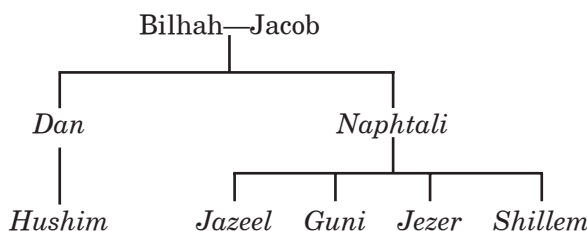
1. *Terms of relationship.* The following Hebrew terms are usually glossed by the first English term, although their range of application is often much broader, as the second gloss suggests:

אָב	<i>father, male ancestor</i>	אֹהֶל	<i>tent, home</i>
אָח	<i>brother, male relative</i>	בֵּית	<i>house, household</i>
אָחוֹת	<i>sister, female relative</i>	שִׁבְט	<i>tribe</i>
אִמָּה	<i>mother, ancestress</i>	מִשְׁפָּחָה	<i>clan, [extended] family</i>
בֶּן	<i>son, descendant; used to address a younger [unrelated] male (e.g., 1 Sam 3.16)</i>	בֶּן אָח	<i>son of a brother (nephew)</i>
בַּת	<i>daughter, female descendant; used to address a younger [unrelated] female (e.g., Ruth 2.8)</i>	בֶּן בֶּן	<i>son of a son (grandson)</i>

These are the usual glosses because these Hebrew and English words usually refer to the same aspect of reality. In each case, however, the Hebrew terms may also refer to relationships outside the nuclear family. Because parents and their children (the nuclear family) are the usual referents of the English terms, it is tempting to think of the first gloss listed for each term as its “real meaning” and the other gloss as an “extended” or “metaphorical” meaning, perhaps even concluding that every related male, for example, was considered a “brother”. We do not know whether or not this was how they thought about these words, since we cannot ask them, and they left no dictionaries. The brief genealogical table of Gn 46.8–27, which describes Jacob’s family at their journey to Egypt, illustrates this point. Note the use of the words “son” and “bore” in these verses:

²³ Now the *sons* of Dan were Hushim, ²⁴and the *sons* of Naphtali were Jazeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. ²⁵These are the *sons* of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter; and she *bore* these to Jacob, all seven lives (Gn 46.23–25).

This diagram shows the generational spread described by “son” in these verses (those called “sons” are in *italics*):



Since Hushim, Jazeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem were Bilhah’s [and Jacob’s] grandsons, *not* her sons, the word בֶּן cannot have the same reference as “son” in everyday English. Furthermore, the verb glossed “bear/give birth to” (“and she *bore* these to Jacob”) cannot have the usual English function of “give birth”, but has an “extended” function that is revealed only by the context. Note that the same pattern describes the descendants of Jacob’s other three wives (Gn 46.8–27).

Since the range of reference of the usual English glosses is much more restricted than that of the Hebrew terms, the word “son” may be misleading if it suggests a closer genealogical or chronological relationship than the context allows. [On the other hand, English also uses some of these terms generically—“son” and “daughter” can refer to a younger unrelated male or female.]

The tiny lexical base (vocabulary) of Biblical Hebrew (c. 8400 words) means that we have only a very incomplete record of the Israelite lexicon, so that it is difficult to see how Abraham could have used the vocabulary of the OT to ask Sarah, “I’d prefer my steak less well done than last night, but the cakes could be a little softer than yesterday; maybe an oak fire would be better than sycamore. Oh, and could you also mend my favorite robe; that same seam is unraveling. Don’t forget to use the green thread—the blue showed up too much last time. And we need to remind the servant girls that they can only wash their hair every new moon due to the drought.” Of course he must have been able to say this (or something very much like it), but it is not entirely clear how he would have done so using the resources of Biblical Hebrew.

2. Many common glosses suggested by Hebrew-English reference tools may be traditional, but changes in either our understanding of Hebrew or English usage may mean that that gloss no longer functions accurately. It may even misrepresent the Hebrew. These glosses are sometimes included in the vocabulary lists with “trad.” (“traditionally”). For example:

	Traditional Gloss	Potential Gloss(es)	Discussion
פֶּן	<i>lest</i>	<i>so that ... not</i>	<i>Lest</i> is a perfectly good, if uncommon, English word that indicates negative purpose.
כִּבֵּס	<i>full (wash by treading)</i>	<i>wash</i>	The archaic verb <i>to full</i> (from Latin, <i>via</i> Old French) means to “wash”, and is the origin of expression like “whiter than fuller’s cloth” (i.e., recently washed).
עֵין	<i>eye, fountain</i>	<i>eye fount</i>	<i>Fountain</i> normally refers to a stream of water that is mechanically shot into the air or poured out, whereas עֵין refers to a natural source of water (as opposed to a well or cistern).
סֵפֶר	<i>book</i>	<i>text scroll document record</i>	Codices (“proto-books”) were not in use until the third century CE, so that the rendering “book” for סֵפֶר is culturally misleading. We know that many Iron Age documents, apparently including even legal texts, were written on pieces of broken pottery (<i>shards</i> ; called <i>ostraca</i> when written on). [There is a specific term for <i>scroll</i> (מִגְלָה); from the verb גָּלַל, <i>to roll</i> .]
יָלַד	<i>bear, give birth</i>	<i>the same</i>	This refers to both immediate birth and to physical <i>ancestry</i> , or “eventual” birth (cf. on Gn 36, above).
צְדָקָה	<i>righteousness</i>	<i>innocence rightness justness righteousness triumph</i>	Terms built on the root צִדִּיק are traditionally glossed with “righteous”, “righteousness”, etc., but in many places the thrust of the term is forensic <i>innocence</i> relative to a particular situation or accusation, not to an absolute or universal moral state. It is even possible that “innocence” is the primary reference and that the idea of “righteousness” is the global extension of particular innocence. Each passage needs to be studied in order to see which gloss is most appropriate, but not even careful study will guarantee certainty or consensus in every case.

3. It is often easier to explain what a word signifies than it is to give an appropriate gloss in another language, as the discussion of “give birth” shows. If you have studied another language, you may have thought, “There’s no way to say that in English”, which is, of course, not true. So far as is known, whatever one language can express others can express as well. The difference may be that what one language says in a single word, another can say only with a phrase, a sentence, or even a paragraph.

For example, Lot is called “[Abraham’s] brother’s son” and David referred to his nephews as “sons of [his sister] Zeruiah”, which suggests that Biblical Hebrew lacked a simple lexeme that meant what English means by “nephew”. Both Biblical Hebrew and English can refer unambiguously to a sibling’s immediate offspring, but Biblical Hebrew lacks a single word

that has this function (much as modern English lacks a specific term for the parents of one's son- or daughter-in-law, although there are terms for this relationship in some languages).

This discussion suggests that the referents of words are not to be confused with the words that we use to express them. English “son” is usually the most contextually appropriate gloss for Hebrew בֶּן, but this does *not* imply, and *must not* be misunderstood to imply, that בֶּן somehow “literally” or “basically” or “fundamentally” *means* “son”, or even that it means “the same thing as is meant by the English noun ‘son’”, but rather that two language groups have chosen these particular words to refer [usually] to what turns out to be the same entity.

2.5 Concepts

full vowel	lexeme	meaning	semantic range
function	lexicon	<i>penult</i>	<i>šewa</i>
gloss	<i>malē’ (plene) spelling</i>	range [of reference]	<i>ultima</i>
half (<i>hiatef</i>) vowel	<i>matres lectionis</i> (sg., <i>mater</i>)	reference	vowel letter
<i>hiaser</i> spelling			

2.6 Vocabulary

<i>hand (power, authority)</i>	יָד .9	<i>father; male ancestor</i>	אָב .1
		<i>fathers</i> ¹¹	אָבוֹת
<i>day; when (preceding the infinitive construct [§16.2])</i>	יוֹם .10	<i>man (not Mankind/humanity), husband; each (as subject of a plural verb)</i>	אִישׁ .2
		<i>men, husbands</i>	אֲנָשִׁים
<i>priest</i>	כֹּהֵן .11	<i>men of, husbands of</i>	אֲנָשֵׁי
<i>all, whole; each, every</i> [NB: This is a noun, <i>not</i> an adjective; “all” is an adjective in English.]	כָּל .12	<i>god, God (used of Israel’s God and other gods)</i>	אֵל .3
	כָּל	<i>gods, God (used of Israel’s God and other gods)</i>	אֱלֹהִים
<i>heart (a person’s moral center; often used where English uses “mind”)</i>	לֵב .13	<i>woman, wife</i>	אִשָּׁה .4
	לֵב	<i>wife of</i>	אִשְׁתּוֹ
<i>king; monarch</i>	מֶלֶךְ .14	<i>women, wives</i>	נָשִׁים
		<i>women / wives of</i>	נָשֵׁי
<i>(f.) life, self; trad., soul</i>	נֶפֶשׁ .15	<i>(f.) land, country [of a geo-political region], earth (as in “heaven and earth”)</i>	אֶרֶץ .5
<i>servant, slave; someone bound in some way to another person, for whom he or she works</i>	עֲבָד .16	<i>house, home, household</i>	בַּיִת .6
		<i>houses, etc.</i>	בָּתִּים
<i>(f.) city</i>	עִיר .17	<i>son, male descendant (cf. בְּנֵימִין, Benjamin, “son of [my] right hand”)</i>	בֶּן .7
<i>cities</i>	עָרִים	<i>word, thing; event, affair, matter</i>	דָּבָר .8

- Most words in Biblical Hebrew are accented on the last syllable (עָרִים → *a · rîm*), called the *ultima*.
- Some are accented on the next-to-last syllable (דָּבָר → *de · rek*), the *penult*.¹²

11. Some *plurals* with unexpected or unpredictable forms (e.g., אָבוֹת, *fathers*) are listed.

12. Di-syllabic (two-syllable) nouns with two *seghols* (דָּבָר, *sere-seghol* “document”), *seghol-patah* (זֶרַע, “seed”), two *patahs* (דַּעַת, “knowledge”) are called “segholates”, and are accented on the first syllable.

3. The terms “ultima”, “penult”, and “antepenult” (the syllable before the penult) are commonly used in scholarly literature—including some commentaries—that discusses the spelling (pointing) or pronunciation of words; you need to know what they refer to.
4. When the penult is accented, you will see a Masoretic accent over the consonant that begins that syllable, either *rebiaʿ* (for full-width letters: e.g., יְרֵךְ; note that it is larger than *holem*, and centered over the consonant), or *zaqef* (for narrow letters; e.g., נִפְּשׁ). Words without these marks are usually accented on the ultima.

2.7 Exercises

1. Learn the names and sounds of the full- and half-vowels. Practice writing them with different consonants.
2. This list includes all but one of the proper names of people and places that occur between 174 and 77 times in Biblical Hebrew. *Pronounce* and *spell* each name aloud, and *write* them in their English forms, and *identify* each *waw* or *yod* as a consonant or vowel letter (and be able to explain your identification). Use the references (the name’s first canonical occurrence) to check your work. Unlike the [alphabetical] list in Lesson I, these are listed in descending order of frequency. For more practice with the alphabet, rearrange the list so that it is in alphabetical order (vowel letters count!).

Example: יְבוּסִי Jebusite

yod, šewa, bet, šureq, samek, hireq-yod

1st *yod* = consonant (followed by vowel)

waw = vowel letter (not preceded or followed by vowel)

2nd *yod* = vowel letter (not followed by vowel)

Gn 17.19	יִצְחָק .m	Gn 9.18	כְּנָעַן .a
1 Kgs 13.32	שִׁמְרוֹן .n	Gn 10.22	אֲרָם .b
Nu 26.29	גִּלְעָד .o	2 Sam 5.7	צִיּוֹן .c
2 Sam 3.3	אֲבִשְׁלוֹם .p	Gn 2.14	אֲשׁוּר .d
1 Kgs 11.26	יִרְבֶּעַם .q	Gn 41.51	מִנְשֵׁה .e
2 Kgs 24.11	נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר .r	2 Kgs 23.31	יִרְמְיָה .f
Gn 29.32	רְאוּבֵן .s	1 Sam 26.6	יֹאָב .g
Gn 10.16	אֲמֹרִי .t	Nu 34.20	שְׁמוּאֵל .h
2 Sam 8.16	יְהוֹשָׁפָט .u	2 Kgs 16.20	חִזְקִיָּה .i
Gn 30.11	גָּד .v	Jg 18.30	יְהוֹנָתָן .j
Gn 14.14	דָּן .w	Gn 19.38	עַמּוֹן .k
Gn 13.18	חֲבֵרוֹן .x	Gn 25.30	אֲדָוִם .l

- a. *Hatef*-vowels are usually transliterated in English Bibles as the corresponding full vowel (e.g., אֲדָוִם → “Edom”), but not in academic transliteration (e.g., [“dôm”]).
- b. *Šewa* usually appears in English names as *e*, although it can also be transliterated as *i*.
- c. As with the first list of names (§1.3), the transliterated form may not resemble their form in English. This is because their form in English is based on their transliteration in Greek (in the Septuagint), Latin (in the Vulgate), or both.
3. Transliterate the first four verses of 1 Chronicles into their English equivalents, and practice reading them aloud. You will need to know two more things: (1) the sign : (*sof pasuq*, “end of *pasuq*”) marks the end of the verse; and (2) the ׀ prefixed to the last word in this verse is a conjunction that can be glossed as “and”.

אָדָם שֵׁת אָנוּשׁ:	1.1
קִינָן מִהֶלֶל אֵל יִרְדָּ:	1.2
חֲנוּךְ מְתוּשֶׁלַח לְמֹד:	1.3
נֹחַ שֵׁם חָם וְיֹפֶת:	1.4

Congratulations! You have now read four verses of the Bible in Hebrew! (Only 22,199 to go!)

2.8 Enrichment: Implicit / Assumed Information

Notice that the author of Chronicles does not tell us that these are personal names, how they are related (or even *that* they are related), and that he also expects his readers to know that the first nine words outline a single line of descent, but that v. 4 branches from a father to his three sons. In fact, to a reader who knows nothing of Genesis 5 and 6, these verses are gibberish. They demonstrate the principle of *assumed information*—information that a speaker or author does not mention, because he or she assumes that the readers or hearers already know it (both speaker and audience thus “share” the information). Assumed information typifies all communication, but is especially noticeable when the author lived (or lives) in another culture or time.

In much of Western culture, for example, if someone arrived at an early-afternoon meeting and said “Sorry I’m late—the service was slow”, most hearers would probably assume a scenario of lunch at a restaurant, including being seated, waiting to order, ordering, eating, paying, etc., none of which need be expressed, since we assume this as part of our own cultural setting. In the same way, the biblical authors never tell us why men tended to meet women at wells (e.g., Gn 24; Ex 2), but assume that their readers know that women drew and hauled water, and—in a culture without plumbing or public water—that an efficient way for a traveler to meet someone from the area was merely to wait at a well, since sooner or later someone would show up. In the same way, many middle- and upper-class North Americans would probably assume that a husband and wife of about the same age met in college, since, in fact, many do meet in college.

Reading 1 Chronicles 1.1–4 shows us that the “Chronicler” (as the author of Chronicles is often called) expected his readers to be familiar with the genealogies of Genesis. He did not expect his work to be read as an independent account of God’s dealings with Israel, but as a supplement or parallel to Genesis—Kings. This also explains that when he “ignored” the sins of David and Solomon, or the history of the Northern Kingdom—he was not trying to mislead his readers, but assuming that they knew the rest of the story.

Lesson 3

SYLLABLES

The final aspect of pronouncing Biblical Hebrew is to recognize combinations of consonants and vowels as syllables. This primarily entails distinguishing silent from vocal *šewa*, and *dageš lene* from *dageš forte*, which will enable you in turn to recognize a syllable as either open or closed. Although the ability to recognize syllables and identify their type will help you recognize some verbal forms, its main value is enabling you to pronounce Hebrew.

3.1 Šewa¹³

The sign for *šewa* (ְ) has at least two functions. It can represent a *half-vowel* (above) or mark the *absence* of a vowel. This section describes how to distinguish these functions.

- Vocal *šewa* (ְ) is a half-vowel (above), like the “i” in *beautiful*, or the “a” in *sofa*.
- Silent *šewa*. When two consonants occur with no vowel between them, the Masoretes inserted *šewa* as a “place-holder”. In English, consonants can be placed side by side, as in *placed*, but in Hebrew, every consonant—except the last letter of the word—must be followed by a vowel point. This *šewa* is also called *šewa quiescens*.

N.B.: The three *hatef*-vowels (ְֿ / ױֿ / ױֿֿ) are always vocal.

There are **three basic rules** for distinguishing vocal and silent *šewa*.

- If the preceding vowel is short, the *šewa* is silent; if the preceding vowel is long, *šewa* is vocal; *qameš /qameš hatef* and *hireq* are ambiguous.

after a short vowel	יְמִלִּיכּוּ	<i>yamlikû</i>
after a long vowel	יֶשְׁבוּ	<i>yēš^hbû</i>

- Šewa* after (under) a letter written with *dageš* (“dot”) is always vocal; *šewa* before a letter with *dageš* is always silent.

after <i>dageš</i>	יִפְלוּ	<i>yipp^hlû</i>
before <i>dageš</i>	יִכְתֹּב	<i>yiktōb</i>

- When there are two *šewas* in a row, the first is always silent and the second always vocal (unless they are under the last two letters of a word, where they are both silent).

1st silent, 2nd vocal	יִשְׁמְרוּ	<i>yīsm^hrû</i>
both silent (end of word)	וַיִּבֶן	<i>wayyēb^hk</i>

These three basic rules will allow you to distinguish most *šewas*; the following guidelines¹⁴ merely amplify them (despite all the rules, there are exceptions and ambiguities).¹⁵

- This discussion refers only to *šewa* itself; *hatef*-vowels are always pronounced.
- Most of these rules were developed by Rabbi Elias Levitas (d. 1549 CE).
- For more information, see Joüon & Muraoka (1991, §§50, 8, 10, 18, 19).

Šewa is vocal when it ...

a. follows the first letter in a word	בְּרֵאשִׁית	<i>b^erēšīt</i>
b. follows another <i>šewa</i> (except at the end of the word)	יִשְׁמְרוּ	<i>yīshm^erû</i>
c. follows any consonant with <i>dageš</i> (cf. “j”)	יִכְפְּרוּ	<i>y^ekapp^erû</i>
d. follows the first of two identical consonants	רֹמְמוּ	<i>rôm^emû</i>
e. follows any syllable with a long vowel	יֵשְׁבוּ	<i>yēš^ebû</i>
f. precedes a <i>b^egad-k^efat</i> letter without <i>dageš</i> (a tendency, not a rule)	יֵשְׁבוּ	<i>yēš^ebû</i>

Šewa is silent when it ...

g. precedes another <i>šewa</i> (cf. “b”, “k”)	יִשְׁמְרוּ	<i>yīshm^erû</i>
h. follows a guttural consonant	יְהִיֶּה	<i>yihye</i>
i. follows the last letter of a word (cf. “k”)	הָלַךְ	<i>hālāk</i>
j. precedes <i>dageš</i> (cf. “c”)	יִכְתֹּב	<i>yiktōb</i>
k. follows <i>both</i> of the <i>last two</i> letters in a word (both <i>šewas</i> are silent, and the consonants are pronounced as a cluster; cf. “b”, “g”)	כָּתַבְתָּ וַיִּכְרֹךְ	<i>kātābt wayyēbk</i>

Most of these “rules” merely invert another rule (cf., e.g., “b”, “g”, “k”), but allow you to examine a given *šewa* from more than one vantage point, as this table demonstrates:

בְּרֵאשִׁית	vocal	under first letter of word (a) [and thus does not follow a short vowel (#1)]; follows <i>dageš</i> (c)
יִשְׁמְרוּ	1st: silent 2nd: vocal	follows short vowel (#1); precedes another <i>šewa</i> (g) follows another <i>šewa</i> (b)
יִכְתֹּב	silent	follows short vowel (#1); precedes <i>dageš</i> (j)
רֹמְמוּ	vocal	between two identical consonants (d); follows long vowel (e)
יֵשְׁבוּ	vocal	follows long vowel (e); precedes <i>b^egad-k^efat</i> letter without a <i>dageš</i> (f)

3.2 *Dageš*

1. *Dageš lene*. When the Masoretes pointed the text, they distinguished the pronunciation of six letters (ב ג ד כ פ ת) as either “hard” or “soft”. Although we explain this as the difference between “b” (ב) and “v” (ב), or “p” (פ) and “f” (פ), it may have been more like the difference between, e.g., the “p” in “pit” and “tip” (hold your hand in front of your mouth). This is a difference in sound (p^h/p), but not in function (i.e., if you say “pit” with a big puff of air it still refers to a hole in the ground, a seed, etc.). The same is true of *dageš lene*—whether a consonant is hard or soft, the word is the same.
2. *Dageš forte*. Instead of writing a doubled letter twice (e.g., *supper*), Biblical Hebrew writes it once, with *dageš forte* (“strong *dageš*”) to show that it is doubled.¹⁶ A letter with *dageš forte* is therefore a doubled letter (although this rarely affects our pronunciation apart from the *b^egad-k^efat* letters).¹⁷ In transliteration, letters with *dageš forte* are written twice:

אִשָּׁה	<i>īššā</i>	“woman, wife”
יִפֹּל	<i>yippōl</i>	“he will fall” (“... falls”)
אִמִּי	<i>immī</i>	“my mother”

16. *Dageš forte* both doubles and “hardens” the *begeḏ-kefet* letters.
17. Five letters do not double: א, ה, ח, ע, ר.

- a. Like a doubled consonant in English, the first of the doubled consonants indicated by *dageš forte* closes one syllable and the second opens the next syllable:

supper	sup · per	(contrast “su · per”)
אִשָּׁה	’iš · šā	“woman, wife”
יִפֹּל	yip · pōl	“he will fall”

- b. Also like a doubled consonant in English (and unlike *dageš lene*), *dageš forte* affects the word’s function:¹⁸

supper	super
dinner	diner
גָּדֹלְתִי	I am great
גָּדַלְתִּי	I made [someone or something] great

- c. *Dageš* in a non-*b^egad-k^efat* letter can be only *forte*. In a *b^egad-k^efat* letter, however, *dageš* can be either *forte*, showing that the letter is doubled, or *dageš lene* (“weak dot”), which means that the letter is merely “hard” (but not doubled). [Since they cannot double, the gutturals and ׀ rarely occur with *dageš*.]

3. There are four basic rules for distinguishing *dageš forte*:

***Dageš* is always *forte* when it ...**

1. is in a non- <i>b^egad-k^efat</i> letter	חִצִּים	hiṣ · šim	arrows
2. follows a full vowel (long or short)	עַתָּה	’at · tā	now

***Dageš* is always *lene* when it ...**

3. follows <i>šewa</i>	מִשְׁתָּה	miš · te	feast
4. begins a word ¹⁹	דָּבָר	da · var	word, thing

N.B.: Identifying the type of *dageš* is challenging only when *dageš* occurs in a *b^egad-k^efat* letter. *Dageš* in a letter following *šewa* is always *lene* (the *šewa* is always silent); *dageš* after any full vowel is always *forte*. Neither *dageš* follows a *hatef*-vowel.

3.3 Identifying Syllable Boundaries

- Every syllable in Biblical Hebrew begins with a consonant, except the conjunction when it has the form - ׀ (below).
- Every syllable in Biblical Hebrew contains one—and only one—vowel, which may be either a full or a half vowel;²⁰ the number of vowels in a word determines the number of syllables.

מַיִם	ma · yim	water
בְּרִית	b ^e · rīt	covenant, treaty, agreement
יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה	yiš · ta · h ^a · ve	he bows down

18. The Hebrew examples are part of the verbal system (below).

19. There is one exception to this that we need not worry about.

20. Grammarians disagree on the nature of *šewa*. Some (e.g., Blau, Lambdin, Seow) agree with this statement. Others (e.g., Kelley, GKC [§26m]) explain the consonant with a half-vowel as the first part of the syllable of the following full vowel, since, in this theory, every syllable must have a full vowel. On the other hand, Joüon-Muraoka (§27c, da) finds a single *šewa* with three functions. No explanation yet accounts for every *šewa* (nor did the Masoretes explain their use of *šewa*).

3. There are two types of syllables in Biblical Hebrew. *Open* syllables consist of a consonant + vowel (CV); *closed* syllables consist of consonant + vowel + consonant (CVC).²¹ The nature of the syllable, and whether or not it is accented, then determine the length of its vowel.

When a syllable ends in ...	it is:	and its vowel is:
a vowel, vowel letter, א	open	long (rarely short)
a consonant (including ה)	closed	short (if the syllable is unaccented) or long (if the syllable is accented)

4. Therefore ...
- any consonant except א (and ה without *mappiq*) may close a syllable
 - in the middle of a word a consonant must be either doubled by a *dageš forte*, or followed by silent *šewa* in order to close a syllable
 - ה can close a syllable only when written with *mappiq* (ה-), which occurs only at the end of a word
5. As in English, a double letter (with *dageš forte*) closes one syllable and opens the next (above).

supper	sup · per				
אִשָּׁה	’iš · šā	woman, wife	בְּתִי	bit · tî	my daughter
יִפֹּל	yip · pōl	he will fall	יִפְלֵא	yip · pā · lē’	it is marvelous
כִּפֹּר	kip · pēr	he atoned	וַיֹּאמֶר	vay · yō’ · mer	[and] he said

6. Some syllables seem to be both open and closed. A short vowel precedes *šewa* (like a closed syllable), but is followed by a *b^egad-k^efat* letter without *dageš lene* (as though the *šewa* were vocal). Some grammarians call this *šewa media* (i.e., “middle”), others say that this apparent anomaly reflects the history of the language, rather than a particular pronunciation. See footnote 15 (above). For example:

	Suggests <i>dageš forte</i> :	Suggests <i>dageš lene</i> :
מִלְכִּי	<i>pataḥ</i> is short	} but כ lacks <i>dageš lene</i>
אֶתְכֶם	<i>segol</i> is short	

3.4 Furtive Pataḥ

When a word ends in a strong guttural (ה, ח, ע) that is *not* preceded by an *a*-class vowel (*pataḥ* or *qameṣ*), the Masoretes wrote *pataḥ* between the final vowel and the final guttural. This *pataḥ furtivum* (“furtive”) was written slightly to the right to show that it is pronounced after the non-*a*-vowel and before the guttural. [This is all much easier to illustrate than explain!] These words thus appear to have two consecutive vowels, but the furtive vowel was used only as a signal to listeners that the word ended in a guttural, not with the long vowel.

רוּחַ	rū ^a ḥ	wind, breath; spirit
רֵעַ	re ^a ˁ	friend, neighbour, companion

3.5 Concepts

Adonai (§3.8)	generic noun	long vowel	short vowel	vocal <i>šewa</i>
closed syllable	<i>dageš lene</i>	<i>mappiq</i>	silent <i>šewa</i>	YHWH (§3.8)
<i>dageš forte</i>	furtive <i>pataḥ</i>	open syllable	Tetragrammaton (§3.8)	

21. Each has various sub-types, which we leave to the reference grammars (see Bibliography).

3.6 Vocabulary

mountain; mountain range, hill country, high country (especially in contrast to valleys; cf. Jg 1.19)	הַר .26	humanity, humankind, man; Adam (cf. אִישׁ)	אָדָם .18
dwell, live, settle; sit; stay, remain	יָשַׁב .27	brother, male relative	אָח .19
eye; well, water-source (cf. <i>En-gedi</i> [עֵין-גִּדִּי] “the well of the kid”)	עֵין .28	eat, devour, consume	אָכַל .20
face, presence (always plural)	פָּנִים .29	say, speak; think	אָמַר .21
stretch out, reach; let go, send [away]	שָׁלַח .30	daughter, female descendant (cf. <i>Bathsheba</i> [בֵּת-שֶׁבַע] “daughter of an oath”, or “seventh daughter”)	בֵּת .22
name, fame, reputation	שֵׁם .31	daughters	בָּנוֹת
hear, listen (שָׁמַע + בְּקוֹל, hear the voice of ≈ obey)	שָׁמַע .32	people [group], nation, folk	גּוֹי .23
year (cf. <i>Rosh hashanah</i> , ראשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, “the head of the year” [New Year])	שָׁנָה .33	(f.) road, way, path, journey; custom	דֶּרֶךְ .24
		come, go, walk, travel; a general term for travel/motion	הֵלֵךְ .25

3.7 Exercises

1. Identify each *dageš* as either *forte* or *lene*, and each *šewa* as silent or vocal. Be prepared to explain how you determined your answer.

כָּבֵד .k	אֲנָשִׁים .a
כֶּהֱן .l	אִשָּׁה .b
כָּלִי .m	בָּטָרָם .c
כָּפַר .n	בֵּית .d
מִזְבֵּחַ .o	בֵּן .e
מִלְחָמָה .p	דָּבָר .f
מִלֵּךְ .q	דָּבָר .g
מִשְׁפָּט .r	דָּם .h
נָאֵם .s	דֶּרֶךְ .i
עָלִיהֶם .t	וַיֹּאמֶר .j

2. Divide each word into syllables, and identify (the chart format is optional)
- each **syllable** as open or closed
 - each **vowel** as long, short, or half
 - each **dageš** as *forte* or *lene*
 - each **šewa** as silent or vocal

Example:	יְכַפְּרוּ				תִּכְתְּבוּ		
Syllables	רוּ	פְּ	כַפּ	יְ	בוּ	תְ	תְכְ
Open/Closed	O	O	C	O	O	O	C
Vowel length	L	H	S	H	L	H	S
<i>Dagešōt</i>		<i>forte</i>				<i>lene</i>	<i>lene</i>
<i>Šewas</i>		vocal ²²	vocal			vocal	silent

22. *Dageš forte* technically represents two of the same letter, separated by [an invisible] silent *šewa*. This method of analyzing *dageš forte* is extremely artificial, and for pedagogical purposes only. The first of the doubled letter closes a syllable, and second opens the next syllable. Do not supply the “invisible” silent *šewa* that is “between” the doubled letters.

מֶלֶךְ־מָּוֶה	f.	בְּשָׂרָם	a.
מִשְׁמֶרֶת	g.	דָּבָר	b.
מִשְׁפָּט	h.	דָּרָךְ	c.
נָאֻם	i.	כָּבֹד	d.
תַּשְׁעִים	j.	לִילָה	e.

After you have done this, practice pronouncing these and the rest of your vocabulary.

3.8 Enrichment: The Divine Name

Most English Bibles distinguish “the LORD” (small capital letters) from “the Lord” (capitalized first letter). This distinguishes the personal *name* of God (“the LORD”) from the generic noun or *title* that means “lord” or “master”, referring to both humans (“my master”) and God (“the/my Lord”).

	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Interpretation
The Tetragrammaton (<i>tetra</i> “four” + <i>gramma</i> “letter”) is the personal name of God.	יהוה		
For unknown reasons (although we might speculate that it was in order to avoid breaking the commandment of Ex 20.7), the divine name (יהוה) was read as though it were pointed with the vowels of אֲדֹנָי.	יהוה + vowels of אֲדֹנָי	<i>Adonai</i> (usually)	“Lord”
This yielded a form (יהוה) that came to be misread as “Jehovah” (which is not a biblical word or name). [The initial <i>hatef-pataḥ</i> was written as <i>šewa</i> under the י.]	יהוה		
Some read the form as שְׁמָא (i.e., “the Name” in Aramaic), although many read the Tetragrammaton as though it were הַשֵּׁם, “the Name” in Hebrew.	יהוה	<i>Adonai</i>	“the Lord” “my Lord” “my Master”
The original pronunciation of the divine name was thus lost.			
Some clues to its pronunciation			
• In the Psalter, Exodus (twice) and Isaiah (three times), the first syllable of the divine name is used as a shortened form of the whole: הַיְיָ־יְהוָה (e.g., Ps 150.1, 6), which suggests the pronunciation of the first syllable.	יְהוָה	<i>Yah</i>	
• Greek texts occasionally transliterate [and abbreviate] the divine name as Ιαω, which suggests a pronunciation like <i>Yahweh</i> (-ω- to approximate the sound of ו).	Ιαω		
The orthography is thus often restored as (using Masoretic pointing).	יהוה or יהוה	<i>Yah · veh</i>	3 ms <i>hifil</i> imperfect of יהוה: “he causes to become/happen”

Regardless of the exact history of its pronunciation (which is largely conjectural), the main point is that the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, is a *personal* or *proper name* (not a title), whereas אֲדֹנָי (Lord, Master) and אֱלֹהִים (God) are common nouns that were used as titles for the true God. When we realize that the term glossed as “the LORD” is a proper name we can better understand the constant reference to “the LORD your God” (which often seems tautologous—who else would be God?), which

would have reminded Israel that YHWH was the God to whom Israel owed covenantal fealty, not Molech, Dagon, Baal, or any other pagan deity (all of whom could be called אֱלֹהִים or אֵל, “God”, or אֱלֹהֵינוּ, “our God” by their worshippers).

יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ	<i>YHWH your God</i> (Dt 6.1)
יהוה הוא הָאֱלֹהִים	<i>YHWH is God</i> [i.e., not Baal] (1 Kgs 18.39); probably in the sense: <i>YHWH is the [true] God!</i>
וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוה:	“... and that you may know that I am <i>YHWH</i> .”
וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו	<i>So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him,</i>
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים	“ <i>Thus says YHWH, the god of the Hebrews: ...</i> ” (Ex 10.2b-3a). ²³
נָאִם יְהוה לֵאדֹנִי	<i>YHWH’s declaration to my master/lord: ...</i> (Ps 110.1)
כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנֶיךָ יְהוה וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ	<i>Thus says your master, YHWH, even your god:</i> “... (Is 51.22)

1. When it immediately follows or precedes the term אֲדֹנִי (Lord, Master), יְהוה is pointed with the vowels that correspond to אֱלֹהִים (אֲדֹנִי יְהוה) so that it would be read as *’Elohim* rather than *’Adonai* (thus avoiding the reading *’Adonai ’Adonai*). This occurs about three hundred times in Biblical Hebrew.
2. Since the potential abuse of the name of God is a grave concern to many, some journals and books do not spell it out (e.g., as “Yahweh”), even when citing a biblical text in which it occurs (the journal or book might be thrown in the trash or otherwise treated callously, thus dishonoring “the Name”). Instead, they may follow the scribal practice of abbreviating it as “י”, or transliterate it without vowels (“Yhwh” or “YHWH”), or both.
3. Although the reasoning that led Israel to avoid or stop pronouncing the divine Name may have been (or at least sound) superstitious, its origin was positive—the desire to obey the commandment and avoid the curse. This was a “hedge” about the law: something that is never pronounced cannot be abused or misused. Some scholars suggest that the pronunciation of the Name was never known to any but the priests, and perhaps even passed from one high priest to the next, but there is no biblical evidence to support this theory.
4. The frequent use of these two terms to refer to the same God occasioned a great deal of discussion through the ages. Some rabbis suggested that יְהוה refers to God in his covenantal, relational rôle, whereas אֱלֹהִים points to his godhood and power, and that the compound form יְהוה אֱלֹהִים (one half of its occurrences are in Gn 2–3) deliberately identified the creator God of Genesis 1 (only אֱלֹהִים) as the covenantal and relational God (יְהוה) of the rest of the book of Genesis.
5. These are not, of course, the only divine names or titles in Scripture, but they are by far the most common.

23. The point of Ex 10.2b-31 is that both Israelites and Egyptians [Pharaoh] will realize that the plagues that are afflicting Egypt are the work of the God of the Hebrews (i.e., YHWH), not of some other god (cf. Ex 20.2).

Part II

LESSONS 4–17

NOMINAL GRAMMAR

VERBAL GRAMMAR (I)

This section introduces the forms of the noun and basic [strong] verb, and how they function in phrases, clauses, and sentences (morphosyntax), so that when you finish of these lessons, you should be able to read nominal phrases and verbal and non-verbal clauses.

You should be able to recognize and interpret the forms of the noun, adjective, pronouns (independent and suffixed), and basic verb, and in the exercises you will have read a number of clauses and phrases of Biblical Hebrew, so that the basic aspects of phrasal and clausal syntax should have become relatively familiar.

More specifically, you should be able to identify nouns as definite or indefinite; to identify which noun an adjective is modifying, whether or not that adjective is attributive, predicate (or substantive, if no noun is present); to recognize and identify construct chains as primarily subjective, objective, or adjectival; to identify (parse) verbal forms of the *qal* stem of the basic verb; and to identify the constituent elements of compound forms (e.g., a “word” made up of conjunction + preposition + article + noun).

Some of these concepts—e.g., nouns and verbs themselves, singular, plural, conjunctions, the imperative—will be familiar from English and other languages, even though their forms are quite different in Hebrew. Other aspects of these chapters—e.g., person, gender, number of verbal forms—will be familiar to students of languages which mark verbal forms to show agreement with their subjects. The construct—Hebrew’s way of showing the “of” relationship between substantives—will be largely unknown to most students, although its function is the same as “of” in English (along with some other common English syntagms).

These lessons also introduce the concept of “discourse”—that words function (have “meaning”) primarily in context, and that their context is not primarily the individual clause or sentence, but the entire story, sermon, poem, etc. in which they occur.²⁴ In fact, we will see that grammar (the combination of words and their forms to create meaningful texts) normally functions at the level of the paragraph (story, etc.) as well as within clauses and sentences.

Finally, because all languages are individual, some aspects of Hebrew, such as word order, as well as the non-semantic signals of clausal function (i.e., the distinction between conjunctive and disjunctive clauses, and the significance of that difference) will be entirely new ground for nearly all students.

The “enrichment” paragraphs in these lessons are extremely important, as they illustrate and apply the exegetical significance of the lessons. They are integral to the grammar, not merely “extras”.

24. The term “discourse” refers to the entire episode, whether that is a story (narrative), a set of instructions, a declaration about future events (prophecy), poem, conversation, &c. “Discourse” can also refer to the entire world within which the episode occurs or is described (the “universe of discourse”).

Lesson 4

THE NOUN

Many languages, like English, depend on endings, word order, or both to show a word's function in a sentence or clause, and to show the functional relationships between words. English adjectives, for example, usually come between the article and the noun that they modify (e.g., “the *red* book”, “a *wise old* prophet”). A word's function or role in English is normally indicated by its position in the sentence:

- a. The hungry man ate an apple.
- b. A hungry apple ate the man.

Since word order in English is usually subject-verb-object (SVO), these sentences differ in function, even though all six words are identical (counting “a/an” as two forms of one lexical item).

Another way to show both function and association is to put an ending on a word—called an *inflection*²⁵—different endings indicate the word's rôle in the sentence and the functional relationships between words in a clause. In the previous sentences, for example, we know that “hungry” describes “man” in a, but that it describes “apple” in b, since adjectives in English precede the word that they modify. Many languages, however, use fairly sophisticated inflectional systems to show agreement, or *concord* between words. Greek, Latin, and German, for example, use sets of endings called “cases” to indicate the rôle that different words play in the sentence (e.g., the nominative and accusative indicate the subject and object, respectively).

Endings may also indicate “gender” to show which words modify (or are modified by) other words. In French, for example, many adjectives add the letter “e” to the end of the lexical form when they modify feminine nouns. “Inflected” languages—in which endings show the function of and relationship between words (the case and gender + number, respectively)—often do not depend on word order to show syntax as heavily as does English. English, for example, uses gender only with third person pronouns (“his”, “she”, “its”), and only nouns are inflected for number (by the addition of the suffix “-s”), which means that word order is crucial to function in English (as the above sentence illustrates).

Although Hebrew nouns, adjectives, and verbs are inflected, sentences in Hebrew prose have a fairly restricted word order (although not nearly as rigid as word order in English). Inflection in Hebrew shows how words are related, but not syntactical function (as, e.g., subject or object). Nominal endings indicate *gender* (masculine, feminine) and *number* (singular, plural) in order to show *concord* between words, revealing which words “belong together”.

4.1 Gender

Every content word (noun, finite verb, pronoun, adjective, participle)²⁶ in Biblical Hebrew belongs to one of two classes, called “masculine” and “feminine”. Grammarians assign gender based on the gender of any verbs and adjectives that modify the word, and of pronouns that refer to it; i.e., feminine nouns are only modified by feminine adjectives and referred to by feminine pronouns,

25. To “inflect” is to “bend”, the term reflects the view that the endings are “bent” forms of the lexical, or “regular/straight” form.

26. A language's lexicon (the list of all the words in that language) can be crudely divided between *content words* (verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs) and *function words* (everything else).

and *vice versa* for masculine nouns. Pairs of words that refer to *animate* objects reflect so-called *natural* gender:

Masculine Nouns		Feminine Nouns	
<i>man, husband</i>	אִישׁ	אִשָּׁה	<i>woman, wife</i>
<i>bull, ox</i>	פָּר	פָּרָה	<i>cow</i>
<i>(male) lamb</i>	כֶּבֶס	כֶּבֶסָה	<i>ewe (female) lamb</i>
<i>king</i>	מֶלֶךְ	מַלְכָּה	<i>queen</i>
<i>son</i>	בֶּן	בַּת	<i>daughter</i>
<i>brother, [male] relative</i>	אָח	אָחוֹת	<i>sister, [female] relative</i>
<i>father, ancestor</i>	אָב	אִמָּה	<i>mother, ancestress</i>

Nouns that are feminine tend to end in either ה- or ת-. Masculine nouns can end in any letter of the alphabet, but tend *not* to end in ה- or ת-. Although endings are clues to a noun's gender, they are only secondary clues, since we can be confident of a noun's gender only if it occurs as the subject of a verb, if it is modified by an adjective, or if it is referred to by a pronoun. The gender of words that are never modified in these ways cannot be identified with certainty; their apparent gender is assigned based on their endings. Adjectives and participles, on the other hand, always have the ending that matches the gender [and number, below] of the word that they refer to or modify.

4.2 Number

Number is the other part of the concord system of Biblical Hebrew. In addition to suggesting gender, every noun's ending indicates whether the noun refers to one or more than one, and, together with its gender, shows which words modify it. Again, as with gender (above), the number of an adjective or participle is determined by the word that it modifies or refers to, so that the reader or hearer can track how words in the clause or phrase relate to each other.

4.3 The Forms of the Noun

Singular			Plural	
Masculine	סוס ²⁷	<i>horse or horse of</i>	סוסים	<i>horses</i>
			סוסי	<i>horses of</i> ²⁸
	סוּסָה	<i>mare</i>		
Feminine	סוּסָת	<i>mare of</i>	סוסות	<i>mares or mares of</i>
	מַלְכוּת	<i>kingdom or kingdom of</i>		

1. Masculine singular nouns are considered *unmarked*—i.e., they normally have no special ending.
2. Feminine singular nouns are considered *marked*, since they usually end in either ה-, ת-, or ת-, although some are unmarked (e.g., עִיר, *city*; אֶרֶץ, *land*).
 - a. The construct singular ending (ת-) and the plural ending (ות-) replace the final ה-.
 - b. If the lexical form ends in ת-, the singular has only one form (e.g., מַלְכוּת); the plural ending (ות-) follows the ת-.
3. Masculine plural nouns usually end in either ים- or י- . These endings are added directly to the end of the singular form. The *only* function of the ending י- is to signal that a noun is both *plural* and *construct* (the “of” function; see Lesson 9).
4. Feminine plural nouns usually end in ות- (occasionally in ים- or י-).

27. Although סוס and סוּסָה are related, they are considered separate nouns.

28. Hebrew uses a form called the “construct” to indicate the “of” relationship (Lesson 9).

5. Although most nouns follow the paradigm above, the plural of some cannot be predicted from their singular. [“Irregular” plurals are listed with their singulars in the vocabulary lists.]

father (m.)	אָב	אָבוֹת	fathers
man (m.)	אִישׁ	אֲנָשִׁים	men
woman (f.)	אִשָּׁה	נָשִׁים	women
house (m.)	בֵּית	בָּתִּים	houses
daughter (f.)	בַּת	בָּנוֹת	daughters
city (f.)	עִיר	עָרִים	cities

Endings therefore merely *suggest* a noun’s gender—they do not determine it. Nouns in the vocabulary lists that end in ה- or ת- are feminine, and other nouns are masculine, unless marked with “f.” or “m.”²⁹

masc. sg. noun with “fem.” plural	אָב	father	אָבוֹת	fathers
fem. sg. noun not in ה- or ת- with masc. plural	יָד	hand	יָדִים	hands [dual]
fem. sg. noun with “masc.” plural	אִשָּׁה	woman	נָשִׁים	women
fem. sg. noun not in ה- or ת- with fem. plural	אֶרֶץ	land	אֶרְצוֹת	lands

There are, however, tendencies in the gender of nouns. For example, parts of the body (e.g., יָד, *hand*; רֶגֶל, *foot/leg*; זְרוֹעַ, *arm/shoulder*) are feminine (although שֵׁד, *breast* is masculine!). Tools or objects that people use (e.g., חֶרֶב, *sword*) also tend to be feminine.

4.4 Dual

Biblical Hebrew also uses a *dual* ending (ים־; accented on the penult) to refer to things that occur in pairs (e.g., parts of the body), or with units of measure to indicate two of that unit (e.g., “two hundred”, “two thousand”). It shows that such things were thought of primarily in pairs, even though they are usually glossed as simple plurals (“feet”, “wings”, not “two feet”, “two wings”).

Singular			Dual		
ear	אָזֶן	אָזְנִים	ears	אָזְנֵי	ears of
hand	יָד	יָדַיִם	hands	יָדָי	hands of
nose	אַף	אַפִּים	nostrils		
foot	רֶגֶל	רַגְלַיִם	feet	רַגְלָי	feet of
palm	כַּף	כַּפַּיִם	palms	כַּפָּי	palms of
sandal	נֶעֱל	נַעֲלָיִם	sandals	נַעֲלָי	sandals of
wing	כַּנָּף	כַּנְּפַיִם	wings	כַּנְּפָי	wings of
year	שָׁנָה	שְׁנַיִם	two years		
hundred	מֵאָה	מֵאֵתַיִם	two hundred		
thousand	אַלְף	אַלְפַּיִם	two thousand		

A few other words have dual form, but lack any obviously dual quality or function:

יְרוּשָׁלַם	Jerusalem	מַיִם	water
מִצְרַיִם	Egypt ³⁰	שָׁמַיִם	sky, heaven

29. If a noun never occurs as the subject of a verb, *and* is never modified by an adjective or participle, lexicographers assign its gender based on its endings.

30. Egypt was divided into “Upper” and “Lower” Egypt, but this does not seem to be the reason for the form of its name.

4.5 Nominal Modification (I): The Article

To specify or *modify* something is to identify it more closely in order to narrow the field of possible referents. For instance, the main difference between “Please get a book” and “Please get the big tan book that is on the table” is that the second is more specific—the [a particular book, not just any book] big [not small or medium] tan [not red, yellow, blue, etc.] book that is on the table [not on the shelf, floor, etc.]. The adjectives “big” and “tan”, and the relative clause “that is on the the table” all modify the word “book”.

- (1) Please get a book.
- (2) ... *the* book
- (3) ... *my* book
- (4) ... *my tan* book
- (5) ... *my small tan* book
- (6) ... *my small tan* book *that is on the table*
- (7) ... *my small tan* book—*my copy of The Princess and Curdie—that is on the table*

Thus, to modify nouns and other substantives, English uses the definite article (2), possession (3; either pronominal [“my”, “her”] or nominal [“Susan’s”, “the prophet’s”]), adjectives (4–5), relative clauses (6), apposition (7), and other means. In this example the phrases grow increasingly specific, so that (7) virtually assures us of getting the right book.

Like many languages, English uses these means of modification in virtually any combination, e.g., “a book that is on the table” (relative clause), or “my copy of *The Princess and Curdie*” (possession and identification). The complexity or fulness of a description is determined by the redundancy factor of language. That is, speakers and authors tend to include as much information as necessary for effective communication.³¹ This is not an absolute value, and may apply more to casual conversation than to formal communication. On the other hand, authors who overestimate readers’ knowledge may write what they think is clear, but their readers may not understand (or may misinterpret) what they are trying to say.

Hebrew can also modify nouns by attaching, for example, the article, some prepositions, and possessive pronominal forms directly to the noun (rather like the -s plural in English).³² This first section describes the article, followed by a description of the most common conjunction.³³

4.5.1 The Article: Function

The article in Biblical Hebrew corresponds roughly to English “the”; Biblical Hebrew has no indefinite article.³⁴ Words with the article are *articular*; words lacking the article are *anarthrous*. Articular nouns are grammatically “definite” and anarthrous nouns are often “indefinite”, but Biblical Hebrew also has several other common ways to show a word’s definiteness or indefiniteness (e.g., the “construct”, below). Since English and Biblical Hebrew use their articles differently, articular words in the biblical text are not necessarily glossed using an English definite article.

31. The linguistic tendency toward efficiency explains why we rarely speak like sentence (7). If there were no other book nearby, we might say only, “Please get my [or even “the”] book”, since that would communicate enough information.

32. Biblical Hebrew also modifies nominal function by means of separate words, such as prepositions, adjectives, relative clauses, the construct chain (the “of” relationship), nominal apposition, and hendiadys.

33. A conjunction links lexemes, phrases, or clauses; it does not “modify” a noun. It is included here for pedagogic reasons.

34. The actual situation is slightly more complicated. Generic English nouns (e.g., “cow”, “house”, “son”—i.e., not proper names) must be modified by either an article (“the”, “a/an”) or a possessive (e.g., “her”, “our”, “their”); since they are not used “absolutely”, the sentence **Shepherd saw dog* is “ill-formed” (both nouns require an article). Biblical Hebrew, however, has no word(s) whose function is limited to that of “a/an”, although the word “one” (אֶחָד) occasionally fills that rôle.

That a word is indefinite does *not* mean that it is non-specific. For example, the phrase “a dog” in the sentence “She saw a dog” refers to a *specific* dog (the dog that she saw), even though the word “dog” is grammatically *indefinite*. Because Biblical Hebrew and English differ in their use of the article, words that are anarthrous in Hebrew often end up being definite in English. This is especially common in biblical poetry, where the article is relatively infrequent, but also occurs in prose.³⁵

4.5.2 The Article: Form

The article consists of a syllable prefixed to a word: • הֶ (*he-pataḥ* plus *dageš forte* in the first letter of the word; the size of the *dageš forte* is deliberately exaggerated). This combination of *pataḥ* + *dageš forte* is sometimes called the “pointing of the article” when it occurs at the beginning of a word. The article in Hebrew has only one form (i.e., it is not inflected for gender or number); apart from doubling the first consonant, it rarely affects the form of its word (#3, below).

1. This chart lists words with and without the article (the transliteration shows the doubling).³⁶

[a] king	<i>melek</i>	מֶלֶךְ	הַמֶּלֶךְ	<i>hammelek</i>	<i>the king</i>
years	<i>šānîm</i>	שָׁנִים	הַשָּׁנִים	<i>haššānîm</i>	<i>the years</i>
[a] name	<i>šēm</i>	שֵׁם	הַשֵּׁם	<i>haššēm</i>	<i>the name</i>

2. When a word begins with a *b^egad-k^efat* letter, *dageš lene* “becomes” the *dageš forte* of the article:

[a] house	<i>bayit</i>	בַּיִת	הַבַּיִת	<i>habbayit</i>	<i>the house</i>
words	<i>d^ebārîm</i>	דְּבָרִים	הַדְּבָרִים	<i>hadd^ebārîm</i>	<i>the words</i>

3. The article affects the form of a few words (in addition to doubling the first letter) in which a short vowel in the lexical form “lengthens” to *qameṣ* when the article is added:

<i>box (ark)</i>	אָרוֹן	הָאָרוֹן	<i>the box (ark)</i>
<i>land, earth</i>	אֶרֶץ	הָאֶרֶץ	<i>the land, earth</i>
<i>garden</i>	גֶּן	הַגֶּן	<i>the garden</i>
<i>mountain, hill country</i>	הָר	הַהָר	<i>the mountain, hill country</i>
<i>festival</i>	חַג	הַחַג	<i>the festival</i>
<i>people, nation</i>	עָם	הָעָם	<i>the people, nation</i>
<i>bull</i>	פָּר	הַפָּר	<i>the bull</i>

4. In two situations the first letter of the word does not double, so that the pointing of the article is *not* • הֶ (*he-pataḥ* followed by *dageš forte*):

- a. Words that begin with *yod* or *mem* followed by vocal *šewa*.

<i>Judahites</i>	<i>y^ehûdîm</i>	יְהוּדִים	הַיְהוּדִים	<i>hayhûdîm</i>	<i>the Judahites</i>
<i>kings</i>	<i>m^elākîm</i>	מְלָכִים	הַמְלָכִים	<i>ham^elākîm</i>	<i>the kings</i>

35. The opposite is also true. For example, the subject of Genesis 14.13a is an otherwise unknown fugitive, who is identified with the article: וַיָּבֹא הַפְּלִיט וַיֹּגֵד לְאַבְרָם *The fugitive* came and reported to Abram ... (Gn 14.13). To identify him in English, however, as “*the* fugitive” could mislead casual readers or hearers, who would conclude—based on their experience of English—that the article means that he was mentioned before this point in the story.

36. Transliterations are illustrative (pedagogical) rather than technically precise.

- b. Words that begin with a guttural (א ה ח ע) or *reš* (ר).³⁷

hill country	har	הַר	הָהָר	<i>hāhār</i>	the hill country
cities	‘ārīm	עָרִים	הָעָרִים	<i>he‘ārīm</i>	the cities

5. These are all of the possible forms [pointings] of the article:

• ה before words beginning with all letters except א, ה, ח, ע, ר	הַבַּיִת <i>the house</i> הַמֶּלֶךְ <i>the king</i>
before ה, ח	הַחֶרֶב <i>the sword</i>
ה before -נִי (sometimes) and -י	הַמְרַגְּלִים <i>the spies</i>
before -י (vocal <i>šewa</i>)	הַיְּהוּדִים <i>the Jews</i> הַנְּעָרִים <i>the youths</i>
ה before א, -ר, and (usually) -ע	הָאִישׁ <i>the man</i> הָעִיר <i>the city</i> הָרֹאשׁ <i>the head</i>
before -י	הַחֲכָם <i>the wise man</i>
ה before unaccented -י	הַהָרִים <i>the mountains</i>
before unaccented -ע	הָעָרִים <i>the cities</i>

N.B.: You do not need to memorize this list, or the table in #5; the main point is to recognize a word as *anarthrous* or *articular*.

4.6 The Conjunction *waw* (וּ - וְ)

Conjunctions are particles or function words that *join* words, phrases, or clauses (cf. “*juncture*”, “*junction*”). English has a multitude of conjunctions, many of which also specify the relationship between the clauses or phrases as contrast (“but”), alternatives (“or”), concession (“although”), etc. Hebrew has a number of conjunctions, but the most common by far is the letter ו, which is prefixed to the first word in the clause or phrase.

4.6.1 Function

The conjunction *waw* (also pronounced *vuv*) shows, for example, *that* clauses are related, but it does not imply anything about *how* they are related. The *function* of the *waw* depends entirely on the relationship between the two clauses which it joins. It therefore can represent the function of nearly any English conjunction, such as “and”, “but”, “or”, “because”, “so that”, “although”. None of these represent its “real” or “literal” function. On the other hand, these glosses are not equally permissible—or even possible—in a given context. *The first step* in interpreting any *waw* is to understand the content of the clauses that it joins so that we can determine their relationship.

1. Vocal *šewa* usually links the conjunction to its word; adding the *waw* to a word does not affect the word itself (apart from the usual loss of initial *dageš lene* due to the vocal *šewa* under the conjunction):

37. On gutturals see §22.1; their lack of doubling is their only characteristic that affects the article (for doubling, see §3.2b).

a man	אִישׁ	וְאִישׁ	and a man
a day	יוֹם	וְיוֹם	but a day
a camel	גִּמְלוֹ	וְגִמְלוֹ	and a camel

2. The vowel under the conjunction may be affected by the first letter of the word. When prefixed to a word beginning with a *bilabial* (“two lips”) consonant (פּ בּ), or to a word that has *šewa* as the first vowel, the conjunction becomes *šureq* (וְ). This is the only time that a Hebrew syllable begins with a vowel.

a house	בֵּית	וּבֵית	and a house
transgression	פֶּשַׁע	וּפֶשַׁע	or a transgression
a proverb	מִשְׁל	וּמִשְׁל	even a proverb
from the king	מִהַמֶּלֶךְ	וּמִהַמֶּלֶךְ	and from the king
their names	שְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם	וּשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם	but their names

4.6.2 Form

These are all of the possible forms (pointings) of the conjunction *waw*:

Conjunction	Prefixed to ...	Examples
וְ	all words except the following	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל and Israel
	words beginning with <i>šewa</i>	וְנַעֲרוֹת or maidens
וּ		וּבִגְד and a garment
	words beginning with פּ בּ	וּמַלְכָּה or a queen
	words beginning with <i>hatef-pataḥ</i>	וְחֵלֹם but a dream
וַ	certain verbal forms	וַיִּכְתֹּב [and] he wrote
	יהוה	וַיהוה and YHWH
וְ	words beginning with <i>hiatef-segol</i>	וְאֵמֶת and truth
וְ	אֱלֹהִים	וְאֱלֹהִים and God
וְ	words beginning with יְ	וַיהוּדָה and Judah
	words beginning with <i>hatef-qameṣ</i>	וְעִנִּי and affliction
		וְאָרֶץ and earth
וְ	words beginning with an accented syllable	וְלַיְלָה and night
	a verbal form (all 1cs preterites)	וַאֲכַתֵּב [and] I wrote

N.B.: You need not memorize this chart. The point is that any form beginning with a *waw* begins with the conjunction, *no matter how the waw is pointed*.³⁸

38. About ten nouns in Biblical Hebrew begin with *waw*; none occurs more than 9 times; most occur once. No lexical item begins with וְ.

4.7 Compound Forms (“Words”)

A single form (word) can thus be comprised of several elements, such as the conjunction, article, and noun (always in that order). The goal is to be able to identify the components of the compound form on the right:

noun	article + noun	conjunction + article + noun
בֵּית <i>a house</i>	הַבֵּית <i>the house</i>	וְהַבֵּית <i>and the house</i>
מֶלֶךְ <i>a king</i>	הַמֶּלֶךְ <i>the king</i>	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ <i>or the king</i>
נָשִׁים <i>women</i>	הַנָּשִׁים <i>the women</i>	וְהַנָּשִׁים <i>or the women</i>

4.8 Concepts

affix	bilabial	form	modification/modify	preposition
anarthrous	conjunction	function	noun	<i>gal</i>
article	context	gender	number	separable
articular	dual	inseparable	plural	singular
aspect	feminine	masculine	[nominal] prefix	

4.9 Vocabulary

<i>altar; place of sacrifice</i>	מִזְבֵּחַ 43	לֹד, מַסֵּר	אֲדֹנָי	34
		(my) [divine] Lord, Master (note the ending)		
<i>water; מַיִם waters of</i>	מַיִם 44	תֵּנָה; דְּוֵלִינְג / הֹמֶה	אֶהֱלֵךְ	35
<i>judgment, justice; justly; custom</i>	מִשְׁפָּט 45	פִּירֵה	אֵשׁ	36
<i>cross over, pass through / by; trespass</i>	עָבַר 46	הֵן (for other forms, see §4.5.2(5))	• הֵן	37
<i>long / remote time (i.e., time without visible or imaginable end); age[s] (trad. “forever”)</i>	עוֹלָם 47	אֲנִי, בִּלְבָד, אֲנִי, ...	אֲנִי -	38
		אֲנִי - before words that begin with ב, מ, פ or have initial vocal <i>šewa</i>	אֲנִי -	
<i>stand (stop; stay (in place))</i>	עָמַד 48	סִיבֵר, דָּאגֶר, קְנִיפָה	חֶרֶב	39
<i>army, host; military duty; cf. the phrase יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת YHWH [of] hosts</i>	צָבָא 49	YHWH (proper name)	יְהוָה	40
		YH (proper name; shortened form)	יָהּ	
<i>head, top, peak (of mountain); beginning (cf. #16)</i>	רֹאשׁ 50	סֵה; יָמִים seas; הַיָּם the sea; west	יָם	41
		take, get, acquire; buy; marry (a wife)	לָקַח	42

4.10 Exercises

Grammatical exercises are generally designed to help you to learn to see contextual examples of patterns so that you can begin to recognize them as they occur in the biblical text, not with the goal of assigning precise or exact functions to words, phrases, etc. The point of these particular exercises is that you learn to recognize some nominal affixes—the plural nominal endings, article,

and conjunction *waw*—and to identify the vocabulary form of nouns when combined with these affixes.

1. Provide a gloss for each noun, identify its gender and number, and write out its lexical [vocabulary list] form.

(2 Kgs 21.3)	הַמְּזֻבְחוֹת .h	(Ex 34.7)	אֲבוֹת .a
(1 Kgs 18.4)	נְבִיאִי .i	(Nu 31.53)	אִישׁ .b
(Lv 27.2)	נַפְשׁוֹת .j	(2 Sa 7.14)	אֲנָשִׁים .c
(1 Kgs 11.1)	נָשִׁים .k	(Ezk 14.16)	בָּנוֹת .d
(Ps 69.36)	עָרֵי .l	(Hos 11.10)	בָּנִים .e
(Ps 104.4)	רוֹחוֹת .m	(Ex 1.21)	בָּתִּים .f
(Ps 148.4)	שָׁמַיִם .n	(2 Kgs 19.23)	הָרִים .g

2. Provide English glosses for these phrases. Be prepared to analyze and explain their elements (e.g., the spelling of the article or conjunction). If a word has more than one gloss translate it both ways (e.g., אִישׁ as both “husband” and “man”); Give the lexical form of words that do not have their lexical form. Note the hints on the left.

לַיְלָה <i>night</i>	יּוֹם וָלַיְלָה .i	אָדָם וְאֱלֹהִים .a
שָׂר <i>noble</i>	הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים .j	אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה .b
נְבִיא <i>prophet</i>	הַנְּבִיאִים וְהַמֶּלֶךְ .k	וּבֵית .c
	עָרִים וְאַרְצוֹת .l	וְהַבֵּית .d
	הָעָרִים וְהָהָרִים .m	בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת .e
	הָעָרִים וְהַבָּתִּים .n	הָהָר וְהָהָרִים .f
מִלְחָמָה <i>war</i>	שָׁלוֹם וּמִלְחָמָה .o	כְּהָנִים וּמִלְכִּים .g
שָׁמַיִם <i>heaven(s), sky</i>	הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ .p	כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב .h

4.11 Enrichment: Hendiadys

Hendiadys (Greek for “one through two”) is the name given to two words that can be linked to refer to a single entity. A common hendiadys, שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ—*heaven and earth*, refers to the entire created order (perhaps what we call the “universe”), for which there is no specific lexeme in Biblical Hebrew.

Jonah used a unique hendiadys to tell the sailors that he feared [served] “YHWH, the god of heaven, who made *the sea and the dry land*” (אַתְּ-הֵימָּה וְאַתְּ-הַיָּבֶשֶׁתָּה (Jon 1.9)). Since the sailors wanted to get *from* the sea *onto* dry land (1.13), Jonah’s way of identifying the creator was crafted to catch their attention! And it worked, as their response shows: a great fear (1.10), duplicated after they throw Jonah into the sea (1.16).

The satan [accuser] tells YHWH to afflict Job himself (rather than merely destroy his property and family), by saying “Only put forth your hand and strike *his bone and his flesh* [וְאֶל-עַצְמוֹ וְאֶל-בָּשָׂרוֹ] ...” (Jb 2.5), not a reference to internal and external physical affliction, but to Job’s entire body.

Hendiadys is also a *verbal* function, when two verbs describing the same event or when one verb modifies the following verb. In 1 Kgs 17.20, the two verbs (... וַיִּקְרָא ... וַיֹּאמֶר) must refer to the same event since calling and speaking are not discrete acts (i.e., to call is to speak).

וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
And he called to YHWH, and said “YHWH my God, ...”
(1 Kgs 17.20)

Occasionally as many as three verbs describe one event; the combination in Jg 9.7 suggests that Jotham was probably shouting so that the rulers of Shechem could hear him from atop Mount Gerizim:

וַיִּשָּׂא קוֹלוֹ וַיִּקְרָא וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וַיִּשָּׂא קוֹלוֹ וַיִּקְרָא וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמְעוּ אֵלַי
And he lifted his voice and called and said to them
“Listen to me, ...” (Jg 9.7)

Lesson 5

THE HEBREW VERB³⁹

The verb may be thought of as the “motor” of the sentence: it makes the sentence “run” or “go”. It does this by identifying what the subject of the sentence did, or by describing the subject itself.⁴⁰

- a. Moses wrote Psalm 90.
- b. Moses was humble.

Sentence (a) tells us what Moses did (it identifies a deed that he performed), but does not describe him; sentence (b) describes Moses himself, without telling us anything about what he has done. Both functions can be combined in a single sentence, which can be either *compound* (c) (i.e., two or more *parallel* clauses) or *complex* (d) (i.e., at least one clause is *subordinate* to another):

- c. Moses was a humble man, and he wrote Psalm 90.
- d. Moses, who was a humble man, wrote Psalm 90.

Since English is a “slot” language in which a word’s function is determined by its position, we normally recognize the verb in an English clause or sentence by its *position*—the verb is the word following the subject (which is the first word or group of words in the sentence).

- e. The *bears* killed forty-two men.
- f. The Levite *bears* the ark.

In (e) the word “bears” is the subject (since it begins the sentence and is preceded by the article “the”), and “killed” is the verb. In (f), however, “bears” is a verb, identifying or naming what the Levites (the subject) did to the ark. In either case, we know that “killed” and “bears” are the predicates of their respective sentences because they follow their subjects.⁴¹

In (a) through (f), as in languages in general, the verbs define or describe the subject or its action(s). Verbs are therefore part of the *comment* of their clause.

A clause consists of a *topic* (or “subject”) and a *comment* (or “predicate”). In sentence (a), “God” is the topic and “created heaven and earth” is the comment (it describes an action of the subject). A sentence always consists of at least one clause, although a clause may not be a complete sentence. All three of the following sentences represent “complete” thoughts, but the thought represented by (h) is “more complete” than that in (g), and (i) is the most complete of the three. Only (g) consists of a single clause.

39. Much of the rest of this book addresses the functions and forms of the verb in Biblical Hebrew, not because verbs are somehow more fundamental or basic or “important” than nouns, but because the verbal system is the most complex aspect of Hebrew grammar.

40. This distinction between action and state is discussed further below (§15.1).

41. We sometimes recognize that a word is the verb because of its context, not because of its form or syntax:

- a. “Bank!” the flight instructor screamed.
- b. “Bank” was his laconic reply to “Where are you going?”
- c. “Bank ahead” called the lookout on the riverboat.

Linda Dietch, a former student, told me that this example reminded her “... of my dad’s answer when I asked why he wasn’t around when my mom went into labor with my older brother: ‘I fell at the bank.’ He fractured a vertebrae in his back and so he and my mom were hospitalized at the same time. My sympathy turned to irritation when I learned that he had fallen out of a tree stand at a river bank. He went on a hunting trip, leaving my mom alone when she was 8.5 months pregnant with their first child!”

- g. Job was patient.
- h. Job was patient, even when he was tested.
- i. Job was patient, even when his flocks and herds were stolen, his servants and children killed, and he himself afflicted with boils.

Like nouns, verbs in Biblical Hebrew are inflected for several reasons: (1) to indicate that the form is a verb; and (2) to show the person, gender, and number (§5.1.3) of the noun(s) that it modifies (its “subject”). Their inflection also indicates (3) the general function or nature of the clause (especially in narrative); and (4) the general time frame of the event or state that they describe. Verbal affixes (the “bits and pieces” that inflect the form) can be prefixed or suffixed to the verbal root (§5.1.1).

Verbal inflection is therefore part of the concord system (§4.1–2), since its affixes indicate its subject (the word that it modifies or comments on), and the relationship between the event or state that it describes and those described by verbs in other clauses. English has lost most of its inflectional system; only third person singular forms are inflected by adding “s” (“I/you/we/they sing” *vs.* “he/she sings”).

5.1 Form

In discussing the verbal conjugations (Lessons 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13), “stems” (Lessons 18–21), and weak verbal roots (Lessons 24, 27, 28, 30, 31) the term “diagnostic” refers to those few vowel points (including *dagesh*) that enable us to distinguish one form from another, or to determine the stem and root of a particular form. This is one aspect of a verb’s *morphology*, or “shape”, which is created by its subject affixes (§5.1.1) and by the vowel points that the Masoretes added to the consonantal text to tell readers how to read a particular form. We have already looked at the basic morphology of the noun (e.g., endings for gender and number); now we turn to the morphology of the verb in Biblical Hebrew.

5.1.1 Subject (PGN) Affixes

Verbs modify their subjects by identifying what the subject is or does. In English the verb follows the subject (word order again), but Hebrew verbs have affixes (prefixes and suffixes) that agree with the person, number, and gender of the subject.

1. The *person* [P] of the verb (first, second, third) shows the relationship of the speaker or narrator to the action or state described by the verb:

Person	The speaker/narrator ...		
1st	... describes himself as doing the action, or as existing in the state described by the verb	“I know” “I thought”	“We see” “We went”
2nd	... directly <i>addresses</i> (speaks to) the subject of the verb	“You know” “You thought”	“You see” “You went”
3rd	... talks or writes <i>about</i> the subject of the verb	“He knows” “They thought”	“She sees” “He went”

2. The verb’s *gender* [G] (masculine, feminine) and *number* [N] (singular, plural) agree with the number and gender of its subject, so that the form of the Hebrew verb is sufficient to identify its subject (unlike the verb in English, which requires an explicit subject).

The three features of person-gender-number [PGN] are indicated by the form of the verb itself, whereas the subject of an English sentence is always a separate word, either a noun (“Moses”, “a servant”) or pronoun (“he”, “they”). The subject in Hebrew *may* be expressed by a noun or pronoun, but the narrator’s decision to identify the subject by using a separate word (whether it is a proper name or a common noun), phrase, or clause is one of the ways that he shapes the story.

Furthermore, although “he went” in English describes the action of one male (“he”), the form of the English verb (“went”) tells us nothing about its subject. The verb in Hebrew, however, identifies its subject as singular or plural, masculine or feminine, and first, second, or third person. Although “you” is completely ambiguous in English (singular? plural? male? female?), there is a specific

Hebrew verbal form for each 2nd person number-gender combination (2ms, 2fs, 2mp, 2fp), all of which are represented by “you” in contemporary English.

The range of subjects to which a given verbal form may refer is thus modified by verbal suffixes and prefixes—affixes attached to the end and beginning of the verbal root (below)—so that the verb agrees with the person, gender, and number [PGN] of its subject. There are two main sets of verbal PGN affixes, one for each of the two main sets of conjugations.

5.1.2 Verbal Root

Every verbal form consists of a set of consonants called the “verbal root”. The root usually has three, but sometimes two (rarely four) of these consonants, which we will call “radicals”.⁴² Verbal roots have been abstracted by grammarians from the forms of the verb.⁴³

מִשַּׁלְתִּי	<i>I ruled/reigned</i>	מִשַּׁל	<i>Rule! (masc. sg.)</i>
יִמְשַׁל	<i>He shall rule/reign</i>	הַמְשִׁלִּים	<i>Those (masc. pl.) who rule ...</i>
מִשַּׁל	<i>He ruled/etc.</i>	הִמְשִׁילֹהוּ	<i>They caused him to rule</i>

When early grammarians recognized that these and other forms share the consonants ל-ש-ל, and that they all refer in some way to “rule”, “govern[ment]”, “dominion”, etc., they concluded that these three consonants—in this order—were the “root” of a verb מִשַּׁל, “rule/govern”, as well as the root (or source) of nouns referring to rule or government. Since many roots in the Semitic languages—including Biblical Hebrew—have three radicals, the Semitic languages are said to be “triradical”.

Many lexical tools (lexicons, theological wordbooks and dictionaries, concordances, etc.) list both verbal forms and nouns under the verbal root that they are either “derived from” or “related to” (e.g., these nouns that contain מִשַּׁל and refer to governance are listed after the verbal root מִשַּׁל).

מִמְשָׁלָה	<i>rule, dominion, realm, kingdom</i>
מִשָּׁל	<i>rule, dominion; authority (2x)</i>
מִשְׁלָה	<i>rule, dominion; ruler</i>

In order to use any of these tools you must know whether it lists words alphabetically or by root, and be able to identify the putative “roots” of nouns, since the nouns will be listed under [after] the verbal forms.

5.1.3 Conjugation

Hebrew verbs have two main sets of forms—the *perfect* (which has a more or less unique set of PGN affixes) and the *imperfect* (which “shares” PGN affixes and other characteristics with other conjugations). The main difference between these two main sets of conjugations⁴⁴ is that the perfect uses PGN *endings* to agree with the subject, whereas the imperfect uses PGN *prefixes and endings* to agree with the subject. The perfect is thus also called the “suffix conjugation” and the imperfect is called the “prefix conjugation”. Their functions also differ (below). Although it is tempting to describe or think of these as tenses, they are not as fundamentally time-oriented as Indo-European tenses; any connotation of “tense” in Biblical Hebrew depends more heavily on the surrounding context and syntax than in, for example, English.

Some conjugations in Biblical Hebrew, such as the preterite and imperative, have a single or primary function—to narrate a series of past events and to give commands, respectively. The perfect and imperfect, on the other hand, have various functions, depending on, for example, whether or not they have a prefixed conjunction (ו-). And some—more specifically, the imperfect—also has other functions that are discerned largely from their context, such as when the imperfect functions as a third-person “imperative”, as in “He should/ must/ought to ...”

42. The term “radical” refers to the consonants of the verbal root (Latin *radix*, “root”).

43. Some grammars and most lexicons use the “root” sign (ר) when they discuss verbal roots.

44. The term “conjugation” is more neutral than either “tense” or “aspect”, both of which are potentially misleading with regard to Biblical Hebrew.

Finally, the descriptions of the functions of the various conjugations in this book refer primarily to their function in biblical *narrative* or *instructional* discourse.⁴⁵

5.1.4 Stem (*binyan*)

There are eight main ways of constructing verbal forms in Biblical Hebrew in order to show the type of action being described by the verb. The medieval grammarians referred to these combinations of vowels and affixes as *binyanîm* (“buildings”), since they were “built” on or from the root; today called “stems”. [see §18.1]⁴⁶

In *form*, some stems have a doubled middle radical (*piel*, *pual*), some have stem prefixes (*hifil*, *hofal*, *nifal*), one has both (*hitpael*), and one has neither (*qal*). Note that all of these names, except for “qal” have the letters “p” or “f” and “l”. This is because the early rabbinic grammarians used the verbal root פֿעַל *pʿl* (“do, make”) as their paradigm verb, following the example of the Arabic gramarians.

Where English uses pronouns, helping verbs, and prepositions to show the type of action described by a verb (“David *hid* the sword”, “David *hid* [himself]”, “David *was hidden*”, “The sword *was hidden* by David”), Hebrew shows the *function* of the verbal form by, e.g., doubling the middle letter of the verbal root, and varying the forms and vowels of the prefixes.

Doubled II-radical		Prefix		Both	Neither
<i>Piel</i>	מוֹשֵׁל	<i>Hifil</i>	הִמְשִׁיל		
<i>Pual</i>	מוֹשָׁל	<i>Hofal</i>	הִמְשָׁל	<i>Hitpael</i>	הִתְמוֹשֵׁל
		<i>Nifal</i>	נִמְשָׁל		<i>Qal</i> מוֹשֵׁל

We begin with the *qal* (Q)⁴⁷ stem, since more than two-thirds of all verbal forms in the Bible are in the *qal*. The word “qal” means “light”; *qal* is the only stem that has no stem prefix (its only prefix is the subject [PGN] prefix in imperfect and preterite), and no doubled letters (in the strong verb).⁴⁸

5.2 The Imperfect

The prefix conjugation—the “imperfect”—primarily describes events or states that are either present or future to the time of the speaker. It therefore tends to be more frequent in direct quotations and poetry than in narrative. (Biblical Hebrew rarely anticipates events, whereas anticipation is not infrequent in English, as in “He would soon discover ...”) It is therefore unlike the English imperfect (or the French *imparfait*), which refers to a continuous action in the past (e.g., “He was walking”)—the Hebrew imperfect does not refer to the past.⁴⁹

5.2.1 Form

The imperfect⁵⁰ uses *prefixes* and some *suffixes* to show the person, gender, and number of its subject. Every form of every imperfect has a PGN prefix; half of the forms also have endings. The affixes of the imperfect are:

45. In biblical poetry, conjugations seem to be used more for poetic reasons than for any temporal reference.

46. They can also be called “constructions” or “patterns”. In some languages the term “stem” refers to the “unchangeable” part of a verbal or nominal form. In Semitic studies the three radicals are called the “root”; the verbal stems (combinations of vowels, prefixes, and doubling) are built “on” or “from” those roots.

47. The name of the stem sounds like “Cal” (a nickname for “Calvin”), not *kwal* (unlike English “q”, Hebrew ק does not require a following “u”).

48. This means that doubling is not a sign of the *qal*, as it is of some other stems (below).

49. This statement refers primarily to biblical narrative, not to poetry.

50. The imperfect is also called “*yiqtol*” (the 3ms form of the *qal* imperfect of the verb קָטַל *qtl*, “kill”), or the “prefix conjugation” (since every form has a prefix). The name “imperfect” reflects the view that it describes action that was yet-to-be-complete.

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
1st	Common	- א	<i>I</i>	- נ	<i>We</i>
2nd	Masc.	- ת	<i>You</i>	- ת - ו	<i>You</i>
	Fem.	- ת - י		- ת - וָה	
3rd	Masc.	- י	<i>He/It</i>	- י - ו	<i>They</i>
	Fem.	- ת	<i>She/It</i>	- ת - וָה	

1. Two sets of forms (2ms/3fs, 2fp/3fp) are identical, and can be distinguished only by context.
2. The dash (-) represents the consonants of the verbal root, which either follows, or is “surrounded by” the PGN affix.
3. A form with a *yod* prefix is always *masculine*.
4. The six forms with a - ת prefix all require endings, context, or both to distinguish their PGN.
5. These affixes *must be memorized*, since they are used in the imperfect and preterite⁵¹ of all verbs, and the second-person endings are used in the imperative of all verbs.
6. Although the subject prefix is always followed by a vowel, none is listed here because the prefix vowel varies from stem to stem.

5.2.2 Qal Imperfect

The term *qal* (related to the verb קלל *qll*, “be light, slight, trifling”) means “light”, and was used because the *qal* lacks the doubling and prefixes (or both) that occur in the other stems (Lessons 18–21). The term “*qal*⁵² imperfect” refers to a particular combination of three elements: the radicals of the verbal root, the PGN affixes of the imperfect, and the vowels that characterize the *qal* imperfect, a combination that yields the following paradigm:

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
1st	Common	אֶמְשֵׁל	<i>I rule</i>	נִמְשֵׁל	<i>We rule</i>
2nd	Masc.	תִּמְשֵׁל	<i>You rule</i>	תִּמְשְׁלוּ	<i>You rule</i>
	Fem.	תִּמְשְׁלִי		תִּמְשְׁלֶנָּה	
3rd	Masc.	יִמְשֵׁל	<i>He rules</i>	יִמְשְׁלוּ	<i>They rule</i>
	Fem.	תִּמְשֵׁל	<i>She rules</i>	תִּמְשְׁלֶנָּה	

1. The vowel for the *qal* PGN prefixes is *hireq* (except 1cs—remember the close relationship between the *i/e* vowels). Two other stems also have *hireq* as their prefix vowel (*nifal*, *hitpael*,⁵³ Lessons 18, 19).
2. The first radical (*not* the PGN prefix) is followed by silent *šewa*.
3. The vowel after the second radical in the *qal* imperfect is often *holem* (all forms except those with a vocalic ending). Because this vowel helps distinguish one stem from another, it is often called the “stem” or “theme” vowel.
4. Verbs that have a guttural (ה, ח, ע) as their second or third radical (e.g., שָׁמַע, שָׁלַח) usually have *pataḥ* as their theme vowel. This *pataḥ* is the only difference between these verbs and מִשַׁל.

51. The *preterite* is the conjugation that identifies the “main storyline” of biblical narratives (Lesson 6).

52. It is also called “G” for *Grundstamm* (German: “basic stem”).

53. The names of the stems reflect the verbal root פָּעַל (“do, make”), which was used as the paradigm verb by the early Jewish grammarians. The names (which are the 3ms perfect of פָּעַל for each stem) are often written with a sign for ‘ayin: *nifal*, *hitpa’el* to show the presence of the middle radical. This is left out for the sake of simplicity.

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
1st	Common	אֶשְׁמַע	<i>I hear</i>	נִשְׁמָע	<i>We hear</i>
2nd	Masc.	תִּשְׁמָע	<i>You hear</i>	תִּשְׁמְעוּ	<i>You hear</i>
	Fem.	תִּשְׁמָעִי		תִּשְׁמַעְנָה	
3rd	Masc.	יִשְׁמַע	<i>He hears</i>	יִשְׁמְעוּ	<i>They hear</i>
	Fem.	תִּשְׁמָע	<i>She hears</i>	תִּשְׁמַעְנָה	

5. Verbs with **ס** as their third radical (III-**ס** verbs) have *qameṣ* where שְׁמַע has *pataḥ*, because the **ס** cannot close the syllable (e.g., מִצָּא: אֶמְצָא, תִּמְצָא, etc.). Since the **ס** is silent, it is not followed by silent *šewa*, the second syllable is open, and the vowel is long.

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
1st	Common	אֶמְצָא	<i>I find</i>	נִמְצָא	<i>We find</i>
2nd	Masc.	תִּמְצָא	<i>You find</i>	תִּמְצְאוּ	<i>You find</i>
	Fem.	תִּמְצָאִי		תִּמְצַאְנָה	
3rd	Masc.	יִמְצָא	<i>He finds</i>	יִמְצְאוּ	<i>They find</i>
	Fem.	תִּמְצָא	<i>She finds</i>	תִּמְצַאְנָה	

5.2.3 Function (HBI §2.2.2)

The function of the imperfect depends on its context, especially on the genre (literary type) of material, and sometimes on whether or not the conjunction (וְ) is prefixed to the form. In the lengthy narratives of Genesis, for example, the imperfect is relatively infrequent, whereas it is by far the most frequent verb form in Leviticus (most of which is instruction, commandment, and prohibition, with little narration).

1. The imperfect usually occurs in direct or indirect quotations,⁵⁴ and generally refers to *future* or *present* events.⁵⁵

כָּל־הַשְּׁמָע יִצְחָק־לִי:	Everyone who hears <i>will laugh</i> for me (Gn 21.6).
וְרֵב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר:	“... and the older <i>shall serve</i> the younger” (Gn 25.23).
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֲנָאֵל:	He said, “ <i>I will redeem</i> ” (Ru 4.4).
זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ	This is my covenant which <i>you shall keep</i> (Gn 17.10).

It occurs in both main and secondary clauses, as in Gn 17.10. “This is my covenant” is the *main* clause—it is the primary part of the sentence—and the relative clause (introduced by the relative אֲשֶׁר) is *secondary* or supplemental to it.

2. The following list of functions of the imperfect is not meant to intimidate beginning students, but rather to arm you against simply equating the imperfect with the [English] future by demonstrating some of the variety of expression possible within a single conjugation. When beginning your study of Hebrew, assume that an imperfect verb refers to the present or future, unless a modifying particle occurs, or there is enough context to show that it has

54. An indirect quotation reports what someone said, thought, or felt, and is usually introduced by “that”: “He said *that* she had finished”. A direct quotation would be: “He said, ‘She finished.’” Indirect quotations also occur with verbs of perception (e.g., “see”, “hear”), and emotion (e.g., “fear”, “rejoice”).

55. Since those have not yet occurred, they may be called *irrealis* (“not real”). This does not mean that the events will not happen, merely that they had not happened as of the time of the quotation.

some other use (or your teacher directs you otherwise). You will find this list more helpful when you begin reading the biblical text.

- a. The imperfect occurs in conditional sentences, generally preceded by **אם** (*if*) or **אם לא** (*if not*; also with **אולי**, *perhaps*):

אם-יגאֹלֶךְ טוֹב יִגָּאֵל	"If he will redeem you—good, let him redeem.
וְאִם-לֹא יִחַפֵּץ לְגָאֹלֶךְ	But if he is not pleased [willing] to redeem you ..." (Ru 3.13).
אִם-תִּגְאֹל גְּאֹל וְאִם-לֹא יִגְאֹל	"If you will redeem, redeem! But if he will not redeem" (Ru 4.4)

- b. The imperfect can be negated by **לֹא** or **אַל** (both \approx *not*). Depending on the context, a negated second person imperfect may express a *prohibition*:⁵⁶

לֹא נֵרֵד כִּי-הָאִישׁ אָמַר אֵלֵינוּ	"... we will not go down, for the man said to us,
לֹא-תִרְאוּ פָנַי	'You shall not see my face ..." (Gn 43.5).
וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תִשְׁלַחוּ:	He said, "Do not send" (2 Kgs 2.16).
לֹא תִרְצַח	"You shall not murder" (Ex 20.13).
לֹא תִגְנוֹב	"You shall not steal" (Ex 20.15).

- c. When it is not first in its clause, the imperfect may be modified by a particle:

וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִצְמָח	and every wild herb had not yet sprouted, ... (Gn 2.5; טָרָם \approx <i>not yet</i>); = "no herb had yet sprouted"
עַד אֲשֶׁר-תָּשׁוּב חֲמַת אָחִיךָ:	"... until your brother's anger turns away" (Gn 27.44; עַד אֲשֶׁר \approx <i>until</i>)
אוּלַי יִיטֵר בְּעֵינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	"Perhaps it will be good in God's eyes ..." (Nu 23.27; אוּלַי \approx <i>perhaps</i>)

- d. When the imperfect occurs with the conjunction (**וְ**) it *always begins* its clause, is usually followed by its subject, and generally refers to the future. It seems to imply that the imperfect is closely linked to the preceding verb (which is often an imperative or another imperfect). Many times the verb merely describes the next in a logical or chronological sequence of events, but, depending on the *context* and on the *relationship* between the function ("meaning") of the verbal roots, this syntagm may also imply purpose or result.

נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם ... וַיִּרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם	"Let us make mankind ... so that they may rule ..." (Gn 1.26).
אוּלַי יִתְעַשֶּׂת הָאֱלֹהִים לָנוּ וְלֹא נֵאָכֵד:	"Perhaps God will save us, so that we do not perish" (Jon 1.6).
וְנָחִיָּה וְלֹא נָמוּת	"... that we may live and not die" (Gn 43.8).

3. Hebrew lacks forms that correspond to what are called "helping", "auxiliary", or "modal" verbs (e.g., "may, might, will/would, shall/should, ought").⁵⁷ Imperfect forms can apparently serve any of these functions, but the nuance of any given imperfect form is open to debate (see the examples above). This is especially clear in biblical poetry, where a single form might be rendered as either "*May* YHWH bless you" (precative—a prayer), "YHWH *blesses* [*is blessing*] you" (present indicative), or "YHWH *will/shall*⁵⁸ bless you" (future). Even published translations differ, and their renderings tend merely to follow tradition. For now, unless the context demands a modal interpretation, we will use the simple present or future to represent the imperfect (unless the context, especially a particle, indicates that the verb is functioning modally, as in Gn 17.18).

56. The imperative (Lesson 8) in Biblical Hebrew is used only for positive commands, not for prohibitions.

57. The verbal root **יָכַל**, glossed as "[be] able", "can", or "could", is introduced with the infinitives (below).

58. The distinction between "will" and "shall" is complex, but this grammar uses "will" in the first person for simple futurity, and "shall" for intent, determination, or choice. In the second and third persons, "shall" is much stronger than "will" (e.g., "You shall not steal"). In American English, at least, this distinction is largely lost. "Shall" is viewed as more "correct" or "formal"; emphasis tends to be by means of vocal stress ("You *will* not get any dessert!").

... ותאמר האשה ...	The woman said ... “From the fruit of the trees of the
מפרי עץ-הגן נאכל:	garden we <i>may eat</i> ” (Gn 3.2)
את-שני בני תמות	“My two sons <i>you may put to death</i> ...” (Gn 42.37)
לו ישמעאל יהיה לפניך:	“If only Ishmael <i>might live</i> before you!”
	(Gn 17.18; לו, <i>if only</i>)

4. This brief discussion of conjugational function shows that, as in vocabulary (Lesson 2), so in grammar, there is no direct or one-to-one correspondence between Biblical Hebrew and English (i.e., they are non-isomorphic). The function of a given form depends on a complex interplay of its lexical function, the genre in which it occurs, and the content of its immediate and larger contexts (perhaps especially, its relationship to the preceding clause). The verbal conjugation therefore has no “basic”, “fundamental”, or “central” function *in the other language*. This in turn implies that no word or form has a “literal” function in another language (again, especially when the languages are as varied in form and function as Biblical Hebrew and English).

5.3 The “Sign of the Object”

Hebrew uses a particle to point out the *definite direct object* of the verb. The particle **את** (or **אתה**) occurs only before definite direct objects (in Ex 34.13, the object precedes the verb).

אֶשְׁלַח אֶת-עַבְדֵי אֵלֶיךָ I will send <i>my servants</i> to you ... (1 Kgs 20.6)
וְאֶת-אַשְׁרָיו תִּכְרֹתוּן, and <i>their Asherahs</i> you shall cut down (Ex 34.13)

5.4 Maqqef

A horizontal line (**־**), written evenly with the top horizontal stroke of, e.g., **וְ** (**־וְ**) can link two or more words into a single accentual unit, so that they are pronounced as though they were one form (although they are still separate “words”). This is especially common when the first consists of a single syllable, such as the sign of the object (Ex 34.13, above).

כָּל-אֵלֶּה	<i>all these</i>
בֶּן-אֲחִינוֹם	<i>son of Ahinoam</i>
עַל-הָעִיר	<i>against the city</i>

5.5 Parsing Verbs

To parse is to identify the “parts” (Latin: *pars*) of a thing. Parsing verbal forms allows us to check our understanding of a form, since our ability to understand it depends on identifying or recognizing it accurately. Parsing a Hebrew verb entails identifying the following elements or “parts” (some do not yet apply):

Lexical form	The radicals of the verbal root
Gloss(es)	One or more of the glosses linked to its <i>lexical form</i>
PGN	The person, gender, and number of the subject form (e.g., 3fp)
Stem	For now, we are studying the <i>qal</i>
Conjugation	E.g., imperfect, preterite, imperative, perfect
Prefixes	There are only four possibilities for this column: the conjunction <i>waw</i> , the interrogative הֲ (§18.1.2), inseparable prepositions (Lesson 7), the article (only on participles [Lesson 12])
Suffixes	This refers <i>only</i> to the PGN of pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14; <i>not</i> the PGN of the subject)

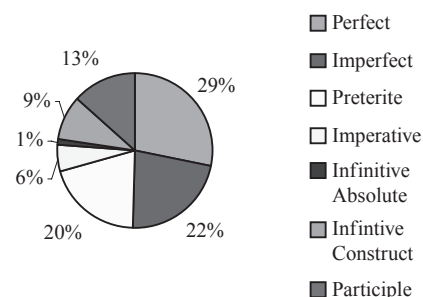
The “parsing form” at the end of this lesson may be reproduced and used throughout your studies.

5.6 Frequency

The occurrence and distribution of the conjugations vary widely, the perfect and infinitive absolute being the most (29%) and least frequent (less than 1%), respectively. The conjugations are not distributed evenly through the Bible; e.g., imperatives (positive commands) are more frequent in the poetic books (Pss) than in, for example, the specifically “covenantal” books (Ex, Lv, Dt).

More than one-fifth (22%) of all verbs in Biblical Hebrew are imperfect. Together with the preterite (Lesson 6), *two-fifths of all verbal forms* (42%) use the same set of subject [PGN] affixes.

Conjugation	Occurrences	% of Total
Perfect	21032	28.4%
Imperfect	16110	21.8%
Preterite	14977	20.3%
Imperative	4270	5.8%
Infinitive Absolute	796	1.1%
Infinitive Construct	6985	9.4%
Participle	9787	13.2%
Total	73957	



5.7 Concepts

affix	dynamic equivalence	interlinear	parse	radical
aspect	function	<i>maqfef</i>	person	root
comment	functional equivalence	modification	PGN	stem
conjugation	gender	morphology	predicate	subject
context	imperfect	number	prefix	topic
diagnostic			<i>qal</i>	translate/translation

5.8 Vocabulary

<i>rule, reign</i>	מָשַׁל	.59	<i>no, not</i>	אֵל	.51
<i>tree</i> (sg. & coll.), <i>wood</i>	עֵץ	.60	One form with two functions: the preposition <i>with</i> ; direct object marker (not translated)	אֶת	.52
<i>voice, sound</i>	קוֹל	.61	<i>go down, descend</i>	יָרַד	.53
(f.) <i>breath, wind, spirit</i>	רוּחַ	.62	<i>utensil, tool</i> , ⁵⁹ <i>container, pot</i>	כֵּלִי	.54
<i>cultivated ground</i> (trad. “field”); contrast מִדְבָּר	שָׂדֶה	.63	<i>no, not</i>	לֹא	.55
<i>official; leader, ruler</i>	שָׂר	.64	<i>war, battle</i>	מִלְחָמָה	.56
<i>heaven(s), sky</i>	שָׁמַיִם	.65	<i>be[come] king; reign, rule</i> (as monarch, king)	מָלַךְ	.57
<i>watch, guard, keep, protect</i>	שָׁמַר	.66	<i>place</i>	מָקוֹם	.58

59. The function of the “utensil” or “tool” may be specified: מִלְחָמָה כֵּלִי utensils of war ≈ weapons.

5.9 Exercises

- After learning the PGN affixes of the imperfect and the 3ms *qal* imperfect of מִשַּׁל, gloss these clauses in English, using the simple future, and parse the verbs.

a. יִמְשְׁלוּ הַכְּהֹנִים	c. תִּשְׁמַעְנָה הַבָּנוֹת	e. יִמְלֹךְ הָדוֹד
b. תִּשְׁמָעִי	d. תִּשְׁלַחֵנִי	f. יִמְשַׁל שְׁלֹמֹה

- After reading the “enrichment” section (below), prepare an interlinear version of these clauses and sentences, and be ready to discuss the task of representing one language by another.

2 Sam 14.16	a. יִשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ
Ps 121.7; ׀- your (m.s.)	b. וְשָׁמַר אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ
עַל upon, over	c. תִּמְשָׁלִי עַל־הָעִיר
עַל upon, over	d. יִמְשְׁלוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הָאָרֶץ
David; עַל over, upon (prep.); כָּל all of	e. יִמְלֹךְ הָדוֹד עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
בְּרִית, covenant; אִתְּכֶם with you (m. pl.)	f. אֶכְרַת בְּרִית אִתְּכֶם
Ex 20.13; רָצַח murder	g. לֹא תִרְצַח
Ex 20.15; גָּנַב steal	h. לֹא תִגְנֹב
קֹל [the] voice of	i. וְשָׁמְעוּ הַבָּנִים וְהַבַּת אֶת־קֹל־הָאֱלֹהִים
בְּרִית (see “f”, above)	j. תִּזְכְּרִי אֶת־הַבְּרִית
Is 30.21; וְאִזְנֶיךָ and your ears; מֵאַחֲרֶיךָ from behind you	k. וְאִזְנֶיךָ תִּשְׁמַעְנָה דְּבַר מֵאַחֲרֶיךָ
אֵל approach, come near [be] near; אֵל to (prep.)	l. וְקָרְבוּ אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
כָּתַב write; כָּל all of; אֵל to, unto (prep.)	m. תִּכְתֹּב אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֶל־הָעֶבֶד

5.10 Enrichment: Translation & the Exercises

Translation from one language [and therefore one culture] into another raises a host of questions which we will not attempt to answer. One of the foremost questions is whether the translator is primarily responsible to the original text or to the audience for which the translation is intended. Does the translation primarily face the original or the reader(s)? The answer to this question determines many of the differences between the so-called “dynamic” or “functional equivalence” versions and the more-or-less “literal” versions.

The exercises in an introductory grammar afford us an opportunity to practice recognizing grammatical forms and their function, and to check our identification and understanding by representing them in English. In other words, the goal is *not* “translation” as we often think of it—rendering or representing a passage written in one language (in this case, Biblical Hebrew) by means of a fluid passage in another language (e.g., English). Especially in later lessons, where the exercises consist of biblical passages, such “fluent” translations often merely show that we are familiar with one of the standard English versions (or that we checked our work against theirs!). In fact, without first-hand speakers to interview, no one knows Biblical Hebrew well enough to produce a “polished” or “smooth” translation without a great deal of guesswork, much of which merely reflects the “received” or traditional translation or interpretation.

Furthermore, the goal of exercises should reflect our overall reasons for studying Biblical Hebrew—that we learn to read the biblical text as carefully as possible, that we be able to understand and evaluate translational choices made by the various versions in English (and, possibly, other languages), and that we be able to evaluate the comments in published tools (commentaries, lexical aids, etc.). We are not trying to see “more deeply” into the text, but to make sure that we are actually reading the text, rather than skimming across its surface, basing our “understanding” on what it says (and does not say), rather than on what we have heard said about it.⁶⁰

Therefore, your primary goal in rendering the clauses, phrases, sentences, and verses into English should be to represent what is in the Hebrew text—to prepare an “interlinear”—that will provide a basis for studying the Hebrew text and looking at other versions. Your “translation” of the exercises should, therefore, be fairly “literal”, even “wooden”—it is actually a *gloss*, not a translation—rather than free and impressionistic (see the discussion of “gloss” in terms of vocabulary in Lesson 2). This does not mean that it should be unintelligible (e.g., following Hebrew word order rather than English); your work should be well-formed English. Free and impressionistic versions are the appropriate fruit of much study and interpretation, *not* for this point in your Hebrew career.

This list of “rules” for glossing Biblical Hebrew into English are merely suggestions—feel free to use or modify them in ways that are most fruitful for the specific goals of your own studies.

1. Every element is verbally represented in English; every English element represents an element in the Hebrew text.
2. Words in English that correspond to elements of compound forms in Hebrew are linked by dashes (e.g., *וַיֹּאמֶר*, *and-he-says*).
3. Each Hebrew lexeme is rendered by the same English lexeme (e.g., *אֶרֶץ* is rendered by *land*; *אֲשֶׁר* by *who/that*, *הִנֵּה* by *behold*, and *ו* by *and*).⁶¹
4. Synonyms are distinguished (e.g., *לְ* *to*, *עַד* *unto*).
5. The object marker *אֶת* is indicated by “[o]” or the like.
6. Linking words that are necessary for sensible English (e.g., relative pronoun, article, copula) are added in brackets [*is*], *italics*, or underlined.
7. Only proper names (persons, places) are capitalized.
8. Only two punctuation marks are used:
 - a. “!” indicates that the verb that it follows is an imperative (#16b).
 - b. “?” indicates the presence of the interrogative prefix (*הֲ*).
9. In longer passages, verse numbers are minimized (verse divisions and numbers were not original).
10. Rules for the construct (Lesson 9):
 - a. Words in construct are indicated by “-of” as the last element in their English word-group.
 - b. All elements of a construct are visually linked by en-dashes (i.e., *the-house-of-the-king*).
 - c. Words that are construct to a definite form are represented with the definite article “the”.
11. Verbs are rendered as “he” and “she” for 3ms and 3fs, respectively, regardless of the “gender” of their subject in English, e.g., *and-[o] the-city she-was-captured*.
12. The translation of *hifil* verb forms (Lesson 20) includes the word “cause” if the form is causative.
13. Verbal forms are rendered as consistently as possible:
 - a. imperfects as future: *I-will-[future]*
 - b. preterites as past: *and-she-[past]*;
 - c. imperatives are immediately followed by an exclamation point (e.g., *Go! to the land ...*).

60. This is not meant to denigrate the use of commentaries and other exegetical tools, but merely to suggest that if our primary obligation is to the text, we ought to be sure that our primary interaction is *with the text*.

61. The latter is not “who” or “that”, but the combined form “who/that”.

These rules probably sound great—after all, don’t we want to get as “close” to the original as possible? Here’s the result for Jonah 1.1–3:

- וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יוֹנָה בֶן־אֲמִתַּי לֵאמֹר: 1
- And-he-was the-word-of YHWH unto Jonah the-son-of Amittai to-say
- קוּם לךְ אֶל־נִינְוָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרָא עָלֶיהָ כִּי־עָלְתָה רָעָתָם לִפְנֵי: 2
- Rise! Go! unto Nineveh the-city the-great and-call against-her for she-has-gone-up their-evil before-me
- וַיָּקָם יוֹנָה לָבֶרֶךְ תַּשְׁיֹשָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּרֶד יָפוֹ וַיִּמָּצֵא אֹנִיָּה בָּאָה תַרְשִׁישׁ 3
- And-he-rose Jonah to-flee Tarshish-ward from-before YHWH and-he-went-down Joppa and-he-found ship going Tarshish
- וַיִּתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ וַיֵּרֶד בָּהּ לְבוֹא עִמָּהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה: 4
- And-he-gave her-fare and-he-went-down in-her to-go with-them Tarshish-ward from-before YHWH

Carefully following the rules yields a text that is neither Hebrew nor English (“Heblish”?); if it communicates meaning to anyone, he or she will *already know Hebrew* and so can reconstruct the Hebrew text behind our “translation”.

Although we might think that such a version demonstrates our knowledge of Hebrew and our faithfulness to the Hebrew text, it actually shows that we don’t understand how language works. The first priority of any attempt to communicate is *to communicate*, and this rendering of Jonah communicates little. Since most users of this grammar know the story of Jonah, as well as English, we can figure out what is going on in the “Heblish Version”, even though it is not normal English. In order to test our understanding of Hebrew, therefore, we need to render the Hebrew text into “good”—or at least “normal”—English (since it was written, as far as we know, in “good” [“normal”] Hebrew). For example:

YHWH’s word came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and call out against her that⁶² their wickedness has come up into my presence.”

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish away from YHWH’s presence. He went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarshish, paid its fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish away from YHWH’s presence. (Jonah 1.1–4)

Whether or not this is the best possible translation of these verses into English is beside the point at the moment. It certainly *communicates* more to the reader than the “inter-linear” version, and so—from that point alone—is more “successful”.

62. Ambiguities are one of the delights of translation. In this case, the word כִּי can introduce either the reason for Jonah’s mission (“since”, “because”, “for”), or the content of his message (“that”).

Parsing Form

Lexical Form	Gloss	P/G/N	Stem	Conjugation	Prefix	Pronominal Suffix	Key
							Lexical Form: the vocabulary form of the word
							Gloss: of the lexical form
							P/G/N: person (1,2,3), gender (m, f), & number (s, p)
							Stem: <i>qal</i> (Q), <i>qal</i> passive (Qp), <i>nifal</i> (N), <i>piel</i> (D), <i>pual</i> (Dp), <i>hitpael</i> (Dt), <i>hifil</i> (H), <i>hofal</i> (Hp)
							Conjugation: perfect (P), imperfect (F), preterite (Pr), imperative (V), cohortative (C), jussive (J), participle (Ptc), infinitive construct (NC), or infinitive absolute (NA)
							Prefix: The conjunction, article, [prefixed] preposition, & interrogative –h are the only possibilities for this column)
							Pronominal suffix: P/G/N of pronominal suffix
							N.B.: The last two columns (prefixes, pronominal suffixes) are only used if these elements are present. Lexical form, gloss, stem, & conjugation are <i>required</i> for all verbal forms. Infinitives have no P/G/N.

Lesson 6

THE PRETERITE

Languages tend to use one particular verbal conjugation for the “main sequence” of events in a story (“narrative”). In Biblical Hebrew that form is the *preterite* (which means “past”), the conjugation that identifies the main sequence of events in a biblical narrative.⁶³ In telling a story, English uses the simple past for the sequence of events, as in this example (the preterites are in *italics*).

George *walked* toward the cliff, wondering what had happened to his friends. Standing on the edge, he *gazed* down its face, looking for some sign of them, but no one was there. He *sighed*, *put* his hands to his mouth, and *shouted* yet again. There was still no answer, but then something far below him *moved* on the face of the cliff.

The main storyline consists of five events: George walked, gazed, sighed, put, and shouted, and something moved. The other verbal forms (“wondering”, “had happened”, “standing”, “looking”, and “was”), also identify events (or non-events), but do not describe the *next event* on the storyline. Both “wondering” and “standing” tell us that George was doing two things at the same time (wondering as he walked; standing as he gazed). “Looking for” modifies “gazed”, narrowing its focus (no pun intended) to tell us that George was not merely admiring the scenery. The three verbs “sighed”, “put”, and “shouted” identify a sequence of actions (and perhaps, by their close proximity, suggest that they were executed rapidly and without interruption). The form “had happened”—an example of the English “past perfect”—refers to something that occurred before George walked toward the cliff.⁶⁴ Both occurrences of “was” are negated (“no one”, “no answer”)—they are examples of *irrealis*, giving the reader information about something that did not occur.

It may be helpful to think of a story as made up of a number of *threads*,⁶⁵ each of which keeps track of a certain type of information. The thread provided by pronouns is obvious in the sentences above: “his”, “he”, and “him” enable the narrator to refer to George without repeating his name (just as “them” refers back to “his friends”).⁶⁶ Another thread is the simple past tense that outlines the story (George walked, gazed, sighed, put, and shouted, and [then] something moved).

... וַיָּרֶץ הָעֶבֶד	And the servant <i>ran</i> ... (Gn 24.17a)
... וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּמְיָאִי	And <i>he said</i> , “Let me swallow ...” (Gn 24.17b)
... וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂתֵה	And <i>she said</i> , “Drink ...” (Gn 24.18a)

63. Although the existence of a preterite “conjugation” in Biblical Hebrew is debated, this grammar uses the term to refer to the past narrative *function* of these verbs, rather than to their form, since this form and function are so closely related in Biblical Hebrew (avoiding the debate about the existence of the preterite as a morphological class).

64. Of course, the narrator decides how to express this simultaneous action. How would the story change if it read “Walking toward the cliff, George wondered ...” In this case, “wondered” is the main narrative verb (preterite), modified by “walking”. The biblical narrators made the same choices, as we shall see.

65. This is not the same as the literary term “narrative thread”, which refers to a story’s basic plot.

66. Pronouns have a similar function in Biblical Hebrew (see §13.1.2).

The preterite (= “past”) in Biblical Hebrew (also called “wayyiqtol”⁶⁷) is also a thread—a cohesive device that links an event to the preceding event. The preterite in Biblical Hebrew thus has the same function as the italicized verbs in the “story” (above)—it tells the reader that the event that it describes was the next event in the story (see §6.10).

Verbal PGN is a cohesive device in Biblical Hebrew that enables us to track verbal subjects. In Gn 24.17, for example, the second verb וַיֹּאמֶר, *and he said*, is 3ms. Since it has no expressed subject, and has the same PGN as the preceding verb, they have the same subject, but וַתֹּאמֶר, *and she said*, is 3fs, which tells us that Rebecca (already introduced in the story) answered the servant’s request. Furthermore, since they are described by three consecutive preterites, readers will assume that these events are consecutive and consequentially related.⁶⁸

6.1 Form

The PGN affixes of the preterite are the same as those of the imperfect. The only difference between their forms is that the preterite is always preceded by *waw* followed by *pataḥ* with a *dageš forte* in the PGN prefix (this is sometimes called the “pointing of the article” (·ן), since it has the same vowel and doubling), so that the PGN prefix is doubled by the *dageš forte* (except the guttural -א [1cs: “I”]). The result of this combination of the conjunction, pointing, and prefix is the following set of subject affixes, which is unique to the preterite (cf. the PGN prefixes of the imperfect, §5.2.1).

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	- אָ I ...	- וָ We ...
2nd	Masc.	- תָּ You ...	וְ - תָּ You ...
	Fem.	- תְּ You ...	וְ - תָּ You ...
3rd	Masc.	- יָ He/It ...	וְ - יָ They ...
	Fem.	- תָּ She/It ...	וְ - תָּ They ...

1. Apart from the prefixed *waw* and *dageš forte* the forms of the preterite are identical to those of the imperfect.
2. Every form that begins with *waw* followed by a letter with *dageš* (or *waw* + *qamesi* followed by ’alef) is preterite.

6.1.1 The *qal* preterite of נוֹשַׁל

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	וָאֶנְשַׁל I ruled/reigned	וָנִשְׁלָנוּ We ruled/reigned
2nd	Masc.	וְתִשְׁלָךְ You ruled/etc.	וְתִשְׁלָכֶם You ruled/etc.
	Fem.	וְתִשְׁלָכִי You ruled/etc.	וְתִשְׁלָכֶנָּה You ruled/etc.
3rd	Masc.	וַיִּשְׁלַח He ruled	וַיִּשְׁלָחוּ They ruled
	Fem.	וַתִּשְׁלַח She ruled	וַתִּשְׁלָחֶנָּה They ruled

67. The term “wayyiqtol” transliterates the 3ms form of the *qal* preterite of the verb קָטַל (וַיִּקְטֹּל). This conjugation is also called “imperfect plus *waw*-consecutive” and “imperfect plus *waw*-conversive”, which reflect views that the *waw* either “converted” the function of the imperfect from present-future to narrative, or showed that its event was “consecutive to” or “consequent upon” the preceding event. All of these terms are used by various authors and resources.

68. Other cohesive devices are temporal and locative expressions (e.g., אָז, “then”, הַיּוֹם, “today”; שָׁם, “there, in that place”).

1. Note the difference in form (the vowel under the conjunction) and function between the imperfect (Dt 10.2) and preterite (Jr 32.10) of the same verb:

וְאָכַתְבְּ עַל־הַלְחָת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים	and <i>I will write</i> on the tablets the words (Dt 10.2); 1cs Q F +w
וְאָכַתְבַּ בַּסֵּפֶר	and <i>I wrote</i> in the document (Jr 32.10); 1cs Q Pr

2. When the verbal PGN is 1cs (“I”), with the guttural prefix א, the *waw* is followed by *qames*, and there is no *dages forte* in the א, since it is a guttural, and so does not double (cf. Jr 32.10, above):

וְאֵשְׁלַח אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן and *I sent* Moses and Aaron ... (Jos 24.5); 1cs Q Pr

3. As with the imperfect, preterites of II- and III-guttural and III-א verbal roots⁶⁹ have an *a*-vowel after the second radical instead of *holem*.

וְאָקְרָא לְךָ בְּשִׁמְךָ	and <i>I called</i> you by your name (Is 44.4).	1cs Q Pr
וַיִּשְׁמַע דָּוִד וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־יֹאבָב	And David <i>heard</i> and <i>sent</i> Joab (2 Sam 10.7)	3ms Q Pr (both)

4. Because only four consonants function as prefixes in the preterite, all preterites begin in one of six ways—there are no exceptions—regardless of the vowel following the prefix.

- אֶ - אַ - אָ	1cs preterite: <i>I</i>	- וְ - וַ	1cp preterite: <i>we</i>
- אַ - אָ	2ms/2fs/3fs preterite: <i>you, she</i>	- וְ - וַ	3ms/p preterite: <i>he, they</i>
- וְ - וַ	2/3fp preterite: <i>they</i>		

N.B.: In parsing the preterite, there is no need to specify the conjunction in the “prefix” column, since the term “preterite” assumes the prefixed *waw*.⁷⁰ Your teacher may want you to spell this out.

Lemma	Lexical Form	Gloss	P/G/N	Stem	Conjugation	Prefix
וַיִּמְשֹׁל	מִשַּׁל	<i>rule, reign</i>	3ms	Q	Pr	

6.2 I-א Verbal Roots

The *qal* preterite (and imperfect) of most strong verbs looks like מִשַּׁל (above), but five verbs look quite different. These five verbs begin with the letter א (they are therefore called I-א⁷¹ or “initial א” verbal roots). Because א is silent when followed by silent *šewa*, the prefix vowel of the *qal* imperfect and preterite is *holem*, not *hireq*, and there is no *šewa* under the א (i.e., the *šewa* was left out and the א functions as a “place marker”, a little like “silent *e*” in English). The five I-א verbs⁷² are:

69. On this terminology, see §6.2 (below).

70. There are a few examples of preterites without prefixed *waw*.

71. The Roman numeral “I” refers to the position of the *alef* as the *first* radical of the verbal root. The same pattern can also refer to the second (II) and third (III) letters in the verbal root. These terms (I-, II-, III-) will be used without further comment.

72. Other verbal roots begin with א, but their forms follow the pattern of the “guttural” verbal roots (Lesson 22).

Verbal Root	Gloss	Occurrences
אָמַר	<i>say, speak</i>	5000+
אָכַל	<i>eat, consume, devour</i>	827x
אָבַד	<i>perish; stray</i>	191x
אָפַה	<i>bake, cook</i>	54x
אָבַה	<i>desire, be willing, agree</i>	25x

1. Their prefix vowel in Q F and Pr is *holem*; there is no *šewa* under the א, which is silent.

נֶאֱכַל	<i>We [shall] eat</i>	1cp Q F
וַתֹּאמֶר	<i>You/She said</i>	2ms/3fs Q Pr
וַיֹּאמְרוּ	<i>They said</i>	3mp Q Pr
נֶאֱבַד	<i>We [shall] perish</i>	1cp Q F

2. In 1cs *qal* imperfect and preterite the 1cs prefix (א) assimilates with the first radical, so that only one א is written:

אֶמַר	<i>I shall say</i>	1cs Q F
וָאֶכַל	<i>I ate</i>	1cs Q Pr

3. The main reason for introducing this set of verbal roots at this point is so that we can use אָמַר in the exercises. Here is its paradigm for the *qal* preterite:⁷³

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1	Common	וָאֶמַר <i>I said</i>	וַנֹּאמֶר <i>We said</i>
2	Masc.	וַתֹּאמֶר	וַתֹּאמְרוּ <i>You said</i>
	Fem.	וַתֹּאמְרִי	
3	Masc.	וַיֹּאמֶר <i>He said</i>	וַיֹּאמְרוּ <i>They said</i>
	Fem.	וַתֹּאמֶר <i>She said</i>	

N.B.: אָמַר is so frequent that the clause יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר *YHWH said* represents one-half of one percent of all the words in Biblical Hebrew (וַיֹּאמֶר alone occurs nearly 2000 times).

6.3 Functions (HBI §2.2.3)

The introduction to this chapter said that the preterite identifies the main storyline of the narrative; this is its main function, but it also has other—much less frequent—functions.

6.3.1 Narrative “backbone”

The preterite describes a series of events in the main flow of a narrative (also called the “main sequence” or “backbone” of the narrative). Preterites are usually translated with the simple past. Each preterite always begins its clause, so that the string of preterites describes the string of past events (see also the examples above) [all of the verbs in these examples are Q Pr]:

73. The paradigm for the *qal* imperfect of אָמַר is nearly identical to this paradigm of its preterite.

וַיִּקְרְאוּ צוֹם וַיִּלְבְּשׁוּ שָׂקִים	and <i>they proclaimed</i> a fast and <i>put on</i> sackcloth (Jonah 3.5)
וַיִּשָּׁבַע הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר	and the king <i>swore</i> [an oath] and <i>said</i> ... (1 Kg 1.29)
וַאֲכַתְּבָה בַּסֵּפֶר וְאֶחָתָם ...	and <i>I wrote</i> in the document, and <i>I sealed</i> [it], ... and <i>I</i>
וַאֲשַׁקֵּל הַכֶּסֶף בַּמֵּאזְנִים:	<i>weighed</i> the silver with scales (Jr 32.10).

Tracing the string of preterites in Gn 1 reveals the prominence of divine speech in creation (these are only the last few verses of the creation story):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים ...	and God <i>said</i> ... (Gn 1.26)
וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֲתֵּי-הָאָדָם ...	and God <i>created</i> human beings, ... (Gn 1.27)
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים	and God <i>blessed</i> them
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים ...	and God <i>said</i> to them (Gn 1.28b)
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים ...	and God <i>said</i> ... (Gn 1.29)
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל- ...	and God <i>saw</i> everything ... (Gn 1.30)

Calling the “preterite chain” the narrative “backbone” does not mean that events described by preterites are the only events—or even “essential” or most important events—of the story.⁷⁴ It *does* mean that in the narrator’s mind, the events described by these verbs comprise the main sequence, or flow, of the narrative. As you might expect from its function, the preterite is far more common in books that are largely narrative (e.g., Gn, 1–2 Sam, Est) than in books that are mainly covenantal (e.g., Lv, Dt) or poetic (e.g., Jb, Pss, Pr, SS). In 1 Sam 3.4–5, the string of preterites outlines a series of events (the speeches introduced by “[and] he said” are brief):⁷⁵

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֶל-שְׁמוּאֵל	YHWH <i>called</i> Samuel
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי:	and he <i>said</i> , “Here I am!” (1 Sam 3.4)
וַיָּרֶץ אֶל-עֲלִי	He <i>ran</i> to Eli
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי כִּי ...	and he <i>said</i> , “Here I am, because ...”
וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא-קָרָאתִי ...	But he <i>said</i> , “I did not call ...”
וַיֵּלֶךְ	So he <i>went</i>
וַיִּשְׁכַּב:	and he <i>lay down</i> (1 Sam 3.5).

This string of preterites extends (with interruptions, see §6.6, §6.10) through the rest of the chapter (and the rest of Samuel⁷⁶). When first reading a biblical narrative, a helpful first step is to identify the preterites, since they normally yield the [bare] outline of the story (see Lesson 25).

6.3.2 Narrative Summary

Although each preterite in a string usually describes the next event in a series, a preterite may also summarize an entire sequence of events, usually at the end of a larger discourse. This function can be recognized by *content* of the preterite clauses, and the relationship between the events that they describe. “God humbled” (Jg 4.23) summarizes the events of Jg 4.13–22, whereas the next preterite (4.24) describes a further event that had begun on the same day.

74. For example, in any story, *what* is said is as important as *that* something was said (e.g., the content of the initial divine speech (Gn 1.26) is crucial, although its content is not “on” the storyline).

75. Note the context-dependent renderings (or non-rendering) of the initial *waw*.

76. The books of 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah each form a single book in the Hebrew Bible.

וַיִּכְנַע אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת יָבִין מֶלֶךְ-כְּנָעַן לִפְנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַתֵּלֶךְ יַד בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַלּוֹךְ וְקָשָׁה עַל יָבִין מֶלֶךְ-כְּנָעַן עַד אֲשֶׁר הִכְרִיתוּ אֶת יָבִין מֶלֶךְ-כְּנָעַן:	So on that day, God <i>humbled</i> Jabin king of Canaan before the sons of Israel (Jg 4.23), and the hand of the sons of Israel <i>grew</i> continually harsher against Jabin king of Canaan until they [had] destroyed Jabin king of Canaan (Jg 4.24).
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6.3.3 Past Perfect

A preterite can apparently refer to an event that took place before the previous event. This function is discernable only from context. Although YHWH might be repeating himself, in the context, Ex 4.19 seems to refer back to 4.11–12; it seems unlikely that Laban interrupted Jacob and Leah’s wedding night (Gn 29.24).

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה	Now YHWH <i>had said</i> to Moses ... (Ex 4.19)
וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן לָהּ אֶת-זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לְלֵאָה בְּתוֹ שִׁפְחָהּ	Now Laban <i>had given</i> her Zilpah his maid— [to be] his daughter Leah’s maid (Gn 29.24)

6.3.4 Compound Reference

Consecutive preterites can describe a single event. In Ru 1.9 and 14, the three women wept aloud (“lifted their voices and wept”), which we might call “compound” or “multiple” reference:

וַתִּשָּׂאנָה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכֶּינָה	And they <i>lifted</i> their voices and <i>wept</i> (Ru 1.9)
וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ	And they <i>called</i> to Lot and <i>said</i> ... (Gn 19.5)

6.4 Word Order

Although there is some variety in the order of elements in preterite clauses, *every preterite begins a new clause* (as the above examples illustrate), which can be called a “preterite clause”. *Nothing*—adverb, subject, object, negative, prepositional phrase—precedes the preterite. After the preterite the order is generally **subject—object(s)** (direct or indirect); **adverbial** expressions are usually clause- or sentence-final. This structure of main narrative clauses is the main reason that Hebrew is often referred to as a **V-S-O** (verb-subject-object) language.

6.5 The Imperfect & Preterite

The imperfect and preterite together “cover” all of the verbal “tenses” and many of the verbal “moods” used in English:

Imperfect (contextual)	Present
	Future
	Modal (<i>may / might, should, ought, etc.</i>)
Preterite	Past Narrative (the main line of events)

1. They do not directly correspond to what we think of as “tenses”, “moods”, or “aspects”, since their function depends on the type of material—the *genre*—within which they occur, so that this chart applies primarily to their function in *narrative*, not to their use in poetry, legal or instructional materials, or other genres.
2. The imperfect can also be preceded by the conjunction *waw*, which means that you will need to distinguish these forms from the preterite; the clue is the pointing under the *waw*:

וַיְמַשֵּׁל	conjunction + 3ms Q imperfect (present/future)	<i>and he shall rule</i>
וַיִּמְשֹׁל	conjunction + 3ms Q preterite (narrative past)	<i>and he ruled</i>
וַאֲמַשֵּׁל	conjunction + 1cs Q imperfect (present/future)	<i>and I shall rule</i>
וַאֲמִשֹּׁל	conjunction + 1ms Q preterite (narrative past)	<i>and I ruled</i>

6.6 Disjunctive Clauses (HBI §3.2.2)

Since the preterite names consecutive narrative events, other information (e.g., flashbacks, contemporaneous action) is contained in clauses that begin with *waw* followed by “something-other-than-a-verb”. This information is often *parenthetical*, adding information to the narrative about a character or circumstance that the reader needs to understand the story. It may also *contrast* two characters or their circumstances, or *introduce* a new character to the story, or describe something that did not happen (a negative clause).

Disjunctive clauses in narrative may be non-verbal, have a perfect or a participle as predicate, or an imperfect with a modifying adverb. Genesis 12.6b, for example, heightens God’s promise in the next clause (12.7) by telling the reader that the promised land was not uninhabited:

וַהֲכַנְעִי אֹז בְּאֶרֶץ:	(now the Canaanites were then in the land) (Gn 12.6b)
לְיִרְעָךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת	“... to your seed I shall give this land.” (Gn 12.7)

The syntax of the disjunctive clause (*w* + subject [“the Canaanites”]) means that this is not the next event in the story (the Canaanites were [already] in the land), but it contains information crucial to the story.

Furthermore, the disjunctive syntax of this clause derives from—and is determined by—its function in the story; the word order is not merely another way of saying “the same thing”. In other words, a disjunctive clause is a signal that its contents do *not* describe the next event in the story (whether it is a positive or negative statement). Furthermore their syntax does not *of itself* indicate the function of a disjunctive clause; it merely indicates its non-sequentiality. [See §6.11.]

6.7 Frequency

About one-fifth (20%) of all verbal forms in the Bible are preterites, but this frequency is much higher in narrative than in poetry. In Genesis (for example) more than two-fifths of all verbs are preterite, but in the Song of Songs less than one percent are preterite.

6.8 Concepts

clause	disjunctive [clause]	narrative	perfect	VSO
<i>waw</i> -consecutive	flashback	narrative backbone	pluperfect	<i>wayyiqtol</i>
<i>waw</i> -conversive	genre	parenthetical information	preterite	word order
diagnostic(s)				

6.9 Vocabulary

<i>bread, food</i>	לֶחֶם .75	<i>enemy</i>	אֹיֵב .67
<i>wilderness (uncultivated or “unclaimed” land)</i>	מִדְבָּר .76	(I) <i>also, even, all the more</i> (cj.) (II) <i>nose, nostril; anger</i> (n.)	אֵף .68
<i>clan, extended family (smaller than a tribe)</i>	מִשְׁפָּחָה .77	<i>covenant, treaty, agreement</i>	בְּרִית .69
<i>serve</i> (cf. עָבַד)	עָבַד .78	<i>flesh, meat; humanity</i> (as “flesh”)	בָּשָׂר .70
<i>time</i> (i.e., a particular moment)	עֵת .79	<i>month, new moon</i>	חֹדֶשׁ .71
<i>do something [good or bad] for/to [someone]</i> (trad. “visit”)	פָּקַד .80	<i>be[come] strong; seize, grasp, hold onto</i>	חָזַק .72
<i>flock</i> (sheep, goats)	צֹאן .81	<i>evening</i>	עֶרֶב .73
<i>approach, come / draw near</i>	קָרַב .82	<i>cut [off]; with בְּרִית as object, make a treaty</i>	כָּרַת .74

6.10 Exercises

1. After studying the PGN affixes of the preterite and the 3ms *qal* preterite of נושׁל, represent these clauses in English using the simple past (“He said”) for the preterite and simple future (“He will say”) for the imperfect. Parse the verbs.

a. וַתִּמְשְׁלוּ	d. וַתִּכְרַתִּי	g. וַיִּמְלֹךְ שְׁאוּל
b. וַאֲשַׁמַּע	e. וַתִּכְרַתִּי	h. וַיִּמְלֹכוּ
c. וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ	f. וַתִּשְׁמְרֵנָה	i. וַתִּקְרְבִי

2. Gloss these clauses and sentences in English, parsing the verbal forms. Remember that the purpose of the exercises is primarily to understand why the text means what it does.

- a. וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ ... 2 Kgs 20.8; אֵל to; Hezekiah; Isaiah
- b. וַיִּכְרְתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרִית: Gn 21.27; שְׁנֵיהֶם they both [the two of them]
- c. וַיִּשְׁפֹּט יִפְתָּח אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים Jg 12.7; שֵׁשׁ six; Jephthah; Israel
- d. וַיִּכְרְתוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ שִׁבְעַ בְּנֵי־בְכָרִי 2 Sam 20.22; רֹאשׁ head of; בֶּן son of; Sheba, Bichri
- e. וַאֲזָכֹר אֶת־בְּרִיתִי: 77 Ex 6.5; זָכַר remember; בְּרִיתִי my [final י. -] covenant
- f. וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיְדַרְשׁ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר ... 2 Sam 11.3; לִ- for the; דָּרַשׁ seek; David
- g. וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־שָׁם לַיהוָה: Jg 2.5; שָׁם there, in that place
- h. וְאַתֶּם לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לַיּוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת Jg 2.2; אַתֶּם you (mp); יוֹשֵׁב inhabitant (ms Q Ptc); הַזֹּאת this (modifies אָרֶץ)
- i. וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוֹיָכִים עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ יְהוֹיָכִין בְּנוֹ 2 Kgs 24.6; שָׁכַב lie down, sleep; עִם with; אֲבֹתָיו his fathers; בֶּן his son; Jehoiaikim, Jehoiachin

77. The two “diamonds” mark the end of a biblical verse (*sof pasuq*, “end of *pasuq*”).

Ps 59.1; לְהַמִּיתוֹ, *to kill him (put him to death)*

j. וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־הַבַּיִת לְהַמִּיתוֹ

Jg 20.27; שָׁאַל *ask*; -בִּי often introduces the object of שָׁאַל; בְּנֵי *sons of*

k. וַיִּשְׁאַלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּיהוָה

Jg 9.18; הָרַג *kill* (Q Pr; the guttural (ה) affects the prefix syllable); בְּנָיו *his sons*

l. וַתְּהַרְגוּ אֶת־בְּנָיו

6.11 Enrichment: Narrative Backbone (& Ancillary Information)

Tracing preterite and disjunctive clauses in a narrative reveals its skeleton (the preterites) and information that the author considered “ancillary” to the storyline (disjunctive clauses). In 1 Samuel 3, for example (next page), the first three verses contain seven disjunctive clauses and two secondary (parallel) clauses, which together set the stage (or background) for the rest of the story (disjunctive clauses are in *italics*):

Now the young man Samuel was serving YHWH in Eli's presence,
but YHWH's word was rare in those days—
no vision was breaking through. [parallel clause]
Then one day
when Eli was sleeping in his place
(now his eyes had begun to be dim—
he could not see), [parallel clause]
and the lamp of God had not yet gone out,
and Samuel was sleeping in YHWH's temple, where the ark of God was,

1a וַהֲנַעַר שְׁמוּאֵל מְשָׁרֵת אֶת־יְהוָה לִפְנֵי עֲלִי
b וַדְּבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה יָקָר בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם
c אֵין חֲזוֹן נִפְרָץ:
2a וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא
b וְעָלִי שָׁכַב בַּמִּקְמוֹ
c וְעֵינָיו הִחְלוּ כְהוֹת
d לֹא יוֹכֵל לִרְאוֹת:
3a וְגַר אֱלֹהִים טָרָם יִכְבֶּה
b וּשְׁמוּאֵל שָׁכַב בְּהִיכַל יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם אֲרוֹן אֱלֹהִים:

Following these introductory—scene-setting—disjunctive clauses, the *events* of the specific story begin with the preterites in verse 4 (preterites are in **bold**):

YHWH **summoned** Samuel
and he said, “Here I am”.
And he **ran** to Eli
and he said, “Here I am, for you called me.”
But he said, “I did not call. Go back to sleep.”
So **he went** and **he lay down**.
And YHWH **called** Samuel again,
And [so] Samuel **got up**,
[and he] **went** to Eli,
and he said, “Here I am, for you called me.”
But he said, “I didn’t call, my son. Go back to sleep.”

4a וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל
b וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִי:
5a וַיָּרֶץ אֶל־עֲלִי
b וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִי כִּי־קָרָאתָ לִי
c וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא־קָרָאתִי שׁוּב שָׁכַב
d וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁכַּב:
6a וַיִּסֶּף יְהוָה קְרֹא עוֹד שְׁמוּאֵל
b וַיָּקָם שְׁמוּאֵל
c וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־עֲלִי
d וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִי כִּי־קָרָאתָ לִי
e וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא־קָרָאתִי בְנִי שׁוּב שָׁכַב

Calling the information in verses 1–3 “background” does not mean that this is unimportant or non-essential to the story. It does mean, on the other hand, that these clauses “set the stage” for the sequential events, which begin in verse 4.

After Samuel goes twice to Eli the author finally explains why Samuel did not recognize YHWH’s voice, setting off his explanation syntactically in a disjunctive clause (*waw* + noun):

(Now Samuel did not yet know YHWH,
nor had YHWH’s word yet been revealed to him)

7a וּשְׁמוּאֵל טָרָם יָדַע אֶת־יְהוָה
7b וְטָרָם יִגְלֶה אֵלָיו דְּבַר־יְהוָה:

The author used disjunctive clauses (*w* + a noun [“Samuel”] (7a) and *w* + adverb [“not yet”] (7b)), to tell readers that these clauses will describe events or situations that do **not** follow **sequentially** the events just described (see §6.6 (above)). Furthermore, because these statements are negative, they “describe” *non-events (irrealis)*, or things that did not happen and which therefore are not (and cannot be) part of the storyline (since they hadn’t yet occurred), but their information is crucial to the reader’s understanding of the sequence of events in the story. They answer a question that would probably occur to most readers, namely, how Samuel could be serving YHWH (3.1) and not recognize his voice. Having given the reader this needed information, the preterite chain then resumes the narration of the sequence of events:

And YHWH **again** called Samuel a third time

וַיִּסָּף יְהוָה קְרָא־שְׁמוּאֵל בְּשִׁלְשִׁית 8a

and he **got up and he went** to Eli

וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-עֲלִי 8b

and he said, “Here I am, because you called me”

וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי כִּי קָרָאתָ לִי 8c

and Eli **discerned** that YHWH was calling the young man.

וַיֵּבֶן עֲלִי כִּי יְהוָה קָרָא לְנָעַר: 8d

And Eli **said** to Samuel ...

וַיֹּאמֶר עֲלִי לְשְׁמוּאֵל 9a

Lesson 7

NOMINAL MODIFICATION (II): PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions precede (are *pre-positioned* to) other words in order to show their *function* or *rôle* in the clause or phrase. In English, for example, the difference in function between “George went *to* the store” and “George went *from* the store” is determined by the prepositions “to” and “from”, which indicate which way George went relative to the store. Prepositions thus modify a noun’s *syntagmatic function*, rather than its reference (which is modified by the article (§4.3), construct (Lesson 8), adjectives and the relative particle (Lesson 11). Prepositions in Biblical Hebrew do not affect the form of the word that they modify (remember, there are no “case endings” in Hebrew). There are three types of prepositions in Biblical Hebrew:

1. *inseparable*—the prepositions ב, כ, and ל are always prefixed to the word that they modify (like the conjunction ו)
2. *separable*—the preposition מן may be either separate from or prefixed to the word that it modifies
3. *separate*—most prepositions in Biblical Hebrew are separate words (as are prepositions in English)

7.1 The Inseparable Prepositions

The prepositions ב (*in, with, against*), כ (*like, as, according to, about [approximately]*), and ל (*to, for, at, belonging to*), are always prefixed to the word that they govern, becoming the first syllable in the word (cf. the conjunction ו).

1. If the word is anarthrous, the preposition is prefixed using vocal *šewa* (but if the first vowel in the word is *šewa*, they use *hireq*).

a house	בֵּית	בְּבֵית	in a house
a king	מֶלֶךְ	כְּמֶלֶךְ	like a king
a woman	אִשָּׁה	לְאִשָּׁה	to/for a woman
garments	בְּגָדִים	בְּבְגָדִים	in / with garments
young men	נְעָרִים	כְּנְעָרִים	like young men

2. The first letter of a word that begins with a *b^egad-k^efat* letter loses *dageš lene*, since the preposition is followed by a [half-] vowel:

a house	בֵּית	לְבֵית	to a house
a son	בֶּן	כְּבֶן	like a son
tool	כְּלִי	בְּכְלִי	with a tool

3. If the first letter of the word has a *hatef*-vowel, the preposition uses the full vowel that matches the half-vowel:

an ark / box	אָרוֹן	בְּאָרוֹן	in a box (“in the box” = בְּאָרוֹן)
a fool	אִילָל	לְאִילָל	to a fool

4. When they are added to an *articular* word, these three prepositions *replace* the ה- of the article, but *not* its pointing (hence the importance of being able to recognize the article's pointing). These three are the *only* prefixes that replace the ה- of the article:

Articular				Anarthrous	
<i>the house</i>	הַבַּיִת	בַּבַּיִת	<i>in the house</i>	בַּבַּיִת	<i>in a house</i>
<i>the son</i>	הַבֶּן	כְּבֶן	<i>like the son</i>	כְּבֶן	<i>like a son</i>
<i>the woman</i>	הָאִשָּׁה	לְאִשָּׁה	<i>to/for the woman</i>	לְאִשָּׁה	<i>to/for a woman</i>

5. When they are added to the name and titles of God (below), their vowel is *seve* (with אֱלֹהִים) or *pataḥ* (with יְהוָה and אֲדֹנָי):

<i>God</i>	אֱלֹהִים	לְאֱלֹהִים	<i>for God</i>
YHWH	יְהוָה	בְּיְהוָה	<i>in YHWH</i>
<i>the Lord</i>	אֲדֹנָי	לְאֲדֹנָי	<i>for/to the Lord</i>

6. When the *conjunction* is prefixed to a word with an inseparable preposition (ל- ב- ו-), it is simply added in front of the preposition (ב- and ו- will lack *dageš lene*):

<i>like the house</i>	כְּבַיִת	וְכְבַיִת	<i>and like the house</i>
<i>for the king</i>	לְמֶלֶךְ	וּלְמֶלֶךְ	<i>even for the king</i>

7. The prepositions ל- (c. 20,000x) and ב- (c. 15,700x) account for well more than half of all prepositions in Biblical Hebrew. There are several reasons for their frequency:

- a. ל- often indicates an [*indirect*] *object*, much like English “to” or “for”:

וַיִּזְבְּחוּ שָׁם לַיהוָה:	They sacrificed there <i>to</i> YHWH (Jg 2.5)
לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי	“Do not take a wife <i>for</i> my son ...” (Gn 24.6)
וְלֹא דָרַשׁ לְבַעֲלִים:	And he did not seek [<i>for</i>] <i>the Baals</i> (2 Chr 17.3)

- b. The preposition ל- is also one of several ways in which Biblical Hebrew indicates *possession*; the ל- is prefixed to the “owner”. The context determines whether the syntagm corresponds to a phrase “an X of Y” (“Y’s X”) or clause (“Y has/had an X”). This is how Hebrew shows that the owner is a particular person, and implies that he or she has more than one:

נְבִיא לַיהוָה	a prophet <i>of</i> YHWH (1 Kgs 18.22); (implication: YHWH has more than one prophet)
מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד	a psalm <i>of</i> David (Ps 3.1); (implication: David wrote more than one psalm)
וְלִרְבֵּקָה אָח	Now Rebekkah <i>had</i> a brother (Gn 24.29); (implication: Rebekkah had more than one brother)

- c. The preposition ל- frequently shows purpose or result, much like English “to”, in the sense of “in order to” or “so that” (Lesson 16).
- d. The preposition ב- has a wide range of functions, as its glosses suggest (e.g., *in*, *with*, *by*, *on*, *against*), and is also used to form temporal clauses (as is the preposition כ-; Lesson 16).

7.2 The Separable Preposition (מִן)

1. The preposition מִן, “from”, can be prefixed to its noun, or written as a separate word. When separate, it is usually linked to the word that it governs with *maqfēf*:

a house	בֵּית	מִן־בֵּית	from a house
the son	הַבֵּן	מִן־הַבֵּן	from the son
the woman	הָאִשָּׁה	מִן־הָאִשָּׁה	from the woman

2. Like the inseparable prepositions (-ב, -כ, -ל), מִן is often joined to the word that it governs, becoming its first syllable. When this happens, the *nun* of מִן assimilates⁷⁸ completely to the first letter, which therefore doubles, so that the *nun* shows up only as a *dageš forte* in the first letter. This assimilation is called *nunnation*. In the first example, **minbáyit* > *mibbáyit* (* means that the form is hypothetical; > means “developed into”).

a house	בֵּית	מִבֵּית	from a house
a son	בֵּן	מִבֵּן	from a son
a king	מֶלֶךְ	מִמֶּלֶךְ	from a king

3. This means that we now know three causes of doubled letters:

The word's spelling:	אִשָּׁה	a woman / wife
The article:	הַבֵּן	the son
Nunnation:	מִמֶּלֶךְ	from a king

N.B.: You should **always ask why a letter is doubled**, since this often helps identify the word's lexical form, or distinguish the elements of a “compound word” (below).

4. Since *reš* and the gutturals (א, ה, ח, ע) do not double, מִן appears as מִי (remember that the *i/e* vowels are closely related) when it is joined to a word beginning with one of these letters:

a woman	אִשָּׁה	מִיאִשָּׁה	from a woman
a city	עִיר	מִיעִיר	from a city
a land	אֶרֶץ	מִאֶרֶץ	from a land

5. Since מִן does not replace the -ה of the article, but is prefixed to it, *sieere* also joins מִן to articular words:

the house	הַבֵּית	מִהַבֵּית	from the house
the woman	הָאִשָּׁה	מִהָאִשָּׁה	from the woman
the king	הַמֶּלֶךְ	מִהַמֶּלֶךְ	from the king

7.3 Summary: Compound Forms

A substantival form (one “word”) can thus consist of as many as four elements: a noun plus up to three prefixes (conjunction, preposition, article [and always in that order]).⁷⁹ This chart shows how

78. In *assimilation* one consonant becomes exactly like another—usually the one after it. In English the prefix *in-* (“not”) assimilates to the first letter of words beginning with *m*, *r*, *l* (e.g., *immobile*, *irreplaceable*, *illegal*), but not to the first letter of every word (cf., e.g., *involute*). Note that assimilation produces a doubled letter in English as well as in Biblical Hebrew.

they are combined; you should learn to “take apart” the forms listed on the right by identifying their elements:

Noun	+	Article	+	Preposition	+	Conjunction
בֵּית		הַבֵּית		לְבֵית		וּלְבֵית
<i>a house</i>		<i>the house</i>		<i>to the house</i>		<i>and to the house</i>
מֶלֶךְ		הַמֶּלֶךְ		מִהַמֶּלֶךְ		וּמִהַמֶּלֶךְ
<i>a king</i>		<i>the king</i>		<i>from the king</i>		<i>even from the king</i>
אִישׁ		הָאִישׁ		כְּאִישׁ		וְכְאִישׁ
<i>a man</i>		<i>the man</i>		<i>like the man</i>		<i>or like the man</i>

7.4 Independent (“Separate”) Prepositions

All other Hebrew prepositions are separate words, although they are often connected to their noun by *maqfef*. Those that end in a long vowel (e.g., לְפָנַי) often cause an initial *b^{egad-k^{efat}}* letter in the following word to lose *dageš lene*.

<i>a house</i>	בֵּית	תַּחַת־הַבֵּית	<i>under the house</i>
<i>his father</i>	אָבִיו	תַּחַת־אָבִיו	<i>in his father’s place</i>
<i>a house</i>	בֵּית	לְפָנֵי־בֵית	<i>before / in front of a house</i>
<i>the king</i>	הַמֶּלֶךְ	לְפָנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ	<i>before / in the presence of the king</i>
<i>Dan</i>	דָּן	עַד־דָּן	<i>as far as Dan</i>
<i>the Jordan</i>	הַיַּרְדֵּן	עַבְר־הַיַּרְדֵּן	<i>beyond the Jordan</i>
<i>Moses</i>	מֹשֶׁה	אֶל־מֹשֶׁה	<i>to[ward] Moses</i>

7.5 Syntax

Hebrew prose often repeats the preposition before each element of a multiple object, and uses the conjunction between prepositional phrases. Since this repetition is normal, it is most likely non-emphatic.

בֵּין בֵּית־אֵל וּבֵין הָעֵי	<i>between Bethel and Ai</i> (Gn 13.3); not “[right smack dab] between both Bethel and Ai”
מִדָּן וְעַד־בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע	<i>from Dan to [as far as] Beersheba</i> (1 Sam 3.20)

7.6 Direction / Goal

Hebrew indicates that an action or event is directed to or toward a person, thing, or location in three different ways: (1) lexically, by prefixing a *preposition* (e.g., אֶל) to the object (§7.4); (2) morphologically, by suffixing the letter ה- to the object (§7.6.1); and (3) contextually (§7.6.2).

7.6.1 The Accusative / Directional Ending (ה, -)

A suffixed ה, - on some words indicates the direction or goal of verbs of motion—where the subject of the verb is going:

וַיָּקָם וַיָּבֹא הַבֵּיתָה	and he got up and went <i>to the house</i> (2 Kg 9.6)
וַיָּשָׁב יוֹסֵף מִצְרֵימָה	and Joseph returned <i>to Egypt</i> (Gn 50.14)
וַיִּפְרֹשׁ כַּפָּיו הַשָּׁמַיְמָה	and he spread his hands <i>toward the sky</i> (2 Ch 6.13)
וַיִּסּוּרוּ שָׁמָּה	and they turned aside <i>to that place</i> (Jg 18.15)

79. We will see another combination—but still a maximum of four elements—when we discuss pronominal suffixes.

Since Ugaritic⁸⁰ suggests that this is a remnant of an accusative case ending,⁸¹ it has come to be called “accusative ה-”. Unlike prepositions, the accusative ה- occurs on only a few words, the most frequent of which are listed here.⁸²

1. *Nouns* (common and proper)

Lexical Form	With Accusative/Directional ה-		Frequency ⁸³	
			Locative	Total (c.)
אֶרֶץ	אֶרֶצָה	to[ward] the ground	87x	2500x
מִצְרַיִם	מִצְרַיִמָה	to[ward] Egypt	29x	680x
בֵּית	הַבֵּיתָה	to[ward] the house	20x	2000x
הַמִּדְבָּר	הַמִּדְבָּרָה	to[ward] the wilderness	18x	270x
הָהָר	הָהָרָה	to[ward] the mountain / hill country	14x	550x
שָׁמַיִם	הַשָּׁמַיִמָה	to[ward] heaven/the sky	12x	420x
שְׁאוֹל	שְׁאוֹלָה	to Sheol	10x	65x
עִיר	הָעִירָה	to[ward] the city	9x	1090x
בֵּית	בֵּיתָה	to[ward] the house, inward	8x	2040x
יְרוּשָׁלַם	יְרוּשָׁלַיִמָה	to[ward] Jerusalem	5x	640x
שַׁעַר	שַׁעַרָה	to[ward] the gate	4x	360x

2. *Locatives*

Lexical Form	With Accusative/Directional ה-		Frequency	
			Locative	Total
there שָׁם	שָׁמָה	to[ward] there/that place	142x	831x
where? אֵן	אֵנָה	to where?	39x	42x

3. *Direction* (see §7.11)

Lexical Form	With Accusative/Directional ה-		Frequency	
			Locative	Total
sea; west יָם	יָמָה	to[ward] the west (sea); westward	64x	392x
north צָפוֹן	צָפֹנָה	to[ward] the north; northward	53x	153x
east קֶדֶם	קֶדְמָה	to[ward] the east; eastward	26x	86x
south; Negev נֶגֶב	נֶגְבָה	to[ward] the south (Negev); southward	29x	110x
south תֵּימָן	תֵּימָנָה	southward	13x	24x

7.6.2 Directional Objects

In addition to prepositions and the directional ה-, the place toward which someone is moving may simply be named, and the “movement to[ward]” understood from the combination of a verb

80. The “Semitic” languages are spoken by the people groups traditionally identified with the “sons of Shem” listed in Gn 10. They are commonly divided between Eastern (Akkadian, which includes the dialects of Assyria and Babylonia) and Western (Ugaritic; Aramaic, Canaanite [of which Hebrew, Moabite, Edomite, &c. are dialects]; Arabic, and Ge’ez [Ethiopic]). Comparative linguistics is the study of the links between related languages, and uses one language to explain features of another.

81. Like the rest of the Semitic family, Hebrew certainly had case endings early in its history.

82. Although the statistics show that the directional ה- is relatively infrequent (e.g., “to[ward] the house” is expressed some 130 times with the preposition אֶל, but only twenty-eight times with the directional ה-), there are many forms with directional ה- in Biblical Hebrew, which means that you will need to recognize them.

83. Occurrences of the directional form and total occurrences of the word are listed on the right.

of motion and the name of the place. Objects may also indicate a location rather than a direction (2 Sam 11.9).

... וַיִּקְרָא לְרַחֵל וּלְלֵאָה הַשָּׂדֶה אֶל-צֹאנוֹ:	... and he summoned Rachel and Leah <i>to the field</i> , to his flock (Gn 31.4)
מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַהִוא יָצָא אֲשׁוּר	From that land he went out <i>to Ashur</i> (Gn 10.11)
וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֲוִרְיָה פֶתַח בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ	Uriah slept <i>at the door</i> of the king's house (2 Sam 11.9)
וַיֵּרְדּוּ הַגֶּרֶן	... and go down <i>to the threshing floor</i> (Ru 3.2)

N.B.: These are *not* three different functions, merely different ways of realizing the same function.

7.7 Prepositional Clauses

Hebrew rarely uses the verb “to be” for clauses that describe the location of a person or thing. Instead, Biblical Hebrew simply juxtaposes the noun and prepositional phrase, leaving the time frame (“tense”) to be inferred from the context:

וְדָוִד בְּמִדְבַּר-זִיף	David [<i>was</i>] <i>in</i> the wilderness of Ziph (1 Sa 23.15)
וַיֹּתֶם בֶּן-הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל-הַבַּיִת	and Jotham, the king's son, [<i>was</i>] <i>over</i> the palace (2 Kg 15.5)
וַיִּכְבֹּד-יְהוָה עַל-הַבַּיִת	and YHWH's glory [<i>was</i>] <i>over</i> the temple (2 Ch 7.3)
וְהַכְנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ	now the Canaanites [<i>were</i>] then <i>in</i> the land (Gn 12.6)

7.8 Concepts

accusative	directional	preposition
assimilation	inseparable preposition	prepositional phrase
comparative linguistics	locative	Semitic
compound form(s)	nunnation	separable preposition

7.9 Vocabulary

92. מִנְחָה	gift, offering, tribute	83. אַחֲרֵי	behind, after (locative & temporal)
93. עַד	to, as far as; until, while	84. אֶל-אֵל	to, toward
94. עָזַב	leave, forsake, abandon	85. אִמָּה	cubit; forearm
95. עַל	on, upon, over; against; concerning	86. בְּ-	in, with, by, on, against, ...; when, while (with inf. const.)
96. עִם	with	87. בֵּין	between
97. צַדִּיק	innocent, just; righteous (adj.)	88. בְּעֵד	on behalf of, about; away from; behind
98. צֶדֶק	innocence; righteousness (n.)	89. כְּ-	like, as, according to; about, approximately (with numbers); when, while (with inf. const.)
99. תַּחַת	lie down, sleep; have sexual relations with	90. לְ-	to, for (indicates indirect object); have (showing possession)
	under, beneath; instead of, in place of ⁸⁴	91. מִן	from, out of; some of; than (in comparisons)

84. For example, Josh 6.20 says that Jericho's wall fell down תַּחֲתֶיהָ, “under itself” (“in its own place”), straight down on its foundation.

7.10 Exercises

1. When you have studied the inseparable prepositions and *מן*, and can recognize the presence of the article, identify the elements of these forms and provide English glosses for them.

a.	וּלְבֶן	c.	וְעַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	e.	וּמִהַבֵּית
b.	וּמִהָהָרִים	d.	מִכְּהֵן	f.	וּלְאֲנָשִׁים

2. Represent these *phrases* and *clauses* in English, parsing the verbal forms.

1 Sam 3.15; בֹּקֶר <i>morning</i> ; Samuel	a.	וַיִּשְׁכַּב שְׁמוּאֵל עַד־הַבֹּקֶר
Dt 7.2; לָהֶם <i>for / with them</i>	b.	לֹא־תִכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית
Gn 13.4; קָרָא <i>call</i> ; שֵׁם <i>the name of</i> ; שָׁם <i>there</i> ; Abram	c.	וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה:
Dt 10.2; כָּתַב <i>write</i> ; לִיחַ <i>tablet</i>	d.	וַאֲכָתַב עַל־הַלֶּחֶת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים
Josh 8.5; אֲנִי <i>I</i> ; עַם <i>nation, people</i> ; אֲשֶׁר <i>who</i> (relative particle); אִתִּי <i>with me</i>	e.	וְאֲנִי וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתִּי נִקְרַב אֶל־הָעִיר
Lv 9.8; שָׁחַט <i>slaughter</i> ; עֵגֶל <i>calf of</i> ; חַטָּאת <i>sin-offering</i> ; Aaron	f.	וַיִּקְרַב אַהֲרֹן אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּשְׁחַט אֶת־עֵגֶל הַחַטָּאת
Jg 20.27; שָׁאַל <i>ask</i> (middle-guttural verbs have a <i>hiatef</i> -vowel rather than <i>šewa</i> ; an initial <i>b^gad-k^fat</i> letter following a word ending in <i>י</i> -, <i>י</i> -, or <i>י</i> .. - often lacks <i>dagesh lene</i>)	g.	וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּיהוָה
2 Chr 2.16; סָפַר <i>count</i> ; Solomon	h.	וַיִּסְפֹּר שְׁלֹמֹה כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים
Gn 1.5; קָרָא <i>call, name</i> ; אֹר <i>light</i>	i.	וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם
Ex 18.24; קוֹל <i>voice of</i> ; חַתָּנוֹ <i>his father-in-law</i> ; Moses	j.	וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה לְקוֹל חַתָּנוֹ
Josh 24.25; עַם <i>nation, people</i> ; הַהוּא <i>that</i> ; Joshua	k.	וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִית לָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
1 Kgs 2.10; יוֹ - <i>his</i> (the <i>י</i> - shows that the noun is plural); David	l.	וַיִּשְׁכַּב דָּוִד עִם־אֲבֹתָיו
Ex 2.24; נָאֲקָתָם <i>their</i> [ם - 3 mp] <i>groaning, complaint, lament</i> ; בְּרִיתוֹ <i>his covenant</i> ; זָכַר <i>remember</i> ; אֵת has both functions in this verse	m.	וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נְאֻקָּתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אֲבֹרָתָם אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב:

7.11 Enrichment: Directions

As the Abram/Abraham stories progress, the divine promises become increasingly specific. YHWH first promised to *show* Abram a “land” (Gn 12.1), then that he would *give* “this land” to his descendants (Gn 12.7). In Gn 13.14–15, he tells Abram that what he can see “from the place where [he was] standing”, using the cardinal directions with the accusative *ה*- to identify the general extent of the now-promised land, which he declares that he will give to *both* Abram and his descendants.

צָפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְקִדְמָה וְיָמָּה: ... to the north, and to the Negev [south], and to the east,
and to the sea [west] (Gn 13.14–15)

What we cannot tell from the story is the extent of the land that Abram could see, since we do not know (1) where he was standing; or (2) the precise topography of his day.

In the ancient Near East [ANE], orientation was toward the east (cf. Lat. *orient*); *yāmīn* could mean either “right side”, “right hand”, or “south”. In the northern hemisphere today we “orient” ourselves and our maps to the north, which reflects magnetic means of direction-finding (e.g., lode-stones, compass). Without such tools, sunrise functioned as the primary directional indicator.

South	North	West	East	
יָמִין	שְׂמֹאל	אַחֹר	קֶדֶם	Jb 23.8–9
			עַל-פְּנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם מִקֶּדֶם	Zc 14.4
		וַיָּמָה	מִזְרָחָה	
נֶגְבָה	צָפוֹנָה			

Job says that God and his work cannot be found in any direction (Jb 23.8–9), but whether he refers to the cardinal directions (east, west, north, south) or his own point of view (“in front”, “behind”, “on [my] left”, “on [my] right”) is unclear, since all four words can have both frames of reference.

In Zc 14.4, the Mount of Olives is said to be “facing” Jerusalem “on the east”; when it splits “from sunrise [east] to the sea [west]”, its two halves will move “northward” and “toward the Negev [south]” (all four forms have “directional” ה-).

Lesson 8

COMMANDS & PROHIBITIONS

The imperfect conjugation can function modally with the sense of “should” or “must” (Lesson 5); the *imperative* conjugation is used for positive commands.⁸⁵ Like the imperative in English, which has only an implicit subject (“Go to bed!”), commands in Biblical Hebrew rarely name the subject. Like the imperfect and preterite, however, the imperative in Biblical Hebrew identifies the gender and number of its subject, using the PGN *endings* (only) of the second person imperfect.

8.1 Form

The imperative occurs only in the second person, and uses the subject [PGN] endings of the imperfect *without* the subject prefixes.

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
2nd	Masc.	no ending or הָ -	וּ -
	Fem.	יְ -	נָה -

8.2 The *Qal* Imperative

When the affixes of the imperative and the vowels of the *qal* imperative are added to the verbal root, the paradigm of the *qal* imperative is:

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
2nd	Masc.	<div> <div>וְשִׁל</div> <div>וְשִׁלָּה</div> </div>	<div> <div>וְשִׁלוּ</div> <div>וְשִׁלְּהוּ</div> </div>
	Fem.	וְשִׁלִּי	וְשִׁלְּנָה

1. The *hireq* under the first radical with vocalic endings avoids consecutive vocal *šewas* (when the prefix is removed from the imperfect, the *šewa* under the first radical becomes vocal).⁸⁶
2. It is not uncommon for the 2ms imperative to have the ending הָ -, which, in the *qal*, yields a form that looks just like 3fs *qal* perfect (וְשִׁלָּה), and can be distinguished from it only by the context.
3. As in the imperfect and preterite, II- and III-guttural verbal roots form their imperative with *pataḥ* rather than *holem*; III-**ס** roots have *qameṣ*.

85. Imperatives are relatively infrequent, accounting for only about one in twenty of all verbs in Biblical Hebrew. Although we might expect to see them in the covenantal “legal” books, they are proportionately most frequent in Psalms (12% of all verbs), Song (11%), Jeremiah (7%), and Isaiah (7%); cf. Leviticus (2%) and Deuteronomy (4%).

86. This explanation is pedagogical, not technical.

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
2nd	Masc.	שָׁמַע	מִצָּא	שָׁמְעוּ	מִצְאוּ
	Fem.	שָׁמְעָה	מִצְאָה	שָׁמְעוּנָה	מִצְאוֹנָה

8.3 Function (HBI §2.2.4c)

1. Positive *commands* use the imperative.

קְרָא נָא גַם לְחוּשִׁי הָאֲרָכִי	Summon Hushai the Archite ... (2 Sa 17.5).
אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ שְׁמַע יְהוָה	Land, land, land, <i>hear</i> YHWH's word (Jr 22.29).
שְׁמַעִי דְּבַר־יְהוָה:	
בֶּן־אָדָם עֹמֵד עַל־רַגְלָיו	Son of man, <i>stand</i> on your feet! (Ezk 2.1)
שְׁמַעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה	Hear this word! (Am 3.1)

2. *Prohibitions* (negative commands) are formed with the *imperfect* (*not* imperative) negated by **לֹא** or **אַל**. There may be a slight tendency for prohibitions with **לֹא** to be more universal or permanent than those with **אַל** (which would then refer to an immediate or specific situation), but this must be determined for each case; it is not a general rule.

לֹא תִגְנוֹב:	Do not steal (Ex 20.15).
לֹא תַעֲבֹר בִּי	Do not cross over against me (Nu 20.18).
לֹא־תִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ שָׂרַי	Do not call her name Sarai (Gn 17.15).
אַל־נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם	Do not bury me in Egypt (Gn 47.29).
רַק אֶת־בְּנִי לֹא תִשָּׁב שָׁמָּה:	But my son do not take back there (Gn 24.9).

8.4 Other Volitional Verbs

The term “volitional” refers to speech in which the speaker asserts his or her will (volition) toward another person. The imperative (above) is the most obvious form of volitional speech, but not all declarations of a speaker’s will are directed to the hearer. Some may indirectly command another person (“He should ...”, “Rebecca ought to ...”, “Let Ezra do it” [*not* in the sense of “allow” or “permit”]), or summon a group (of which the speaker is part) to do something (“Let’s ...”, “We should ...”).

8.4.1 Cohortative (HBI §2.2.4a)

The first person forms of the imperfect can show *volition*—the subject’s determination to do something. This is technically another modal use of the prefix conjugation, although this form can occur with an added **וְ**. It is parsed in the conjugation column as “c” (for “cohortative”).

נִכְרְתָה בְּרִית אֲנִי וְאַתָּה	You and I <i>will make</i> a covenant (Gn 31.44) or “We—you and I—will make a covenant”
וְאֶשְׁלַח סֵפֶר	I <i>will send</i> a letter ... (2 Kgs 5.5)
נִשְׁלַח אֲנָשִׁים לְפָנֵינוּ	We <i>will send</i> men before us ... (Dt 1.22)
נִזְבַּחָה לַיהוָה:	We <i>will sacrifice</i> to YHWH (Ex 5.17)

When it occurs with the conjunction after another cohortative, imperfect, or imperative, the cohortative may be *telic*, showing purpose or result; this is determined by the context and the relationship between the functions of the two verbs:

תְּהִי אֱלֹהִים ... וְנִכְרְתָה בְרִית עִמָּךְ:	Let there be an oath ... that we <i>may make</i> a covenant with you (Gn 26.28)
קְרָא נָא גַם לְחוּשַׁי ... וְנִשְׁמָעָה מִה־בְּפִי	Call Hushai ..., <i>that we may hear</i> (2 Sam 17.5)
... וְנִפִּילָה גּוֹרָלוֹת וְנִדְעָה we'll cast lots <i>so that we may know</i> ... (Jn 1.7)

8.4.2 Jussive (HBI §2.2.4b)

In the third person the prefix conjugation can also have volitional force, which is called *jussive* (Latin *jussus*, a command). This functions rather like a third person imperative, that is, “Let him ...” in the sense of “He should/must/ought ...”,⁸⁷ but probably *not* with the sense “Allow him to ...”. Because there is no special form⁸⁸ for this function, grammarians differ on which verbs are jussive and which are not, especially in biblical poetry; in Gn 41.35, for example, Joseph is offering Pharaoh advice, so the verbs are probably jussive:

וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת-כָּל-אֹכֶל ... וַיִּצְבְּרוּ-בָר	“Let them gather all the food ... and let them store grain ...” (Gn 41.35); i.e., “They should ...”
יִשְׁמְעוּ הָעִבְרִים:	“Let the Hebrew hear!” (1 Sam 13.3); i.e., not permission, but exhortation.
יִשְׁמַר אֶת-נַפְשְׁךָ:	May he guard your life or He shall guard your life (Ps 121.7)

8.5 The Volitional Particle (נָא)

The imperative, cohortative, and jussive may be followed by the particle נָא (with or without *maqgef*). Although נָא is often translated “please”, or “I pray” (in the archaic sense of “ask”), its function seems to be inconsistent, which means that its function is not clear. A verb followed by נָא, however, is *always* volitional. When a volitional verb is negated, it may be preceded by אַל-נָא or לֹא-נָא:

שְׁמַע־נָא הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתִּי:	“Hear this dream which I dreamed (Gn 37.6).
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֶמְרָנָא שִׁבּוֹלֶת	They said to him, “Say ‘Shibboleth’” (Jg 12.6).
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-נָא תַעֲזֹב אֶתָּנוּ	He said, “Do not abandon us, ⁸⁹ ...” (Nu 10.31).

8.6 The Volitional Summary Particle (וְעַתָּה) (HBI §3.3.8)

The particle וְעַתָּה (וְ + עַתָּה; traditionally, “And now”) usually introduces an imperative, cohortative, or jussive, which directs the hearer to pursue a course of action based on the preceding discourse. Volitional forms occur frequently without וְעַתָּה, but you should expect to find a volitional verb (negative or positive) after וְעַתָּה whenever you come across it. When it occurs without a volitional form, it functions as a temporal particle, “now”. Note that the volitional form is often *not* the following word; additional information or reasons can precede the command or declaration of intent.

וְעַתָּה בְּנִי שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי	Now therefore, my son, listen to my voice (Gn 27.8)
וְעַתָּה יִגְדֹּל-נָא כֹחַ אֲדֹנִי	Now therefore, let the power of my Lord be great (Nu 14.17)
וְעַתָּה כְּתֹבוּ לָכֶם אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת	Now therefore, write this song (Dt 31.19)
וְעַתָּה יִשְׁמַע־נָא אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ	Now therefore, let my lord the king hear (1 Sam 26.19)

87. Since Biblical Hebrew does not use helping verbs to show what is called “mood”, the choice of which helping verb to use in English reflects the translator’s interpretation.

88. The imperfect and jussive can be distinguished in a *few* types of verbal roots because their vowels differ (below).

89. Pronominal objects are always attached to either the verb itself or, as here, the direct object marker itself (אֶתָּנוּ > אֶת-נָא).

8.7 Concepts

cohortative command	imperative jussive	prohibition volitional
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8.8 Vocabulary

<i>love, loyalty, kindness</i> (trad. “lovingkindness”)	108. חֶסֶד	<i>stone</i> (cf. אֶבֶן הָעֶזֶר, Ebenezer, “the stone of help”; 1 Sam 7.12)	100. אֶבֶן
<i>possess, subdue; dispossess</i> [someone] (<i>hifil</i>)	109. יָרַשׁ	<i>ground</i> (cf. Gn 2.7)	101. אֲדָמָה
<i>silver</i>	110. כֶּסֶף	<i>boundary; territory</i> (i.e., land inside a boundary)	102. גְּבוּל
<i>write</i>	111. כָּתַב	<i>blood</i>	103. דָּם
<i>night</i> (m.)	112. לַיְלָה	<i>gold</i>	104. זָהָב
<i>something appointed</i> (place, time); <i>season</i>	113. מוֹעֵד	<i>remember</i>	105. זָכַר
<i>work, deed, thing done</i> (m.)	114. מַעֲשֵׂה	<i>seed</i> (sg. & coll.)	106. זֶרַע
untranslatable particle indicating volition (trad. “please”); follows imv., coh., juss.	115. נָא	<i>strength; army; wealth</i>	107. חֵיל

8.9 Exercises

After learning the forms of the *qal* imperative, gloss the clauses, parsing the verbs. Since the imperative is always second person, you can simply label the PGN by gender and number (e.g., “ms” or “fp”). N.B.: Not all verbal forms in these biblical quotations are imperative.

- a. וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמֹר אֶת־הָאִישׁ 1 Kg 20.39
- b. שְׁכְּבִי עַד־הַבֹּקֶר: Ru 3.13; עַד *until*; בֹּקֶר *morning*
- c. וַיֹּאמֶר פֶּרְעָה אֶל־יֹסֵף אָמַר אֶל־אֲחִיךָ Gn 45.17; אֲחִיךָ *your* [ך- 2ms] *brothers*; Pharaoh, Joseph
- d. לֹא תִגְנוֹב: Ex 20.15; גָּנוֹב *steal*
- e. וַעֲתָה בָנִים שְׁמַעוּ־לִי Pr 5.7; וַעֲתָה (see §8.6); לִי *to me*; Jehoshaphat
- f. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל דִּרְשָׁנָא כִּי־יִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבַר יְהוָה: 1 Kgs 22.5; דִּרְשׁ *seek, search*; מֶלֶךְ *king of*; כִּי־יִשְׁמַע *today*; דְּבַר *word of*
- g. בְּנֵי תוֹרָתִי אֶל־תִּשְׁכַּח Pr 3.1; בְּנֵי *my son* (vocative); תוֹרָתִי *my teaching*; שָׁכַח *forget*
- h. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן אָמַר אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתְּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קִרְבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה Ex 16.9; עַדְתְּ *assembly of*; לִפְנֵי *before, in the presence of*
- i. וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל דְּבָרֵיכֶם Dt 5.28; קוֹל *the sound of*; דְּבָרֵיכֶם *your words*
- j. וַיִּקְרָא פֶּרְעָה אֶל־מֹשֶ�ה וְלֹאֲהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר לָכֵן זָבַחוּ לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם בָּאָרֶץ: Ex 8.21; קָרָא *call to, summon*; לָכֵן *go* (2mp Q V of הלך); זָבַח *sacrifice*; כֶּם־ *your* (2mp); Pharaoh, Moses, Aaron

Dt 9.7; שכח <i>forget</i>	זכר אל-תשכח .k
Josh 9.6; לָנוּ <i>for [with] us</i>	וַעֲתָה כָּרְתוּ-לָנוּ בְּרִית: .l
2 Kgs 4.36; קרא אל <i>call to, summon</i> ; Gehazi, Shunamite	וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-גִּיחִזִּי וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא אֶל-הַשְּׁנַמִּית .m
Hg 2.11; שאל <i>ask</i>	שְׁאַל-נָא אֶת-הַכֹּהֲנִים .n
Gn 27.43; י - <i>my (1cs)</i>	וַעֲתָה בְּנִי שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי .o
Dt 6.4; אלהינו <i>our [נו- 1cp] god</i> ; אחד <i>one</i>	שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: .p

8.10 Enrichment: Verbal Euphony in Poetry

The first eight lines of Psalm 100 contain seven commands: “Shout ...! Serve ...! Enter ...! Know ...! Enter ...! Thank ...! Bless ...!” Even though Hebrew poetry does not use rhyme, the repeated PGN affix **ו**- on the string of 2mp imperatives links this series of commands by both form and sound (imperatives are *italicized*). Nearly every line in the psalm (after the title [1a]) begins with a word ending in *-u*, and several (2a-b, 4a-b) end with a word that begins with the preposition **בְּ** (*with*). Read these lines aloud until you can begin to hear their repeated sounds.

<i>Shout</i> to YHWH, all the earth;	הֲרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ: 1b
<i>Serve</i> YHWH with joy;	עֲבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה 2a
<i>Come</i> before him with a glad shout;	בָּאוּ לִפְנֵי בְּרִנָּה: 2b
<i>Know</i> that YHWH is God.	דַּעוּ כִּי־יְהוָה הוּא אֱלֹהִים ... 3a
<i>Enter</i> his gates with thanks,	בָּאוּ שְׁעָרָיו בְּתוֹדָה 4a
His courts with praise,	חֲצֹרְתָיו בְּתִהְלָה 4b
<i>Thank</i> him,	הוֹדוּ-לוֹ 4c
<i>Bless</i> his name;	בִּרְכּוּ שְׁמוֹ: 4d

Reading the Hebrew text reveals effects such as this aural repetition (which is invisible in English), so that we can enjoy both *what* they said and *how* they said it.

Lesson 9

NOMINAL MODIFICATION (III): THE CONSTRUCT

The English word “of” signals many relationships, including possession (“the sword of Goliath”), relationship (“son of David”), and modification (“an altar of gold”). These can also be signalled by the “possessive ‘s” (“God’s kingdom”, “the scribe’s son”) or an adjective (“a golden altar”), or even by juxtaposing two nouns (“a stone wall”).

Hebrew expresses these relationships with the construct chain, in which each word is “linked to” the following word. Words are said to be in either the “construct” or “absolute” state. Nouns thus have one of two states:⁹⁰ they are either “absolute” (from Latin, meaning “unconnected” or “independent”) or “construct”. About **one-third** of all nouns in Biblical Hebrew occur in the construct state.

9.1 The construct Chain

To modify (in language) is to restrict. A major way to modify a word’s referent in English and Hebrew is by means of the “of” relationship. Consider, for example, “the girl’s book”, “the author’s book”, and “his book”. In each case the words before “book” restrict what “book” can refer to. In order to show this relationship, Biblical Hebrew places two or more substantives side-by-side in a sequence of words called a *construct chain*, in which each word is linked to the following word by the “of” relationship:

1.	אָבִי מֶלֶךְ	<i>a father of a king or a king’s father</i>
2.	אָבִי הַמֶּלֶךְ	<i>the father of the king or the king’s father</i>
3.	בַּת הַמֶּלֶךְ	<i>the daughter of the king or the king’s daughter</i>
4.	סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה	<i>the document of the teaching/law</i>
5.	בֵּית מֶלֶךְ הָאָרֶץ	<i>the house of the king of the land</i>
6.	בֵּית מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל	<i>the house of the king of Israel</i>

1. Each noun is *in construct* to the *following* word.
2. The order is not arbitrary, and may not be changed (e.g., #1 cannot mean “a father’s king”).
3. The last word in a construct chain is in the absolute state.⁹¹ The vocabulary form of a noun is also its form in the *absolute*.
4. A construct chain therefore consists of a series of words, each of which (except the last) is modified by the rest of the series.

9.1.1 Forms

1. Masculine singular and feminine plural nouns have the same endings in both states. Feminine singular and masculine plural nouns, however, have separate endings for absolute and construct. The ה- of the fem. construct singular and the וֹת- of the plural replaces the ה- of the singular; if the absolute ends in ה-, the absolute and construct singular endings are the

90. Unfortunately, the words “construct” and “absolute” can refer to a word’s *function* (i.e., “linked” or “independent”) or its *form* (since the construct spelling of many words differs slightly from their absolute [lexical] form). You will need to note which sense applies.

91. We shall note the single exception to this when we discuss pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14, below).

same. The ׁ- of the masculine plural absolute drops off, and the form has *sere* instead of *hireq*, as in the following table.⁹²

Singular				Plural			
Absolute		Construct		Absolute		Construct	
Masc.	סוס <i>horse</i>	סוס <i>horse of</i>		סוסים <i>horses</i>	סוסי <i>horses of</i>		
Fem.	סוסה <i>mare</i>	סוסת <i>mare of</i>		סוסות <i>mares</i>	סוסות <i>mares of</i>		

2. Even if the ending is the same (as in ms and fp), the vowels of words in construct often differ from their lexical form, since the accent changes [lessens] slightly when a word is in construct.

Singular				Plural			
Absolute		Construct		Absolute		Construct	
Masc.	בֵּית <i>house</i>	בֵּית <i>house of</i>		בָּתִּים <i>houses</i>	בָּתִּי <i>houses of</i>		
	בֶּן <i>son</i>	בֶּן <i>son of</i>		בָּנִים <i>sons</i>	בָּנִי <i>sons of</i>		
Fem.	אִשָּׁה <i>wife</i>	אִשָּׁת <i>wife of</i>		נָשִׁים <i>wives</i>	נָשִׁי <i>wives of</i>		
	בַּת <i>daughter</i>	בַּת <i>daughter of</i>		בָּנוֹת <i>daughters</i>	בָּנוֹת <i>daughters of</i>		

3. This does not apply to long internal vowels (cf. סוס, above), i.e., those written with a *mater* (which are thus called “unchangeably long”):

Singular				Plural			
Absolute		Construct		Absolute		Construct	
Masc.	אִישׁ <i>man</i>	אִישׁ <i>man of</i>		אֲנָשִׁים <i>men</i>	אֲנָשִׁי <i>men of</i>		
Fem.	עִיר <i>city</i>	עִיר <i>city of</i>		עָרִים <i>cities</i>	עָרֵי <i>cities of</i>		

4. Three fairly common nouns form their construct singular by adding ך (פֶּרִי has the same form in both states):

Singular				Plural			
Absolute		Construct		Absolute		Construct	
אב <i>father</i>		אבִּי <i>father of</i>		אבות <i>fathers</i>		אבות <i>fathers of</i>	
אח <i>brother</i>		אחי <i>brother of</i>		אחים <i>brothers</i>		אחי <i>brothers of</i>	
פה <i>mouth</i>		פִּי <i>mouth of</i>					
פֶּרִי <i>fruit</i>		פֶּרִי <i>fruit of</i>					

5. The construct singular of nouns with two vowels with either *waw* or *yod* between them “collapses” or “simplifies” into a single long vowel (-awe- > -ô-; and -ayi- > -ê-):

Singular				Plural			
Absolute		Construct		Absolute		Construct	
מוֹת <i>death</i>		מוֹת <i>death of</i>					
בֵּית <i>house</i>		בֵּית <i>house of</i>		בָּתִּים <i>houses</i>		בָּתִּי <i>houses of</i>	
עֵין <i>eye; spring</i>		עֵין <i>eye/spring of</i> ⁹³		עֵינִים <i>eyes</i>		עֵינֵי <i>eyes of</i>	

92. The following paradigms list the singular and plural forms for each word—regardless of the point being illustrated—as they occur in Biblical Hebrew. If a form is not listed, it does not occur.

93. עֵין is the first part of the names of many water sources, e.g., עֵין־גִּדִּי (*En-gedi*) “Well of [the] Kid”.

9.1.2 Syntax

1. Although the form of a word often signals that it is in the construct, the primary signal of a construct chain is an *uninterrupted series of two or more substantives*, the last of which is often definite, being either an articular noun or proper name.⁹⁴

כּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם	the stars of the sky
בֶּן דָּוִד	the son of David, David's son
עָרֵי יְהוּדָה	the cities of Judah, Judah's cities
בָּנוֹת זֶלּוֹפֶחֶד	the daughters of Zelophehad, Zelophehad's daughters
מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב	the altar of gold, the golden altar

2. The definiteness of the *last* element in a construct chain determines the definiteness or indefiniteness of *every* element in that chain. If the last element is definite, the entire chain is definite; if it is indefinite, then the entire chain is indefinite. A substantive can be definite because it is articular, or because it is a proper name, or because it is construct to another word that is definite.

a man's son	בֶּן אִישׁ	בֶּן הָאִישׁ	the son of the man, the man's son
houses of a city	בָּתֵּי עִיר	בָּתֵּי הָעִיר	the houses of the city, the city's houses
a king's song	שִׁיר מֶלֶךְ	שִׁיר דָּוִד	the song of David, David's song

3. On the other hand, some words in construct with a definite noun may be definite, but are not exclusive. The phrase *תועבת יהוה*, *an abomination of YHWH*, for example, describes many things in Scripture, none of which is “*the* [implicitly: only] abomination of YHWH”.
4. Nothing can come between words in a construct chain except the locative *ה*- without breaking the chain. This includes prepositions and the conjunction *ו*, which can only be prefixed to the first word in the chain.
5. Articular words, proper names (and substantives with a pronominal suffix, below) cannot occur within a chain. When they occur, the construct chain ends. Since they are all definite, they make the entire chain definite. This means that the first noun in a construct chain cannot have the article or be a proper name.⁹⁵
6. Each word in a construct “belongs to” the next word. This is never reversed. *כּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם* (the first example above) cannot mean “the sky of the stars”.
7. Most construct chains have either two or three parts (as above), but construct chains can [rarely] have as many as six elements (six-element chains are extremely rare⁹⁶). In these examples, English words linked by dashes represent a single Hebrew form:

לְפָנֵי כָל-קָהָל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	in-the-presence-of all-[of] the-assembly-of the-congregation-of the-sons-of Israel (Nu 14.5)	[six elements]
וְאֶל-כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַת בֵּית-אָבִי אִמּוֹ	and-to all-[of] the-clan-of the-household-of the-father-of his-mother (Jg 9.1)	[six elements]
לְכָל-עֲבוֹדַת מִשְׁכָּן בֵּית אֱלֹהִים	for-all-[of] the-labour-of the-tabernacle-of the-house-of God (1 Ch 6.33; cf. 1 Ch 28.13, 20)	[five elements]
מִסְפַּר יְמֵי-חַיֵּי הַבָּלּוּ	the-number-of the-days-of the-life-of his-vanity [his vain life] (Qo 6.12)	[five elements]

94. Or a noun with a pronominal suffix (Lesson 14).

95. The apparent exception to this, the phrase *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת* (traditionally rendered “LORD of hosts” but now “Sovereign LORD” [NIV] or the like), may be probably more apparent than real. It occurs fifteen times in the form *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת*, “YAHWEH, God of hosts” (e.g., 2 Sam 5.10; 1 Kgs 19.10, 14; Ps 89.9), which may suggest that *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת* is a shortened form of the same phrase. It also occurs six times as *יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת* (Ps 59.6; 80.5, 20; 84.9; *צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהִים* occurs twice [Ps 80.8, 15]). *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת* may not, therefore, be in construct to *צְבָאוֹת*, but rather in apposition to an implicit [culturally understood] *צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת*. On the other hand, however, *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת* may be a true exception.

96. In Nu 14.5, the form *לְפָנֵי* is a compound preposition the second element of which is *פָּנִים*, *face*, *presence*; in Jg 9.1, the last form is compounded from *אִם*, *mother*, and *ה*-, *his*.

9.1.3 Function

Construct chains are functionally *attributive*—they modify a word by limiting its range to the “of” term. “Brother”, for example, could refer to many males; “brother of *David*” limits the potential referents to seven. This modification often shows possession, but it can also carry any of several nuances, such as those identified for “of” in English, or the genitive in Greek or German.

Construct chains have three primary functions: objective, subjective, or adjectival. For example, “the love of God” can refer to one’s love *for God* (“God” is the object of the love) or God’s love *for someone/thing* (“God is the subject of the love”); “the word of YHWH”, on the other hand, refers consistently to a message from YHWH (Yhwh is the source of the message).

Possession—a common function of the construct—is an example of the subjective function, so that “Goliath’s sword” refers to “the sword that Goliath has (had/owns/uses/etc.)”. The following list of functions of the construct is not meant to suggest that the biblical authors chose to use a particular “type” of construct (any more than we think about “which” function of “of” we are using). It merely illustrates the types of relationships that the construct can indicate.

Since the entire chain cumulatively modifies the first word, *only the first word* in a construct chain can be the subject, object, or indirect object of a clause, or the object of a preposition. This will become increasingly clear as you read more Hebrew.

1. *Possession*. The item named by the first word belongs to the second.

חֶרֶב גִּלְיָת Goliath’s sword or the sword of Goliath (1 Sa 21.10)
כִּסֵּא שְׁלֹמֹה Solomon’s throne or the throne of Solomon

2. *Attribution*. The second word modifies the first, and is often glossed like an adjective. This type of construct chain often has a pronominal suffix (Lesson 14) on the final word (the “-” in Ps 2.6).

מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב the gold altar or the altar of gold (Nu 4.11)
הַר קָדְשִׁי my holy mountain or the mountain of my holiness (Ps 2.6)

3. *Relationship*. The construct chain describes people who are related to one another.

בַּת־מֶלֶךְ a king’s daughter; a daughter of a king (2 Kg 9.34)
אָבִי כְנָעַן Canaan’s father; the father of Canaan (Gn 9.18)

4. *Definition*. Generic terms are often defined more closely by a proper name:

נְהַר־פָּרָת the river Euphrates (Gn 15.18)
אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן the land of Canaan (Gn 17.8)

5. The noun כָּל—“all, every, each” is in construct to the noun that it modifies. Its construct form is כָּל (with or without *maqgef*):

כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ all the people of the land (2 Kgs 11.20)
לְכָל־בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלִשְׂרֵי הַצָּבָא to all the king’s sons and to the leaders of the army (1 Kg 1.25)

9.2 The “Possessive” lamed

A construct chain is either entirely definite (“the servant of the king”, “the city of David”) or entirely indefinite (“a servant of a king”). To show possession when the owner is specific but the thing possessed is not (“a servant of the king”, “a prophet of YHWH”), Hebrew prefixes the preposition ל (cf. §7.1) to the “owner”. The context determines whether the construction is a phrase “a X of Y” (“Y’s X”) or clause (“Y has/had an X”). This often implies that a person had more than one prophet, psalm, &c.

נְבִיא לַיהוָה	a prophet of YHWH (1 Kgs 18.22)
מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד	a psalm of David (e.g., Ps 3.1)
וּלְרֵבְכָה אָח	Now <i>Rebecca</i> had a brother (Gn 24.29)
וּלְנַעֲמִי מִיָּדָע לְאִשָּׁה	Now <i>Naomi</i> had a relative by [or of] her husband (Ru 2.1)

9.3 Concepts

absolute	attributive; attribution	modification; to modify	possessive	state
adjectival	construct (chain)	objective	relationship	subjective

9.4 Vocabulary

<i>prophet</i>	נְבִיא	.125	<i>love, like; desire</i> (cf. Amnon, 2 Sam 13)	אָהַב	.116
<i>inheritance, property</i>	נַחֲלָה	.126	(f.) <i>mother; ancestress</i>	אִם	.117
<i>young man</i> ⁹⁷	נֶעֶר	.127	<i>gather, take in</i>	אָסַף	.118
<i>guilt, trespass, sin</i>	עֲוֹן ⁹⁸	.128	<i>chest, box; ark</i> (of the covenant)	אָרוֹן	.119
<i>inward part</i>	קֶרֶב	.129	<i>garment, clothing</i>	בִּגְדֵי	.120
<i>inside, within</i>	בְּקֶרֶב		<i>morning</i>	בֹּקֶר	.121
<i>foot, leg</i>	רֵגֶל	.130	<i>glory, honor, wealth</i>	כְּבוֹד	.122
<i>peace, health, welfare</i>	שָׁלוֹם	.131	<i>camp, army</i>	מַחֲנֶה	.123
<i>teaching, instruction</i> (trad., “law”)	תּוֹרָה	.132	<i>messenger</i> (מַלְאָכִי, Malachi, “my messenger”); <i>angel</i>	מַלְאָךְ	.124

9.5 Exercises

Gloss these phrases and clauses, parsing the verbal forms, and identifying any construct chains. Use the “rules” for glossing the construct (Lesson 5):

1. Words in construct are indicated by ‘-of’ as the last element in their English word-group.
2. All elements of a construct are visually linked by em-dashes (i.e., *the-house-of the-king*).
3. Words that are construct to a definite form are represented with the definite article “the”.

97. This word can focus on *age* (“youth”, “young man”), especially when opposed to “elder” or “aged” (e.g., Ex 10.9; Dt 28.50; Josh 6.21; 1 Sam 17.33,42; 2 Kgs 4.29 ... 35; Is 3.5; Est 3.13), but can also reflect social standing; for example, it identifies an especially trusted or personal *servant*, such as one who accompanies his master on an errand or journey (e.g., Gn 22.3,5,12,19; Ex 33.11; Jg 7.10; 9.54; 19.3,9 ..., 19 [N.B.: distinguished from other (previously unmentioned) servants!]; 1 Sam 14.1,6; 16.18; 20.21,35 ...; 25.5,8 ...; 2 Kgs 4.19,22,24,25; 5.20; 6.15,17; Ru 2.5,6; Est 2.2; 6.3,5), to an *heir* (e.g., Gn 25.27; 34.19; 37.2; 41.12; 2 Sam 18.5,12 ...), or a young man who is in some way “special” (e.g., Jg 13.5,7,8 ...; 17.7,11 ...; 1 Sam 1.22,24 ...; 2.11,13 ...; 3.1,8; 4.21; 9.3,5 ...; 16.11; 1 Kgs 11.28; 1 Chr 12.28). Some occurrences, by modifying it with “small” or “little” seem to encompass *both* (e.g., Jg 8.20; 1 Sam 20.35; 1 Kgs 3.7 (cf. 1 Ch 22.5; 29.1); 2 Kgs 5.14). The narrative sometimes includes the age of the נֶעֶר (e.g., Gn 37.2 (17 years) ; 2 Chr 34.3 (16 years; cf. 34.1)). Calling someone a נֶעֶר thus often implies that he is a person of *rank* or *relative importance*.

98. The Masoretes pointed this word with what looks like two consecutive vowels. It is pronounced, however, as though a *waw* preceded the *holem*: `a · *wôn* (i.e., according to its theoretical spelling: עֲוֹן).

a. בת מִלֶּךָ	e. בית בני אִשֶּׁת הַכֹּהֵן	i. לְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי־יְהוּדָה
b. בית בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ	f. רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים	j. בֶּן לְדָוִד
c. נְבִיאֵי יְהוָה	g. שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־דָוִד	k. עֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
d. מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	h. מִבְּנוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ	l. בֶּן־אִשָּׁה מִן־בָּנוֹת דָּן

a. וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֲנָשִׁי גִבְעוֹן אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה	Josh 10.6; Gibeon, Joshua
b. וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי פַרְעֹה אֵלָיו ...	Ex 10.7; אֵלָיו to him
c. בְּנֵי רָחֵל אִשֶּׁת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף וּבְנֵימִן:	Gn 46.19; Rachel, Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin
d. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה דָם־הַבְּרִית	Ex 24.8; הִנֵּה here is; Moses
e. וְיִתָּר דְּבָרֵי יִרְבְּעָם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:	1 Kgs 14.19; יִתָּר rest of; כְּתוּבִים are written; note the possessive ל near the end; Jeroboam, Israel
f. אֵלֶּה רֹאשֵׁי אֲבוֹת הַלְוִיִּם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם:	Ex 6.25; אֵלֶּה these [are]; ל according to; (name); לָהֶם - their (3 mp); Levites
g. וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוֹאָשׁ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּשִׁמְרוֹן עִם מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְלֹךְ יִרְבְּעָם בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו:	2 Kgs 14.16; אֲבֹתָיו his fathers; וַיִּקְבֹּר and he was buried; בְּנוֹ his son; תַחְתָּיו in his place; Jehoash, Samaria, Jeroboam
h. וַיְהִי גְבוּל בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן הַיַּרְדֵּן	Josh 13.23; וַיְהִי and it was (3 ms Q Pr , היה); Reuben, Jordan
i. וַיִּמְצָא מִלֶּאךָ יְהוָה אֶת־הָגָר	Gn 16.7; מִצָּא find; Hagar
j. וַיִּשְׁלַח הָעָם שְׁלָה	1 Sam 4.4; שְׁלָה to Shiloh; הָעָם people;
וַיִּשְׁאוּ מִשָּׁם אֶת אַרְוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת	(מִן +) שָׁם there; וַיִּשְׁאוּ and they took;
k. אֵלֶּה הֵם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגֵּרְשׁוֹנִי:	Nu 3.21; אֵלֶּה these [are]; Gershonites

9.6 Enrichment: Semantic Clusters

You now have a large enough Hebrew vocabulary that you will begin to find it helpful to group and learn words by their *semantic domain*—their shared “area of reference”. Here are few examples, taken from the vocabulary in Lessons 2–9 (numbers are the number of the lesson):

Human relationships (family)			Human relationships/rôles (society)		
<i>father; male ancestor</i>	אָב	2	<i>lord, master</i>	אָדוֹן	4
<i>brother, male relative</i>	אָח	3	<i>humanity, humankind, man; Adam</i>	אָדָם	3
<i>man, husband; each</i>	אִישׁ	2	<i>enemy</i>	אֹיֵב	6
<i>(f.) mother; ancestress</i>	אִם	9	<i>people [group], nation, folk</i>	גּוֹי	3
<i>woman, wife</i>	אִשָּׁה	2	<i>priest</i>	כֹּהֵן	2
<i>women, wives</i>	נָשִׁים	2	<i>king, monarch</i>	מֶלֶךְ	2
<i>son, male descendant</i>	בֶּן	2	<i>messenger; angel</i>	מַלְאָךְ	9
<i>daughter, female descendant</i>	בַּת	6	<i>rule, reign</i>	מָשָׁל	5
<i>daughters</i>	בָּנוֹת	2	<i>servant, slave</i>	עֶבֶד	2
<i>clan, extended family</i>	מִשְׁפָּחָה	3	<i>official, leader, ruler</i>	שָׂר	5
Parts/Aspects of the Body/Person			Terms that Refer to Deity		
<i>heart</i>	לֵב	2	<i>(my) [divine] Lord, Master</i>	אֲדוֹנִי	4
<i>(f.) life, self</i>	נֶפֶשׁ	2	<i>god, God</i>	אֵל	2
<i>eye [water-source, well]</i>	עֵין	3	<i>gods, God</i>	אֱלֹהִים	2
<i>face, presence</i>	פָּנִים	3	<i>YHWH (proper name)</i>	יְהוָה	4
<i>head, top, peak</i>	רֹאשׁ	4	<i>Yah (proper name)</i>	יְהִי	4
<i>voice, sound</i>	קוֹל	5			
<i>(f.) breath, wind, spirit</i>	רוּחַ	5			
<i>(II) nose, nostril; anger (n.)</i>	אָף	6			
<i>foot, leg</i>	רֵגֶל	9			

Seeing how terms are related to each other will help you remember their gloss(es), since you will learn them according to their semantic function, rather than merely in isolation. As you learn more words, a semantic “map”—cross-referenced lists or diagrams that link words by function or reference—will also help you realize the [sometimes slight] differences between apparent synonyms, although this often comes only by studying the occurrences of a pair (or set) of closely related words to see how each one is used.

Lesson 10

THE PERFECT (QATAL, SUFFIX CONJUGATION)

The imperfect primarily refers to the present or future, and the preterite explicitly narrates series of events. Both are “prefix” conjugations. The other main verbal paradigm of Biblical Hebrew, the “perfect”, has an extremely broad set of functions that are both *temporal*—ranging from pluperfect (in, e.g., narrative flashbacks) to simple past, present, and even future—and *volitional* (especially as imperative). The main distinction in form between the imperfect and preterite, on the one hand, and the perfect, on the other, is that the perfect uses a unique set of PGN affixes—all of which are suffixes (hence “suffix conjugation”)—to refer to the person, gender, and number of its subject. Its other name, *qatal*, reflects the 3ms *qal* perfect of קָטַל, “kill”, a common paradigm verb.

The perfect is the most frequent conjugation in Biblical Hebrew. More than one-quarter (28%) of all biblical verbs are perfects.

10.1 Form

The perfect⁹⁹ uses *suffixes* to agree with the person, gender, and number [PGN] of its subject.

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	אָנִי - <i>I</i>	אֲנִי - <i>we</i>
2nd	Masc.	אַתָּה - <i>you</i>	אַתֶּם - <i>you</i>
	Fem.	אַתְּ - <i>you</i>	אַתֶּן - <i>you</i>
3rd	Masc.	--- <i>he/it</i>	הֵם - <i>they</i>
	Fem.	הִיא - <i>she/it</i>	הֵן - <i>they</i>

1. The 3ms perfect has no ending; it is the lexical (or “vocabulary”) form of the verb.
2. Second person endings all consist of ת + vowel point, as does 1cs.
3. The *šewa* of the 2fs perfect ending is silent; this is the only time that a Hebrew word ends with two consonants (see “*Dageš, šewa, & Syllables*”, Lesson 3): מָשַׁלְתְּ ≈ *mašalt*.
4. The 3fs (הִיא -) and 3cp (הֵם -) endings consist of a vowel.
5. The 2mp (אַתֶּם -) and 2fp (אַתְּ -) endings consist of a closed syllable.
6. The third person plural (“they”) is called “common” (as are both first person forms) because the same suffix (הֵם -) is used for subjects of either gender.
7. These endings are used throughout the perfect of all verbs (the only difference is the loss of *dageš lene* in the ת-endings of some forms of the verb), and so *must be memorized*.

99. The perfect is also called “*qatal*” (= 3ms *qal* perfect of the traditional paradigm verb) or “suffix conjugation”.

10.2 The *Qal* Perfect

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
1st	Common	מָשַׁלְתִּי	<i>I ruled</i>	מָשַׁלְנוּ	<i>We ruled</i>
2nd	Masc.	מָשַׁלְתָּ	<i>You ruled</i>	מָשַׁלְתֶּם	<i>You ruled</i>
	Fem.	מָשַׁלְתְּ		מָשַׁלְתֶּן	
3rd	Masc.	מָשַׁל	<i>He ruled</i>	מָשַׁלוּ	<i>They ruled</i>
	Fem.	מָשַׁלָּה	<i>She ruled</i>		

The slight vocalic differences under the *radicals* of the verbal root reflect the nature of the ending (whether an open or closed syllable or a vowel) and are fairly consistent throughout the entire verbal system, not just the *qal* perfect. You do not need to memorize these guidelines, but they may help you find your way around the verbal paradigms.

1. If the PGN ending *begins with a consonant* (all except the third person forms), there is silent *šewa* after the third radical (i.e., before the ending), and the second radical's vowel is *pataḥ* (-ַ-).
2. If the ending is a *closed syllable* (2mp, 2fp), the second radical has *pataḥ*, and the vowel after the first radical is a half-vowel (*šewa* [-ְ-]).
3. If the ending is a *vowel* (3fs, 3cp), the second radical has vocal *šewa* (-ְ-).
4. If the ending is a closed syllable (2mp, 2fp) or vowel (3fs, 3cp), it is accented; otherwise, the accent falls on the antepenultimate [next-to-last] syllable. This is part of the reason for the variations in the vowels within the verbal root.
5. The perfect may describe a simple past event (“I ruled”), ingression (“He began/came to rule”), or ongoing action (“She was ruling”).

מָשַׁלְתִּי	<i>mā · šal · tî</i>	מָשַׁלְנוּ	<i>mā · šal · nû</i>
מָשַׁלְתָּ	<i>mā · šal · tā</i>	מָשַׁלְתֶּם	<i>m^e · šal · tem</i>
מָשַׁלְתְּ	<i>mā · šalt</i>	מָשַׁלְתֶּן	<i>m^e · šal · ten</i>
מָשַׁל	<i>mā · šal</i>	מָשַׁלוּ	<i>mā · š^e · lû</i>
מָשַׁלָּה	<i>mā · š^e · lā</i>		

10.2.1 Stative Verbs

Some verbs have either *šere* or *holem* after the second radical in the 3ms *qal* perfect (the lexical form). The rest of their forms are like מָשַׁל. These verbs describe a state or condition, and are called “stative” verbs (Lesson 15). The most common stative verbs in Biblical Hebrew are:

גָּדַל	<i>be[come] large, great</i>	מָלֵא	<i>be[come] full</i>
זָקֵן	<i>be[come] old</i>	קָדַשׁ	<i>be[come] holy, set apart, reserved</i>
טָהַר	<i>be[come] ceremonially clean, pure, acceptable</i>	קָרַב	<i>be[come] near, close</i>
טָמֵא	<i>be[come] ceremonially unclean, impure</i>	רָחַק	<i>be[come] distant, far</i>
כָּבֵד	<i>be[come] heavy, important; wealthy</i>	שָׁלַם	<i>be[come] whole, complete, healthy, at peace</i>

10.2.2 III-⌘ Verbs

Verbs that end in ⌘ (III-⌘ verbs) look slightly different because “syllable-final” ⌘ becomes silent and cannot close the syllable (§6.2). Their forms differ from those of מָשַׁל (above) and other strong verbs in three ways.

1. They lack silent *šewa* after the **ס**, which functions as a reminder of historical spelling (cf. the now-silent *e* in English, which was pronounced in Chaucer's day).
2. Since the second syllable is thus open, they have *qameṣ* after the second radical rather than *pataḥ* (§22).
3. Since the *qameṣ* after the second radical therefore precedes the ending, the **ת** of the second person endings lacks *dageš lene* (and 2fs lacks the final silent *šewa*).

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	מָצָאתִי <i>I found</i>	מָצָאנוּ <i>We found</i>
2nd	Masc.	מָצָאתָ <i>You found</i>	מָצָאתֶם <i>You found</i>
	Fem.	מָצָאתְּ <i>You found</i>	מָצָאתֵן <i>You found</i>
3rd	Masc.	מָצָא <i>He/It found</i>	מָצְאוּ <i>They found</i>
	Fem.	מָצְאָה <i>She/It found</i>	

4. In most other III-guttural verbal roots, 2fs *qal* perfect has two *pataḥ*s (note the accent).

שָׁלַחְתְּ *šā · la · ḥat* you sent שָׁמַעְתְּ *šā · ma · 'at* you heard

10.3 Function (HBI §2.2.1)

The function of the perfect is heavily contextual. It depends primarily on the *genre* or literary type of the discourse within which it occurs. Its function also reflects the content of its clause and its relationship to the surrounding context, as well as the action or state described by the verbal root itself. A primary factor in its temporal and modal function is syntactical—whether or not it occurs with the prefixed *waw* (וַ).¹⁰⁰

1. *Without the conjunction*, the perfect nearly always refers to the *past* in narrative—either the simple past (“he saw”), continual past (“he was seeing”), perfect (“he has seen”) or pluperfect (“he had seen”). The function is controlled by the context. In narrative, the perfect tends to be preceded by another word, either a subordinating conjunction such as **כִּי**, the relative (**אֲשֶׁר**), or, in a disjunctive clause (§6.6, and below), by its subject, object (Gn 42.4), prepositional phrase (2 Sam 5.5), or a negative (**לֹא**).

בְּחֶבְרוֹן מָלַךְ עַל־יְהוּדָה ... וּבִירוּשָׁלַם מָלַךְ ... עַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה:	In Hebron <i>he</i> reigned over Judah ..., and in Jerusalem <i>he</i> reigned over all Israel and Judah (2 Sam 5.5).
וְאֶת־בְּנֵימִן אָחִי יוֹסֵף לֹא־שָׁלַח יַעֲקֹב	(Joseph's brothers went down [preterite] ...), but Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob <i>did not send</i> ... (Gn 42.4)
וַהֲדָד שָׁמַע בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּי־שָׁכַב דָּוִד עִם־אֲבֹתָיו	Now Hadad <i>heard</i> in Egypt that David <i>slept</i> with his fathers ... (1 Kgs 11.21)

This function of the perfect is especially common in *disjunctive clauses* (§6.6, §6.10), which describe events that happened alongside or before the preceding preterite (a flashback), contrast or compare two events (Gn 1.5), or inject a non-event (i.e., with a negative) into a string of preterites (Jg 11.17).

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה	God called [preterite] the light “Day”, and the darkness <i>he</i> called [perfect] “Night” (Gn 1.5).
וְלֹא זָכְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְהוָה	but the sons of Israel <i>did not remember</i> Y ^{HWH} ... (Jg 8.34)
וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְאָכִים אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם ... וְלֹא שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְגַם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב שָׁלַח וְלֹא אָבָה	Israel sent [preterite] messengers to the king of Edom, ... but the king of Edom <i>did not listen</i> , and also to the king of Moab [they] <i>sent</i> , but he <i>did not agree</i> (Jg 11.17).

100. This discussion refers primarily to narrative and instructional biblical prose.

The disjunctive clause shows that the event that it describes is *not necessarily* the next event in the story. Its relationship to the storyline (simultaneous, overlapping, antecedent [flashback], proleptic, etc.) must be determined by the relationship of its *content* to its *cotext*.¹⁰¹ This is an especially common function of the perfect in biblical narrative.

This does *not* mean that events described in disjunctive clauses are insignificant or less important, but rather that they stand outside the main sequence (often like a “by the way” comment in English), telling the reader something that he or she either will need to know in order to fully understand something that is going to be described in the narrative.

From another perspective, non-events (*irrealis*) are often just as important as events, so that we should always ask why the narrator is telling us that this or that *didn’t* happen.

2. *Stative* verbs (§15.1) may describe either a *past* or *present* state, condition, or situation in the perfect, including verbs that describe an emotion, thought, perception, or condition. Their function is determined by the syntax and context; 2 Sam 7.22 is a direct quotation; Dt 34.9 is a disjunctive clause.

גְּדֹלַת אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה You are great, Lord YHWH (2 Sam 7.22)
וַיְהִי שֶׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון מְלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה Now Joshua ben Nun *was full* of a spirit of wisdom (Dt 34.9)

3. Any *perfect with a prefixed* -ו begins a clause, and is often followed by its subject or object. This tends to occur in direct quotations (within either narrative or prophecy), where the perfect tends to refer to the present or future, and may function as a series of instructions (Lv 3.8), predictions, or commands (Ru 3.2). Again, the nuance depends heavily upon the literary genre and immediate context.

וְסָמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ He shall lean his hand on [its] head, ...
וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ and slaughter it ..., and the sons of Aaron
וְזָרְקוּ בְנֵי אֹהֶרֶן אֶת־דָּמֹו shall sprinkle its blood (Lv 3.8).
וְרָחַצְתָּ נִסְכֶּתָּ וְשָׁמַתָּ שְׂמִלְחֶיךָ עָלֶיךָ Wash, perfume yourself, put on your robe,
וַיֵּרְדֶּתָּ הַגֶּרֶן and go down to the threshing floor (Ru 3.2)
כִּי יִמְלְאוּ יָמֶיךָ וְשָׁכַבְתָּ אֶת־אֲבֹתֶיךָ When your days are full [complete], and you
lie down with your fathers, ... (2 Sam 7.12).

The predicate of a disjunctive clause that interrupts a sequence of *waw* + perfect clauses may be *imperfect* or *imperative*. This often happens within a series of instructional or imperative *w* + perfects, and reflects the non-instructional line of the disjunctive clause.

וְקָרְבוּ וְכִרְעִי וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם And its inner part and legs *he shall* [must] wash with water (Lv 1.9)
וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תֹּקֵד בּוֹ And the fire of the altar *shall* [must] be kept burning on it (Lv 6.2
[ET 6.9]¹⁰²)

10.4 The Imperfect, Preterite, & Perfect

As this chart suggests, a verb’s conjugation in Biblical Hebrew narrative is primarily related to the function of its clause within a particular genre, and the relationship of the contents of the clause to the main line of that genre. These are not absolute rules: for example, an imperfect may begin a prophetic discourse, as may a participle (not listed), a perfect may introduce a series of preterites, &c. Within direct quotations, any verbal conjugation may be used.

101. The terms “context” and “cotext” are often distinguished. “Cotext” refers to the surrounding *words*, and “context” to the entire sociological and conceptual “world” within which the discourse occurs (“context” in this sense can also be called the “universe of discourse”).

102. This nomenclature is the normal way of indicating different verse numberings between the Hebrew and English text (ET); it means that Leviticus 6.2 in the Hebrew text is 6.9 in the English Bible (Leviticus 6.1 in Hebrew is 6.8 in the English text).

Conjugational Functions	Primary Temporal Reference	Primary Function		Subject person gender number
		Main “storyline”	“Added” information (disjunctive clauses)	
preterite	past	narrative		any
waw + perfect	present-future-modal	instruction prophecy		
perfect	past		narrative	
imperfect	present-future-modal		instruction prophecy	
cohortative imperative jussive	future	commands (used in direct quotations)		1st only 2nd only 3rd only

10.5 Concepts

antecedent	cotext	genre	perfect	qatal
content	disjunctive clause	instructional material	performative	stative verb
context	flashback	narrative	proleptic	suffix conjugation

10.6 Vocabulary

tribe; rod, staff (m.) ¹⁰³	מִטָּה	.141	perish	אָבַד	.133
people [group], nation	עַם	.142	ear	אָזֶן	.134
text, document; ¹⁰⁴ writing(s)	סֵפֶר	.143	cattle; animals	בְּהֵמָה	.135
friend, companion	רֵעַ	.144	master, owner, husband, Baal	בָּעַל	.136
lip, language; edge, shore	שִׁפָּה	.145	herd (large cattle, such as donkeys, camels, cows, horses)	בָּקָר	.137
tribe; rod, staff	שִׁבְט	.146	be, become (often ל introduces the result), happen, occur	הָיָה	.138
swear [an oath] (N only)	שָׁבַע	.147	palm of hand, sole of foot	כַּף	.139
judge (vb.)	שָׁפַט	.148	command[ment], order	מִצְוָה	.140

103. The noun מִטָּה refers to a tribe slightly more frequently (196/248 = 79%) than שִׁבְט (143/193 = 74%). מִטָּה is more common in Ex & Nu, whereas שִׁבְט is distributed more widely and evenly, as this table shows (statistics are for these books, not total occurrences):

	מִטָּה				שִׁבְט	
	staff	tribe	other		staff	tribe
Ex	20	6	26	4	1	3
Nu	5	103	108	8	1	7
Dt				19		19
Jg				16	1	15
Sam	2		2	18	3	15
Kgs		2	2	13		13
Pss	1		1 2	11	9	2
Pr				8	8	

104. “Book”—the traditional gloss for סֵפֶר—is misleading; codices, the forerunners of bound volumes—“books” as we think of them—were not used until the second century CE. A סֵפֶר could be written on nearly any material (e.g., a broken piece (sherd) of pottery (writing makes it an *ostrakon*), a piece of papyrus or parchment, a clay tablet). The noun מְגִלָּה (related to the verb גָּלַל, “to roll”) refers explicitly to a “scroll”, although it is relatively infrequent in Biblical Hebrew (21x) compared to סֵפֶר (185x).

10.7 Exercises

After learning the PGN subject endings of the perfect, parse and gloss (using the simple past) these forms.

a. אֲבִדְתִּי	e. מָצָאת	i. וְנִקְרַב
b. וַתִּמָּצֵא	f. יִשְׁפֹּטוּ	j. קָרַבְנוּ
c. קָרָאתָ	g. קָרַבְנוּ	k. וּשְׁמֹרְתָן
d. וַתִּקְרָא	h. וַיִּזְכֹּר	l. שִׁפְטוּ

a. וּשְׁלֹמֹה יָשָׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא דָוִד אָבִיו	1 Kgs 2.12; כִּסֵּא <i>seat, throne</i> ; אָבִיו <i>his father</i> ; Solomon, David
b. לֹא-עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה	Dt 28.47; ךְּ- <i>your</i> (2 ms); שִׂמְחָה <i>joy, rejoicing, happiness</i>
c. וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד שָׁלַח אֶל-צִדּוֹק וְאֶל-אֲבִיתָר	2 Sam 19.12; David, Zadok, Abiathar
d. וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתָּם בְּקוֹלִי:	Jg 6.10; יְ - <i>my</i> (1cs); בְּקוֹל <i>listen to the voice of</i> (<i>obey</i>) ...
e. מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים עַל-גּוֹיִם	Ps 47.9 (each line is a clause); קָדְשׁוֹ <i>his</i> [יְ- 3ms] <i>holiness</i>
f. לֹא-הִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוֹשָׁפָט אָבִיךָ	2 Chr 21.12; ךְּ- <i>your</i> (2ms); Jehoshaphat; Asa
g. כִּי שָׁמַרְתִּי בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה	2 Sam 22.22; כִּי <i>for, that, because</i> ; רָשָׁע <i>be wicked</i> ; <i>act wickedly</i> ; here בָּן <i>against</i> ; יְ - <i>my</i>
h. וְלֹא-שָׁמַרְנוּ אֶת־הַמִּצְוֹת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים	Ne 1.7; חֹק <i>statute, rule, regulation</i>
i. וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-בָּנָתָיו לָמָּה זֶה עֹזְבֹתֶן אֶת־הָאִישׁ	Ex 2.20; בָּנָתָיו <i>his</i> [יְ- 3ms] <i>daughters</i> ; לָמָּה <i>Why?</i>
j. זָכַרְתִּי בַלִּילָה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה	Ps 119.55; ךְּ- <i>your</i> (2ms); יְהוָה (vocative); ignore the final הָ - on וַאֲשֶׁמְרָה
k. וְאֶתְּבַת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ	Dt 6.5; ךְּ- <i>your</i> (2ms); מָאֹד <i>strength, might, power</i>
l. לִמְעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וּלְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ	Dt 31.12; לִמְעַן <i>so that, in order that</i> ; לִמְדוּ <i>learn</i> ; יִרָא <i>fear</i> ; ךְּ- <i>your</i> (2mp); שָׁמֹר <i>here be careful</i> ; לַעֲשׂוֹת <i>to do; by doing</i>

10.8 Enrichment: The Perfect as Performative?

A possible function of the perfect not mentioned in the lesson, is the perfect as *performative*. A performative is a verb that accomplishes or realizes the act that it describes, so that to say, e.g., “I promise that ...” is to make the promise—no further action is required (cf., e.g., “I declare ...”, “I announce ...”, “I claim ...”). A crude test of a performative is whether or not the word “hereby” can be inserted into the statement, as well as such functional tests as whether or not the speaker has the authority to accomplish the act that he or she is naming.

A common example of a performative in the prophetic literature is the formula “Thus says YHWH” (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה), so that although אָמַר is 3ms *qal* perfect, it refers to the following quotation, rather than to a past speech.

The performative function may also explain statements with a perfect as predicate, especially divine pronouncements, such as the promise of the land to Abram [sic]:

לְזֶרְעֶךָ נִתְּנִי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת To your seed I [hereby] *give* this land (Gn 15.18)

Why does this statement use the perfect, since the former promises (Gn 12.7; 13.15, 17), use the imperfect to refer to a clearly future event (Abram does not yet have any heirs to whom the land might be given)? One explanation is that the performative function is better suited to the divine self-malediction in the covenantal ratification ceremony (Gn 15.17).

In Gn 17.5, two verbal clauses—with a imperfect (יִקְרָא) and *waw* + perfect (וַיְהִי)—referring to the future, precede a perfect (נִתְּתִיךָ). The content and context of the divine promise suggest that this is a performative, especially since Abram [now Abraham] was not yet a “multitude of nations”, and would not even be a father for some time (the verse is divided into clauses).

וְלֹא־יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָם	“And your name shall no longer be called ‘Abram’,
וְהָיָה שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָהָם	but your name shall be ‘Abraham’,
כִּי אֲבִיהֶמוֹן גּוֹיִם נִתְּתִיךָ:	because I [hereby] <i>make</i> you a father of a multitude
	of nations” (Gn 17.5).

The possibility of performative functions here and in other places again cautions us against assuming a simple relationship or equation between verbal conjugations—or verbal function—in Biblical Hebrew and other languages.

Lesson 11

NOMINAL MODIFICATION (IV)

Biblical Hebrew uses prepositions to show a noun's syntagmatic function (Lesson 7). It limits or modifies the range of a noun's reference by means of the article (§4.3), construct chain (Lesson 9), relative particle אֲשֶׁר (§11.2), or adjectives (cf. the examples in §4.3).

11.1 Adjectives

11.1.1 Form

Adjectives in Hebrew use the same endings as the noun. The lexical form of the adjective is masculine singular. The endings are added to the lexical form, unless it ends in הָ -, in which case the gender-number endings replace הָ - (e.g., יָפֶה). Endings often affect the word's vocalization.

Gender	Singular	Plural	
Masc.	טוֹב	טוֹבִים	<i>good</i>
Fem.	טוֹבָה	טוֹבוֹת	
Masc.	גָּדוֹל	גָּדוֹלִים	<i>large, great</i>
Fem.	גָּדוֹלָה	גָּדוֹלוֹת	
Masc.	יָפֶה	יָפִים	<i>handsome, attractive; beautiful</i>
Fem.	יָפָה	יָפוֹת	

Adjectives use the endings that agree with the *grammatical gender* of the word that they modify, so that their endings do *not* always match the ending of the noun that they modify. This is especially true for feminine nouns that do not end in הָ-, ת־, or וֹת־ (plural). When an adjective modifies a collective noun (e.g., צֵאן), it may agree with its grammatical number (and be singular), or with the noun's collective sense (and be plural).

אִשָּׁה יָפָה	<i>a beautiful woman</i>	Both nouns have the form (ending) associated with their genders, so the adjectives and nouns have the same endings.
סוּסִים טוֹבִים	<i>good horses</i>	
עָרִים גָּדוֹלוֹת	<i>great cities</i>	All three nouns are feminine (despite their form); so the adjectives have the feminine ending.
יָד חֲזָקָה	<i>a strong hand</i>	
נָשִׁים יָפוֹת	<i>beautiful women</i>	
עַם גָּדוֹל	<i>a great people [nation]</i>	Both adjectives agree with the noun, one with its grammatical number, the second with its collective sense.
הָעָם הַהֹלְכִים	<i>the people who walk</i> (Is 9.1)	

11.1.2 Function

Adjectives in Biblical Hebrew have three functions, which are indicated by 1) whether or not the adjective and its substantive agree in *definiteness*; 2) the *word order* of the adjective and

substantive; and 3) the immediate *syntax*. The three functions may be called *attributive*, *predicate*, and *substantive*.

1. An *attributive* adjective and its noun agree in definiteness—both are either definite or indefinite—and form a noun phrase, like an adjective in English:

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדֹל the *great* king
בְּחֵיל כָּבֵד מְאֹד ... with a very *heavy* [i.e., lavish] retinue (1 Kg 10.2)

2. A *predicate* (or “verbal”) adjective and its noun form a non-verbal clause, glossed using a form of “to be”.¹⁰⁵ The adjective is usually indefinite, the noun definite, but both may be indefinite, especially in poetry. The adjective, which *predicates* something about the noun, may precede or follow it.

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדֹל The king *is* [was] *great*.
הַגָּדֹל הַמֶּלֶךְ
טוֹב הַדָּבָר The word *is* *good* (1 Kgs 2.38).
כִּי כָבֵד הָרָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ
כָּל-הַדְּרָכֵי-אִישׁ זֶךְ בְּעֵינָיו for the famine *was* *heavy* [i.e., harsh, severe] in the land (Gn 12.10).
All a man’s ways *are* *clean* in his eyes (Pr 16.2).

3. When there is an adjective but no noun, the adjective “becomes” a noun—it is *substantive* (or “nominal”), and may function as a noun or as a relative clause. Indefinite substantive adjectives occur much more frequently in poetry than prose. Some adjectives occur so frequently as substantives that they can be considered nouns (e.g., more than 90% of the occurrences of זָקֵן, “old”, are substantive, hence the gloss “elder”). An adjective in a construct chain is always substantive (Pr 15.28; Ex 12.21).

הַגָּדֹל the *great one/man*; he [one] *who is* *great*
לֵב צַדִּיק יִהְיֶה לְעֹנֹת The heart of *the righteous* ponders in order to answer (Pr 15.28);
this could also be attributive: “A righteous heart ...”
וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל Moses summoned all of *the elders* of Israel ... (Ex 12.21)

4. When both noun and adjective are indefinite (as is fairly common in poetry), the adjective’s function must be determined from its context. For example, when the modified noun is the subject or object of a clause or sentence (“*The great king* went to war”), or object of a preposition (“for *the great king*”), then the adjective is *attributive*. When the noun and adjective form their own clause (“The king *is* *great*”), the adjective is *predicate*.

Adjective with Noun		
	Indefinite Noun	Definite Noun
Predicate	טוֹב מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ טוֹב <i>A king is good.</i> ¹⁰⁶	טוֹב הַמֶּלֶךְ <i>The king is good.</i>
	מֶלֶכָּה טוֹבָה <i>a good queen</i> ¹⁰⁷	הַמֶּלֶכָּה הַטוֹבָה <i>the good queen</i>

105. It may seem that we are *adding* “is”, “was”, &c. to the text. Not so. The predicate translation renders the Hebrew text according to the requirements of English syntax and grammar. Some translations (e.g., KJV, NKJV, NAS) italicize words to show that there is no form in the Hebrew text that directly corresponds to that English term. It is unfortunate that this practice gives the appearance of “adding to” to the text.

106. When an anarthrous adjective follows an indefinite noun, the context—the clausal syntax—determines whether the adjective is predicate or attributive. Hence טוֹב מֶלֶךְ could be either *a good king* or *a king is good*.

107. See the preceding note.

	Adjective without Noun	
	Indefinite Noun	Definite Noun
Substantive	טוב <i>a good one/person/man</i> <i>he who is good / whoever is good</i>	הטוב <i>the good one/person/man</i> <i>[the/any] one who is good</i>
	טובה <i>a good woman</i> <i>she who is good</i>	הטובות <i>the good women</i> <i>the women who are good</i>

5. English adds “-er” to an adjective to show comparison (“taller”, “holier”) or uses the adverb “more” (“more wise”, “more sure”). There is *no comparative* form in Biblical Hebrew, which compares two things by using the preposition מִן to introduce the thing to which something is being compared (the word introduced by “than” in English comparison). Comparative adjectives are always predicate.

וְכַעַס אֵוִיל כָּבֵד מִשְׁנֵיהֶם	... but a fool's wrath <i>is heavier than</i> both (Pr 27.3)
וְטוֹב־רֶשׁ מְאִישׁ כָּזָב:	... and a poor [man] <i>is better than</i> a man of a lie [liar] (Pr 19.22)
גָּדוֹל יְהוָה מְכֹל־הָאֱלֹהִים	YHWH <i>is greater than</i> all gods. (Ex 18.11)
כִּי חֲזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ	... for [they—i.e., the people] <i>are stronger than</i> we (Nu 13.31)

6. The “comparative *min*” also occurs with stative verbs, where the subject of the verb is compared to someone/thing else (1 Kgs 10.23).

וַיִּגְדַּל הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מְכֹל מְלָכֵי הָאָרֶץ	And King Solomon <i>became greater than</i> all the kings of the land ... (1 Kgs 10.23)
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7. The word כָּל, *all*, is a *noun* in Hebrew; it therefore does *not* agree with the noun that it modifies, but usually occurs in construct with it as כָּל, *all of, each of, every* ... (more than 4000x). With pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14) it is written כָּל- (c. 200x).¹⁰⁸ When it [occasionally] occurs with the article, it refers to “everything” (i.e., “the whole [thing]”; 2 Sa 19.31; cf. Lv 1.9, 13; more than one-quarter of the occurrences of הַכָּל are in Ec).

כָּל־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת	according to <i>all [of]</i> this teaching/instruction (Dt 4.8)
וַיֵּתֶר כָּל־דִּבְרֵי אָסָא	Now the rest of <i>all [of]</i> the words of Asa (1 Kgs 15.23)
מִנֶּרֶת זָהָב כָּלָה	a lampstand <i>entirely</i> [all of it] of gold (Zc 4.2)
וַיֹּאמֶר מִפִּיבֹשֶׁת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ	And Mephiboshet said to the king,
גַּם אֶת־הַכָּל יִקַּח	“Let him just take <i>everything</i> ...” (2 Sa 19.31).

8. The word מְאֹד, *very, much*, can strengthen adjectives and verbs, and so is often called an “adverb”. מְאֹד is not inflected for gender or number. It comes at the end of the phrase or clause, following the word that it modifies. [N.B.: מְאֹד is strengthened by repetition (Nu 14.7).]

קָרוֹב אֵלַיךְ תִּהְיֶה מְאֹד	... the word is <i>very near</i> to you (Dt 30.14)
טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד:	The land is <i>very, very</i> good (Nu 14.7)
יָפָה הִיא מְאֹד	... she was <i>very</i> beautiful (Gn 12.14).
אִישׁ בָּרִיא מְאֹד	... a <i>very</i> fat man (Jg 3.17).

9. Adjectives follow construct chains; they do not interrupt them.

כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה הַגָּדֹל	all of the <i>great</i> work of YHWH (Dt 11.7 Jg 2.7)
וְאַלֶּה דִּבְרֵי דָוִד הָאַחֲרֹנִים	These are the <i>last</i> words of David (2 Sam 23.1)

108. The “x” is shorthand for “times” or “occurrences” [in Biblical Hebrew]. This means “two hundred times”.

11.1.3 The Most Common Adjectives

This lists by frequency all adjectives used 50 times or more in Biblical Hebrew (* indicates those which occur often or primarily as substantives).

רָע	<i>bad, evil, disastrous</i> (661x);	רָחוֹק	<i>far, distant</i> (85x)
רָעָה	fem. as subst.: <i>disaster, tragedy, evil, wickedness</i>	קָרוֹב	<i>near</i> (78x)
טוֹב	<i>good, pleasant; happy</i> [of the heart] (612x)	עָנִי	* <i>afflicted, distressed, poor</i> (76x)
רַב	<i>much, many</i> (475x)	מֵת	<i>dead</i> (72x)
צַדִּיק	<i>just, innocent, righteous</i> (206x)	זָר	<i>strange, different, illicit</i> (71x)
זָקֵן	* <i>old</i> (187x); <i>elder</i>	כָּסִיל	* <i>stupid, dull, insolent</i> (70x); <i>fool</i>
אַחֵר	<i>another, other</i> (166x)	מָלֵא	<i>full</i> (67x)
חָכָם	<i>wise, skilled</i> (138x)	אֲבִיּוֹן	* <i>poor</i> (61x)
קָדוֹשׁ	<i>holy, set apart</i> (115x)	חָזָק	<i>hard, strong</i> (56x)
מְעַט	<i>few</i> ; subst.: <i>a little</i> (96x)	קָטָן	<i>small, little, insignificant</i> (54x)
חָלָל	<i>dead, killed</i> (94x); subst.: <i>the dead</i>	חֲדָשׁ	<i>new</i> (53x)
טָהוֹר	<i>clean, pure</i> (94x)	שָׁוְיָא	<i>worthless</i> (52x); <i>in vain</i> (adverb); subst.: <i>worthlessness</i>
תָּמִים	<i>whole, complete, entire, blameless</i> (91x)	אַחֲרֵי	<i>behind, last</i> (50x)
טָמֵא	[ceremonially] <i>unclean, impure</i> (88x)		

11.2 The Relative Particle

A relative clause modifies a noun or substantive by *relating* something about it. English relative clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun (“who”, “which”) and follow the word that they modify—“the prophet *who* said”. Hebrew relative clauses are introduced by the relative אֲשֶׁר (more than 5500 times in Biblical Hebrew).

1. Like the relative pronoun in English, אֲשֶׁר normally follows the word that it modifies:

עָנִי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם	... the affliction of my people <i>who are in Egypt</i> (Ex 3.7)
הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר מִצְפּוֹן בְּהָר	... the kings <i>who were on the north in the hill country</i> (Jos 11.2)
בְּעֹז אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֵלִימֶלֶךְ:	... Boaz, <i>who was from Elimelek's clan</i> (Ru 2.3)
עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עִם־שָׁאוּל וַיּוֹנָתָן:	... with [the] Israel[ites] <i>who were with Saul and Jonathan</i> (1 Sam 14.21)

N.B.: English allows “implicit” relative clauses—i.e., those that do not begin with a relative pronoun, such as “the kings from the north” instead of “the kings *who were* from the north”. In biblical narrative, however, relative clauses are nearly always explicit (written with אֲשֶׁר).

2. When a relative clause modifying a “locative noun” ends with שָׁם, “there”, the combination שָׁם ... אֲשֶׁר often functions as a relative locative adverb (שָׁם ... אֲשֶׁר, “where”):

בְּאֶרֶץ גּוֹשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	... in the land of Goshen, <i>where the sons of Israel</i> [were], ... (Ex 9.26)
מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה שָׁם	“... from the place <i>where</i> you are ...” (Gn 13.14)
בְּהִיכַל יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁם אָרוֹן	... in YHWH's temple, <i>where</i> the ark ... was (1 Sa 3.3)

3. When this type of relative clause describes a person, group, or thing, it is usually predicate (“who/which was/were/is/etc. there”):

אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם: ... the Amorites *who were there* (Nu 21.32)

4. The compound form **כַּאֲשֶׁר** (**אֲשֶׁר** + **כֹּ**) is a comparative particle, “as, just as,” that often precedes a verb (especially verbs of command, instruction, etc.); following the introductory particle **וַיְהִי** it is often temporal in the sense of “when”:

וַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לָהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה	YHWH shall do to them <i>just as</i> he did ... (Dt 31.4)
כַּאֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר מִשַּׁל הַקְּדֻמוֹנִי	As the proverb of the ancients says, (1 Sam 24.14)
וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר זָקֵן שְׁמוּאֵל	Now <i>when</i> Samuel was old, ... (1 Sam 8.1)

N.B.: Biblical Hebrew has three syntagms that correspond roughly to the relative clause in English: (1) clauses introduced by the particle **אֲשֶׁר**; (2) clauses formed by a substantive adjective (§11.1.2); and (3) clauses formed by a substantive participle (§12.2). Although these sound the same when rendered into English, the **אֲשֶׁר** clause modifies a noun; the substantival adjective and participle have no noun to modify.

11.3 Non-verbal Clauses

A clause is a group of words that makes a *comment* (the predicate) about a *topic* (the subject). Although the word “predicate” is often used casually to refer to verbs, a predicate can be nearly any part of speech or connected group of words (syntagm). A clause can be a sentence, or merely part of a sentence (e.g., relative clauses, above). In these two examples, David is the subject; the rest of the clause tells us something about David:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. David <i>wrote many songs</i> . | ascribes an action to David (something that he did) |
| b. David <i>was a mighty warrior</i> . | explains who/what David was (what kind of warrior he was) |

Hebrew clauses that sound like (a) are *verbal* clauses (a verb is the main part of the predicate), but clauses like (b) tend to be *non-verbal*, with either a predicate adjective (Ex 9.27), noun, prepositional phrase, or adverb as the predicate. We will consider a clause non-verbal when it lacks an imperfect, preterite, perfect, imperative, predicate participle (Lesson 12), or infinitive (Lesson 16). We will also consider the more specific word in a non-verbal clause to be the subject, with (1) proper names and definite nouns more specific than generic nouns; (2) personal pronouns more specific than proper names and definite nouns; and (3) demonstratives more definite than personal pronouns.

יְהוָה הַצְדִּיק	YHWH is the righteous one (Ex 9.27)
אֲנִי יְהוָה	I am YHWH (Ex 6.2); pronoun as subject
אָחִי הוּא	he is my brother (Gn 20.5); pronoun as subject
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם אֵלִישָׁע	Elisha said to them, “ <i>This</i> is not the way,
וְלֹא זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ וְלֹא זֶה הָעִיר	nor [וְלֹא <i>and not</i>] is <i>this</i> the city. ...” (2 Kgs 6.19)

A clause is either *syndetic* (linked to its preceding cotext by a conjunction) or *asyndetic* (lacking a conjunction; these are relatively infrequent in biblical narrative). Disjunctive and preterite clauses are by definition syndetic, as is any other clause beginning with *waw*. Other types of clauses are also syndetic, such as those that begin with subordinating particles, such as **כִּי**, **אֲשֶׁר**, **לְמַעַן**, etc. It is not the first word or form that determines that a concatenation of words is a clause, however, but the presence of a topic and a comment.

11.4 Nominal Apposition

Nouns can also be modified by other nouns. In *apposition* one noun follows another, but they do not form a construct chain (since the first noun is usually definite, it cannot be in construct). If the first noun is a generic term (e.g., “the king”), the apposed noun is usually a personal name. If the first noun is a personal name, the second usually identifies him or her by office, position, or relationship (i.e., the aspect of that person that is contextually appropriate). A major clue to the presence of apposition is that proper names and definite nouns do not occur in construct:

(a)	הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד	King David (2 Sa 3.31; Samuel-Kings uses this syntagm)
(b)	דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ	King David (1 Ch 26.26; Chronicles uses this syntagm)
(c)	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נֹון	Joshua son of Nun (Ex 33.11)
(d)	שָׂרַי אִשְׁתִּי אַבְרָהָם	Sarai, Abram's wife (Gn 16.1)
(e)	דָּוִד עֶבֶד יְהוָה	David, the servant of YHWH (Ps 36.1)
(g)	רוּת הַמֹּאבִּיטָה אִשְׁתִּי מַחֲלֹן	Ruth, the Moabite, Mahlon's wife (Ru 4.10)
(f)	בָּרוּךְ בֶּן נְרִיָּה הַסֹּפֵר	Baruch, son of Neriah, the scribe (Jr 36.32)

In (c) – (e), a construct chain is apposed to the proper name; in (f), a second apposition (“the scribe”) further describes Baruch; in (g), a second apposition, which is also a construct chain describes Ruth as “Mahlon’s wife”. Understanding this requires reading the string of words to see how they are related to each other, as well as general knowledge of biblical context. These examples also illustrate the frequent interdependence of construct chains and apposition.

11.5 Concepts

adjective apposition/apposed	attributive clause	comment predicate	relative subject	substantive topic
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11.6 Vocabulary

copper, bronze	נְחֹשֶׁת	.158	other, another (adj.)	אַחֵר	.149
service, servitude, labour, work	עֲבוּדָה	.159	who, which, what, that; when	אֲשֶׁר	.150
mouth	פֶּה	.160	[just] like, as; when	כְּאֲשֶׁר	.151
mouth of (construct)	פִּי	.161	large, big, great (adj.); be / become large, great (st. vb.)	גָּדוֹל	.152
holiness, “apartness”	קָדָשׁ	.162	old; elder (adj.); be / become old (st. vb.)	זָקֵן	.153
holy, sacred (adj.) ¹⁰⁹	קֹדֶשׁ	.163	good (adj.); be / become good (st. vb.)	טוֹב	.154
much, many (adj.)	רַב	.164	honest, upright, right (adj.); thus, so (adv.)	כֵּן	.155
bad, disastrous; evil, wicked (adj.)	רָע	.165	before (temporal & locative), in the presence of, in front of	לִפְנֵי	.156
bad, disastrous, evil, wicked (adj.)	רָשָׁע	.166	wadi (temporary stream or its valley; rarely perennial stream, e.g., Jabbok)	נָחַל	.157
gate (of a city)	שַׁעַר	.167	horse, stallion (m.)	סוּס	.158
			mare	סוּסָה	.159

11.7 Exercises

- After studying the forms of טוב, גדול, יפה (§11.1.1), gloss these phrases and clauses, parsing any verbal forms. Be prepared to explain their structure and the function of the adjectives.

a. האיש הטוב	d. גדול האלהים	g. האיש הגדול אשר בשדה
b. האשה יפה מאד	e. הערים על-ההרים	h. העיר במדבר קטנה
c. האיש אשר בבית	f. הבקר אשר על-ההרים	i. זקן אבי הכהן

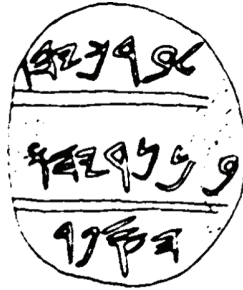
109. “Holy” and “sacred” are synonyms with different histories: “holy” comes from Old English *hālig*, “sacred” from Latin *sacrare*.

2. Gloss these phrases and clauses, parsing the verbs and identifying the function of any adjectives.

- a. טוב יהוה לכל Ps 145.9; remember that כל is a *noun*
- b. וייראו האנשים יראָה גדלה Jon 1.10; יראָה *fear, be afraid*; יראָה *fear* (noun); an object from the same root as its verb is called a “cognate accusative”, which is a common syntagm in Biblical Hebrew
- c. וקרא זה אל־זה ואמר קדוש קדוש קדוש יהוה צבאות מלא כל־הארץ כבודו: Is 6.3; זה *this* [one]; צבא *host, army*; מלא *fulness, that which fills* (n.m.); כבודו *glory+his* [Your gloss should differ from most English versions.]
- d. ויאמר האיש הזקן שלום Jg 19.20; the last word is a quotation
- e. ויאמר שמעו דבר־המלך הגדול מלך אשור 2 Kg 18.28; Assyria
- f. אנשים רשעים הרגו את־איש־צדיק בביתו על־משכבו 2 Sam 4.11; הרג *kill*; צדיק *innocent*; ביתו *house+his*; משכבו *bed+his*
- g. ויבאו כל זקני ישראל וישאו הכהנים את־הארון: 1 Kgs 8.3; ויבאו *they* [m.p.] *went*; וישאו *they carried*
- h. שחו רעים לפני טובים ורשעים על־שערי צדיק: Pr 14.19; שחו *they bow* (down); לפני *in the presence of*; רשע *bad, evil, wicked*; the verb is elided from the second line
- i. והייתם קדושים כי קדוש אני: Lv 11.45; והייתם *and you* [m.p.] *shall be*; אני *I*; כי *because, for* (that)
- j. והלכתם אחרי אלהים אחרים אשר לא־ידעתם: Jr 7.9; אחרי *after*
- k. והבית אשר־אני בונה גדול כי־גדול אלהינו מכל־האלהים: 2 Chr 2.4; אני *I*; בונה *building* (a participle functioning as a predicate adjective); נו *our*
- l. ומלך ארם צנה את־שרי הרקב לאמר לא תלחמו את־הקטן את־הגדול כי אם־את־מלך ישראל לבדו: 2 Chr 18.30; ארם *[he]* *commanded*; צנה *saying*; לאמר *Do not*; תלחמו *fight*; רקב *chariot*; לבדו *only* (him alone); כי אם *but*
- m. עיר גדולה גבעון כאחת ערי הממלכה והיא גדולה מן־העי וכל־אנשיה גברים: Josh 10.2; אחת *one of*; ממלכה *kingdom*; היא *she, it*; ה *her, its*; גבור *warrior*; Gibeon, Ai

11.8 Enrichment: Reading a Bulla

This is a greatly enlarged drawing of a *bulla*, the clay impression of a seal; the original is thumbnail-sized.



לברכיהו

בן נריהו

הספר

of Berechياهو

ben Neryahu

the scribe

or (using more familiar forms of the names):

Belonging to Baruch

son of Neriah

the scribe

(cf. Jr 36.32)

This is a greatly enlarged copy of a typical *bulla*, with an inscription consisting of the owner's name (with *lamed* of possession), followed by "son of", his father's name, and his occupation. The appositions between "Baruch" and "son of Neriaiah" on the one hand and "the scribe" on the other, identify both men by their fathers' names and their occupation or position in society. The *bulla* is thus the owner's "signature".

1. Both names end in *-yahu*, a variant of *-yah* that occurs in Biblical Hebrew. [Jeremiah's name occurs with both endings: יְרֵמְיָהּ (8x; only in Jr 27.1–29.1) and יְרֵמְיָהוּ (>110x; in the rest of the book; never in 27.1–29.1).]
2. Since the names of the father and son, as well as the occupation, match the biblical references, this particular bulla most probably records the personal seal of the scribe named Baruch ben Neriaiah who worked for Jeremiah, and would have been affixed to documents (long since deteriorated) that he wrote, transcribed, or witnessed.
3. The same form of personal identification was in use long before the Israelite monarchy and the period of the canonical prophets. In Josh 1.1, Joshua is identified as יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נֹון מֹשֶׁה, *Joshua son of Nun, servant of Moses*; Joshua—not his father—was Moses' assistant; Baruch was a scribe, according to the information on this bulla.
4. This bulla appeared on the antiquities market without any reference to its provenance. This means that its interpretation lacks the controls that its discovery *in situ* (in place) would have provided, such as depth, occupational or destruction layer, etc.
5. You can find more information on the paleo- or archaic Hebrew (Canaanite) alphabet at many sites on-line.

Lesson 12

THE PARTICIPLE

The verbal system of Biblical Hebrew includes forms that are called both “participles” and “verbal adjectives”, since they are based on verbal roots and are functionally adjectives. Unlike English participles (forms that end in “-ing”), Hebrew participles can be identified by their vowels, a prefixed **מ־** (in most verbal stems),¹¹⁰ and syntax. More than one-tenth (about 13%) of all verbal forms in Biblical Hebrew are participles. They are especially common in biblical poetry.

12.1 Form

All participles are inflected for gender and number in order to agree with the word that they modify. They use the same endings as adjectives and nouns. Like adjectives, participles agree with the *grammatical* gender of the word that they modify. The *qal* has two participles—active and passive.

		Qal Active Participle		Qal Passive Participle	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Masc.	abs.	מֹשֵׁל	מֹשְׁלִים	מוֹשׁוּל	מוֹשְׁוּלִים
	const.		מוֹשְׁלֵי	מוֹשׁוּל	מוֹשְׁוּלֵי
Fem.	abs.	מוֹשֶׁלֶת	מוֹשְׁלוֹת	מוֹשׁוּלָה	מוֹשְׁוּלוֹת
	const. ¹¹¹	מוֹשְׁלֶת		מוֹשׁוּלָת	

1. The *qal active* participle always has an *o*-vowel (*holem* or *holem-waw*) after the *first* radical.
2. The *qal passive* participle always has a *u*-vowel (*šureq*, rarely *qibbuš*) after the *second* radical.
3. Unlike the other verbal conjugations, participles can be articular. Like the infinitive construct, they can occur with prepositions and pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14).

12.2 Function (HBI §2.2.5)

The participle in Biblical Hebrew is an adjective, with the same functions as the adjective—attributive, predicate, and substantive. The rules for identifying participial function are the same as for the adjective (§11.1.2).

1. *Attributive*, or *adjectival* participles usually follow, and agree in definiteness with the word that they modify. Although they are attributive, their verbal nature means that they can be glossed in several ways, often as relative clauses (cf. Pr 8.34; Dt 1.38); for example, Is

110. The term “stems” refers to various patterns of vowels and prefixes used to modify the function of the verbal root (Lesson 18).

111. There are about thirty-five feminine construct *qal* participles in Biblical Hebrew; few of these are strong verbal roots. The most frequent occurs in the phrase זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבַשׁ, “flowing with milk and honey” (20x; always fsc Q Ptc from the root זָבַח, “flow”).

40.3 could also be rendered “a voice which was calling, ...” Their temporal reference (past, present, future) is entirely contextual:

אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם שָׁמַע לִי	How happy is the man <i>who listens</i> to me, ... (Pr 8.34)
קוֹל קוֹרָא בַּמִּדְבָּר	A voice <i>calling</i> , “In the wilderness ...” (Is 40.3)
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון הָעֹמֵד לְפָנֶיךָ	Joshua son of Nun, <i>who stands</i> before you (Dt 1.38)
מִשְׁפָּט כָּתוּב	judgment <i>that is written</i> (Ps 149.9)
שָׁלֹם ... שֹׁמֵר הַבְּגָדִים	Shallum ..., <i>the keeper of [who keeps or the one who keeps] the garments</i> (2 Kgs 22.14)
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם נֹשְׂאֵי הַמִּנְחָה:	He sent away the people <i>who had carried</i> the tribute (Jg 3.18)

2. *Predicate, or verbal* participles may precede or follow the word that they modify; the words disagree in definiteness. In narrative, predicate participles tend to occur in disjunctive clauses, where they function much like finite verbs. A predicate participle is technically “tenseless”—its temporal reference depends on the context, as does its nature as simple or continuous action. Note that the last five examples in this list occur in disjunctive clauses (§6.6):

אֱלֹהִים מֹשֵׁל בְּיַעֲקֹב	God <i>rules</i> in Jacob (Ps 59.14)
צִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לָעַד	His righteousness <i>stands</i> for ever (Ps 112.9)
וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף	But they did not know that Joseph <i>was listening</i> (Gn 42.23)
וַעֲתָלְיָה מַלְכָת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:	Now Athaliah <i>was ruling</i> over the land (2 Kg 11.3)
וּפְלִשְׁתִּים עֹמְדִים אֶל־הָהָר מִזֶּה	Now the Philistines <i>were standing</i> on the hill on this side (1 Sam 17.3)
וּמַלְכַת־שֶׁבַע שָׁמְעָה אֶת־שִׁמְעֵי שְׁלֹמֹה	Now the queen of Sheba <i>heard</i> the report of Solomon ... (1 Kgs 10.1)
וְהִיא יֹשֶׁבֶת בִּירוּשָׁלַם	Now she <i>lived</i> in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 22.14)

Depending on the context, and the semantic *load* of the verbal root, a predicate participle following הִנֵּה or וְהִנֵּה may suggest the speaker’s sense of immediacy:

כִּי־הֵנִי בּוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים	For I am <i>about to create</i> [<i>creating</i>] a new heaven and a new earth (Is 65.17)
וְאֶרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה	
הִנֵּה אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה דָבָר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל	I am <i>doing</i> [<i>about to do</i>] a thing in Israel (1 Sa 3.11)
וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי יֹרֵד אֵלֶיךָ	I am <i>going to come down</i> [<i>coming</i>] to you (1 Sa 10.8)

3. When there is no substantive for the participle to modify, it is “its own noun”, and thus *substantival* (nominal), glossed by a pronominal relative clause (“he who ...”, “the one who ...”, “whoever ...”, etc.). As Jos 2.24 suggests, all participles in construct chains are substantive.

הוֹלֵךְ בְּיִשְׁרוֹ יִרָא יְהוָה	<i>Whoever walks</i> in his honesty fears YHWH (Pr 14.2)
יְהוָה שֹׁמְרֶךָ	YHWH is <i>the one who watches</i> you [= “your watcher”] (Ps 121.5)
כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ	All the <i>inhabitants</i> of the land (Jos 2.24)

4. Some verbs occur primarily as substantive participles (e.g., the verbal root אִיב occurs 281 times; all but two are substantive participles). Words listed as nouns that have the vowel pattern *o-e* (i.e., *holem* - *sere*) are *qal* participles that were used primarily as substantives (e.g., שֹׁפֵט, *judge*; סֹפֵר, *scribe*).

הִנֵּה אֲנִי נֹתֵן אֶת־אֹיְבֶךָ בְּיָדְךָ	I am about to give [predicate ptc.] <i>your enemy</i> into your hand (1 Sam 24.4)
---	---

5. Since they are *verbal* adjectives, participles can govern direct and indirect objects. They also occur with pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14); the suffix may indicate pronominal possession or it may identify the [pronominal] direct object of the action described by the participle:

שְׁמֹרֶךָ: ... שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל: *He who watches you ... he who watches Israel* (Ps 121.3b, 4b)
 אֲנִי יְהוָה רִפְּאֵךְ I am YHWH, [he] who heals you (Ex 15.26); or your healer

12.3 Concepts

active	nominal	participle	predicate	verbal
adjectival	attributive	passive	substantive	

12.4 Vocabulary

166. אֵיל	ram	175. יֵשׁ	(אֵין/אֵין) there is / are (opposite of)
167. בָּחַר	choose (the preposition בְּ- often introduces its object)	176. מוֹת	death; מוֹת, death of
168. גִּבּוֹר	mighty man, warrior	177. נָגַד	in front of, before, opposite
169. דּוֹר	generation, life-span	178. מְלָאכָה	work, occupation
170. דָּרַשׁ	seek, inquire (cf. מְדַרְשׁ)	179. סָפַר	count; write, record
171. הָרַג	kill	סָפַר	scribe, secretary, recorder (ms Q Ptc)
172. זָבַח	sacrifice (n.)	180. פָּתַח	opening, entrance
173. חוּץ	outside (noun and prep.); street	181. שָׂאֵל	ask [for], request
174. חֲכָמָה	wisdom, skill	182. שֶׁמֶן	oil (usually olive oil)

12.5 Exercises

After learning the forms of the *qal* participle, *gloss* these phrases and clauses, *parsing* the verbs, and *identifying* each participle's function as either attributive, predicate, or substantive (adjectival, verbal, nominal).

2 Chr 22.12; Athaliah

1. וַעֲתָלְיָה מִלְכֶּת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

Is 9.1; רָאוּ they saw (3cp Q P); צִלְמוֹת death-shadow; נָגַהּ it shined;
 על + הֵם < עֲלֵיהֶם (their / them)

2. הָעָם הַהֲלָכִים בַּחֲשֵׁךְ רָאוּ אֹר וְגִדּוֹל
 יֹשְׁבֵי בָאָרֶץ צִלְמוֹת אֹר נָגַהּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

Ps 59.14b; וַיֵּדְעוּ and they will know (3 mp QF); אָפַס end; Jacob

3. וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי-אֱלֹהִים מֹשֵׁל בְּיַעֲקֹב לְאַפְסֵי הָאָרֶץ

1 Sam 3.3; שָׁן temple; הֵיכָל there, in that place; Samuel

4. וַשְׁמוּאֵל שָׁכַב בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׁן אֲרוֹן אֱלֹהִים:

Ps 147.3; שָׁבַר break; רָפָא heal

5. הָרָפָא לְשִׁבּוּרֵי לֵב

Ec 7.15; וְצִדִּיק אֲבָר בְּצִדְקוֹ + בְּ-, in + righteousness + his

6. יֵשׁ צִדִּיק אֲבָר בְּצִדְקוֹ

Ps 58.12

7. יֵשׁ-אֱלֹהִים שְׁפָטִים בָּאָרֶץ:

8. וַיֵּאָהֱב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו ... וַרְבֵּקָה אֶהְבֵּת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב:
Gn 25.28; four names!
9. כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְט
Ps 75.8
10. אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁמְרֵי מִשְׁפָּט
עֲשֵׂה צְדָקָה בְּכָל־עֵת:
Ps 106.3; אֲשֶׁר־י happy (trad., blessed); עֲשֵׂה
do; צְדָקָה righteousness, innocence; עֵת time
11. וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה אָהֲב אֶת־דָּוִד
כִּי־הוּא יוֹצֵא וְבָא לִפְנֵיהֶם:
1 Sam 18.16; הוּא he; יוֹצֵא ms Q Ptc < יֵצֵא go
out, leave; בָּא ms Q Ptc < בֹּא come/go in; הֵם +
לִפְנֵי before + them; David
12. וַדְּבוּרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה אִשָּׁת לַפִּידוֹת
הִיא שִׁפְטָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵת הַהִיא:
Jg 4.4; הִיא she; הַהִיא that; עֵת
time; Deborah, Lapidot
13. כֹּה אָמַר־יְהוָה אֱל־שָׁלֹם בֶּן־יִאֲשִׁיָּהוּ מִלֶּךְ יְהוּדָה
הַמֶּלֶךְ תַּחַת יִאֲשִׁיָּהוּ אָבִיו
Jr 22.11; אָבִי father + his;
Shallum; Josiah; Judah
14. וְהִשְׁכַּב בְּבֵית יִכְבֵּס אֶת־בְּגָדָיו
וְהָאָכַל בְּבֵית יִכְבֵּס אֶת־בְּגָדָיו:
Lv 14.47; יִכְבֵּס he will wash; יוֹ
garments + his (suffixed to a plural noun; cf. #6)
15. וּפְלִשְׁתִּים עֹמְדִים אֶל־הָהָר מִזֶּה
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֹמְדִים אֶל־הָהָר מִזֶּה
1 Sam 17.3; מִזֶּה on one [this] side (זֶה)
Philistines
16. לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַל־הָרָעִים הָרָעִים אֶת־עַמִּי
Jr 23.2; לָכֵן therefore (כֵּן + לָ); עַל concerning;
both participles are from the root רָעָה shepherd,
tend (the mp ending “replaces” the final ה- of
the root)
17. יֹאמְרוּ גְאוּלִּי יְהוָה
Ps 107.2a; גָּאֹל redeem

12.6 Enrichment: Participles & Poetic Compression

Participles are especially common in the book of Proverbs, probably because they allow highly compressed syntax, perhaps also to impart a “timeless” and “universal” air to the sayings. In Pr 17.9, for example, the use of four participles allows the proverb to be compressed into only eight words:

מִכְסֵּה־פֶשַׁע מִבְקֵשׁ אֶהְבָּה Whoever conceals a transgression seeks love;
וְשֹׁנֵה בְדָבָר מִפָּרִיד אֶלֹוֹף: And whoever repeats a matter separates a friend [friends] (Pr 17.9)

At times, however, compression can be confusing. How should we read these lines? Which is primary—seeking or concealing, repeating or separating? Since our experience suggests that talking about offenses can destroy relationships, but that this is not the only reason for relationships to fail, we would probably read Pr 17.9b as suggested above (rather than “Whoever separates friends repeats a matter”).

In 17.9a, however, either participle could be read as the subject, so that an alternative interpretation (and translation) would be “Whoever seeks love conceals a transgression”. This line may even be deliberately ambiguous, written in order to allow or even encourage both understandings. The decision to *gloss* it in one way or the other, however, is essentially arbitrary, since either participle can be predicate or substantive.

Word order is not always a reliable guide to syntax or function, especially in biblical poetry, so that we must reflect on the content of the proverb in order to translate it appropriately.

In Pr 12.1a, however, the parallelism helps us determine that the first participle is the subject (substantive) and the second the predicate, since the predicate is elided from the second line, and since “loves discipline” parallels “hates correction”, we follow the first reading:

אהב מוסר אהב דעת *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge;*
 ושנא תוכחת בער: *And whoever hates correction [loves] stupidity (Pr 12.1)*

It may seem that we have merely read the Hebrew as though it followed English word-order, but our interpretation (and therefore translation) is actually based on the parallels between the two lines. The general principle here is the frequent omission [elision] of the predicate from the second of two parallel lines of biblical poetry.

Two passive participles (Lesson 19) allow even greater compression in Pr 27.5—only five words:

טובה תוכחת מגלה מאהבה מסתרת: *A revealed rebuke is better than concealed love (Pr 27.5)*

This could also be rendered so that the English syntax corresponds to the Hebrew:

Better a rebuke revealed than love concealed.

Nothing is gained beyond (perhaps) a certain “poetic” feel due to the rhyme of “revealed” and “concealed”; both renderings are as compressed as English allows. Or, if we wanted to add a poetic structure that is not present in the Hebrew sentence, we could invert the order of the last two words so that we read *noun – adjective ... adjective – noun*, creating a grammatical chiasm, but this may be overly clever.

Better a *rebuke* revealed than concealed *love*.

Lesson 13

PRONOMINALS (I)

One challenge in writing or speaking is keeping track of who is acting or speaking, and whether or not this is a new person or someone already mentioned in the discourse. Another challenge is to write so that the result “holds together”, or is “cohesive”. Pronouns are a *cohesive* device (§6), a linguistic “glue” that binds together a discourse. English tracks clausal subjects pronominally (e.g., “Then *he* went ...” or “After *she* had taken ...”), rather than by repeating the subject’s name. Pronouns are thus called “anaphoric” (Greek *ana*, “above”), since they usually refer *back* to someone or something previously mentioned (traditionally called the “antecedent”).¹¹²

Biblical Hebrew has two sets of pronouns—individual words, called “independent pronouns”, and suffixes, called “pronominal suffixes” (Lesson 14). Both sets are inflected for person, gender, and number to link them to their “antecedent”.

Independent personal pronouns identify the subject of the clause; these “subject” pronouns, however, are not merely cohesive—they also function on the level of discourse, a “higher-level” function that explains why Biblical Hebrew has independent subject pronouns alongside the PGN of the finite verb.¹¹³ (§13.1.2). The third person independent pronouns (along with a few other forms) also function as *demonstrative adjectives* (“this”, “these”, “that”, “those”).

Pronominal suffixes show pronominal possession (“my”, “her”, “their”), indicate the pronominal objects of verbs and prepositions, and the pronominal subjects of the infinitive construct (§16.1.1).

13.1 Independent Pronouns

Pronominal forms in Biblical Hebrew have person, gender, and number. Independent pronouns usually identify the subject of their clause; about 20% of all independent personal pronouns occur with the conjunction *waw* as part of the first form in disjunctive clauses (*w* + pronoun).

13.1.1 Form

Person	Gender	Singular		Plural	
1st	common	אֲנִי	אֲנִי	נַחֲנוּ	אֲנֵחֵנוּ <i>we</i>
2nd	masc.	אַתָּה	you	אַתֶּם	you
	fem.	אַתְּ		אַתֶּן	
3rd	masc.	הוא	he, it	הֵם	הֵמָּה <i>they</i>
	fem.	היא	she, it	הֵנָּה	

112. Pronouns can be *cataphoric*, referring to something that follows (“Although *he* awoke early, John ...”); this function is rare in Biblical Hebrew.

113. Apart from commands, English sentences have explicit subjects, either nominal or pronominal (English also uses a “dummy” subject, as in “*It’s* raining” and “*There’s* one in here”). Independent subject pronouns in Biblical Hebrew often “sound” redundant (or “emphatic”) to English readers when they occur alongside a verbal form that indicates the PGN of its subject. They are not actually redundant, because: (1) all communication is as efficient as possible (superfluity is only apparent, never real); and (2) their function is related to the larger context in which they occur, including the genre and the relationship of their clause to the preceding clause. This will become more clear as you begin to read the biblical text.

1. The basic form is distinct for each person; gender and number is distinguished by the end of the form:

Person	Form	
1st	אֲנִי -	<i>I, we</i>
2nd	אַתָּה -	<i>you</i>
3rd	הֵם -	<i>he, she, it, they</i>

2. The “double forms” differ primarily in frequency and distribution:
 - a. אֲנִי (1cs) is more than twice as frequent (803x) as אֲנִי (c. 350x), but in some biblical books one form dominates, for example

	אֲנִי	אֲנִי
Dt	55x	6x
Ezk	1x	155x

- b. The longer 1cp form (אֲנִי־הֵם, “we”) occurs about 115 times in Biblical Hebrew, the shorter form (נִהְיֵה) only six times.
- c. The longer 3mp form (הֵמָּה, “they”) is slightly more frequent (c. 55%) than הֵם; as with 1cs (אֲנִי־אֲנִי), they are not distributed evenly:¹¹⁴

	הֵמָּה	הֵם
Gn	4x	17x
Ex	5x	17x
Lv	1x	18x
Ps	25x	3x
Ezk	57x	8x ¹¹⁵

- d. “She/It”—הִיא (3fs written with *-w-*)—is “normal” in the Torah, but is written הִיא in the rest of the Bible.¹¹⁶

13.1.2 Function (HBI §1.5.1)

1. An independent pronoun *always* means that you are looking at a *clause*, whether or not the pronoun comes first in the clause.
2. Independent personal pronouns usually identify the *subject* of a verbal or non-verbal clause (“I”, “she”, “we”). They do *not* show pronominal possession (e.g., “my”, “your”) or the pronominal objects of verbs or prepositions (e.g., “him”, “for them”). The examples illustrate its use with various types of predicates—a noun (Gn 3.19; Ex 6.2), adjective (Ezk 42.14), finite verb (Gn 41.15), and participle (Nu 33.51):

כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה	For <i>you</i> are <i>dust</i> , ... (Gn 3.19)
אֲנִי יְהוָה	<i>I</i> am YHWH (Ex 6.2).
כִּי־קָדֹשׁ הֵנָּה	For <i>they</i> [fp] are <i>holy</i> (Ezk 42.14).
וְאֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ	And <i>I</i> heard about <i>you</i> ... (Gn 41.15)
כִּי אַתָּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן	When <i>you</i> cross the Jordan ... (Nu 33.51)

114. When two 3mp pronouns occur in the same v., both forms may be used (7x), although both are repeated in some vv. (הֵמָּה (17x) or הֵם (7x)).

115. In Ezekiel, the clause הֵמָּה מְרִי הֵמָּה/הֵם, *for they are a rebellious household*, occurs seven times, six times with הֵמָּה as the subject, once with הֵם.

116. The 3fs form הִיא—with *yod*—occurs ten times in the Torah out of more than 150 occurrences in those books.

3. Independent pronouns also occur in non-verbal clauses, apparently signaling the non-verbal predication:

יהוה הוא האלהים YHWH [*—he*] is [the] God! (1 Kg 18.39).
 כִּי־טוֹב כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָכֶם הוּא: For the goodness of all of the land of Egypt [*it*] is yours (Gn 45.20).

4. Independent pronouns often occur with the conjunction *-וְ*, creating a disjunctive clause (§6.6). After a conversation between Joseph and his brothers, the narrator finally explains why Joseph's brothers thought that they were secure in talking in front of him (Gn 42.23). The added information of Jg 11.39 makes the virginity of Jephthah's daughter explicit.

וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף
 כִּי הַמְלִיץ בֵּינָתָם: Now they did not know that Joseph could
 understand [participle] them, because the
 interpreter was between them (Gn 42.23).
 וְהִיא לֹא־יָדְעָה אִישׁ ... (now she had not known a man) ... (Jg 11.39)

The change of subject that is often signalled by an independent pronoun may also imply a contrast between the events or actions described by two clauses, especially when a disjunctive clause begins with *w* + pronoun (cf. 2 Chr 13.11 (Exercise #16)). The contrast is thus appropriately signalled in English by rendering the conjunction as, for example, “but”, “now”, “but as for her”.

Although the contrasting clause—“every great matter they shall bring to you”—is left out of Exercise #6 (Ex 18.22), the disjunctive clause that ends the sentence again signals a contrast, here by beginning the clause with the object (*waw* + non-verb) rather than the subject.

5. The only affix that can be attached to the independent personal pronouns is the conjunction *-וְ*.

13.2 Demonstratives

Demonstratives *point out* or *point to* a person or object (“this”, “that”, “these”, “those”), and can be thought of as making an articular word even more definite or specific (contrast “this scroll” with “the scroll”).

13.2.1 Form

	Gender	Singular	Plural
“Near”	masc.	זֶה	
	fem.	זֹאת	
		<i>this</i>	<i>these</i>
“Far”	masc.	הוּא	הֵמָּה
	fem.	הִיא	הֵנָּה
		<i>that</i>	<i>those</i>

The paradigm of the demonstratives overlaps the paradigm of the personal pronouns (above). The “far” demonstratives are the same as the third person personal pronouns. They are demonstrative primarily when they are attributive (§13.2.2(5), below).¹¹⁷

13.2.2 Function (HBI §1.5.2)

1. Since demonstratives are essentially adjectives, they can be either predicate or attributive. Unlike adjectives, they are not substantive.
2. Like adjectives, demonstratives agree with the grammatical gender and number of the word that they modify.

117. Their discourse functions may differ, but there is little functional difference between “*That* is the king” and “*He* is the king”.

3. When they are *predicate*, (1) demonstratives are *anarthrous*; (2) they tend to *precede* the word that they modify; and (3) they are usually the *subject* of the clause (זה, the second demonstrative in 2 Kgs 6.19, occurs eleven times in Biblical Hebrew):

זאת הארץ	This is the land (Nu 34.2)
היא העיר הגדלה	That [it] is the great city (Gn 10.12)
אלה שמות	These are the names (Ex 1.1)
ויאמר אליהם לא זה הדרך	Elisha said to them, “This is not the way,
ולא זה העיר	nor is this the city. ...” (2 Kgs 6.19)

4. *Attributive* demonstratives *follow* the word that they modify, and are *articulate*:

המקום הזה	this place (Gn 28.17)
בעיר ההיא	in that city (Js 20.6)
כל-היום ההוא	all that day (Nu 11.32)

5. An articulate “third person pronoun” is therefore actually an attributive demonstrative:

בימים ההמה	in those days (Jr 3.16) ¹¹⁸
בעת ההוא	at that time (Nu 22.4)
העיר הזאת	this city (Gn 19.20)

6. Usually the demonstrative immediately follows the noun that it modifies. If the noun is modified by an adjective (or is in construct), the attributive demonstrative follows the entire phrase, after any adjectives, or after the final word of the construct chain, or both. In Gn 2.12, the adjective after the attributive demonstrative is predicate:

הדבר הגדול הזה	this great thing (1 Sa 12.16)
הרעה הגדלה הזאת	this great evil (Gn 39.9)
כאשר הבאתי אל-העם הזה	Just as I brought upon this people
את כל-הרעה הגדלה הזאת	all this great disaster (Jr 32.42)
וזהב הארץ ההוא טוב	and the gold of that land is good (Gn 2.12)

13.3 Interrogative Pronouns

Biblical Hebrew uses two *uninflected* interrogative pronouns to ask questions about persons (“who?”, “whom?”) and things (“what?” “how?”). Both are normally “fronted”—they begin their clause.

13.3.1 The Interrogative מי

The uninflected interrogative מי, “who”, is always *definite*, and always asks about a *person*.

1. If there is no verb, מי is usually the subject of a non-verbal clause (but cf. Ru 2.5, #3, below):

ויאמר פרעה מי יהוה	Pharaoh said, “Who is YHWH, ...?” (Ex 5.2)
מי אתם	“Who are you (m.p.)?” (Jos 9.8)
מי האנשים האלה	Who are these men ...?” (Nu 22.9)
בת-מי את	“Whose daughter are you?” (Gn 24.23)
מי עשה הדבר הזה	“Who did this thing?” (Jg 6.29; cf. Jg 15.6)
מי-שמע כזאת	Who has heard [such a thing] as this?
מי ראה כאלה	Who has seen [such things] as these? (Is 66.8)

118. The phrase “[in] those days” accounts for nearly three-quarters of all occurrences of the 3mp demonstrative.

2. When **מי** is the object of the verb, it has the sign of the object, but still begins the question (and is rendered “whom”):

אֶת־מִי תַעֲבֹדוּן “Whom will you serve?” (Jos 24.15)
 אֶת־מִי אֲשַׁלַּח וּמִי יֵלֶךְ־לָנוּ “Whom shall I send, and who shall go for us?” (Is 6.8)

3. **מי** also functions as the object of prepositions (in Ru 2.5, the **ל** shows possession):

אַחֲרֵי מִי יֵצֵא מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל After *whom* has the king of Israel gone out? (1 Sam 24.15)
 לְמִי הַנְּעִרָה הַזֹּאת? To *whom* does this young woman *belong*? (Ru 2.5)

13.3.2 The Interrogative **מָה**

The uninflected interrogative **מָה**, “what”, is always *indefinite*, and does *not* refer to persons. If there is no verb, **מָה** is the subject of a non-verbal clause.

וְאָמְרוּ־לִי מָה־שְּׁמוֹ “... and they say to me, ‘What is his name?’
 מָה אֶמַּר אֲלֵהֶם What shall I say to them?” (Ex 3.13)
 מָה־עָשָׂה לָךְ הָעָם הַזֶּה “What did this people do to you?” (Ex 32.21)
 וּמִי־יֹאמַר־אֵלָיו מָה־תַּעֲשֶׂה: And who says to him, ‘What are you doing?’ (Qo 8.4)
 מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלַמְתָּ “What is this dream which you dreamed?” (Gn 37.10)

1. **מָה** also occurs in indirect questions:

לֹא יָדְעוּ מָה־הוּא They did not know *what* it [was] (Ex 16.15)

2. **מָה** may also ask “why”, often in combination with **לְמָה** or **לָמָּה**, “for what?”:

מָה אֲנַחְנוּ יֹשְׁבִים פֹּה “Why are we sitting here ...?” (2 Kgs 17.3)
 לָמָּה לֹא־הָלַכְתָּ אֵלַי “Why didn’t you come to me?” (Nu 22.37)
 וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְשָׁאוּל And David said to Saul,
 לָמָּה תִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אָדָם “Why do you listen to men’s words, ...?” (1 Sam 24.10)

3. **מָה** is spelled with three different vowels, depending on the first letter of the following word; there is no difference in function:

מָה What?
 מַה־ What?
 מֶה What?

13.4 Frequency

There are 8,629 independent pronominal forms in Biblical Hebrew:

Personal (subject)	5,001	
Demonstratives	2,651	
Interrogative	977	(מִי (423x), מָה (554x))

13.5 Concepts

antecedent	demonstrative	interrogative	pronoun
cohesion	independent pronoun	pronominal subject	

Person	Gender	Singular			Plural				
1st	common	<i>I</i>	אֲנִי	אַנְכִי	.191	<i>we</i>	אֲנַחְנוּ	נַחְנוּ	.183
2nd	masc.	<i>you</i>	אַתָּה		.192	<i>you</i>	אַתֶּם		.184
	fem.	<i>you</i>	אַתְּ		.193	<i>you</i>	אַתֶּן		.185
3rd	masc.	<i>he, it</i>	הוא		.194	<i>they</i> (3 mp pers. pron.); <i>those</i> (mp dem.)	הֵם	הֵמָּה	.186
	fem.	<i>she, it</i>	היא	הוא	.195	<i>they</i> (3fp pers. pron.); <i>those</i> (fp dem.)		הֵנָּה	.187
			<i>Who?</i>	מִי		.196	<i>this</i> (ms dem. pron.)	זֶה	.188
		<i>What?</i>	מָה	מַה־	.197	<i>this</i> (fs dem. pron.)	זֹאת		.189
			מֵה			<i>these</i> (cp dem. pron.)	אֵלֶּה		.190

After learning the personal and interrogative pronouns, and the demonstratives, *gloss* these clauses, *parsing* any verbal forms.

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| Ex 6.8 | אֲנִי יְהוָה | 1. |
| Gn 29.4; Haran; the last two words are a quotation | וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִחֶרֶן אֲנַחְנוּ: | 2. |
| 1 Sam 4.18; אַרְבָּעִים 40 | וְהוּא שָׁפַט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה: | 3. |
| Ps 110.4; דְּבָרָתִי order of; Melchizedek | אַתָּה־כֹּהֵן לְעוֹלָם עַל־דְּבָרָתִי מִלְּכִי־צֶדֶק: | 4. |
| Jr 29.20 | וְאַתֶּם שְׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה | 5. |
| Gn 42.23; Joseph | וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שְׁמַע יוֹסֵף | 6. |
| Ex 18.22; עֵת time (in the sense of measured, or passing time); קָטָן small; on the second clause, cf. §13.1.2(4) | וּשְׁפָטוּ אֶת־הָעָם בְּכָל־עֵת ...
וְכָל־הַדָּבָר הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפָּטוּ־הֶם | 7. |
| Ru 3.9; Ruth; גֹּאֵל redeemer (ms Q Ptc < גֹּאֵל, redeem) | וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתָּה וַחֲאָמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת ...
כִּי גֹאֵל אַתָּה: | 8. |
| Ps 115.18; בָּרַךְ bless; עַתָּה now; הַלֵּל praise (D); Yah | וַאֲנַחְנוּ נְבָרַךְ יְיָ מְעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם
הַלְלוּ־יְיָ: | 9. |
| Is 14.13; הַשָּׁמַיִם your (m.s.); assumes “to”; עָלָה go up, ascend; מִמַּעַל above | וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵעֲלֶה מִמַּעַל | 10. |
| 1 Chr 17.16; יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים is vocative; בֵּיתִי my house | וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וּמִי בֵּיתִי | 11. |
| Dt 10.10 | וְאֲנֹכִי עֹמְדִתִּי בַּהַר | 12. |

119. The personal pronouns are listed paradigmatically.

- 2 Chr 13.11; מִשְׁמֶרֶת *observance*
(cognate accusative); נוּ - *our*; אָחִי *him*
(direct object) [cf. §13.1.2(4)]¹²⁰
- Jg 8.23; וְאֵלֵהֶם *to them* (m.p.); Gideon;
בָּכֶם *over you*; בְּנִי *my son*
- Ho 2.10; נָתַתִּי *I gave*; לָהּ *to her*;
דָּגָן *grain*; תִּירוֹשׁ *new wine*
- 1 Kgs 2.22; וַיַּעַן *and he answered*
(3ms Q Pr < עָנָה *answer*); Solomon;
מְלֹכָה; Abishag; Shunamite; Adonijah;
מְלֻכָּה; *kingship, kingdom*; מִמֶּנִּי *than I*
(comparative use of מִן)
13. שְׂמֵרִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאַתֶּם עֹבְדֵתֶם אֹתוֹ:
14. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים גִּדְעוּן לֹא־אֶמְשַׁל בָּכֶם
וְלֹא־יִמְשַׁל בְּנִי בָכֶם יְהוָה יִמְשַׁל בָּכֶם:
15. וְהָיָה לֹא יָדְעָה כִּי אֲנֹכִי נָתַתִּי לָהּ הַדָּגָן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ
16. וַיַּעַן הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָמּוֹ
וְלִמָּה אֶת שְׂאֵלֶת אֶת־אֲבִישָׁג הַשְּׁנָמִית לְאֹדֹנִיָּהוּ
וְשְׂאֵלֵי־לוֹ אֶת־הַמְּלֹכָה
כִּי הוּא אָחִי הַגָּדוֹל מִמֶּנִּי

13.8 Enrichment: Disjunctives in Poetry

The discussion of disjunctive clauses (§6.6) is usually limited to biblical prose, but it also applies to biblical poetry. A common poetic signal of a shift in perspective is a line beginning with *waw* + an independent pronoun (or a substantive), especially 1cs (referring to the poet) and 2ms (referring to YHWH). Note the contrasts in the following verses (participants are in bold; *w* + pronoun is in *italics*):

יְהוָה מַה־רָּבוּ צָרִי	YHWH, how my enemies have increased;
רַבִּים קָמִים עָלַי:	Many rise against me;
רַבִּים אֹמְרִים לְנַפְשִׁי	Many say about me,
אֵין יְשׁוּעָתָהּ לֹו בָאֱלֹהִים	'He has no salvation in God'.
וְאַתָּה יְהוָה מָגֵן בְּעַדִּי	<i>But you, YHWH</i> , are a shield on my behalf—
כְּבוֹדִי מְרִים רֹאשִׁי:	My glory , and the one who raises my head (Ps 3.2–4).
<hr/>	
פֶּן־יֹאמַר אֹיְבִי וְכָל־תִּי	Lest my enemy say, 'I have overcome him!'
צָרִי יִגִּילוּ כִּי אָמוּט:	My foes exult when I fall.
וְאֲנִי בַחֲסֶדְךָ בְּטַחַתִּי	<i>But I</i> trust in your love;
יִגַּל לְבִי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ	My heart exults in your salvation;
אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי:	I will sing to YHWH, for he has done good for me (Ps 13.5–6).
<hr/>	
נַפְשֵׁנוּ כַצִּפּוֹר נִמְלְטָה מִפֶּחַ יוֹקְשִׁים	Our soul like a bird has been delivered from the birders' snare ;
הַפֶּחַח נִשְׁבַּר וְאֲנַחְנוּ נִמְלְטָנוּ:	The snare is broken, <i>but we</i> are delivered (Ps 124.7).

120. The contrast in this v. is *not* signaled by the use of different conjugations. Instead, the *waw* + non-verb (in this case, the independent pronoun) makes this a disjunctive clause, to which the choice of conjugation is subordinate. Contrast is a function of the difference in *content* between the clauses.

Lesson 14

PRONOMINALS (II): SUFFIXES

Independent “subject” pronouns indicate the subject of their clause. In order to show pronominal *possession*, and verbal and prepositional pronominal *objects*, Biblical Hebrew attaches “pieces” of the independent pronouns to substantive and verbal forms. Like the independent pronouns, these suffixes are inflected to agree with the person, gender, and number of their antecedent. There are 45,590 pronominal suffixes in Biblical Hebrew (*versus* about 8,629 independent pronominal forms).

14.1 Form

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	com.	י - <i>my, me</i>	נו - <i>our, us</i>
2nd	masc.	ך - <i>your, you</i>	כם - <i>your, you</i>
	fem.	ךְ - <i>your, you</i>	כן - <i>your, you</i>
3rd	masc.	ה - <i>his, him, its</i>	הם - <i>their, them</i>
		הוּ - <i>his, him, its</i>	הֶם - <i>their, them</i>
	fem.	הָ - <i>her, its</i>	הֶן - <i>their, them</i>

1. There are no *cases* in Biblical Hebrew (unlike, e.g., Greek, Latin, German), so that the form of the suffix is the same regardless of its function, which is determined entirely from its context.
2. There is no difference in function between different forms (i.e., all forms listed under 3ms refer to “he”, “him”, or “his”).
3. הוּ - (3ms) occurs only in poetry; נוּ - (3ms) occurs on verbs.
4. Pronominal suffixes are added to nouns as follows:
 - a. Suffixes are added directly to *masculine* and *feminine singular* nouns, sometimes with a helping vowel. When a feminine noun ends in ה-, the ה- is replaced by ת- (the feminine singular construct ending), and the suffixes are added to the form with ת - (תּוֹרָה > תּוֹרָתִי, *my teaching*).

Absolute	Construct	Construct + suffix
<i>son</i>	בֶּן	בְּנִי בְּנֶךָ בְּנֶהָ עִירוֹ
<i>city</i>	עִיר	עִירוֹ
<i>land</i>	אֶרֶץ	אֶרְצֵנוּ
<i>maid / servant</i>	שִׁפְחָה	שִׁפְחָתְךָ
<i>teaching</i>	תּוֹרָה	תּוֹרָתִי
<i>mistress / lady</i>	גְּבִירָה	גְּבִירָתָהּ

- b. When suffixes are added to *plural* nouns, there is a ם- between the noun and the suffix; some forms are found only on plural nouns:

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	com.	י - <i>my, me</i>	ינוּ - <i>our, us</i>
2nd	masc.	יךְ - <i>your, you</i>	יכם - <i>your, you</i>
	fem.	יךְ - <i>your, you</i>	יכן - <i>your, you</i>
3rd	masc.	יו - <i>his, him, its</i>	יהם - <i>their, them</i>
	fem.	יה - <i>her, its</i>	יהן - <i>her, its</i>

- 1) *Masculine plural* nouns drop the final ם- of their ending and add the suffixes after the ם- of the plural.
- 2) *Feminine plural* nouns add ם- after their plural (ות-) ending, and before the suffix (בנות > בנותיכם, *your* [masc pl] *daughters*). The third plural suffixes ם, ך, and ך, however, can be added directly to the plural ending (בנותם).

<i>words</i>	דברים	דברי	דבריך	<i>your</i> (ms) <i>words</i> (Josh 1.8)
<i>sons</i>	בנים	בני	בניה	<i>her</i> <i>sons</i> (Is 66.8)
<i>days</i>	ימים	ימי	ימיו	<i>his</i> <i>days</i> (Jb 14.5)
<i>garments</i>	בגדים	בגדי	בגדיך	<i>your</i> <i>garments</i> (1 Kg 22.30)
<i>lands</i>	ארצות	ארצות	בארצותם	<i>in their</i> (mp) <i>lands</i> (Gn 10.5)
<i>daughters</i>	בנות	בנות	בנותיכם	<i>your</i> (mp) <i>daughters</i> (Ezr 9.12)

- c. The 1cs suffix (ם-) is added to plural nouns with the vowel *pataḥ*, which is the only difference between “my” used with singular and plural nouns.

Absolute	Construct + Suffix
<i>horse</i> סוס	סוסי <i>my horse</i>
<i>horses</i> סוסים	סוסי <i>my horses</i>
<i>son</i> בן	בני <i>my son</i> (Pr 3.1)
<i>sons</i> בנים	בני <i>my sons</i> (1 Sam 12.2)
<i>daughter</i> בת	בתי <i>my daughter</i> (Ru 3.16)
<i>daughters</i> בנות	בנותי <i>my daughters</i> (Ru 1.11)

- d. Suffixes are added to the *construct* form of the noun. We may therefore say that a noun with a pronominal suffix is in construct *to the suffix*, and that the pronominal suffix is the last “element” or “member” of the construct chain (even if it is a chain of only one “form”, composed of two elements).
5. Pronominal suffixes are also used to show the pronominal object of a *preposition*. They are combined with prepositions in one of three ways:
- a. Suffixes are added *directly* to ב and ל (their paradigms are identical, apart from the preposition; different glosses illustrate the variety of the prepositions’ function):

1st	בי	<i>by me</i>	לנו	<i>to us</i>
2nd	m.	לך <i>to you</i> (ms)	בכם	<i>with you</i> (mp)
	f.	בך <i>against you</i> (fs)	לכן	<i>for you</i> (fp)
3rd	m.	לו <i>for him</i>	בהם	<i>in them</i> (mp)
	f.	בה <i>with her</i>	להן	<i>to them</i> (fp)

- b. Singular suffixes and 1cp are added to כִּי¹²¹ and to some forms of מִן and עִם with a “helping” syllable:

1st	כְּמוֹנִי	like me	כְּמוֹנוֹ	like us
2nd	כְּמוֹךְ	like you (ms)	כְּכֶם	like you (mp) ¹²²
3rd	כְּמוֹהוּ	like him	כְּהֶם	like them (mp)
	כְּמוֹהָ	like her	כְּהֶן	like them (fp)
1st	מִמּוֹנִי	from me	מִמּוֹנוֹ	from us ¹²⁴
2nd	מִמּוֹךְ	from you (ms)	מִמְּכֶם	from you (mp)
	מִמּוֹךְ	from you (fs)	מִמְּכֶן	from you (fp)
3rd	מִמּוֹהוּ	from him ¹²³	מִמּוֹהֶם	from them (mp)
	מִמּוֹהָ	from her	מִמּוֹהֶן	from them (fp)
1st	עִמּוֹדִי ¹²⁴	with me	עִמּוֹנוֹ ¹²⁵	with us
2nd	עִמּוֹךְ	with you (ms)	עִמְּכֶם	with you (mp)
	עִמּוֹךְ	with you (fs)	--- ¹²⁶	
3rd	עִמּוֹהוּ	with him	עִמּוֹהֶם	with them (mp)
	עִמּוֹהָ	with her	--- ¹²⁷	

6. Most prepositions add suffixes by means of a *yod* between the preposition and suffix, so that the suffixes look like those added to plural nouns (each line in this example uses a different preposition, and glosses of the prepositions are varied to show use):

1st	לְפָנַי	in my presence	לְפָנֵינוּ	before us
2nd	אֵלַיךְ	to you (ms)	אֵלֵיכֶם	to you (mp)
	עָלַיךְ	against you (fs)	עָלֵיכֶן	concerning you (fp)
3rd	אַחֲרָיו	after him	אַחֲרֵיהֶם	after them (mp)
	תַּחֲתָיָהּ	under her / it	תַּחֲתֵיהֶן	under them (fp)

N.B.: The noun אֱלֹהִים, *god / God* occurs only with the 1cs suffix (אֱלֹהֵי, *my God*); all other suffixes are added to the construct of אֱלֹהִים (e.g., אֱלֹהֵיךָ, *your God*). The preposition אֶל/אֵל uses *pataḥ* to link the 1cs suffix (אֱלֹהֵי, *to me*); all other forms have *yod*, as in the paradigm.

121. The preposition כִּי does not occur with 2nd person feminine suffixes.

122. כְּמוֹכֶם occurs once (Jb 12.3).

123. The 3ms and 1cp suffixes with מִן (both are מִמּוֹנִי) can be distinguished only by context.

124. Be careful not to confuse this with forms of the verbal root עָמַד *stand*.

125. Cf. עִמּוֹנוֹ אֱלֹהִים *God [is] with us* (“Immanuel” (with and without *maqef*; e.g., Is 7.14; 8.8, 10).

126. The preposition עִם does not occur with 2nd person feminine plural suffixes.

127. The preposition עִם does not occur with 3rd person feminine plural suffixes.

The key to analyzing a compound form is to know the pronominal suffixes and the vocabulary (which will let you identify the central lexeme (content word)).

וּבֵיתִי <i>and in my house</i> (Is 3.7)			
וּ- 1cs suffix	-בֵּית- noun	-כִּי- prep.	וּ- cj.
כַּדְּבָרֶיךָ <i>according to your words</i> (1 Kg 3.12)			
ךָ- 2ms suffix	-י- plural	-דָּבָר- noun	-כִּי- prep.
בְּבָנֵינוּ <i>with our sons</i> (Ex 10.9)			
נוּ- 1cp suffix	-י- plural (supply the final nun)	-בֶּן- noun	-כִּי- prep.
וּבְּנוֹתֵינוּ <i>and with our daughters</i> (Ex 10.9)			
נוּ- 1cp suffix	-י- plural	-בָּנוֹת- noun	-כִּי- prep. cj.
מִמְּקוֹצוֹתֵיהֶם <i>from their troubles</i> (Ps 107.6, 13, 19, 28)			
הֶם- 3mp suffix	-י- plural	-מְקוֹצוֹת- noun	-[וּ]- prep.

14.2 Function (HBI §1.5.1b)

1. Pronominal suffixes are added to nouns with all of the nuances of the construct chain (possession, relationship, etc.):

דְּבָרֶיךָ	<i>your</i> (ms) words (Josh 1.8)	source: words spoken by “you”
בָּנֶיהָ	<i>her</i> sons (Is 66.8)	relationship: sons born to her
יָמָיו	<i>his</i> days (Jb 14.5)	days during which he lived
בְּגָדֶיךָ	<i>your</i> (ms) garments (1 Kg 22.30)	ownership: garments owned by “you”
בְּאֶרְצוֹתָם	<i>in their</i> lands (Gn 10.5)	ownership: lands lived in by “them”

2. Because pronouns are definite, pronominal suffixes make the word to which they are suffixed definite as well, and end the construct chain. Every word with a pronominal suffix is therefore both *construct* and *definite*. In 1 Sam 26.19, דְּבָרִי is construct to עֲבָדְךָ, which is construct to the 3ms suffix:

יִשְׁמַעֲנָא אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ	“..., may my master the king hear <i>the</i> words of <i>his</i>
אֶת דְּבָרִי עֲבָדְךָ	servant (1 Sam 26.19)
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו	<i>his</i> hands and <i>his</i> feet (Jg 1.6); two construct chains
בְּיָמֵיכֶם	in <i>your</i> days (Jl 1.2)

3. Pronominal suffixes indicate the *objects* of prepositions:

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם	He said <i>to them</i> , ... (Gn 9.1)
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו	And you shall say <i>to him</i> ... (Ex 9.13)
שָׁלַח אֵלַי לְנָשִׁי וּלְבָנֵי	He sent <i>to me</i> for my wives and for my sons and for
וּלְכֶסֶףִּי וּלְזָהָבִי וְלֹא מָנַעְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ:	my silver and for my gold; and I have not withheld [anything] <i>from him</i> (1 Kgs 20.7).
אֲשֶׁר נִוְתְּרוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּאֶרֶץ	who were left <i>behind them</i> in the land ... (2 Ch 8.8)
וַעֲמָשָׂא בָּא לִפְנֵיהֶם	And Amasa went in <i>before them</i> (2 Sa 20.8)

4. Pronominal suffixes indicate the *object of a verb*, either by being suffixed directly to the verbal form, or by being suffixed to the sign of the object. The form of the sign of the object often changes to **את** when a pronominal suffix is added (§14.4).

וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֹתָנוּ:	... then you shall serve <i>us</i> (1 Sam 17.9).
וְאַתֶּם עֲזַבְתֶּם אוֹתִי	..., but you have deserted <i>me</i> , ... (Jg 10.13)
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח אֹתְכֶם	... to the king who sent <i>you</i> (2 Kgs 1.6)

5. As with nouns (§7.1), the preposition **ל** can show pronominal *possession* and *indirect objects* (verbs of speaking occur with both **ל** and **אל**).

כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:	“... for all the earth is <i>mine</i> ” (Ex 19.5).
וְהִיאָמְרָה אֵלָיו אָבִי	She said <i>to him</i> “Father, ...” (Jg 11.36)
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שָׁמְשׁוֹן	Samson said <i>to them</i> ... (Jg 14.12)

6. Prepositions rarely occur with the relative (**אֲשֶׁר**).¹²⁸ Instead, the preposition that functions with **אֲשֶׁר** falls at or toward the end of the relative clause, with a pronominal suffix that agrees in person, gender, and number with the word being modified by the **אֲשֶׁר**-clause. [The suffix will be, e.g., *fp* when the referent is *cities* (Gn 19.29), *ms* when it is *man* (Gn 41.38; Jos 8.24).] In a similar way, when **אֲשֶׁר** refers to a place, **שָׁם**, *there*, comes at the end of the clause (Jg 19.26).

אֶת־הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־יָשַׁב בָּהֶן לוֹט:	... the cities <i>in which</i> Lot lived (Gn 19.29)
אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ:	... a man <i>in whom</i> is a divine spirit” (Gn 41.38)
בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר יָדְפוּם בּוֹ	... in the wilderness <i>into which</i> they had pursued them (Jos 8.24)
וְתָפַל פֶּתַח בֵּית־הָאִישׁ	She fell at the door of the man’s house
אֲשֶׁר־אֲדוֹנֶיהָ שָׁם	<i>where</i> her master was (Jg 19.26)
וְעָמַדְתִּי לִיד־אָבִי	And I will stand beside my father
בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שָׁם	in the field <i>where</i> you are (1 Sam 19.3)

14.3 Definiteness

Comparing the article, construct, and pronominal suffixes reveals that Biblical Hebrew has three ways to indicate that a substantive is definite:

1. *Proper* nouns [names] and *pronominals* are definite, since they refer to a specific person or place:

דָּוִד	David	הוא	<i>he, it, that</i> (when articular)
אַבְרָהָם	Abraham	חֶבְרוֹן	Hebron
מִי	Who?	הֵם	<i>they, those</i> (when articular)

2. *Articular* common substantives are definite:

הַבַּיִת	<i>the house</i>	לְכָהֵן	<i>to/for the priest</i>
הַחֵג	<i>the feast</i>	אַחֲרֵי־הַמִּלְחָמָה	<i>after the battle</i>

3. Words in *construct* to something that is *definite*, that is when the construct chain ends in:
a) a proper noun:

בֵּית אַבְרָהָם	Abraham’s household (Gn 17.23)
בֶּן־דָּוִד	David’s son (2 Sam 13.1)
אֲנָשֵׁי יְהוּדָה	the men of Judah (2 Sam 2.4)

128. Contrast the routine and common use of relative pronouns as the objects of prepositions in English.

b) an articular substantive:

כָּל-כְּלֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן	<i>all the utensils of the Tabernacle</i> (Ex 27.19)
מֵעֵינֵי הַקָּהָל	<i>from the eyes of the assembly</i> (Lv 4.13)
דְּבַר אִישֵׁי-הָאֱלֹהִים	<i>the word of the man of God</i> (1 Kg 13.4)

c) a pronominal suffix or מִי:

שֹׁמֵרְךָ	<i>he who watches over you</i> (Ps 121.5) [<i>your watcher</i>]
בֵּיתִי וְחֲצֹרֹתַי	<i>my house and my courts</i> (1 Chr 28.6)
הַר קִדְשִׁי	<i>my holy mountain</i> (<i>the mountain of my holiness</i> ; Ps 2.6)
דְּבָרֵי פִיךָ	<i>the words of your mouth</i> (Ps 138.4)
וּמִי־מִי לָקַחְתִּי כֶּפֶר	<i>... and from whose hand have I taken a ransom</i> (1 Sa 12.3)

N.B.: A word with a pronominal suffix is both *construct* and *definite*, and the suffix ends a construct chain and makes the entire chain definite. A substantive plus pronominal suffix is thus a miniature construct chain of two elements contained in one form.

14.4 Verbs with Pronominal Objects

Biblical Hebrew indicates pronominal objects either by suffixing the pronominal to the object marker (§14.2.4), or by attaching the suffix directly to the verbal form itself.

14.4.1 Form

- The pronominal suffixes that are attached to verbs are much like those used on prepositions, nouns, infinitives construct, participles, and the sign of the object (above), and can be suffixed to any conjugation except the infinitive absolute (Lesson 16). Like most Hebrew pronouns, they are inflected for person, gender, and number. The variation in some forms depends on whether the verb ends in a consonant or vowel (e.g., 3fs).

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	common	נִי - <i>me, to me</i>	נֵנוּ - <i>us, to us</i>
		י -	
2nd	masc.	ךָ -	כֶּם -
	fem.	ךָ - <i>you, to you</i>	כֶּן ¹²⁹ - <i>you, to you</i>
3rd	masc.	הוּ -	ם -
		וּ - <i>him, to him</i>	םָ - <i>them,</i>
	fem.	הָ -	ן - <i>to them</i>
		הָ - <i>her, to her</i>	ן -

- A few pronominal suffixes have an alternate form, with *nun*—which is often assimilated—between the suffix and the verbal form. This paradigm lists all the forms of this type of suffix that occur in Biblical Hebrew. In this form, the 3ms and 1cp suffixes are identical, and can be distinguished only by the context.

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	common	נִי -	נֵנוּ -
2nd	masc.	ךָ -	
3rd	masc.	נֵנוּ -	
	fem.	נָה -	

129. This form (2fp) occurs only on participles.

3. The combination of a pronominal suffix and verbal form means that any form that ends with *-uhû* (either *-והו* or *-הו* -) is a masculine plural verbal form (the first *-u-*) with a 3ms suffix (*-hû*):

ואם־תִּדְרֹשׁוּ יִמָּצֵא לָכֶם If you seek *him*, he will be found by you, but if you
 ואם־תַּעֲזֹבֻהוּ יַעֲזֹב אֶתְכֶם: abandon *him*, he will abandon you (2 Ch 15.2).
 יִבְלַעֻהוּ They will swallow *him* (Ho 8.7)

14.4.2 Function

1. Pronominal suffixes identify the *pronominal object* of the verb:

וַיִּשְׁלַחֵהוּ מֵעֵמֶק חֶבְרוֹן ... and he sent *him* from the valley of Hebron (Gn 37.14)
 וּמִשַּׁחֲתָהוּ אֹתוֹ: “... and you shall anoint *him*” (Ex 29.7)
 וְלֹא הָרְגוּם: and they did not kill *them* (Josh 9.26)
 פֶּן־נִשְׂרֹף אֹתְךָ “... lest we burn *you* ...” (Jg 14.15)
 שִׁפְטֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצַדִּיק Judge *me*, YHWH, according to my innocence (Ps 7.9b)
 כִּי שָׁכַחְנִי עַמִּי “... for my people have forgotten *me* ...” (Jr 18.15a)

2. When *parsing* a verb with a pronominal suffix, use the “suffix” column to identify the person, gender, and number of the suffix (e.g., 3fp):

Lemma	Lexical Form	Gloss	PGN	Stem	Conj.	Suffix
שִׁפְטֵנִי	שִׁפַּט	<i>judge</i>	2ms	Q	V	1cs
הָרְגוּם	הָרַג	<i>kill</i>	3cp	Q	P	3mp

14.5 Concepts

definiteness pronominal possession
 pronominal object pronominal suffix

14.6 Vocabulary

<i>cherub</i> (perhaps a winged bull with human head)	כְּרוּב .205	<i>door</i> [way]	דֶּלֶת .197
<i>other side; region beyond</i> [sthg.]	עֵבֶר .206	<i>knowledge, understanding</i>	יָדַעַת .198
<i>power, strength</i>	עֹז עֹז .207	<i>slaughter; sacrifice</i>	זָבַח .199
<i>rebellion, revolt; transgression</i>	פָּשַׁע .208	<i>tumult, uproar; crowd, multitude</i>	הֶמוֹן .200
<i>be satisfied, satiated</i>	שָׂבַע .209	<i>arm, forearm; strength</i>	זִרְעֹעַ .201
<i>in this way/manner, thus, so</i>	כֵּן .210	<i>fat</i>	חֵלֶב .202
<i>in front, east; eastward</i>	קִדְמָה קִדְמָה .211	<i>be pleased</i> [with], <i>delight</i> [in] (st. vb.)	הִפִּיץ .203
<i>bull, young bull; steer</i>	שׁוֹר .212	<i>male offspring / child</i> <i>female offspring / child</i>	יָלַד יָלְדָה .204

14.7 Exercises

1. After learning the pronominal suffixes, gloss these clauses, and be prepared to explain their structure and function. Clauses d-i can be checked against the biblical references.

Nu 22.9	מי האנשים	.g	2 Sam 12.7	אתה האיש	.d	יהוה מלך עמו	.a
Ru 2.5	למי הנערה הזאת	.h	Est 7.5	מי הוא	.e	הוא אישה	.b
Is 41.13	אני יהוה אלהיך	.i	Jg 2.2	מה זאת	.f	היא אשתו	.c

2. Before glossing these phrases and clauses, circle or mark the pronominal suffixes, and identify their person, gender, and number.

Gn 31.44; נִכְרְתָהּ is cohortative; עד testimony, witness	a. נִכְרְתָהּ בְּרִית אֲנִי וְאַתָּה וְהָיָה לְעֵד בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ:
2 Sam 5.7; David	b. הִיא עִיר הָדָד:
Jos 5.2; עֵת time; Joshua	c. בָּעֵת הַהִיא אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ...
1 Kgs 13.26; the last three words are a quotation	d. וַיֹּאמֶר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא
Gn 29.4; Haran (place name); the last two words are a quotation	e. וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִחֶרֶן אֲנַחְנוּ:
2 Kgs 10.13; Jehu, Ahaziah; Judah	f. וַיְהִי כִּשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים וַיִּהְיֶה אֶחָד מִלִּבְיָהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אַתָּם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶחָד אֶחָד וַיִּהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ
Jg 2.2; יָשָׁב inhabitant	g. וַיֹּאמֶר ... [לָהֶם] וְאַתֶּם לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְּרִית לַיּוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְלֹא־שְׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלִי
Gn 27.32; בְּכֹר first-born; Isaac, Esau	h. וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִי־אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי בְּנֶךָ בְּכֹרֶךָ עָשׂוּ:
Ps 22.7; תוֹלַעַת worm	i. וְאֲנֹכִי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא־אִישׁ
Jos 20.6	j. וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּעִיר הַהִיא
Gn 11.31; כְּלָה daughter-in-law (the people identified by the three proper names) are direct objects of "Terah took ..."; Abram, Lot, Haran	k. ... אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בְּנֵהָרָן בְּנֵי־בְנוֹ וְאֶת־שָׂרִי כְלָתוֹ אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ
Dt 5.5	l. אֲנֹכִי עֹמֵד בֵּין־יְהוָה וּבֵינֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהִיא

14.8 Enrichment: Ruth 3.16

In Ruth 3.7, Ruth, in obedience to Naomi, went to the threshing floor, and, after he fell asleep, lay down at Boaz's feet. When he awoke in the middle of the night,

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אַתָּה He said, "Who are you?" (Ru 3.9)

Boaz knew that the person lying beside him was female (and therefore used the fs pronoun), but could not identify her.

After Ruth made her request known to Boaz, she slept, but he awakened her early in the morning so that she could get back to the privacy of Naomi's home without anyone knowing that a woman had been at the threshing floor (3.14). Ruth left the threshing floor while it was still dark enough that the two of them could not recognize each other (3.14).

When she arrived at Naomi's house in Bethlehem, Naomi asked:

מִי־אַתְּ בָּתִּי "Who are you, my daughter?" (Ru 3.16)

This is often glossed with a question that asks about the plan's success, for example, "How did it go, my daughter" (NAS, NIV; cf. ESV). The question, however, shows that even Naomi—who was certainly expecting Ruth, and who would have recognized her better than anyone else in Bethlehem—could only tell that it was a younger female (hence "my daughter"), not that she was Ruth.

The parallel between Naomi's question and Boaz's (3.9) implies that when Ruth arrived home it was still [nearly] as dark as midnight. The author recorded this question in order to assure readers that Boaz's plan had succeeded—that Ruth's visit to the threshing floor remained secret, since she arrived at Naomi's house while it was still too dark for anyone to identify her (cf. 3.14), even if they had recognized that she was a woman.

Lesson 15

STATIC VERBS & הִיָּה

Languages in general have two major types of verb: stative (or static) and dynamic (sometimes called “fientive”). *Stative* verbs describe their subject’s state or condition, rather than an action, and are therefore intransitive (do not govern direct objects); the closest parallels to stative verbs in English are the verb “to be” with a predicate adjective (*He was old*) and the verb “become” (*He had become unclean*).

Dynamic verbs—which we have been studying since Lesson 4—describe events or actions, including any type of movement. Dynamic verbs are therefore *active*, but not necessarily transitive, since they do not necessarily occur with what we think of as direct objects (“He ran home” means “He ran to his house”).

15.1 Stative Verbs

Stative verbs in Biblical Hebrew describe their subject’s condition or state—the way things are or were—and so are usually glossed with forms of “to be” or “to become”. The forms of “be” that are used to render stative verbs do not have the same function as the forms of “be” found in passive clauses in English.¹³⁰

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. The ball <i>was thrown</i> . | passive |
| 2. The ball <i>was red</i> . | stative |
| 3. The ball <i>was polished</i> . | passive (if “polished” is a participle) or stative (if “polished” is an adjective, as in “It was a polished ball.”). |
| 4. וְעִגְלוֹן אִישׁ בָּרִיא מֵאֵד | Now Eglon <i>was</i> a very fat man (stative; “fat” is an adjective) |
| 5. יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ | May YHWH’s name <i>be blessed</i> ... (Ps 113.2; passive) |

These are the most common stative verbs in Biblical Hebrew.

כָּבֵד	<i>be heavy, wealthy</i>	גָּבַהּ	<i>be high, exalted</i>
מָלֵא	<i>be full</i>	גָּדַל	<i>be large, great</i>
קָדַשׁ	<i>be holy</i>	זָקֵן	<i>be old</i>
קָרַב	<i>be near</i>	טָהַר	<i>be clean, pure</i>
רָחַק	<i>be far, distant</i>	טָמֵא	<i>be unclean, impure</i>

15.1.1 Form

- The lexical form of most stative verbs (3ms *qal* perfect) has a vowel other than *pataḥ* after the second radical: either *holem* (גָּדַל, *be[come] large/great*) or *se* (טָמֵא, *be[come] unclean*).
- Apart from this difference, the paradigm of the stative verbs is the same as that of מָשַׁל in the perfect; strong stative verbs tend to have *pataḥ* after the second radical in the imperfect and preterite. [N.B.: Many of these forms do not occur in Biblical Hebrew.]

130. For the various passive and reflexive functions, Biblical Hebrew uses different forms of the verb, called “stems” or *binyanîm* (Lessons 18-21).

Qal Perfect (גָּדַל *be large, great*)

Person	Gender		Singular		Plural
1st	Common	גָּדַלְתִּי	<i>I was / became great</i>	גָּדַלְנוּ	<i>We were / became great</i>
2nd	Masc.	גָּדַלְתָּ	<i>You were / became great</i>	גָּדַלְתֶּם	<i>You were / became great</i>
	Fem.	גָּדַלְתְּ		גָּדַלְתֶּן	
3rd	Masc.	גָּדַל	<i>He was / became great</i>	גָּדְלוּ	<i>They were / became great</i>
	Fem.	גָּדְלָהּ	<i>She was / became great</i>		

Qal Imperfect / Preterite (כָּבֵד *be heavy, wealthy, important*)

Person	Gender		Singular		Plural
1st	Common	אֶכְבֹּד	<i>I was / became wealthy</i>	נִכְבְּדוּ	<i>We were / became important</i>
2nd	Masc.	תִּכְבְּדוּ	<i>You were / became heavy</i>	תִּכְבְּדוּ	<i>You were / became wealthy</i>
	Fem.	תִּכְבְּדִי		תִּכְבְּדֶנָּה	
3rd	Masc.	יִכְבֹּד	<i>He was / became heavy</i>	יִכְבְּדוּ	<i>They were / became heavy</i>
	Fem.	תִּכְבְּדִי	<i>She was / became important</i>	תִּכְבְּדֶנָּה	

Qal Imperative (קָדַשׁ *be holy*)

Person	Gender		Singular		Plural
2nd	Masc.	קָדַשׁ	<i>Be holy!</i>	קָדְשׁוּ	<i>Be holy!</i>
	Fem.	קָדְשִׁי		קָדְשֶׁנָּה	

3. The 3ms *qal* perfect (lexical form) of many stative verbs is identical or nearly identical to the ms form of the adjective of the same root, e.g.:

<i>large, great</i>	גָּדַל	גָּדַל	<i>be large, great</i>
<i>old</i>	זָקַן	זָקַן	<i>be old</i>
<i>strong</i>	חָזַק	חָזַק	<i>be strong</i> (also fientive: <i>hold, seize, grasp</i>)
[ceremonially] <i>clean</i>	טָהַר	טָהַר	<i>be [ceremonially] clean</i>
<i>unclean</i>	טָמֵא	טָמֵא	<i>be [ceremonially] unclean, impure</i>
<i>heavy, wealthy</i>	כָּבֵד	כָּבֵד	<i>be heavy, wealthy</i>
<i>full</i>	מָלֵא	מָלֵא	<i>be full</i>

4. On the other hand, only one form of a stative verb looks like the adjective: **3ms *qal* perfect** is exactly like the **ms** form of the adjective. In all other forms, the stem (or “theme”) vowel—the vowel after the second radical—varies according to the type of PGN ending, just as in the fientive [action/dynamic] verbs (as the above paradigms show). In the adjectives, however, the vowel does *not* change:

Adjectival Forms

	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural	
Masc.	קָרַב	קָרְבִּים	<i>near,</i>	כָּבֵד	כְּבִדִּים	<i>heavy,</i>
Fem.	קָרְבָּה	קָרְבוֹת	<i>close</i>	כְּבִדָּה	כְּבִדּוֹת	<i>honored</i>

15.1.2 Stative Verbs & Time

Stative verbs can refer to the *present* even when their form is the perfect conjugation, in the sense that they describe a condition that characterizes the subject. This same “presentness” is part of the

function of the perfect of a number of verbs of thought, emotion, and perception (e.g., ידע, אהב), especially when they occur within quotations. In Ezk 22.4, they might be rendered as “you are ...” or “you have become ...”

בְּדַמְךָ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁפַכְתָּ אֲשָׁמָה וּבְגִלּוּלֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתָ טִמְאָה	because of your blood which you shed, <i>you are guilty</i> , and because of your deeds which you have done, <i>you are unclean</i> (Ezk 22.4)
יֹאמַר הָעֶבֶד אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנִי אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת־בָּנָי	... the servant shall say, ‘ <i>I love</i> my master, my wife, and my children’ (Ex 21.5)
אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא יָדַעְתָּ:	... my master, O king, <i>you do not know</i> (1 Kgs 1.18)
וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־שִׁמְעִי אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ אֵת כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר יָדַע לְבָבְךָ	The king said to Shimei, “ <i>You know</i> all the evil which your heart knows, ...” (1 Kgs 2.44)

15.2 Fientive [Dynamic / Action] Verbs

Dynamic Verbs (transitive)	Dynamic Verbs (intransitive)
אָהַב <i>love</i>	עָבַר <i>cross over, pass by / through</i>
אָכַל <i>eat, devour, consume</i>	הָלַךְ <i>go, walk</i>
אָמַר <i>say, speak</i>	יָרַד <i>go down, descend</i>
יָרַשׁ <i>possess, dispossess</i>	יָשַׁב <i>remain, sit, settle, stay</i>
כָּתַב <i>write, inscribe</i>	Some verbs can be either dynamic or stative in qal: חָזַק <i>be strong</i> (also dynamic: <i>hold, seize, grasp</i>)
מָלַךְ <i>reign [as king]</i> (also stative: <i>be king</i>)	
עָזַב <i>forsake, abandon, leave</i>	
עָמַד <i>stand, stop, stay</i>	
שָׁכַב <i>lie down, sleep</i>	
שָׁמַע <i>listen, hear; obey</i>	
שָׁמַר <i>guard, watch, keep</i>	

15.3 The Verb היה

Although the function of “being” is often implicit (cf. predicate adjectives, participles, and adverbial functions), the verb היה is usually glossed as “be” or “become” (the latter especially when followed by ל).

15.3.1 Forms of היה

Because היה ends in a vowel letter rather than a consonant, its forms are not like those of the verbs that we have studied to this point. The primary difference is that the final ה- disappears whenever there is an ending (and in the preterite when there is no ending). [III-ה verbs (היה and other verbs like it) are discussed in Lesson 25.]¹³¹ היה is so important to the structure and message of Hebrew narrative that we introduce it here. The chief characteristic of III-ה verbs is that the final ה- (which

131. This nomenclature for types of verbal roots was explained in §6.2.

is a vowel letter, not a radical) disappears before PGN endings in all forms. It is replaced by a *yod*, which is a vowel letter for either *hireq* or *sere*:

Qal Perfect of היה

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	הָיִיתִי <i>I was</i>	הָיִינוּ <i>We were</i>
2nd	Masc.	הָיִיתָ <i>You were</i>	הָיִיתֶם <i>You were</i>
	Fem.	הָיִיתְּ <i>---</i>	---
3rd	Masc.	הָיָה <i>He was</i>	הָיוּ <i>They were</i>
	Fem.	הָיְתָה <i>She was</i>	---

1. The vowel letter *yod* (as part of *hireq-yod*) “replaces” the final vowel letter ה- before consonantal endings (endings that begin with a consonant).
2. The 3fs ending תָּהָה “replaces” the final vowel letter ה-.
3. The 3cp vocalic ending וּ- “replaces” the final vowel letter ה-.
4. Because they are preceded by a vowel, the ת- of the PGN endings does not have *dagesh lene*.
5. The sign—means that this form does occur in the Bible.

Qal Imperfect of היה

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	אֶהְיֶה <i>I am / shall be</i>	נֶהְיֶה <i>We are / shall be</i>
2nd	Masc.	תֶּהְיֶה <i>You are / shall be</i>	תֶּהְיֶיךָ <i>You are / shall be</i>
	Fem.	תִּהְיֶיךָ <i>---</i>	---
3rd	Masc.	יֶהְיֶה <i>He is / shall be</i>	יֶהְיֶיךָ <i>They are / shall be</i>
	Fem.	תִּהְיֶה <i>She is / shall be</i>	---

1. The vowel letter *yod* replaces the final vowel letter ה- before consonantal endings (2/3fp).
2. The vowel before the final ה- is *segol* (this is only for forms without PGN endings).
3. The vocalic endings יֶ- (2fs) and וּ- (2/3mp) “replace” the final vowel letter ה-.

Qal Imperative of היה

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
2nd	Masc.	הֵיְהָ <i>Be!</i>	הֵיְהוּ <i>Be!</i>
	Fem.	הֵיְהִי <i>---</i>	---

Qal Preterite of היה

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	וָאָהִי <i>[And] I was</i>	וָנָהִי <i>... we were / became</i>
2nd	Masc.	וָתָהִי <i>... you were / became</i>	וָתָהִי <i>... you were / became</i>
	Fem.	---	וָתָהִינָה <i>...</i>
3rd	Masc.	וָיָהִי <i>... he was / became</i>	וָיָהִי <i>... they were / became</i>
	Fem.	וָתָהִי <i>... she was / became</i>	וָתָהִינָה <i>...</i>

Final ה- drops off in the preterite, so that forms without PGN endings end in *hireq-yod*.

Do not confuse forms of the *Tetragrammaton* (on left) with היה (on right).

	Forms of היה		
	הָיָה	<i>He was [became]</i>	3ms Q P
	יִהְיֶה	<i>He will be[come]</i>	3ms Q F
	יְהִי	<i>Let him [it] be[come]!</i>	3ms Q J
	יִהְיוּ	<i>They will be[come]</i>	3mp Q F
יְהוָה (YHWH)	וַיְהִי	<i>And he will be[come]</i>	3ms Q P + <i>waw</i>
	וַיְהִי	<i>And he was [became]</i>	3ms Q Pr

1. In the *imperfect*, the vowel after the second radical of היה is *segol*.
2. In the *preterite*, the final ה- (a vowel letter) drops off; the י- prefix is not doubled due to the following *šewa*.

N.B.: You do not need to memorize these paradigms, but you will need to be able to recognize and identify the forms of היה.

15.3.2 Functions

The verb היה is usually glossed as “be”, “become”, “happen”, or “come to pass”. Its function is larger than the English verb “to be”, which primarily links a topic with its [adjectival, nominal, or adverbial] comment (e.g., “Goliath was *large*”, “Goliath was a *giant*”, “Goliath was *in front of the Philistine army*”).

The primary distinction in the function of היה is between the 3ms forms and the other forms of היה. Since the non-3ms forms are more easily explained, we discuss them first.

1. All forms of היה can link the subject and predicate; the conjugation of היה indicates the general temporal frame of the clause.

טִמְאִים הֵם וְטִמְאִים יְהִיוּ לָכֶם:	They are unclean, and they <i>are/shall be</i> unclean for you (Lv 11.35) [both clauses have predicate adjectives]
יְדֵי־יְהוָה הָיְתָה־בָּם	YHWH’s hand <i>was</i> against them (Jg 2.15)
כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיִיתִי עִם־מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ	As I <i>was</i> with Moses, I <i>shall be</i> with you (Jos 1.5)
לִי הָיְתָה הַמְּלוּכָה	The kingdom <i>was</i> mine (1 Kgs 2.15)

2. Furthermore, with an expressed (nominal, substantive) subject, היה is the predicate of a stative clause to which it adds explicit temporal information (past for the preterite and perfect, and present or future for the imperfect and *w*+perfect). This is not primarily a static description, but often signals some sort of change in the subject’s condition or state, and therefore a turn in a story. It thus often marks the beginning of a narrative segment, as these examples illustrate:

וַיְהִי אֹר	and <i>there was</i> light (Gn 1.3)
וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר	<i>There was</i> a morning and <i>there was</i> an evening, ... (Gn 1.5); or “A morning <i>was</i> and ...”
וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ	<i>There was</i> a famine in the land (Gn 12.10; Ru 1.1); or “A famine <i>came upon</i> the land”
וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	YHWH <i>was</i> with Joshua, and his fame <i>was</i> in all
וַיְהִי שְׁמֵעוֹ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:	[i.e., throughout] the land (Jos 6.27)

3. When a 3ms form of היה without an expressed (nominal, substantive) subject opens a narrative, the 3ms preterite and *w* + perfect tend to signal a temporal or locational shift in the flow of events which is identified in the next two or three words. Either an *infinitive*

construct (below) with a preposition will follow the form of *היה*, or a temporal phrase, with a preposition and one or more nouns.

- a. If the form is *וַיְהִי* (3ms *qal* preterite of *היה*), it opens a section of a past narrative built on a series of preterites (*italicized* in both passages):

וַיְהִי בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ	So at that time, Abimelech <i>said</i> (Gn 21.22)
וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא	Now in those days, Moses <i>grew up</i> , and <i>he</i>
אֶל-אָחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ ...	<i>went out</i> to his relatives, and <i>he saw</i> their
	burdens, and <i>he saw</i> a man ... (Ex 2.11)

- b. The form *וְהָיָה* (*waw* + 3ms *qal* perfect of *היה*) is either the predicate of a simple clause, or it introduces a series of instruction or prophecy outlined by a series of *waw* + perfects. This form therefore occurs primarily within direct quotations, rather than on the main storyline of the narrative.

וְהָיָה שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָהָם	Your name <i>shall be</i> Abraham (Gn 17.5)
וְהָיָה כִּי-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם ... וַאֲמַרְתֶּם	When your sons say to you ..., you
	shall say (Ex 12.26–27)

- c. *וְהָיָה* may be followed by a temporal particle, such as *כִּי* (“when” in this context), which in turn is then followed by one or more verb(s) in the imperfect, preterite, or *waw* + perfect conjugations; *וַיְהִי* is rarely followed by these particles.

וְהָיָה כִּי-יִקְרָא לָכֶם פַּרְעֹה וַאֲמַר	When Pharaoh summons you and says ... (Gn 46.33)
וְהָיָה כִּי-יִחַטֵּא וְאָשָׁם וְהָשִׁיב	When he sins and is guilty and returns ... (Lv 5.23)

4. The combination of a form of *היה* followed by the preposition *ל* has two predominant functions: possession and change in status.

- a. The combination can indicate *possession* (the “possessive” use of *ל*), with a temporal nuance added by the conjugation of *היה*.

וַיְהִי-לוֹ צֹאן-וּבָקָר ... and *he had* flocks and herds (Gn 12.16)

- b. It can also indicate a *change* in its subject’s *status* or *condition*. The *ל* indicates what the subject has “become” (or, in the future, “will become”).

וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:	The man <i>became</i> a living being (Gn 2.7)
וְהָיָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית	It shall <i>be</i> a sign of a covenant (Gn 17.11)

- c. These functions can be combined when two words are introduced by *ל*—one indicates the new “owner”, and the other the subject’s new status.

וַתְּהִי-לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה	... and she became <i>his wife</i> (Ru 4.13); “a wife of his”
וַיְהִי-לָהּ לְבֵן	... and he became <i>her son</i> (Ex 2.10)
וְהָמָּה יִהְיוּ-לִי לְעָם:	... and they shall be[come] <i>my people</i> (Jr 31.33)
הָיְתָה-חֲבֵרוֹן לְכָלֵב בֶּן-יִפְנֵה הַקְנִזִּי לְנַחֲלָה	Hebron became <i>the inheritance</i> of Caleb son of Jephuneh the Kenizzite (Jos 14.14)
אֲנַחְנוּ נִהְיָה לְאֹדְנֵי לַעֲבָדִים:	We shall be[come] <i>my lord’s slaves</i> (Gn 44.9)

15.4 Frequency

Some forms of הִיָּה—by far the most common verb in Biblical Hebrew (c. 3500x), are extremely frequent in the Bible:

הָיָה	<i>He was [became]</i>	3ms Q P	1022x
וְהָיָה	<i>He will be[come]</i>	3ms Q P + <i>waw</i>	776x
וַיְהִי	<i>He was</i>	3ms Q Pr	396x
יִהְיֶה	<i>He will be[come]</i>	3ms Q F	334x
יִהְיוּ	<i>They will be[come]</i>	3mp Q F	130x
יֵהְיֶה	<i>Let him [it] be[come]!</i>	3ms Q J	75x

15.5 Concepts

dynamic	intransitive	status, change of
fientive	static	transitive
	stative	

15.6 Vocabulary¹³²

<i>be / become full</i> (st. vb.); <i>full</i> (adj.)	מָלֵא .221	<i>if, then; אִם ... אִם ≈ either ... or</i>	אִם .213
<i>[a] few, little</i> (adj.)	מָעַט .222	<i>be / become high, exalted</i> (st. vb.)	גָּבַהּ .214
<i>be / become holy; restricted in use</i> (st. vb.)	קָדַשׁ .223	<i>[ceremonially] clean, pure</i> (adj.)	טָהָר .215
<i>be / become far, remote, distant</i> (st. vb.)	רָחַק .224	<i>be / become [ceremonially] clean, pure</i> (st. vb.) ¹³³	טָהָר .215
<i>far, remote, distant</i> (adj.)	רָחֹק	<i>be / become [ceremonially] unclean, impure</i> (st. vb.); <i>unclean, impure</i> (adj.)	טָמֵא .216
<i>call, invite, summon; name; read; proclaim</i> [This overlaps with קָרָה (Lesson 21).]	קָרָא .225	<i>be able [to]</i> (st. vb., often with infinitive construct, §16.2.6c); <i>overcome, prevail</i> (over)	יָכַל .217
<i>near, close</i> (adj.); <i>be / become near, close, approach</i> (st. vb.)	קָרִיב קָרַב .226	<i>fear, be afraid of</i> (thing or person introduced by אֵת, מִפְּנֵי, מִן) (st. vb.)	יָרָא .218
<i>be / become whole, complete</i> (st. vb.)	שָׁלֵם .227	<i>be / become heavy, severe; honored, wealthy</i> (st. vb.); <i>heavy, severe; etc.</i> (adj.)	כָּבֵד .219
		<i>for, because; that; but; since, while; when, if</i> [N.B.: These glosses do not exhaust its function, but will suffice for the purposes of this grammar.]	כִּי .220

15.7 Exercises

When you have reviewed the forms and function of הִיָּה, gloss these clauses, parsing all verbal forms.

Ps 104.1b; מְאֹד *very, much*

1. יהוה אֱלֹהֵי נִדְלָתָּ מְאֹד

Ex 3.5; הֵלֶם [to] *here*

2. וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-תִּקְרַב הֵלֶם

132. This list includes all stative verbs with strong verbal roots that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew. Stative verbs from other root types will be introduced later.

133. About one-half of the occurrences of both טָהָר and טָמֵא are in Lv.

3. וְעַלִּי זָקֵן מְאֹד 1 Sam 2.22; Eli
4. וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא זָקַנְתִּי לֹא יִדְעֹתִי יוֹם מוֹתִי: Gn 27.2; מוֹת is construct singular of מוֹת
5. וַתִּטָּמֵא הָאָרֶץ וַאֲפָקַד עֲוֹנָה עָלֶיהָ וַתִּקָּא הָאָרֶץ אֶת־יֹשְׁבֶיהָ: Lv 18.25; וַתִּקָּא and it vomited (3fs Pr); יֹשֵׁב inhabitant (ms Q Ptc)
6. וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה Ex 2.11; Moses
7. וַאֲבָרָם כְּבֹד מְאֹד בַּמִּקְנֵה בְּכֶסֶף וּבַזָּהָב: Gn 13.2; מִקְנֵה property; Abram
8. וַתִּקְרָא אִשָּׁה חֲכָמָה מִן־הָעִיר שְׁמֻעוֹ שְׁמֻעוֹ אֲמֵרוֹנָא אֶל־יוֹאֵב קָרַב עַד־הַנָּה וַאֲדַבְּרָה אֵלָיֶךָ: וַיִּקְרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הָאֵתָה יוֹאֵב וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ שְׁמַע דְּבָרִי אֲמַתְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַע אֲנֹכִי: 2 Sa 20.17; הָאֵתָה (2ms pronoun with interrogative -ה) Is it you?; אֲמָה [female] servant; Joab [each line is a separate clause]
9. וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: Gn 9.1 (||¹³⁴ Gn 1.28); רְבָה be fruitful; רְבָה multiply (both are 2mp Q imperative)

Locate all of the occurrences of וַיְהִי and וְהָיָה in Genesis 11.27–13.18, as well as any stative verbs, and identify their function.

15.8 Enrichment: Genesis 13.2

Since the 3ms *qal* perfect of stative verbs are identical in form to the masc. sing. adjective, the interpretation of some clauses is open to debate, with potentially significantly different interpretations. In Gn 13.2, for example, does כְּבֹד describe a state or condition, or is it a flashback to Gn 12.16? The three interpretations are all grammatically permissible:

- Now Abram *was* very wealthy (כְּבֹד as either 3ms *qal* perfect or ms adj.)
 וַאֲבָרָם כְּבֹד מְאֹד Now Abram *became* very wealthy (כְּבֹד as 3ms *qal* perfect)
 וַאֲבָרָם כְּבֹד מְאֹד Now Abram *had become* very wealthy (כְּבֹד as 3ms *qal* perfect)

There is probably not a great deal of difference in the long run—however we translate it, Abram was very wealthy. The larger question is how this wealth affected his relationship with Lot, and thus we might want to get some idea of when the troubles between Lot's and Abram's shepherds may have begun.

Our interpretation of the events of Gn 12, and of the relationship between Gn 12 and 13, will affect how we read this clause. The verb can *only* be interpreted in reference to its clause and the larger context. Gn 12.16 says that however well-to-do Abram had been, his wealth greatly increased after Pharaoh took Sarai, which in turn suggests that Gn 13.2 is meant to remind the reader of what had happened in Egypt (Gn 12.16). This in turn suggests that the third option listed above—the past perfect—is the best in this context. We are here searching in the shadows between philology and interpretation, but its occurrence in a disjunctive clause also suggests a flashback to events before the immediately preceding preterite (“Abram went up from Egypt, ...”; Gn 13.1).

134. A double vertical line (||) means that two texts are identical (or nearly so), or else that they are parallel poetic lines.

Lesson 16

THE INFINITIVES & SUMMARY OF QAL

Hebrew has two forms that are called “infinitives”—the *infinitive construct* (NC) and the *infinitive absolute* (NA). The names refer to whether or not the particular infinitive can occur with affixes; NC routinely occurs with prepositions and pronominal suffixes, whereas NA does not. The term is traditional but unfortunate, for two reasons: (1) their identity as infinitives does not depend on the presence of a preposition as does the infinitive in English (“to ...”); (2) their function overlaps with that of the English infinitive only occasionally. On the other hand, because they seem merely to name an action or event without further specification, they are genuinely “non-finite” in function.

16.1 Form

In nearly all verbs, NC (infinitive construct) is essentially identical to the 2ms imperative. The *qal* infinitive absolute (Q NA) has *qameṣ* after the first radical and *holem* after the second radical. This chart lists 2ms *qal* imperfect and imperative for comparison.

	imperfect (2ms)	imperative (2ms)	infinitive construct	infinitive absolute
משל	תִּמְשַׁל	מְשַׁל	מְשַׁל	מְשַׁל
כתב	תִּכְתֹּב	כָּתֹב	כָּתֹב	כָּתֹב
שכב	תִּשְׁכַּב	שָׁכֵב	שָׁכֵב	שָׁכֵב
שמע	תִּשְׁמָע	שָׁמַע	שָׁמַע	שָׁמַע

16.1.1 Infinitive Construct (NC): Function (HBI §2.2.6)

1. Infinitives (NC & NA) are inflected for *stem*, but *not* for person, gender, or number. Instead, they use pronominal suffixes to indicate pronominal subjects (“he”, “they”), or nouns to indicate nominal subjects; in some uses the subject is implied from the context.
2. If the subject is a *noun*, it follows the infinitive construct; if the subject is *pronominal* (“he”, “they”), it is suffixed (almost every time a pronoun follows an infinitive construct, the infinitive is *לֵאמֹר* and the pronoun begins the direct quotation).
3. If NC has an *object*, the object may be suffixed (in which case the subject will be a noun), or it may follow the infinitive (in which case the subject may be either a suffix or noun). These clauses illustrate the possibilities:

בְּשָׁמְרוֹ	when <i>he</i> guards or that <i>he</i> may guard
בְּשָׁמְרוֹ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב	when <i>he</i> guards <i>Jacob</i>
וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי כִבְרוֹ אֹתוֹ	After <i>he</i> buried <i>him</i> (1 Kgs 13.31)
לְלַמְּדָם מִלְחָמָה	to teach <i>them</i> war (Jg 3.2)
	[the pronominal object may be considered “indirect” in English]
וּכְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי רֵבֶקָה אָחִתּוֹ	and when <i>he</i> heard the words of Rebecca his sister (Gn 24.30)

4. NC often occurs with prepositions (as the above examples show); the preposition indicates the function of the subordinate clause. When NC occurs with a preposition *other than* ל, it tends to be the predicate of a temporal [circumstantial] clause. In these cases its temporal reference—or “tense”—is relative to that of the main clause. Both prepositions ב and כ convey contemporaneous action (*when, while, as*); the temporal aspect depends on the preposition and the cotext.¹³⁵

וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁכַּב אֲדֹנֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם-אֲבֹתָיו	When my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, ... (1 Kg 1.21). [The future is indicated by introductory וְהָיָה.]
אַחֲרֵי קָבְרוּ אֶת-אָבִיו:	... after he buried his father (Gn 50.14).
וַיְהִי כִּרְאֹת אֶת-הַנֶּזֶם	When he saw the gold ring ... and when he heard the words of Rebecca his sister (Gn 24.30).
וּכְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת-דְּבָרֵי רִבְקָה אָחֳתוֹ	[The past is indicated by introductory וַיְהִי.]

5. The prepositions that occur most frequently with infinitives are:

ב	when,	בְּדַבֵּר יִצְחָק אֶל-עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ	when Isaac spoke to Esau his son (Gn 27.5)
כ	while	כְּשָׁמְעַע עֵשָׂו אֶת-דְּבָרֵי אָבִיו	when Esau heard his father's words (Gn 27.34)
ל	to	... לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת חֲכֻמַּת שְׁלֹמֹה	to hear Solomon's wisdom (1 Kgs 5.14)
	by [X]-ing	וְאִם תֵּלֶךְ בְּדַרְכֵי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֵּי	And if you walk in my ways by keeping my statutes (1 Kgs 3.14)
אַחֲרֵי	after	אַחֲרֵי שֶׁכַּב-הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם-אֲבֹתָיו	after the king slept with his fathers (2 Kgs 14.22)
לִפְנֵי	before	לִפְנֵי בּוֹא הַפְּלִיט	before the fugitives came (Ek 33.22) ¹³⁶

6. When the phrase בַּיּוֹם (*in the day [that]*) precedes NC, it usually has the same contemporaneous function as the prepositions ב and כ (i.e., *when, while, as*), although it can also refer to a specific period of time (daylight, twenty-four hours, etc.). This sometimes affects our reading of the text—does Nu 30.9 mean that the husband must restrain his wife immediately (“*when* he hears”), or either before sundown or within the next twenty-four hours (“*on the day* that he hears”)?

כַּאֲשֶׁר בַּיּוֹם שָׁלַח אוֹתִי מֹשֶׁה	just as when Moses sent me (Jos 14.11)
בַּיּוֹם בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֲדָם	... when God created them (Gn 5.1)
וְאִם בַּיּוֹם שָׁמְעָה אִשָּׁה יְגִיֵּא אוֹתָהּ	and if, when her husband hears, he restrains her, ... (Nu 30.9)

7. With a prefixed ל, NC (infinitive construct) has four main functions (not all of these are *gal* NC):

- a. *telic* (purpose, result); this is always the case when it occurs with לִמְעַן, and often when it occurs with prefixed ל:

וַיָּבֹאוּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת חֲכֻמַּת שְׁלֹמֹה	They came from all the peoples to hear Solomon's wisdom (1 Kgs 5.14).
וַיִּשְׁלַח תַּעִי אֶת-יֹרָם בְּנוֹ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ- דָּוִד לְשַׁאֲלֵהוּ לְשָׁלוֹם	Toi sent Joram his son to King David to ask him for peace and to bless him because he had fought against Hadad-ezer (2 Sa 8.10).
וּלְבָרְכּוֹ עַל אֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם בַּהֲדָדְעֶזֶר ... בְּגִן-עֵדֶן לְעַבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ:	... in the garden of Eden to serve [till] it and to guard it (Gn 2.15)

135. This function is precisely analogous to the infinitive with prepositions in Greek.

136. The form לִפְנֵי is not common before infinitives construct.

- b. *gerundive* (glossed as “by _____ ing”; the blank is filled by the infinitival verb)

שְׁמֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ Keep the Sabbath day *by sanctifying* it (Dt 5.12);
(the main verb is an imperatival infinitive absolute
(16.1.2.1))

כִּי תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ When you obey YHWH your God *by keeping* all his
לְשׁוֹמֵר אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו commands (Dt 13.18)

- c. *complementary*, completing or explaining a “vague verb” (יכל “be able”, כלה “finish”, חדל “cease”, the *hifil* of יסף “do again, repeat”. NC can have this function with or without ל־. [In Jg 3.18 and Ru 1.18, English style suggests their gerundive gloss.]

אִם־תּוּכַל לְסַפֵּר אֹתָם ... if you are able *to count* them (Gn 15.5)

וַתַּחֲדֹל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ: She stopped *talking* to her (Ru 1.18); She ceased *to talk* ...

כָּלָה לְהַקְרִיב אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה ... he finished *offering* the tribute (Jg 3.18)

- d. *quotative frame*. The form לֵאמֹר (Q NC [*qal* infinitive construct] of אָמַר; trad., *saying*) is the most common infinitive construct in Biblical Hebrew, usually following verbs of speech *other than* אָמַר (although it does occur with אָמַר):

וַיַּעֲנוּ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר They answered Joshua, *saying*, “... (Jos 1.16)

וַאֲשַׁלְּחָה עֲלֵיהֶם מַלְאָכִים לֵאמֹר I sent messengers to them, *saying*, “... (Ne 6.3)

וַיִּצַּו בְּעֹז אֶת־נַעֲרָיו לֵאמֹר Boaz commanded his servants, *saying*, “... (Ru 2.15)

N.B.: Although ל־ occurs far more frequently with NC than any other preposition, and even though the ל־ is often glossed as “to”, it is *not* the “sign of the infinitive” as the word “to” is in English. [In other words, “go” is not an English infinitive, but “to go” is.] In contrast, מִשֵּׁל—with or without the prefixed ל־ is an infinitive construct.

8. NC is negated by either בְּלֹאִי or לֹבֵלִי, expressing negative purpose or result, or a negated gerundive.

צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכָל־מִמֶּנּוּ ... I commanded you *not to eat* from it ...
(Gn 3.11)

הִפְגַּעְנוּ בַּמֶּלֶךְ לְבִלְתִּי שַׂרֵף אֶת־הַמִּגִּלָּה They pressed the king *not to burn* the scroll
(Jr 36.25)

פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ... lest you forget YHWH your God *by not*
לְבִלְתִּי שֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו *keeping* his commandments ... (Dt 8.11)

16.1.2 Infinitive Absolute (NA): Function (HBI §2.2.7)

“Absolute” means that no prefixes (e.g., prepositions) or suffixes are affixed to it except the conjunction *waw* (147x) and interrogative הֲ (23x).

	infinitive construct	infinitive absolute
מִשֵּׁל	מִשֵּׁל	מִשֵּׁל
כָּתַב	כָּתַב	כָּתַב
שָׁכַב	שָׁכַב	שָׁכַב
שָׁמַע	שָׁמַע	שָׁמַע

1. NA usually occurs in a clause with a finite form of the same verb. This makes it fairly easy to recognize, because there are *two forms of the same verbal root* in one clause. It apparently

focuses or strengthens the function of the main verb.¹³⁷ Its gloss depends on the function of the main verb (stem and conjugation) and the context.

מִכָּל עֵץ הָגֶן אֲכַל תֹּאכַל: וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע ... מוֹת תָּמוּת:	“From [any] tree of the garden you may <i>freely</i> eat, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ..., you shall <i>surely</i> die” (Gn 2.16–17)
אָמַר אֶמְרָתִי	“I <i>most certainly</i> said ...” (1 Sam 2.30)
קָרַע אֶקְרַע אֶת־הַמְּמִלְכָּה מֵעַלְיָךְ	I will <i>certainly</i> tear the kingdom from you (1 Kgs 11.11)

2. When NA occurs alone, it serves as the main verb in its clause. When it does this, its function is equivalent to that of any conjugation, but is most often imperatival.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם זְכוֹר אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה	Moses said to the people, “ <i>Remember</i> this day!” (Ex 13.3)
הִלֵּךְ וְקָרָאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם	Go call in the ears of Jerusalem (Jr 2.2)
הִלֵּךְ וְרָחֲצָתָ ... וְטָהַר:	Go and wash ... and <i>you will be clean</i> (2 Kgs 5.10)

3. Infinitive absolutes (NA) of two different verbal roots can occur side-by-side, especially NA of הִלֵּךְ, in the sense of continually or constantly.

וַיִּלְךְ דָּוִד הַלֹּךְ וְגִדּוֹל	David <i>continued to grow strong</i> (2 Sam 5.10 [= 2 Ch 11.9]); grew stronger and stronger
... הַלֹּךְ וְתִקְוַע בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת:	... <i>continually blowing</i> the horns (Jos 6.9)
... וַעֲלֹוּ עִלָּה וּבְכָה:	... and they were <i>weeping as they went up</i> (2 Sam 15.30)

4. NA cannot be directly negated, although the main verb of its clause may be negated with לֹא or אַל.

16.2 Summary of the Qal Stem

It is helpful to think of verbal forms in Hebrew as containing certain “diagnostics” that help us identify the stem and form of the verb. The most basic of these are the PGN prefixes and endings for the perfect, imperfect (cohortative, jussive), preterite, and imperative. You must be able to identify these at sight.

Person	Gender	Perfect		Imperfect		Imperative	
		Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.
1st	common	אָ - תִּי	נִי - נוּ	אֶ - אָ	נֶ - נִי	---	---
2nd	masc.	תָּ - תָּ	תָּם - תָּ	תֶּ - תָּ	תֶּ - תָּ	תֵּ - תָּ	תֵּ - תָּ
	fem.	תִּ - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי
3rd	masc.	---	הֵ - הֵ	יֶ - יֶ	יֶ - יֶ	יֵ - יֵ	יֵ - יֵ
	fem.	תִּי - תִּי	---	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי	תִּי - תִּי

Since the PGN affixes are common to all stems and types of verbal root, they do not enable us to distinguish a verb’s stem (which often affects or determines the verb’s function). It is instead the vowels that “attach” the subject [PGN] prefixes to the verbal root and the vowel after the second radical that are the primary diagnostic of the verb’s stem. We will address this as we encounter each stem (Lessons 18–21).

137. The vagueness of this statement reflects the generally vague understanding that biblical scholars have of the significance and function of NA in such cases.

16.2.1 The Qal Stem

The sign of the *qal* are the *a*-vowels of the perfect, the (occasional) *holem* of the imperfect, imperative, and infinitive construct, and the *holem* and *šureq* of the *qal* active and passive participles. In imperfect and preterite, the primary signal that a verb is *qal* is the **hireq under the prefix**.

The **primary diagnostic for the *qal*** is therefore **negative: no prefix or doubling in the perfect, imperative, participle, and infinitives, and *hireq* as the prefix vowel in the imperfect (cohortative, jussive), and preterite**. This paradigm summarizes the *qal*. [See also the full paradigm in Appendix D.]

Conjugation	PGN	Fientive Verbs	Stative Verbs
Perfect	3ms	מָשַׁל	כָּבַד
Imperfect	3ms	יִמְשַׁל	יִכְבֹּד
Preterite	3ms	וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּכְבֹּד
Imperative	[2]ms	מִשַּׁל	כִּבֹּד
Inf. Const.		מִשַּׁל	כִּבֹּד
Inf. Abs.		מִשַּׁל	כִּבֹּד
Ptc. (active)	ms	מִשַּׁל	
Ptc. (passive)	ms	מְשֻׁל	

1. *Qal* perfects tend to have *a*-vowels; *qal* imperfects and preterites tend to have *o*- or *a*-vowels.
2. The prefix vowel in *qal* imperfect and preterite is *hireq*.
3. The “stem” or “theme” vowel (*qal* imperfect, preterite, imperative, infinitives) is either *holem* (fientive roots) or *pataḥ* (stative roots); this only appears when there is no ending or a consonantal ending.
4. *Qal* active participle is nearly the only verbal form with *holem* after the first radical.
5. *Qal* passive participle is the only verbal form with a *u*-vowel between the second and third radicals.
6. *Qal* is the only stem that lacks both a stem prefix (perfect, imperative, infinitives, & participle), and a doubled middle radical. [The significance of this will become clear as we study the other stems.]

16.2.2 The Conjugations

We have now reviewed all of the conjugations of the Hebrew verb, as they appear in the *qal* stem of the strong verb. How are the functions of these conjugations related?

1. The *perfect* (P) and *preterite* (Pr) are *complementary*. The predicate of an “interruptive” disjunctive clause may be in the perfect. The predicate of the disjunctive clause may also be either participial or non-verbal, in which case the clause contains background information about the setting. This is one way in which Biblical Hebrew shows a “flashback”—an event that happened before the story—or compares the actions or situations of two characters.
2. The *imperfect* (F) and *w + perfect* (w + P) are *complementary*. If a disjunctive clause “interrupts” the *w + perfect* chain of instructions, commands, or predictions, the predicate of the disjunctive clause will usually be in the imperfect, signaling that the event is secondary to the main line of the instructions, etc.
3. *Infinitives* construct (NC) are either *circumstantial* (often after וַיִּיָּיֶה) or *complementary*, filling out “vague verbs”, *telic* (showing purpose or result), or else they function as *gerunds*. They may do this after any finite conjugation (imperfect, preterite, perfect, imperative). Infinitives absolute appear to modify the function of the main verb; if the clause lacks a main verb, their function must be determined by context.
4. Participles (Ptc) are functionally *adjectives*, modifying or functioning as nouns, although they occasionally occur with a form of הָיָה, apparently as a way of saying that someone “was doing” something.

5. The conjugations can occur with various affixes [in addition to the subject (PGN)]:

This conjugation ...	can be combined with ...			
	conjunction <i>w-</i>	article	prepositions	pronominal suffixes
imperFect	yes	no	no	yes
Preterite	always	no	no	yes
imperatiVe	yes	no	no	yes
Perfect	yes	no	no	yes
Participle	yes	yes	yes	yes
iNfinitive Construct	yes	no	yes	yes
iNfinitive Absolute	yes	no	no	no

- Thus any verbal form with an article, for example, is a participle; a conjunction-less verb cannot be preterite, etc.
- “Yes” does *not* mean “always”.
- “Always” means “always”.
- “No” means “never”.

16.3 Frequency

More than one-tenth (11%) of all verbs in Biblical Hebrew are infinitives (6985 occurrences in Biblical Hebrew), but infinitives construct (9%) are far more common than infinitives absolute (1%).

16.4 Concepts

circumstantial clause	infinitive absolute	temporal clause
gerundive	infinitive construct	vague verb

16.5 Vocabulary

<i>open</i> (vb.)	פָּתַח .236	<i>there is/are not</i> (opp. 317); <i>no</i> ; <i>אֵין</i> ; often ≈ <i>without</i>	אֵין .228 אֵין
<i>innocence</i> (§2.4/3); <i>righteousness</i>	צָדִיקָה .237	<i>not</i> (adv.); <i>except, unless</i> (cj.) us. מִבְּלִיתִי or לְבִלְתִּי	בִּלְבָּל .229 בִּלְתִּי
<i>north</i>	צָפוֹן .238	<i>wine</i>	יַיִן .230
<i>abundance, multitude, great quantity</i>	רַב .239	<i>right</i> (hand, side); cf. <i>Benjamin</i> (“son of my right hand”); <i>south</i>	יְמִין .231
<i>chase, persecute, pursue</i>	רָדַף .240	<i>seat, throne</i>	כִּסֵּא .232
<i>rejoice, be glad</i>	שָׂמַח .241	<i>number, total</i>	מִסְפָּר .233
<i>hate</i>	שָׂנֵא .242	<i>dwelling; Tabernacle</i>	מִשְׁכָּן .234
<i>break, smash, shatter</i>	שָׁבַר .243	<i>assembly</i> (trad. “congregation”)	עֵדָה .235

16.6 Exercises

After learning the forms of the *qal* infinitives construct and absolute, and reviewing the *qal* system, *gloss* these clauses, *parsing* the verbs. Remember that infinitives have no PGN; if they have a pronominal suffix, it is identified by PGN in the “suffix” column.

1. 2 Sam 15.10; מְרַגֵּל *spy* (here *secret messengers*); שֶׁפָּר *ram's horn*; Absalom; Hebron
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם מְרַגְלִים בְּכָל-שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
כְּשִׁמְעֶכֶם אֶת-קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר
וַיֹּאמְרֵם מֶלֶךְ אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם בְּחֶבְרוֹן:
2. Gn 37.8; interrogative הֲ; when followed by אִם, the two clauses express alternatives (real or hypothetical)
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אָחִיו הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ
אִם-מִשׁוּל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ
3. Gn 3.24; וַיֵּשְׁבֵן *he caused to dwell*; מִקְדָּם [to the] east of; גֶּן *garden*; Eden; חַיִּים *life*
וַיֵּשְׁבֵן מִקְדָּם לְגִן-עֵדֶן אֶת-הַפְּרִי
לְשֹׂמֵר אֶת-דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:
4. Qo 3.6, 8; הִשְׁלִיךְ *throw away* (*hifil* of שָׁלַךְ)
עַתָּה לְשִׁמּוֹר וְעַתָּה לְהִשְׁלִיךְ:
עַתָּה לְאַהֲבָה וְעַתָּה לְשִׁנְאָה
עַתָּה מִלְחָמָה וְעַתָּה שָׁלוֹם:
5. Jr 45.1; דִּבֶּר *he said*; Jeremiah, Baruch, Neraiah
הַדִּבֵּר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל-בָּרוּךְ
בֶּן-נְרִיָּה בְּכַתְּבוֹ אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
עַל-סֵפֶר מִפִּי יִרְמְיָהוּ
6. Ex 15.26; this is not a complete sentence
וַיֹּאמֶר אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ...
7. Pr 6.22; שָׁכַב *lie down*; [the subject of תִּשְׁמֹר (3fs) is “Wisdom”]
בְּשֹׁכְבְּךָ תִּשְׁמֹר עָלֶיךָ
8. 1 Sam 24.21
יִדְעֹתִי כִּי מֶלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ
9. Jos 14.7; בֶּן-אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה *40 years old*; בֶּן-אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה *40 years old*; מֹשֶׁה עֶבְד־יְהוָה אָמֵן
מִקְדָּשׁ בְּרִנֵּעַ לְרֹגֵל אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
10. 2 Ch 24.1; בֶּן-שֶׁבַע שָׁנָה *7 years old*; Joash
בֶּן-שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים יָאֵשׁ בְּמִלְכוֹ
11. Dt 6.17 [the *nun* on תִּשְׁמְרוֹן does not affect its function]
שָׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוֹן אֶת-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
12. 1 Sa 8.7; מָאָס *reject, spurn; refuse*; the second כִּי *but*
כִּי לֹא אֶתְךָ מָאָסוּ
כִּי-אֲתִי מָאָסוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם:
13. 1 Sam 23.15; וַיֵּרָא *and he saw* (3ms Q Pr < רָאָה); יָצָא *go out*; בָּקַשׁ *seek*; David, Saul
וַיֵּרָא דָּוִד כִּי-יָצָא שָׁאוּל לְבָקֵשׁ אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ
14. Gn 41.49; כִּי + עַד *until*; חָדַל *stop*, cease
עַד כִּי-חָדַל לְסַפֵּר כִּי-אֵין מִסְפָּר:

15. רק חִזַּק לְבַלְתִּי אֶכֶל הָדָם כִּי הָדָם הוּא הַנֶּפֶשׁ
ולא־תאכל הַנֶּפֶשׁ עִם־הַבָּשָׂר:
Dt 12.23; רק *only*; תאכל (2ms Q F)
16. וּמָכַר לֹא־תִמְכְּרֶנָּה בַּכֶּסֶף
Dt 21.14; מָכַר *sell* (רָנָה- 3fs suffix)
17. וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאֵב אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַבִּשְׁתָּ הַיּוֹם
אֶת־פָּנַי כָּל־עֲבָדֶיךָ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־שִׁנְאֶיךָ
וְלִשְׂנֹא אֶת־אַהֲבֶיךָ
2 Sam 19.6–7; הַבִּשְׁתָּ *you have shamed*;
both NCs are gerundive (“by ____ing”)

16.7 Enrichment: Gerundive Infinitives Construct

As the functions outlined above suggest, not all infinitives construct are created equal. In Deuteronomy 10.12, for example, the first infinitive construct, *to fear*, presents the basic response of the Israelites, whereas the next three—*by walking ... loving ... serving*—expound what “fear” means in this covenantal context:

- | | |
|--|--|
| וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל | Therefore, Israel, |
| מָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֹׂאֵל מִעֲמֶךָ | what does YHWH your God ask from you |
| כִּי אִם־לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ | but <i>to fear</i> YHWH your God |
| לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו | <i>by walking</i> in all his ways |
| וּלְאַהֲבָה אוֹתוֹ | and <i>by loving</i> him, |
| וּלְעַבֵּד אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ | and <i>by serving</i> YHWH your God |
| בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: | with all of your heart and all of your being (Dt 10.12). |

Lesson 17

QUESTIONS, NEGATIVES, NUMERALS

This lesson addresses three syntactical and functional topics: (1) explicit and implicit questions; (2) negated clauses (at which we have already glanced under the topic of “irrealis” (§6, §6.11, §10.3); and (3) numerals. Combining these in one lesson does not mean that they are unimportant. Numerals occur in nearly 3000 verses (and not just in genealogies and the book of Numbers!), and there are more than 6000 negated statements and nearly 900 explicit questions.

17.1 Asking Questions

Biblical Hebrew asks questions in two basic ways. *Explicit* questions begin with an interrogative form, such as an interrogative pronoun or adverb, or the interrogative particle **הֲ**. *Implicit* questions—which are much less common—are required or suggested by the context. Unlike English, Biblical Hebrew has no question mark.

17.1.1 Interrogative Adverbs

1. Biblical Hebrew has a number of interrogative adverbs, which can ask about location, direction (“where”), reason (“why”), or manner (“how”). Since a good many questions in Biblical Hebrew are rhetorical—asked not to gain information, but to make a point (e.g., Gn 4.9; Ps 42.4, 10)—the line between questions and exclamations is often blurred (e.g., **אֵיךְ** in Is 14.11 and 2 Sam 1.5).

לָמָּה	Why?	178x	לָמָּה שָׁכַחְתִּי	Why have you forgotten me?
לָמָּה			לָמָּה-קָדַר אֶלַי	Why do I go about mourning? (Ps 42.10)
מָדוּעַ	Why?	72x	מָדוּעַ אֲדֹנִי בָכָה	Why is my master weeping? (2 Kgs 8.12)
			אֵיךְ נָפַלְתָּ מִשָּׁמַיִם	How you have fallen from heaven! (Is 14.11)
אֵיךְ	How?			
אֵיכָּה	Why?	61x	אֵיךְ יָדַעְתָּ כִּי-יָמָת שָׁאוּל	How do you know that Saul is dead? (2 Sam 1.5)
	How!			
			אֵיכָּה יֹשְׁבָה בְּדָר הָעִיר	How the city sits solitary, ...! (La 1.1)
אֵי	Where [is]?	56x	אֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ:	Where is your God (Ps 42.4)
אֵן אָנָּה	[To] where?	42x	אָנָּה אַתָּה הֹלֵךְ	“Where are you going?” (Zc 2.6)
אֵי	Where?	31x	אֵי הָבֵל אָחִיךָ	Where is Abel, your brother? (Gn 4.9)
עַד אָנָּה	How long?	11x	עַד-אָנָּה תִּמְלֹל-אֵלֶּה	How long will you say these things (Jb 8.2)
אֵי-מִזֶּה	From where?	9x	לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֵי מִזֶּה הָמוֹה:	I did not know where they were from (1 Sam 25.11)

17.1.2 Interrogative -ה

The interrogative particle -ה introduces “yes-no” questions by being *prefixed* to the *first* word of a direct or indirect question.¹³⁸

הֲכֹלֵב אֲנִכִּי	Am I a dog? (1 Sam 17.43)
הֲעֶבֶד יִשְׂרָאֵל	Is Israel a slave/servant? (Jr 2.14)
הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אֲנִכִּי:	Am I my brother’s keeper? (Gn 4.9)
וְהֲלוֹא עִמָּךְ שָׁם צָדוֹק וְאַבְיָתָר	And are not Zadok and Abiathar there with you? (2 Sam 15.35)

2. The vowel under the interrogative -ה varies according to the first letter of the word to which it is attached:

Interrogative	If the word begins with ...	Example
-ה	any non-guttural followed by a full vowel	הֲשָׁמְרָה Did she keep watch?
-ה	any guttural followed by a vowel other than <i>qames</i> or <i>qames hatuf</i> ,	הֲעֶבֶד Is a servant ...?
	or any non-guttural followed by a half-vowel	הֲאֱלֹהִים Did God ...?
-ה	any guttural followed by <i>qames</i> or <i>qames hatuf</i>	הֲאֲנִכִּי Am I ...?

3. The compound form הֲלוֹא (לֹא + -ה) introduces a *negative rhetorical* question—that is, a question that assumes a positive answer. These might be represented with or without a “tag question” in English (e.g., “Am I not YHWH?” *versus* “I’m YHWH, aren’t I?”), or even “indeed”. The question’s cotext (literary context) and content determine which might be more appropriate).

הֲלֹא אֲנִכִּי יְהוָה:	Am I not YHWH? (Ex 4.11)
הֲלוֹא אֲנִכִּי אֲתֹנָךְ	“Am I not your she-donkey, ...?” (Nu 22.30)
הֲלֹא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עִמָּכֶם	Is not YHWH your God with you? (2 Chr 22.18)

4. *Polar questions*—“yes/no” questions that pose a choice between opposites—end with לֹא אִם (“... or not” questions; e.g., Jg 2.22), introduce each choice with interrogative -ה (Nu 13.18b), or end with אִם followed by an adjective (Nu 13.18c).

לְמַעַן נִסּוּת בָּם אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל	... in order to test Israel by them—
הֲשֹׁמְרִים הֵם אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה	<i>whether</i> they will observe the way of YHWH
אִם־לֹא: or not (Jg 2.22).
וּרְאִיתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִהֲהוּא	and see the land, what it is,
וְאֶת־הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב עָלֶיהָ	and the people who live in it
הַחֹזֶק הוּא הַרְפָּה	— <i>whether</i> they are strong or weak,
הַמְעַט הוּא אִם־רַב:	[whether they are] few or many (Nu 13.18).

5. *Implicit questions* are not marked (interrogative -ה occurs only 746x). Some questions are semi-explicit, introduced by a verb such as שָׁאַל, “he asked”, but most must be recognized from the context, which means that there is often disagreement about whether or not a

138. It is preceded twice by the conjunction -וּ (2 Sa 15.35; Zc 3.1).

particular clause is a question or a statement. In 1 Ch 22.18, David exhorts the leaders of Israel by asking a rhetorical question (introduced by הֲלֹא). Does the force of the interrogative carry over to the next clause or not? It can be read either way:

הֲלֹא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עִמָּכֶם	<i>Is not YHWH your god with you?</i>
וְהִנֵּיהּ לָכֶם מִסְבִּיב	<i>And has he not given you rest all around? or</i>
	<i>And he has given you rest all around (1 Ch 22.18).</i>

Nor does the rest of the sentence (“for he has given into my hand the inhabitants of the land, and the land has been subjugated before YHWH and his people.”) answer the question, since it fits both readings.

17.2 Negatives

Biblical Hebrew has three main negative clause-level adverbs—לא, אֵל, אֵין—as well as a number of relatively infrequent negatives (e.g., בְּלֹאִי, Lesson 16). These largely and usually negate the clause in which they occur.

1. The adverbs לא and אֵל negate clauses.

וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה	<i>... but they did not listen to Moses (Ex 6.9)</i>
וַיִּרְאַת יְהוָה לֹא בָחָרוּ	<i>... but the fear of YHWH they did not choose (Pr 1.29)</i>
לֹא-קָרָאתִי בְנִי	<i>I did not call, my son ... (1 Sam 3.6)</i>
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט אֶל-יֹאמֶר כֵּן:	<i>Jehoshaphat said, “The king should not say so” (1 Kgs 22.8)</i>

2. לא and אֵין can also occur in single-element statements as “No”, when the rest of the sentence is understood from the context:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַיֹּשֶׁפֶה אִישׁ וְאָמְרָת אֵין:	<i>“... and he says, ‘Is there a man here?’, you shall say, ‘No.’” (Jg 4.20)</i>
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִי בָרְחֹב נָלִין	<i>They said, “No. Instead/But, we will spend the night in the square” (Gn 19.2).</i>

3. אֵין negates non-verbal clauses as “There is/was not/no”. When it negates a participle, its subject is often a pronominal suffix. When the participle itself is the subject, אֵין can function like “without ...” (Lv 26.36).

אֵין כְּמִנִּי בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ	<i>There is none like me in all the earth (Ex 9.14)</i>
כַּאֲשֶׁר אֵין יָדַע מִהֲדָרָךְ הָרוּחַ	<i>Just as you do not know what the way of the spirit is (Qo 11.5)</i>
וְנָפְלוּ וְאֵין רֹדֵף:	<i>... and they will fall without a pursuer (Lv 26.36)</i>

4. אֵין also occurs with nouns and participles in the sense of “there is no one who” or “without”:

וְאֵין-פֹּתֵר אוֹתָם לְפָרְעָה:	<i>... but there was no interpreter of them for Pharaoh (Gn 41.8);</i> <i>... no one to interpret them ...</i>
וְאֵין מוֹשִׁיעַ:	<i>... but there will be no [without a] deliverer (Dt 28.29)</i>
אֵין יוֹצֵא וְאֵין בֹּא:	<i>No one went out and no one went in (Josh 6.1)</i>

5. אֵין occurs with the possessive preposition ל to indicate that someone “does not have” something. The ל is prefixed to the person who “does not have”:

וּבֶן אֵין-לוֹ	<i>... and he had no son (Dt 25.5)</i>
וְאִם-אֵין לְאִישׁ גֹּאֵל	<i>but if the man has no “redeemer, ...” (Nu 5.8)</i>

17.3 Numerals

Like English, Hebrew has two sets of numerals, *cardinal* (e.g., “one”, “two”, “three”) and *ordinal*, which identify *order* (e.g., “first”, “second”, “third”).

17.3.1 Cardinal Numerals

Cardinal numerals are words that refer to the amount or quantity of something (“ten years”, “thirty shekels”).

“One” – “Ten”			“Tens”	
“Masculine”	“Feminine”			
אֶחָד	אַחַת	one		
שְׁנַיִם	שְׁתַּיִם	two	(the initial <i>šewa</i> is silent in the feminine)	
שְׁלֹשָׁה	שְׁלֹשָׁה	three	שְׁלֹשִׁים	thirty
אַרְבַּע	אַרְבַּעַה	four	אַרְבָּעִים	forty
חֲמִישָׁה	חֲמִישָׁה	five	חֲמִשִּׁים	fifty
שֵׁשׁ	שֵׁשׁה	six	שִׁשִּׁים	sixty
שִׁבְעָה	שִׁבְעָה	seven	שִׁבְעִים	seventy
שְׁמוֹנָה	שְׁמוֹנָה	eight	שְׁמוֹנִים	eighty
תֵּשַׁע	תֵּשַׁעַה	nine	תֵּשַׁעִים	ninety
עָשָׂר	עָשָׂרַה	ten	עָשָׂרִים	twenty (plural of “ten”)

1. Apart from “one” and “two”, the main difference between the masculine and feminine forms is the “feminine ending” (ה-).
2. When the feminine forms occur in the construct, the final ה- is replaced by ת- (as in nouns); e.g., עֶשְׂרֵת / עֶשְׂרֵתָּהּ.
3. The numeral “one” usually follows the noun that it modifies and agrees with it in gender and definiteness. If there is no noun, it functions like an indefinite “one” in English, often with the article.

בְּנֵי אִישׁ-אֶחָד נַחֲנוּ	We are the sons of <i>one</i> man [<i>a</i> man] (Gn 42.11)
תּוֹרָה אַחַת לָהֶם	They [shall] have <i>one</i> law (Lv 7.7)
כָּל הַיָּדָא אֶל-מָקוֹם אֶחָד	Everything goes to <i>one</i> place (Qo 3.20)
שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פִּישׁוֹן	The name of [the] <i>one</i> was Pishon (Gn 2.11)

4. The numeral that signals “two” can either precede or follow its noun, which is in the plural. If it precedes, it is in construct, but does not mean “two of ...”. “Two” also occurs with pronominal suffixes:

עַמּוּדִים שְׁנַיִם	two pillars (2 Chr 3.15)
וְאֵת שְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ	... and her <i>two</i> sons (Ex 18.3)
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לָהּ שְׁנֵי גּוֹיִם בְּבִטְנָךְ	YHWH said to her, “ <i>Two</i> nations are in your womb” (Gn 25.23)
וַיֹּאכְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו	The <i>two</i> of them ate together (Jg 19.6)

5. The numerals that represent “three” through “ten” *disagree* in *gender* with the noun that they modify.

שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲלֵה בְנֵי-נֹחַ	These <i>three</i> were Noah’s sons (Gn 9.19)
חֲמִשָּׁה שֶׁקֶלִים כֶּסֶף	<i>five</i> shekels of silver (Lv 27.6)

6. Hundreds & thousands:

מֵאָה	100
מֵאוֹת	200 (dual ending)
שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת	300
...	etc.
אַלֶּפֶּה	1,000
אַלְפִים	2,000 (dual ending)
שְׁלֹשָׁת אֲלָפִים	3,000
...	etc.
רִבּוֹת / רִבְבָּה	10,000
רִבּוֹתִים	20,000 (dual ending)
שְׁלֹשׁ רִבּוֹת	30,000
...	etc.

7. #6 (above) illustrates how Hebrew forms compound numerals (e.g., “thirteen”, “ninety-nine”, “one hundred forty-two”): numerals are either juxtaposed or linked with the conjunction וְ. Determining whether to multiply or add large numerals is contextual.

כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר	<i>fourteen</i> people in all (Gn 46.22)
שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת עָשָׂרִים וְאַחַד	621 (Ez 2.26)
שֵׁשֶׁה וְאַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת	46,500 (Nu 1.21)

8. The preposition כֹּ- occurs with numerals in the sense of “approximately” or “about”:

כְּאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ:	<i>about</i> four hundred men (1 Sam 22.2)
כְּעֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִים	<i>about</i> ten years (Ru 1.4)

9. Age is usually indicated by the phrase “the son of *X* years”:

וְאַבְרָם בֶּן-חֲמִשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה	Now Abram was <i>seventy-five years old</i> ... (Gn 12.4)
בֶּן-שְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה יָאֻשִׁיָּהוּ בָמָלְכוֹ	Josiah was <i>eight years old</i> when he became king (2 Kgs 22.1)

17.3.2 Ordinal Numerals

Ordinal numerals are adjectives that tell the *order* in which something occurred. Apart from the words for “first”, they are generally formed by adding י - to the cardinal forms. Ordinal numerals are not inflected for gender:

רִאשׁוֹן	<i>first</i> (cf. רִאשִׁית, <i>beginning</i> ; רֹאשׁ, <i>head</i>)
אֶחָד	<i>first</i> (occasionally)
שֵׁנִי	<i>second</i>
שְׁלִישִׁי	<i>third</i>
רְבִיעִי	<i>fourth</i> (cf. אַרְבַּע)
חֲמִישִׁי	<i>fifth</i>
שִׁשִּׁי	<i>sixth</i>
שְׁבִיעִי	<i>seventh</i>
שְׁמִינִי	<i>eighth</i>
תְּשִׁיעִי	<i>ninth</i>
עֲשִׂירִי	<i>tenth</i>

1. The ordinals function as attributive adjectives, following their noun and agreeing with it in gender, number, and (usually) definiteness:

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	On the <i>seventh</i> day ... (Josh 6.15)
וּבַיּוֹם הָרְבִיעִי פָּרִים עֲשָׂרָה	On the <i>fourth</i> day, ten bulls, ... (Nu 29.23)
אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי אַחֲרוֹן	I am <i>the first</i> and I am <i>the last</i> (Is 44.6)

2. Ordinals only function from “first” to “tenth”; beyond “tenth”, Biblical Hebrew uses cardinal numerals:

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַפֶּסַח	They made [celebrated] the Passover in the
בְּרִאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ	<i>first</i> [month] on the <i>fourteenth</i> day of the
בְּשָׁנָה שְׁתִּית עֲשָׂרָה לְאַחַז	month (Nu 9.5).
	In the <i>twelfth</i> year of Ahaz ... (2 Kgs 17.1)

17.4 Concepts

cardinal numeral	non-verbal clause	polar question
interrogative	negation	rhetorical question
	ordinal numeral	

17.5 Vocabulary

<i>nine</i>	תֵּשַׁע .252	<i>one</i> (m., f.)	אֶחָד אֶחָת .244
<i>ten</i>	עָשָׂר עָשָׂר .253	<i>two</i> (m., f.)	שְׁנַיִם שְׁתֵּי .245
<i>twenty</i>	עֶשְׂרִים	<i>second</i> (ord.; m., f.)	שְׁנִי שְׁנִית
<i>hundred</i>	מֵאָה .254	<i>three</i>	שְׁלֹשׁ .246
<i>two hundred</i>	מֵאוֹתִים	<i>four</i>	אַרְבַּע .247
<i>thousand</i>	אַלֶּף .255	<i>five</i>	חֲמִשָּׁה .248
<i>two thousand</i>	אַלְפִים	<i>six</i>	שֵׁשׁ .249
<i>first</i> (ord.)	רִאשׁוֹן .256	<i>seven</i>	שִׁבְעָה .250
<i>first; beginning</i> (n.)	רִאשִׁית .257	<i>eight</i>	שְׁמוֹנֶה .251
<i>half</i>	חֲצִי .258		
<i>shekel</i> (approx. 11.4 g, 0.5 oz.)	שֶׁקֶל .259		

17.6 Exercises

You will find numerals for the populations of the tribes of Israel in the following verses. Fill in the name of each tribe and its population at the beginning and end of the wandering in the wilderness.

N.B.: The order of two tribes is reversed in Nu 26.

Num 1	Tribe	Population	Num 26	Population
1.21	ראובן		26.7	43,730
1.23			26.14	
1.25			26.18	
1.27			26.22	
1.29		54,400	26.25	
1.31	זבולן		26.27	
1.33			26.37	
1.35			26.34	
1.37			26.41	
1.39			26.43	64,400
1.41	אשר	41,500	26.47	
1.43			26.50	
1.46			26.51	601,730

These verses contain numerals for ages, numbers of people (census lists), etc. Gloss the clauses, transmogrifying the numerals.

Gn 5.27; Methusaleh

a. ויהיו כל-ימי מתושלח תשע ושלשים שנה ותשע מאות שנה

Gn 7.24; *prevail*; the sign *sof pasuq*
[:] marks the “end of the verse”

b. ויגברו המים על-הארץ חמשים ומאת יום:

Ex 23.12; *you shall do* (2ms Q F
עשה); *work, deed*; שבת *rest*

c. ששת ימים תעשה מעשיך וביום השביעי תשבת

Ex 24.18b; Moses

d. ויהי משה בקר ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה:

2 Sam 5.4–5; *month, new moon*;
David, Hebron, Jerusalem, Israel,
Judah; each line is a clause

e. בן-שלשים שנה דוד במלכו

ארבעים שנה מלך:

בחברון מלך על-יהודה שבע שנים וששה חדשים
ובירושלם מלך שלשים ושלש שנה על כל-ישראל ויהודה:

Nu 11.19; the second form of יום is
dual (i.e., *two days*); the final *nun* on
“you shall eat” is not (yet) explained

f. לא יום אחד תאכלון ולא יומים ולא חמשה ימים
ולא עשרה ימים ולא עשרים יום:

Gloss these clauses and sentences, *parsing* the verbal forms.

Nu 14.41; למה זה? *why?*; Moses

a. ויאמר משה למה זה אתם עברים את-פי יהוה

Jr 3.14

b. ולקחתי אתכם אחד מעיר ושנים ממשפחה

Is 44.6; *thus*; נאל *redeemer* (Q Ptc);
אחרון *last*; מבלעדי *apart from, except for*;
without (+ 1cs suffix); Israel; the second line
is a quotation

c. כה-אמר יהוה מלך-ישראל ונאלו יהוה צבאות
אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים:

2 Kgs 10.34; יתר *[the] rest, remainder*; עשה
do; גבורה *strength, power*; Jehu

d. ויתר דברי יהוא וכל-אשר עשה וכל-גבורתו
הלוא-הם כתובים על-ספר דברי הימים
למלכי ישראל:

17.7 Enrichment: *Irrealis*

If a story is a record of events—a record of “what happened”—why do authors tell their readers that some events did *not* occur? What does negative information (*irrealis*) add to a story?

As Lydia walked down the street, she saw a dog tied in front of a house. The dog barked and lunged at her, breaking its rope. Suddenly realizing that it was free, it ran after her, but *did not bite her*.

In this admittedly simple illustration, the negative clause (in *italics*) tells the reader something that is *contrary to expectation*. We probably expect that a barking dog that breaks loose and chases someone intends to attack that person, but this dog did not, contrary to our expectation (and, perhaps, to our experience). In fact, in this example, the last (negative) statement also leads us to conclude that the dog caught her, since if it did not, the *irrealis* would not make sense (if the dog didn’t catch her, it couldn’t have bitten her).

But what if the story read:

As Lydia walked down the street, she saw a dog tied in front of a house. The dog barked and lunged at her, breaking its rope. Suddenly realizing that it was free, it chased her, but Lydia ran inside *before the dog could catch her*.

In this case the negative information is that the dog did not catch her (most readers would probably infer that if the dog had caught her, it would have attacked her). The *irrealis* is given obliquely and implicitly, in a “privative” clause (related to the root of the word “deprive”), rather than in a negative statement. Furthermore, if we rewrite the last clause so that it reads merely “... but Lydia ran safely inside”, we would not need the clause in italics, since the word “safely” implies that the dog did not catch her.¹³⁹

In the beginning of the story of Abram, we find a number of *irrealis* clauses:

וְתָהִי שָׂרַי עֲקָרָה אֵין לָהּ יֶלֶד׃ And Sarai was barren—she had *no child* (Gn 11.30)

This is one of the precipitating crises of the Abram story—his lack of an heir—set over against the divine promise of descendants (e.g., Gn 12.2; 13.16). Since we are told this at the very beginning of the stories about Abram, we might suspect that this will become an important theme in what follows.

In 1 Sa 3.1b, the author uses a form of *irrealis* to warn readers against mis-reading the preceding incident (the prophetic announcement of YHWH’s judgment upon Eli’s house). This prophecy follows Eli’s word to Hannah (1.17), which might encourage us to think that prophetic revelation was relatively commonplace in Israel at that time. As the opening of 1 Sa 3 shows, however, that was not true:

וְדְבַר־יְהוָה יָקָר בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם Now YHWH’s word was rare in those days;
אֵין חֲזוֹן נִפְרָץ׃ there was *no vision* breaking through (1 Sa 3.1b).

This double statement not only warns against misinterpreting the prophetic activity of the preceding chapter as a normal occurrence, but also helps to set the stage for the restoration of prophetic revelation through Samuel (which is the story of 1 Sa 3).

139. There is another type of *irrealis*, which we might call “semantic”, or “positive”, *irrealis* in which a non-negated verb describes a non-event. In Lv 10.3, Aaron’s response to Moses’ speech was silence: אָהָרֹן אָחֵרֶן, and Aaron was *silent*, i.e., Aaron did not speak. This raises a host of complex questions about the relationship between positive and negative statements that are better left for another course of study. Note that in this case, the author does not tell us what Aaron actually did.

Part III

LESSONS 18–31

VERBAL GRAMMAR (II)

READING HEBREW

This section introduces the forms and functions of the other stems of the verb, the other [“weak”] forms of the verbal root, as well as the basic tools of Biblical Hebrew (the Hebrew Bible and lexica), and the basic steps of beginning to read biblical narrative and poetry.

By the end of these lessons (the end of the book), you should be able to recognize and read nominal phrases with some fluency, as well as recognize a number of fairly standard forms and formulae at sight. You should also be able to identify all of the forms of the verbal stems and roots.

Depending on your teacher and the goals of your course of study, you will have begun to read from the biblical text, and to discuss how to use your knowledge of Hebrew to study the biblical text.

Lesson 18

OTHER STEMS

Verbal function is primarily modified in English by syntax, using various types of pronouns (e.g., reflexive), “helping verbs”, prepositions, etc., as illustrated by the differences between the following sentences:

- (1) John *hid*.
- (2) John *hid* himself.
- (3) John *hid* the ball.
- (4) The ball *was hidden* by John.
- (5) John *made* Jim *hide* the ball.
- (6) John *caused* Jim *to hide* the ball.

Since most readers or speakers of English assume that “hide” without an expressed object is reflexive (the subject hides himself or herself), they will read or hear sentences (1) and (2) as essentially identical—the “reflexive” pronoun (2) merely clarifies the meaning of (1). Sentence (3)—which also uses “hid”, the same form of the verb as in (1) and (2)—shows an entirely different relationship between the subject (“John”) and the object (“the ball”). Sentences (4), (5), and (6) are morphologically and syntactically different from the others; (5) and (6), like (1) and (2), are functionally identical.

18.1 The Concept of “Stem”

Where English uses helping verbs, prepositions, and syntax to indicate verbal nuances, (“David hid the sword”, “David hid [himself]”, “David was hidden [by Samuel]”), Hebrew modifies the shape of the verb itself, using prefixes,¹⁴⁰ different sets of vowels, and a doubled middle radical in patterns which are called “stems” or *binyanim* (“buildings”). These combinations are traditionally called the “derived” stems because the early grammarians viewed *qal* as the basic (“simple”) stem, from which these stems were “derived”. Although the vowel patterns and forms of the stems differ, the PGN affixes and the functions of the conjugations are the same in all stems. In these examples, the verbs have different stems:

וַיִּמְלֹכוּ בְּדַמָּשֶׁק	they <i>reigned</i> in Damascus (1 Kgs 11.24)	3mp <i>qal</i> preterite
וַיַּמְלִיכוּ אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְמֶלֶךְ	they <i>made</i> Abimelek <i>king</i> (Jg 9.6)	3mp <i>hifil</i> preterite
	["caused" Abimelek to be king]	
הֲלֹא מִסְתַּתֵּר עִמָּנוּ	Is not David <i>hiding</i> with us? (1 Sam 23.19)	ms <i>hitpael</i> ptc ¹⁴¹
וְלֹא נִסְתָּרוּ מִלִּפְנֵי	They <i>are not hidden</i> from me (Jr 16.17)	3cp <i>nifal</i> perfect
כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהִים הִסְתֵּר דָּבָר	The glory of God is <i>to hide</i> a matter (Pr 25.2)	<i>hifil</i> inf. const.

There are eight basic verbal patterns in Biblical Hebrew,¹⁴² but more than two-thirds of all verbal forms in the Bible are *qal*, and three of the main stems (*hitpael*, *pual*, *hofal*) occur fairly infrequently (less than 3% of all verbal forms). Furthermore, only two verbs occur in all eight stems (ten occur in the seven stems not including *qal* passive),¹⁴³ and most occur in various combinations of two to four stems.

140. These are combined with the PGN prefixes of the imperfect (below).

141. This example demonstrates “metathesis”, in which two letters change places (a normal occurrence in the *hitpael* when the verbal root begins with a *sibilant* (“s-sound”). The root is סתר, one of a relatively few verbal roots that occur in these three stems.

142. The existence of the eighth stem—the *qal* passive—has been suspected for several centuries, but not confirmed until relatively recently.

143. Not including *qal* passive (Lesson 21).

18.1.1 The Names of the Stems

The stems have been given various names through the centuries, following changes in academic fashion, or the individual grammarian's convictions. The traditional names, except for the *qal*, are the 3ms perfect form of the verb פָּעַל, “do, make”, which was the original verb for Hebrew paradigms. The early Hebrew grammarians used פָּעַל because the Arabic grammarians used *fa'ala* as their paradigm verb, and the early Jewish grammarians based their study of Hebrew grammar upon that of the Arabs. It is no longer used as the paradigm verb for Biblical Hebrew because פֿ does not double in Hebrew (as it does in Arabic).

Since the mid-18th century, the study of the Semitic languages has shown that Hebrew is only one of a family of related languages, including Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Coptic, as well as various Aramaic dialects and Arabic. In order to use terminology that reflects the relationship of Hebrew to, for example, Akkadian, scholars have developed what might be called “pan-Semitic” names for the stems. These names reflect the distinguishing aspect of that stem that is shared by some or all of the Semitic tongues. This grammar will use the “Semitic” designations for the stems as a sort of shorthand, but will always refer initially to both sets of terms.

N.B.: The standard Hebrew-English lexica use the traditional names of the stems, so you will want to know both sets of terms.

3ms Perfect	Traditional Name	“Pan-Semitic” Name	Stem Prefix Vowels		Doubled II-radical?
פָּעַל	<i>Qal</i>	G (the <i>Grund-</i> , or “basic”, stem)			---
נִפְעַל	<i>Nifal</i>	N (<i>n</i> -prefix)	נִ	הִ	---
פִּיעַל	<i>Piel</i>	D (“doubled”)			yes
פִּעֵל	<i>Pual</i>	Dp (passive of D)			yes
הִתְפַּעֵל	<i>Hitpael</i>	Dt (D with <i>t</i> -infix)	הִתְ	הִתְ	yes
הִפְעִיל	<i>Hiphil</i>	H (<i>h</i> -prefix)	הִ	הִ	---
הִפְעִיל	<i>Hophal</i>	Hp (passive of H)	הִ	הִ	---

The name of the stem which we have studied thus far—the *qal* (from the verb קָלַל)—means “light”, because it lacks a stem prefix (unlike N, Dt, H, Hp) and does not have a doubled radical (unlike D, Dp, Dt).

18.1.2 The Paradigm Verb

Hebrew grammarians turned from פָּעַל to קָטַל, “kill”, as a paradigm verb, since it has no *bēgad-kēfat* letters (and thus no appearing and vanishing *dageš lenes*), and no gutturals (thus no *ḥatef*-vowels). קָטַל, however, occurs only three times in Biblical Hebrew (Ps 139.19; Jb 13.15; 24.14), which is rather rare for a “model” verb.¹⁴⁴

Today, different grammars use different verbal roots as their “model” verb. Since the root נָשַׁל meets the requirements of a paradigm verb (three “strong” radicals, no gutturals or *reš*, and the first radical is a non-sibilant), we will continue to use it as our paradigm verb. It occurs in only a few stems (which means that most of the listed forms do not exist in Biblical Hebrew), but is fairly frequent in Biblical Hebrew (99x).

18.1.3 The Functions of the Stems

The nuances [the plural is deliberate] of a verb’s function in different stems must be determined for each verbal root, but there are some overall tendencies. For example, if a verb is fientive (active) in

144. Transliterated as *qtl*, however, it appears in one of the sets of names for the verbal conjugations: *qatal* (perfect), *yiqtol* (imperfect, jussive), *wayyiqtol* (preterite), &c.

the *qal*, it will probably be passive in *nifal*. On the other hand, a verb that occurs in *nifal* but not in *qal* usually “sounds” active when glossed in English.

<i>Qal</i>	tends to be either fientive or stative
<i>Nifal</i>	tends to be the passive of <i>qal</i> (or <i>piel</i>); if there is no <i>qal</i> or <i>piel</i> , it tends to be reflexive or reciprocal
<i>Piel</i>	fientive, and nearly always transitive; if <i>qal</i> is stative, <i>piel</i> is often causative
<i>Pual</i>	passive of <i>piel</i>
<i>Hitpael</i>	its nuances are difficult to classify, but are usually passive or double-status (reflexive, reciprocal, etc.)
<i>Hifil</i>	causative of <i>qal</i> and <i>nifal</i>
<i>Hofal</i>	passive of <i>hifil</i>

The stems thus correspond in a *very rough* and *approximate* way to the concept of voice (active, middle, reflexive, passive, etc.) in English.

N.B.: Although the vowel patterns and forms of the stems differ, the PGN affixes of each conjugation (perfect, imperfect, etc.) are the same in all stems as those learned for the *qal*, as are also the functions of the various conjugations.

18.2 The N-Stem (*Nifal*)

The name *nifal* comes from the 3ms perfect in the traditional paradigm verb (נִפְעַל). The primary difference between *nifal* and *qal* is a **prefixed ן** (hence its “Semitic” name, “N”). This ן is visible (orthographic) in the perfect and participle, but assimilates (“nunnates”, see §7.2) to the first radical whenever it is followed by silent *šewa*. This means that in every conjugation except the perfect and participle a diagnostic for the *nifal* is a **doubled first radical** preceded by a **hireq** (under the prefix) and followed by **qameṣ**. These examples illustrate this process (* = hypothetical form):

* <i>yinmāšēl</i>	* <i>yimmāšēl</i>	יִמְשַׁל	3ms N F	
* <i>hinmāšēlû</i>	* <i>himmāšēlû</i>	הִמְשַׁלּוּ	2mp N V	

18.2.1 Form

Conjugations with orthographic [written] -ן

In the *nifal* perfect and participle, the prefixed *nun* is visible at the beginning of the verbal form.

***Nifal* Perfect**

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	נִמְשַׁלְתִּי	נִמְשַׁלְנוּ
2nd	Masc.	נִמְשַׁלְתָּ	נִמְשַׁלְתֶּם
	Fem.	נִמְשַׁלְתְּ	נִמְשַׁלְתֶּן
3rd	Masc.	נִמְשַׁל	נִמְשַׁלּוּ
	Fem.	נִמְשַׁלָּה	

1. Every form of the *nifal* perfect begins with -ן, followed by a silent *šewa* after the first radical.
2. Every form with no ending or a consonantal ending has pataḥ after the second radical.
3. 3ms N P looks just like the 1cp Q F of some verbs, especially statives (e.g., dB;k.nI, “we shall be wealthy”); they can be distinguished by their context.
4. All PGN affixes are the same in all stems.

Nifal Participle

Gender	Singular	Plural
Masc.	נִמְשָׁל	נִמְשָׁלִים נִמְשָׁלִי
Fem.	נִמְשָׁלָה	נִמְשָׁלוֹת

1. Every form begins with -נִ (nun+hireq), and has silent *šewa* after the first radical and *qameṣ* after the second radical.
2. The *qameṣ* after the second radical distinguishes the ms and fs participle from 3ms and 3fs perfect.

Conjugations without orthographic -נִ

The prefixed -נִ appears only in the *nifal* perfect and participle. The other conjugations of the *nifal* have three characteristics in common:

1. The **prefix vowel** is *hireq* in all forms.
2. The first radical is **doubled** in all forms, since the *nun* assimilates to the first radical of the verbal root.
3. The doubled **first radical** is followed by *qameṣ*.

If there is no PGN ending, the vowel after the second radical is often *sere*, which is thus a secondary diagnostic. *Nifal* preterite is identical to the imperfect (with the prefixed -נִ and *dageš forte* in the PGN prefix).

Nifal Prefix Conjugations

Imperfect (= Preterite)			
Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1st	Common	אֶמְשָׁל	נִמְשָׁל
2nd	Masc.	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּמְשָׁלוּ
	Fem.	תִּמְשָׁלִי	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה
3rd	Masc.	יִמְשָׁל	יִמְשָׁלוּ
	Fem.	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה

Like *hifil*, *hofal*, and *hitpaal* (H, Hp, Dt, below), but unlike *qal*, *nifal* imperative and infinitives have a prefix. They thus resemble the imperfect, with -הִ instead of the PGN prefix.

Nifal Imperative

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
2nd	Masc.	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁלוּ
	Fem.	הִמְשָׁלִי	הִמְשָׁלְנָה

The infinitive absolute occurs in two forms; most verbal roots tend to use one form or the other. As in all stems, the infinitive construct is the same as 2ms imperative.

Nifal Infinitives

NC	הִמְשָׁל
NA	הִמְשָׁל נִמְשָׁל

18.2.2 Summary of Nifal Diagnostics

This chart summarizes the main clues for identifying a *nifal* form.

Conjugation	Diagnostic	Example	Parsing
Perfect	נִּ	נִכְבֵּד	3ms N P
Participle	נִּ	נִכְבְּדִים	mp N Ptc
Imperfect	יִ	יִכְרֹת	3ms N F
	תִּ	תִּמְשֹׁלָנָה	2fp N F
Preterite	וּיִ	וּיִכְתֹּב	3ms N Pr
Imperative & Infinitives	הִ	הִכְרֵא	N NC
		הִכְרֵאוּ	mp N V

1. All forms of the *nifal* have a prefix, and most have *hireq* as a prefix vowel (like *qal* imperfect and preterite, *hifil* perfect, and all forms of the *hitpa'el*). The exception to this is I-guttural roots, which have *šere* (below). *Nifal* and *qal* are the only stems that use *hireq* as their prefix vowel (except for *hifil* perfect, which has other distinguishing features).
2. All forms of the *nifal* except perfect and participle begin with the same pattern: prefix+*hireq-dageš forte* in first radical+*qames*. This pattern occurs only in *nifal*.
3. Compare *nifal* and *qal* in this skeleton paradigm:

Conjugation	PGN		<i>Qal</i>		<i>Nifal</i>
Perfect	3ms	מָשַׁל	<i>he ruled</i>	נִמְשַׁל	<i>he was ruled</i>
Imperfect	3ms	יִמְשַׁל	<i>he shall rule</i>	יִנְמְשַׁל	<i>he shall be ruled</i>
Preterite	3ms	וּיִמְשַׁל	<i>he ruled</i>	וּיִנְמְשַׁל	<i>he was ruled</i>
Imperative	2ms	מְשַׁל	<i>Rule!</i>	הִמְשַׁל	<i>Be ruled!</i>
Inf. Const.		מְשַׁל	<i>to rule</i>	הִמְשַׁל	<i>to be ruled</i>
Inf. Abs.		מְשׁוֹל		הִמְשׁוֹל	
				נִמְשׁוֹל	
Participle	ms	מְשַׁל	<i>one who rules</i>	נִמְשַׁל	<i>one who is ruled</i>

18.2.3 Function of the Nifal (HBI §2.1.3)

1. The *nifal* is primarily the **passive** and **reflexive** of the active stems (*qal*, *piel*, *hifil*). Note the difference between the active (2 Kgs 21.26; *qal*) and passive (2 Kgs 21.18; *nifal*) of קָבַר, “bury”:

וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּקִבְרֹתוֹ בְּגִן־עֶזְאָה וַיִּמְלֹךְ יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ בְּנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו:	He <i>buried</i> him [Manasseh] in his tomb in Uzzah’s garden, and Josiah his son reigned in his place (2 Kgs 21.26).
וַיִּשְׁכַּב מְנַשֶּׁה עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּגִן־בֵּיתוֹ בְּגִן־עֶזְאָה וַיִּמְלֹךְ אָמוֹן בְּנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו:	And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and he <i>was buried</i> in the garden of his palace, in Uzzah’s garden. And Amon his son ruled in his place (2 Kgs 21.18).

2. The sign of the object may precede the *subject* of a passive *nifal*, apparently since the subject is affected by the action of the verb:

וַיִּוָּלֵד לְחֲנוֹךְ אֶת־עִירָדִיר Irad *was born* to Enoch (Gn 4.18).

N.B.: Unlike English (or NT Greek), passive clauses in Hebrew rarely identify or mention who or what did the action described by the verb (the agent or the means). We do not

know if the passive was used *in order to* avoid naming the doer of the deed or if, having decided to use a passive, the author was constrained by the rules of Hebrew syntax so that he could not name the actor. This is true of all passives in Biblical Hebrew, not merely of the *nifal*.

3. When the *nifal* is **adjectival**, it can be glossed by words ending in “-ible”, “-able”, “-ful”, “-some”. This function, sometimes called “potential” is common with stative verbs.

מִכֹּל-הָאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל	Any of the food which <i>may be eaten</i> [is ceremonially <i>edible</i>] ... (Lv 11.34) [3 ms N F]
שָׂרִים רַבִּים וְנִכְבָּדִים מֵאלֶּה	leaders more numerous and <i>honorable</i> than these (Nu 22.15) [ms N Ptc]

4. *Nifal* also has a variety of “**double-status**” nuances, in which the subject both does the action described by the verb and is affected by its own action. These functions are variously called generally “reflexive”, “middle”, “reciprocal”, or “tolerative” (depending on the verbal root), and often sound active when glossed into English (the third verb in Gn 19.17 is a passive *nifal*).

הַמֶּלֶט עַל-נַפְשֶׁךָ ...	“ <i>Escape</i> for your life ... to the hill country
הִהְרָה הַמֶּלֶט פֶּן-תִּסָּפֶה:	so that you are not [lest you be] <i>swept away</i> ” (Gn 19.17).
וְנִסְתַּרְתָּ בְּנַחַל כְּרִית	... and <i>hide</i> at the Wadi Cherith (1 Kg 17.3)
יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם	YHWH <i>will fight</i> for you (Ex 14.14).

18.3 Frequency

The *nifal* occurs 4,140 times in the Bible (6% of all verbal forms); it is more frequent in the latter prophets and poetic books than in Genesis – 2 Kings.

18.4 Concepts

active	middle	reciprocal	tolerative
double-status	passive	reflexive	

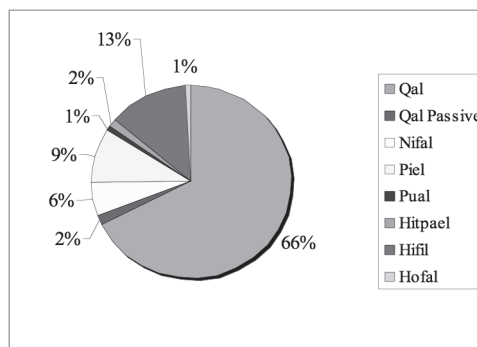
18.5 Vocabulary

<i>still, yet, again; לא עוד, no longer, not [never] again</i>	עוד	.269	or (cj.)	או	.260
[whole] burnt offering	עֹלָה	.270	light (n.)	אֹר	.261
now [at this time]	עַתָּה	.271	only, surely (adv.)	אֶךְ	.262
“therefore” (esp. when followed by a volitional form cf. §8.6)	וְעַתָּה		wise, skilled (adj.)	חָכָם	.263
shepherd (Q Ptc)	רֹעֶה	.272	court, enclosure, settlement	חֵצֵר	.264
joy, rejoicing, gladness	שִׂמְחָה	.273	therefore (פֶּן + לֵ); not usually followed by a volitional form)	לָכֵן	.265
sun	שֶׁמֶשׁ	.274	for the sake of, on account of (prp.); in order that /to (cj.)	לְמַעַן	.266
judge (Q Ptc)	שֹׁפֵט	.275	very, exceedingly (adv.); power, might (n.)	מְאֹד	.267
			find; be found (N)	מָצָא	.268

18.6 Distribution of the Stems

The occurrence of the stems varies widely, as this table shows. Slightly more than two-thirds of all verbal forms in Biblical Hebrew are *qal*.¹⁴⁵

Stems	Occurrences	% of Total
<i>Qal</i> ¹⁴⁶	49847	67.4%
<i>Qal Passive</i>	1277	1.7%
<i>Nifal</i>	4125	5.6%
<i>Piel</i>	6879	9.3%
<i>Pual</i>	450	0.6%
<i>Hitpacl</i>	1177	1.6%
<i>Hifil</i>	9671	13.1%
<i>Hofal</i>	531	0.7%
Total	73957	



18.7 Exercises

After studying the characteristics of the *nifal*, gloss these sentences and clauses, *parsing* the verbs, which contain both *qal* and *nifal* forms.

Jg 8.32; קִבֵּר *tomb of*; Joash

1. וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּקִבְרֵ יוֹאָשׁ אָבִיו

Jb 28.12a ... 13b; מֵאֵין [from] where?; חַיִּים *life, living* ("wisdom" is the subject of the clause)

2. וְהַחֲכֹמָה מֵאֵין תִּמְצָא ...
וְלֹא תִמְצָא בָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים:

Ex 22.3; בִּידוֹ *in his hand*; גְּנוּבָה *stolen thing*

3. אִם-תִּמְצָא תִמְצָא בִידוֹ הַגְּנוּבָה ...

Lv 25.54; יִגְאֹל *he / it will be redeemed*; אֵלֶּה *these* [means of redemption]; יֵצֵא *go out*; יוֹבֵל *Jubilee*

4. וְאִם-לֹא יִגְאֹל בְּאֵלֶּה וַיֵּצֵא בְשָׁנַת הַיָּבֵל
הוא ובניו עִמּוֹ:

2 Kg 14.14; וָלָקַח *and he took*; אֶצְרָה *storehouse*

5. וָלָקַח אֶת-כָּל-הַזֶּהָב-וְהַכֶּסֶף וְאֵת כָּל-הַפְּלִים הַנִּמְצָאִים
בֵּית-יְהוָה וּבְאֶצְרוֹת בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ

Jr 51.8; Babylon

6. נָפְלָה בָּבֶל וַתִּשְׁבֶּר

Gn 2.4; תּוֹלְדוֹת *generations*; בָּרָא *create*

7. אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם

1 Sa 4.11 [-] is due to *hatef-pataḥ* under אֵ, not to preterite]

8. וַאֲרוֹן אֱלֹהִים נִלְקַח

Dn 12.1

9. כָּל-הַנִּמְצָא כָתוּב בְּסֵפֶר

Ps 37.28; חָסִיד *pious, godly, kind* (each line is a clause)

10. כִּי יְהוָה אֱהָב מִשְׁפָּט
וְלֹא-יִשְׁעוּב אֶת-חֲסִידָיו
לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמְרוּ
וְזָרַע רְשָׁעִים נִכְרַת:

145. Statistics vary from source to source. Statistics in this book are based on Dean Forbes & Francis I. Andersen, *Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1975).

146. Some of *qal*'s relative frequency reflects some common verbs (אָמַר, הָיָה), but verbs that occur in *qal* and other stems tend to occur most frequently in *qal*.

- Zc 9.10b; קָשֶׁת *bow*; וְדָבַר *he will speak* (3ms D P+w); אָפֶס *end*; מִשְׁלַּח *dominion, rule, realm* (each line is a clause)
- Ne 13.1; קָרָא *read*; יָבוֹא *he may enter* (3ms Q F); קָהָל *assembly*; Moses, Ammonite(s), Moabite(s)
- Ps 139.16; כָּל = כָּל with suffixes
- 1 Sa 1.13 (“her” refers to Hannah)
- Gn 9.11; מַבּוּל *flood* (only used of “Noah’s flood” and in Ps 29.10); שָׁחַת *destroy* (D); the speaker is YHWH
- 2 Kg 22.13; בְּעַד *on behalf of*; עַל *concerning, about*
- Ps 34.19a
- Nu 9.13
- 1 Kg 2.10
- 1 Sa 4.22; אֵי *no*; גָּלָה *depart*
- Ps 37.17; זְרוּעַ *arm* (fem.); סָמַךְ *[to] support* [Each line is a clause.]
11. וְנִכְרְתָהּ קָשֶׁת מִלְחָמָה
וְדָבַר שְׁלֹם לְגוֹיִם
וּמִשְׁלֹחַ מִיָּם עַד-יָם וּמִנְהַר עַד-אֶפְסֵי-אֶרֶץ:
12. בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נִקְרָא בְּסֵפֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּאֶזְנֵי הָעָם
וְנִמְצָא פְתוּב בּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָבוֹא עִמָּנִי וּמֵאֲבִי בְּקָהָל הָאֱלֹהִים עַד-עוֹלָם:
13. וְעַל-סִפְרָךְ כָּל־ם יִכְתְּבוּ
14. וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע
15. וְלֹא-יִכְרַת כָּל-בָּשָׂר עוֹד מִמֵּי הַמַּבּוּל
וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה עוֹד מַבּוּל לְשַׁחַת הָאָרֶץ:
16. דָּרָשׁוּ אֶת-יְהוָה בְּעָדֵי וּבְעַד-הָעָם וּבְעַד כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַל-דִּבְרֵי הַסֵּפֶר הַנִּמְצָא הַזֶּה ...
עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ אֲבֹתֵינוּ עַל-דִּבְרֵי הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה
17. קָרוֹב יִהְיֶה לְנִשְׁבְּרֵי-לֵב
18. וְנִכְרְתָהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מֵעַמּוּיָהּ
19. וַיִּשְׁכַּב דָּוִד עִם-אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּעִיר דָּוִד:
20. וַתִּקְרָא לְנָעַר אֵי-כְבוֹד לְאֹמֶר גָּלָה כְבוֹד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל
כִּי נִלְקַח אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים:
21. כִּי זְרוּעוֹת רַשָּׁעִים תִּשְׁבְּרֶנָּה
וְסוֹמֵךְ צַדִּיקִים יִהְיֶה:

18.8 Enrichment: Nifal vs. Hitpael?

A much-debated point of interpretation in Genesis pits the *nifal* and *hitpael* (Lesson 19) against each other—the translation of these verses has even been made a test of the orthodoxy of English translations. In YHWH’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the divine promise of widespread blessing is repeated five times—three times using the *nifal*, twice with the *hitpael*:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ... וְנִבְרַכְתְּמוּ בָּךְ כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה: | ... and in you all the clans of the earth <i>shall be blessed</i> (Gn 12.3b) [N] |
| ... וְנִבְרַכְתְּמוּ בָּךְ כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה
וּבְזֶרְעֶךָ: | ... and in you all the clans of the earth <i>shall be blessed</i> and in your seed (Gn 28.14) [N] |
| ... וְנִבְרַכְתְּמוּ בּוֹ כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ | ... and in him all nations of the earth <i>shall be blessed</i> (Gn 18.18) [N] |
| ... וְהִתְבָּרַכְתְּמוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ | ... and in your seed all nations of the earth <i>shall bless themselves</i> (Gn 22.18) [Dt] |
| ... וְהִתְבָּרַכְתְּמוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ: | ... and in your seed all nations of the earth <i>shall bless themselves</i> (Gn 26.4) [Dt] |

The usual approaches to this apparent conundrum assume that all five statements repeat the same promise. They therefore either (1) assign priority to the *hitpael* forms of the promise, claiming that the promise is *middle/reflexive* (“shall bless themselves” i.e., by invoking the name

of Abraham—“May you be blessed [*or* May YHWH bless you] as he blessed Abraham!”); (2) claim that all five statements are *passive* (“shall be blessed in/through Abram”), since that is the primary function of the *nifal*; (3) suggest that there is no real difference between the two forms of the promise.

The first interpretation tends to deny that the *hitpael* can be passive; the second seeks to demonstrate that passivity is a normal function of the *hitpael* (as above). The third refuses to assign priority to one or the other.

Perhaps instead of choosing one of these interpretations as *the* “correct” intent of the divine promise, we should conclude that its different forms were intended to be complementary, and they record what are in fact two separate but interlinked promises. The promise(s) could mean that “clans/nations of the earth shall *be blessed* through the divine covenant with Abraham” (Abraham as a channel or means of blessing), and “shall *bless themselves* by or in Abraham” (invoking Abraham’s blessings on oneself or someone else). This approach allows the different stems to reflect two different—but related—outcomes of YHWH’s prior promise to bless and exalt Abram.

This example illustrates the importance of examining the context(s) within which a verbal root occurs in different stems, and of assuming that morphological differences are intentional and functional, rather than being merely arbitrary, stylistic, or mistaken.

Lesson 19

THE D-STEMS (*PIEL*, *PUAL*, *HITPAEL*)

Piel, *pual*, and *hitpael* are also called “D-stems”, since they all have a **doubled** (or “geminated”) **middle radical**. This *dageš forte* is the primary diagnostic of the D-stems. Like *qal*—but unlike *nifal*—D and Dp have no prefix in the imperative and infinitives; Dt (*hitpael*) always has an orthographic prefix. Further, these stems are relatively stable in form, since the first syllable of the root is closed due to the doubled middle radical.

Many verbs that occur in one or more D-stems also occur in *qal*. The function of the two sets of forms (Q & D) may not be related, just as the functions of *nifal* and *qal* are not necessarily related. Each verbal root-stem combination must be analyzed and evaluated on its own terms, on the basis of its occurrences and use(s) in the biblical text. There is no “pure” or “absolute” one-to-one relationship between them.

The main difference between *piel* and *pual*—in fact, the only difference in many forms—is the vowel under the first radical. If it is a *i-* or *a-vowel* (*hireq* or *pataḥ*) the verb is *piel*; if it is an *o-* or *u-* vowel (*qibbuṣ* or *holem*), it is *pual*. All forms of *hitpael* has a closed prefix syllable (e.g., *הִתְּ*, *יִתְּ*, *מִתְּ*).

19.1 Form

Perfect

	Person	Gender	D	Dp	Dt
Singular	1st	Common	מִשְׁלַּחְתִּי	מִשְׁלַּחְתִּי	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחְתִּי
	2nd	Masc.	מִשְׁלַּחְתָּ	מִשְׁלַּחְתָּ	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחְתָּ
		Fem.	מִשְׁלַּחְתְּ	מִשְׁלַּחְתְּ	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחְתְּ
	3rd	Masc.	מִשְׁלַּח	מִשְׁלַּח	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּח
		Fem.	מִשְׁלַּחַה	מִשְׁלַּחַה	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחַה
Plural	1st	Common	מִשְׁלַּחֲנוּ	מִשְׁלַּחֲנוּ	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחֲנוּ
	2nd	Masc.	מִשְׁלַּחְתֶּם	מִשְׁלַּחְתֶּם	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחְתֶּם
		Fem.	מִשְׁלַּחְתֵּן	מִשְׁלַּחְתֵּן	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחְתֵּן
	3rd	Common	מִשְׁלַּחוּ	מִשְׁלַּחוּ	הִתְּמִשְׁלַּחוּ

1. The **middle radical** is **doubled** (has *dageš forte*) in all forms of the D-stems.

N.B.: If the middle radical of a verbal form is a *b^{egad-k^{efat}}* letter, it will have *dageš lene* whenever the first radical is followed by silent *šewa* (e.g., *וַיִּשְׁכַּב*, and *he lay down*). This means that a *dageš* in the middle radical does not always mean that the verb is a D-form.

2. There is always a full vowel under the first radical in all forms of the D-stems.
3. Like *qal*, *piel* and *pual* have no prefix in the perfect (unlike *nifal*, *hifil*, *hofal*, *hitpael*, which have prefixes in all forms).

- The PGN indicators are the same in all stems.
- The closed syllable does not change; the **vowel after the first radical** is **consistent** throughout the perfect of each D stem, as are the prefix and first root syllable of *hitpael*:

מָשַׁל	D
מָשַׁל	Dp
הִתְמַשַּׁל	Dt

Prefix Conjugations

Imperfect (= Preterite)					
	Person	Gender	D	Dp	Dt
Singular	1st	Common	אֶמְשַׁל	אֶמְשַׁל	אֶתְמַשַּׁל
	2nd	Masc.	תִּמְשַׁל	תִּמְשַׁל	תִּתְמַשַּׁל
		Fem.	תִּמְשְׁלִי	תִּמְשְׁלִי	תִּתְמַשְׁלִי
	3rd	Masc.	יִמְשַׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִתְמַשַּׁל
		Fem.	תִּמְשַׁל	תִּמְשַׁל	תִּתְמַשַּׁל
Plural	1st	Common	נִמְשַׁל	נִמְשַׁל	נִתְמַשַּׁל
	2nd	Masc.	תִּמְשְׁלוּ	תִּמְשְׁלוּ	תִּתְמַשְׁלוּ
		Fem.	תִּמְשַׁלְנָה	תִּמְשַׁלְנָה	תִּתְמַשַּׁלְנָה
	3rd	Masc.	יִמְשְׁלוּ	יִמְשְׁלוּ	יִתְמַשְׁלוּ
		Fem.	תִּמְשַׁלְנָה	תִּמְשַׁלְנָה	תִּתְמַשַּׁלְנָה

- The **middle radical** is **doubled** in all forms of the D-stems (see note above).
- Piel* and *pual* have the same prefix vowel (*šewa*) in imperfect, preterite (and participle; below); *hitpael* uses the same prefix vowel (*hireq*) throughout its conjugations:

יִמְשַׁל	D, Dp
יִתְמַשַּׁל	Dt

- In all forms of *piel* except the perfect, the **first radical** is followed by *pataḥ*.
- In all forms of *pual*, the **first radical** is followed by *qibbuṣ* (usually) or *holem* (if the middle radical is a guttural or *reš*).
- The PGN prefixes replace the initial -הּ of *hitpael* (as in the H-stems, below).
- The preterite of all three stems is identical to the imperfect (with prefixed -י plus *dageš forte*). The exception is the י- prefix (3ms, 3mp), which lacks the *dageš*:

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים	And God <i>spoke</i> with him, ...(Gn 17.3)
וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה בָּעָם אֶת הַנְּחָשִׁים הַשָּׂרָפִים	And YHWH <i>sent</i> among the people fiery serpents,
וַיִּנְשְׁבוּ אֶת־הָעָם	and they <i>bit</i> the people (Nu 21.6)

Imperative

	Person	Gender	D	Dt
שׁ	2nd	Masc.	מְשַׁל	הִתְמַשַּׁל
		Fem.	מְשַׁלִּי	הִתְמַשְׁלִי
פּ	2nd	Masc.	מְשְׁלוּ	הִתְמַשְׁלוּ
		Fem.	מְשַׁלְנָה	הִתְמַשַּׁלְנָה

1. The imperative of *piel* looks exactly like the imperfect without the prefix.
2. The ה־ prefix of *hitpael* occurs in all forms except imperfect, preterite, and participle (below).
3. *Pual* does not occur in the imperative.

Infinitives

	D	Dt
Construct	מִשֵּׁל	הִתְמַשֵּׁל
Absolute	מִשֵּׁל	הִתְמַשֵּׁל

1. Both infinitives often look exactly like ms imperative in *piel* and *hitpael*; context will determine which conjugation is being used.
2. *Pual* does not occur as infinitive construct.
3. *Pual* occurs once as infinitive absolute (גָּנַב גָּנַבְתִּי, *I was surely stolen*; Gn 40.15).

Participles

	Gender	D	Dp	Dt
Sg.	Masc.	מְשַׁלֵּם	מְשַׁלֵּם	מְשַׁלֵּם
	Fem.	מְשַׁלֶּה	מְשַׁלֶּה	מְשַׁלֶּה
Pl.	Masc.	מְשַׁלִּים	מְשַׁלִּים	מְשַׁלִּים
	Fem.	מְשַׁלּוֹת	מְשַׁלּוֹת	מְשַׁלּוֹת

1. Every form begins with מ־, which is the participial prefix for all stems except *qal* and *nifal*.
2. The prefix vowel is the same as for the imperfect and preterite:

מ־ D, Dp
 מְמ־ Dt

N.B.: When the middle radical is followed by vocal *šewa*, the *dageš forte* is often missing from certain consonants, especially ל, מ, and ק. The middle radical of הלל, *praise*, for example, is never doubled when followed by a half-vowel, although it is written with two *ls* in English: *Halleluiah*.

הַלְלֵי־יָהּ Praise YAH! (Ps 150.1)
 וּבִקְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה ... and seek YHWH! (Ho 3.5)

Summary of the *Hitpael*

1. Due to its prefix (ה־, י־, etc.), some forms of Dt differ from those given above.
2. If the verbal root begins with a *sibilant* (ז, ס, צ, ש, שׁ), the ה of the prefix *metathesizes* (switches places with) the first letter of the verbal root (e.g., יִשְׁמַח < יִשְׁמַח).¹⁴⁷
3. If the verbal root begins with צ (e.g., צָדַק), the ה of the prefix *metathesizes* with the צ, and partially assimilates to it, becoming ט (e.g., יִצְטַדֵּק).

147. In the only I-ז verb in *hitpael*, the ה of the prefix assimilates to, and doubles the ז (הִזְזִיב, Is 1.16; this parsing is disputed).

4. If the verbal root begins with a *dental* (ת ט ד), the ת of the prefix assimilates to, and thus doubles, it (e.g., מִדְּבַר = m.s. *hitpa'el* Ptc of דָּבַר < **mitdabbēr*).¹⁴⁸
5. The relatively frequent verbal root שָׁחָה, “bow, honor, do obeisance; worship”¹⁴⁹ (170x) occurs in forms that begin הִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ, etc., which have traditionally been parsed as *hitpa'el* of שָׁחָה, with the expected metathesis of the ת and ש: הִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ: *he bowed*;¹⁵⁰ its participial prefix is גִּ- . These are all the forms of this verb in Biblical Hebrew (note the subtle difference between **3ms preterite** and **3mp preterite**, which are the most frequent forms):

PGN	Perfect		Imperfect		Preterite		Imv.
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	
1c	הִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי			נִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ	וַאֲשַׁתַּחֲוֶה	וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ	הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ
2m	הִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ	הִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם	תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה				
2fs							
3m	הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה	הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ	יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה	יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ	וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה	וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ	
3f							
NC	הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּת						
Ptc ms	מִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה						
mp	מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים						

19.2 D-Stem Diagnostics

This chart summarizes the main clues for recognizing a D or Dp form.

Conjugation		Diagnostics	Example	Parsing
Perfect	no prefix	<i>i</i> / <i>e</i> -vowel under I (D)	כָּבַד	3ms D P
		<i>u</i> / <i>o</i> -vowel under I (Dp)	כָּבַדְתָּ	3ms Dp P
Imperative & Infinitive		<i>a</i> -vowel under I (D, Dt);	כָּבֹדוּ	mp D V
		these forms not in Dp	כָּבֹד	D NC
Imperfect	šewa under prefix	וְיִגְדֹּל (Dp) וְיִגְדֹּל (D)	יִגְדֹּל	3ms Dp F
		וְתִכְבְּדֶנָּה (Dp) וְתִכְבְּדֶנָּה (D)	תִּכְבְּדֶנָּה	2/3fp D F
Preterite		וַיִּגְדֹּל (Dp) וַיִּגְדֹּל (D)	וַיִּגְדֹּל	3ms D Pr
Participle		מְכַבְּדִים	מְכַבְּדִים	mp D Ptc

148. *in front of a transliterated form means that the form is a hypothetical reconstruction.

149. שָׁחָה is often glossed “bow [down]”, but this does not fit a number of contexts in which it describes a person who is already bowing (e.g., 2 Sa 14.4, 22; 1 Kg 1.31; 1 Chr 21.21; 29.20; 2 Chr 7.3), or who cannot “bow” because they are, e.g., in bed (1 Kg 1.47).

150. Although this parsing has been challenged (based on Ugaritic), it remains the simplest interpretation of the forms.

1. All D forms have a **doubled middle radical**.
2. The only forms of D & Dp that have a stem prefix are imperfect, preterite and participle; the **prefix** vowel is **always** a **half-vowel**.
3. Dt always has a prefixed stem syllable; the prefix syllable is either ה־ (P, V, NC), י־ (F, Pr), or נ־ (Ptc).
4. *Comparing the Stems*. This chart reveals the differences and similarities between the various stems. Note the similarity between the D-stems as a group:

Conjugation	PGN	Q	N	D	Dp	Dt
Perfect	3ms	מָשַׁל	נִמְשַׁל	מָשַׁל	מִשַּׁל	הִתְמַשַּׁל
Imperfect	3ms	יִמְשַׁל	יִנְמַשֵּׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִתְמַשֵּׁל
Preterite	3ms	וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּנְמַשֵּׁל	*וַיִּמְשַׁל	*וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּתְמַשֵּׁל
Imperative	2ms	מִשַּׁל	הִנְמַשֵּׁל	מִשַּׁל		הִתְמַשֵּׁל
Inf. Const.		מִשַּׁל	הִנְמַשֵּׁל	מִשַּׁל		הִתְמַשֵּׁל
Inf. Abs.		מִשֹּׁל	הִנְמֹשֵׁל	מִשֹּׁל	מִשֹּׁל	הִתְמֹשֵׁל
Participle	ms	מֹשֵׁל	נִמְשָׁל	מֹשֵׁל	מִמְשָׁל	מִתְמַשֵּׁל

*The *yod* prefix is not doubled in *piel* and *pual* preterite—the other PGN prefixes are doubled, just as in *qal*, *nifal*, and *hitpael*.

19.3 Function of the D-Stems

19.3.1 *Piel* (HBI §2.1.4)

Piel is an **active** stem. Although the function of verbs in the *piel* is often related to the *qal* of the same stem (if it occurs), the *piel* is not primarily derived from or dependent upon the function of the *qal*, but has its own identify and function, which must be established *for each verb*.

1. If a verbal root occurs in both Q and D, the *piel* often describes the action that **causes** or brings about the state or condition described by the *qal*, especially if the verb is stative in *qal* (1 Ch 29.25; Lam 4.6 is for comparison of both function and form). This use of *piel* is often called “factive” or “resultative” because it is said to describe the action that results in or brings about the state.

וַיִּגְדֵּל עוֹן בְּתַעֲמֵי מַחֲטַאת סֹדֶם
The guilt of the daughter of my people *is greater* than the sin of Sodom (Lam 4.6; 3ms Q Pr).

וַיִּגְדֵּל יְהוָה אֶת־שְׁלֹמֹה
YHWH *exalted* Solomon ... (1 Ch 29.25; 3ms D Pr).

בָּנִים גָּדַלְתִּי
I *raised* sons ... (Is 1.2; 1cs D P).

טוֹב־לִי כִי־עֲנִיתִי לְמַעַן אֶלְמֹד חֻקֶּיךָ:
It is good for me that I have humbled so that I *might learn* your statutes (Ps 119.71; 1cs Q F).

טוֹב־אַתָּה וּמַטִּיב לְמִדְּוֵי חֻקֶּיךָ:
You are good and [you] do good; *teach* me your statutes (Ps 119.68; ms D V + 1cs).

וַיִּקְדַּשׁ אֶת־הָעָם וַיִּכְבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֵתָם
He *sanctified* the people and they *washed* their clothes (Ex 19.14; 3ms D Pr).

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־הָעָם הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ
Joshua said to the people, “*Sanctify yourselves*” (Jos 3.5).

2. Many verbs, especially those that occur only or primarily in *piel*, sound merely “active” when glossed in English, without any apparent causative function. This is especially true for verbs that occur in *piel* but not in *qal*, and for so-called “denominative” verbs. Denominative verbs are those that supposedly developed from nouns (e.g., $\text{דָּבָר} > \text{דִּבֶּר}$), a claim that

generally means that either there is no parallel verb in another Semitic language, or that the noun is more frequent than the verb. We do not yet know how the lexicon of these roots developed (i.e., from verb to noun, or *vice versa*).

וַיִּמֶן יְהוָה דָּג גָּדוֹל לִבְלַע אֶת־יוֹנָה	YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah (Jon 2.1; 3ms D Pr).
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel (Nu 14.39; 3ms D Pr).
וַיְדַבֵּר שְׁלֹשָׁת אֲלָפִים מְשָׁל	He spoke 3000 proverbs (1 Kgs 5.12).
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־הָעָם וַיַּכְבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֵתָם	He sanctified the people and they washed their clothes (Ex 19.14; cf. above).
וְאֶת־הָאֲבֵדָה לֹא בִקְשָׁתָם	... and the perishing one [female] you <i>did</i> not seek (Ezk 34.4).
אֶזְכֹּר לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	I will sing to YHWH, Israel's God (Jg 5.3).
וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים לַעֲמֹד לְשָׁרֵת	The priests could not stand <i>to serve</i> (1 Kgs 8.11).
וַיִּגְדַּל עוֹן בַּת־עַמִּי מִחַטָּאת סֹדֶם	The guilt of the daughter of my people <i>has become greater</i> than the sin of Sodom (Lam 4.6).

19.3.2 Pual (HBI §2.1.5)

Pual is the **passive** of *piel*. Many *puals* are participles (40%), perhaps because passive verbs are basically descriptive. These participles often function as adjectives (e.g., Pr 27.5).

וְשׁוֹמֵר תּוֹכַחַת יִכָּבֵד:	But whoever regards reproof <i>shall be honored</i> (Pr 13.18).
וְאַפְרַיִם עֲגֻלָּה מְלֻמָּדָה	And Ephraim is a <i>trained</i> [taught] heifer (Ho 10.11)
וַיִּבְקַשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמָּצֵא	The matter [plot] <i>was searched out</i> and found (Est 2.23)
יְהִי מְבֹרָךְ שֵׁם יְהוָה ...	May YHWH's name <i>be blessed</i> ...
שֵׁם יְהוָה מְהֻלָּל:	... YHWH's name is <i>to be praised</i> (Ps 113.2a ... 3b)
טוֹבָה תּוֹכַחַת מְגֻלָּה מֵאַהֲבָה מְסֻתָּרָה:	Better an <i>uncovered</i> rebuke than <i>hidden</i> love (Pr 27.5).

19.3.3 Hitpael (HBI §2.1.6)

Much like *nifal*, *hitpael* is **passive**, **reflexive**, or “**reciprocal**”. These functions vary from verb to verb, and even from one text to another. Although the *hitpael* occurs more frequently than either *pual* or *hofal* (below), it is relatively uncommon (only twenty-two verbs occur more than ten times in *hitpael*). [In Ps 2.2, the parallel *hitpael* and *nifal* are apparently reflexive and reciprocal, respectively.]

וְהִיא מִתְקַדְּשֶׁת מִטְּמֵאֶתָּהּ	She <i>cleansed herself</i> from her uncleanness (2 Sam 11.4)
וַיִּתְקַשֵּׁר יְהוּא ... אֶל־יֹרָם	Jehu <i>conspired</i> ... against Joram (2 Kgs 9.14).
וַאֲבִנֵּר הָיָה מִתְחַזֵּק בְּבֵית שָׁאוּל	Now Abner <i>was strengthening</i> [his position] in the household of Saul (2 Sam 3.6).
וַיִּתְּצֻבוּ מְלָכֵי־אֶרֶץ וְרוֹזְנִים נֹסְדוּ־יַחַד	The kings of the earth <i>take their stand</i> , and the rulers counsel [<i>nifal</i>] together (Ps 2.2).
אִשָּׁה יִרְאַת־יְהוָה הִיא תִתְהַלָּל	A woman who fears YHWH —she shall <i>be praised</i> (Pr 31.30; final <i>games</i> is due to pausal lengthening).

Compare the *qal*, *piel*, *pual* and *hitpael* of גָּדַל (Ps 144.12 is the only *pual* occurrence of גָּדַל):

רַק הַכִּסֵּא אֲנִי גָדוֹל מִמֶּךָ	Only [with regard to] the throne <i>am I greater</i> than you (Gn 41.40); 1cs Q F
בָּנִים גָּדַלְתִּי	Sons I <i>have raised</i> (Is 1.2); 1cs D P
כִּי עַל־כָּל יִתְגַּדֵּל	For he will <i>exalt himself</i> over all (Dn 11.37); 3ms Dt F
בָּנֵינוּ כְּנֹטְעִים מִגִּדְלֵם בְּנוֹרֵיהֶם	Let our sons be like <i>full-grown</i> plants in their youth (Ps 144.12a); mp Dp Ptc

N.B.: It is not uncommon to read—especially in older works—that the D-stems are emphatic or intensifying. This “intensifying” function has never been demonstrated, and has, in fact, been disproved, so that today we discuss the “functions” (plural) of the *piel*, etc., as illustrated above.

19.4 Frequency

There are 8,506 D-forms in the Bible (12% of all verbal forms); *piel* is by far the most common of the three.

D	6,879	9.3%
Dp	450	0.6%
Dt	1,177	1.6%
Total	8,506	11.5%

19.5 Concepts

denominative	factive	passive	pual	reflexive
D-stem	hitpael	piel	reciprocal	resultative

19.6 Vocabulary

<i>cover</i> (Q); <i>atone</i> [for] (D)	כָּפַר	.284	<i>kneel</i> (I: Q); <i>bless</i> (II: D)	כָּרַךְ	.276
<i>learn</i> (Q); <i>teach</i> (D)	לָמַד	.285	<i>look for, seek, search</i> (D; not in <i>qal</i>)	בָּקַשׁ	.277
<i>hasten, act quickly</i> (D) [often in hendiadys: “do X quickly”]	מָהֵר	.286	<i>say, speak</i> (D; in Q only as ptc.)	דָּבַר	.278
<i>capture, seize</i>	לָכַד	.287	<i>living, alive</i> (adj.); <i>life, lifetime</i> (pl. n.)	חַי חַיִּים	.279
<i>above</i> (prp., also מִמֶּעַל); <i>higher</i> (adv., usually מִמֶּעַלָּה)	מִעַל	.288	<i>wrath, anger; heat</i>	חֲמָה	.280
<i>so that not</i> (i.e., פֶּן is a negative telic particle, trad., “lest”)	פֶּן	.289	<i>account, regard, value, reckon</i>	חָשַׁב	.281
<i>remain, be left over</i> (N); <i>spare, leave [behind]</i> (H)	שָׂאֵר	.290	<i>young sheep: young ram</i> (m.; rarely written as כֶּשֶׁב); <i>ewe-lamb</i> (f.; also כֶּשֶׁבָּה)	כֶּשֶׁב כֶּשֶׁבָּה	.282
<i>serve, minister to</i> (D)	שָׁרַת	.291	<i>strength, power</i>	כֹּחַ	.283

19.7 Exercises

After studying the characteristics of the D-stems, gloss these sentences and clauses, parsing the verbs.

1. אִסְיַמְצָא הַנָּגֵב יִשְׁלַם שָׁנִים: Ex 22.6; thief; [re]pay (D)
2. וַיֹּאמֶר חֲטָאתִי עָתָה כִּבְדַּנִּי נָא נִגְדִּי זִקְנִי-עָמִי וְנִגְדִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשׁוֹב עָמִי וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 1 Sam 15.30; sin; worship (Dt); return (2ms Q V)
3. וַיִּדְעֻם כִּי שִׁלַּחְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת הַמְצֹנָה הַזֹּאת לְהוֹיֹת בְּרִיתִי אִתְּ-לֹוֹי אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: Mal 2.4; לְהוֹיֹת to be (Q NC < היה); אֶת (2nd time) with; Levi
4. אֶל-תַּתְּהַלֵּל בְּיוֹם מָחָר Pr 27.1; boast (Dt); tomorrow
5. וַיִּקְרָא לַמֶּשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן לֵילָה וַיֹּאמֶר ... עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כְּדִבְרֵכֶם: Ex 12.31 (the speaker is Pharaoh); Moses, Aaron
6. וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמְצָא וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל־עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: Est 2.23; impale (trad., hang)
7. יִהְלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי הוּא צָוָה וַנִּבְרָאוּ: Ps 148.5; צָוָה he commanded (3ms D P); create
8. וַיִּנְתְּנוּ בְיָד מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וַיִּבְדּוּ נְבוֹכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וַיִּבְדּוּ־עַבְדָּיו Jr 46.26; וַיִּנְתְּנוּ and I will give / put them (1cs Q P < נתן + 3mp + וי); in the hand of; when ק precedes vocal šewa it usually lacks dageš forte
9. הַלֹּא־זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְנוּ אֵלֶיךָ בְּמִצְרַיִם ... Ex 14.12; Egypt
10. לִפְי־שִׁכְלוֹ יִהְיֶה־אִישׁ Pr 12.8; לִפְי according to; שִׁכְל prudens
11. וַעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי אֵתָּה אַתֶּם מִבְּקָשִׁים וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶתֶּם מִמָּוֶת פְּנֵי פֶרְעֹה: Ex 10.11; אֵתָּה it / that (dir. obj. + 3fs) [i.e., the act of serving YHWH]; גִּרֹשׁ drive out / away [D]; מִמָּוֶת from [את + מוֹת] (Pharaoh); one clause per line; the first line is a quotation.
12. וַיֵּרָא דָּוִד כִּי־יָצָא שְׂאוֹל לִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ וַדָּוִד בְּמִדְבָּר־זִיף בַּחֲרָשָׁה: 1 Sam 23.15; וַיֵּרָא and he saw (3ms Q Pr < ראה); David, Saul, Ziph, Horshah
13. וַיִּתְּהַלֵּךְ חֲנוּךְ אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וַאֲיֵנוֹ כִּי־לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים: Gn 5.24; וַאֲיֵנוֹ and he was not (אין + 3ms suffix); Enoch
14. וּמִלְטִי אֶת־נַפְשִׁי וְאֶת־נַפְשׁ בָּנִי שְׁלֹמֹה: 1 Kgs 1.12; מִלְט escape (N), rescue (D); Nathan is speaking to Bathsheba; Solomon
15. וּבִקְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵת דָּוִד מֶלֶכָם: Ho 3.5
16. וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־אַבְרָהָם Gn 18.33; וַיֵּלֶךְ he went (3ms Q Pr < הלך); כַּאֲשֶׁר when; כָּלָה finish (D); Abraham
17. וְלֹא בִקְשָׁהּ בְּכָל־זֹאת: Ho 7.10
18. מִצָּא עַבְדְּךָ אֶת־לְבוֹ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־הַתְּפִלָּה הַזֹּאת: 2 Sam 7.27; תְּפִלָּה pray (Dt); prayer
19. וַיִּבְרְכֶם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּשְׁלַחֶם וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶל־אֶהֱלִיָּהֶם: Josh 22.6; וַיֵּלְכוּ and they went (3mp Q Pr < הלך)

Ps 113.1–3; יהי *let / may it be, it should / must be*
(3ms Q J < היה); מִזְרַח *dawn/east*; מְבוֹא *entrance*;
the jussive (יהי) is “distributed” to the last line as
well

20. הִלְלוּ יְהוָה
הִלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה
הִלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה:
יְהי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:
מִמִּזְרַח־שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד־מְבוֹא מְהֵלָל שֵׁם יְהוָה:

Josh 23.14

21. לֹא־נִפְל דְּבַר אֶחָד מִכָּל הַדְּבָרִים הַטּוֹבִים
אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עֲלֵיכֶם

Am 2.14–15; מָנוֹס *flight* [i.e., the ability to flee];
קָל *swift*; חָזָק *strong*; מוֹלֵט *escape (N), deliver,*
rescue (D); אִמְצָץ *strengthen (D)*; תַּפַּשׁ *use, wield*;
קֶשֶׁת [a] *bow*; רֶכֶב *ride*; each line is a clause

22. וְאִבְד מָנוֹס מִקָּל
וְחָזָק לֹא־יֵאֱמָן כָּחוֹ
וְגִבּוֹר לֹא־יִמְלֹט נַפְשׁוֹ:
וְתַפַּשׁ הַקֶּשֶׁת לֹא יַעֲמֹד
וְקָל בְּרִגְלָיו לֹא יִמְלֹט
וְרֶכֶב הַסּוֹס לֹא יִמְלֹט נַפְשׁוֹ:

1 Ch 17.27; הוֹאֵלֶת *you have been pleased* (2ms
H P < יאל); לֵהוֹיֹת *to be* (Q NC < היה + ל)

23. וְעַתָּה הוֹאֵלֶת לְבָרָךְ אֶת־בֵּית עַבְדְּךָ
לֵהוֹיֹת לְעוֹלָם לְפָנֶיךָ
כִּי־אֵתָהּ יְהוָה בֵּרַכְתָּ וּמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם:

19.8 Enrichment: The Nature of D/Piel

There are two D-forms in Ps 29, both occur in the second of two parallel lines, both parallel *qal* verbs. The *qal-piel* parallel of the same verbal root (Ps 29.5) is often cited as proof that the second of two parallel lines is more “intense” (since the *piel* was said to be an intensifying stem), or that it “focuses” or “extends” the content of the first line (see §19.4/N.B.).

קוֹל יְהוָה שִׁבַּר אֲרָזִים YHWH’s voice *breaks* cedars,
וַיִּשְׁבַּר יְהוָה אֶת־אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָּנוֹן: And YHWH *breaks* Lebanon’s cedars (Ps 29.5).

It is true that Ps 29.5b is more specific than 29.5a, but it is more specific (or focused) because the cedars are identified more specifically as “Lebanon’s cedars”, *not* because of the stem of the predicate. Nor should we necessarily read the act of smashing Lebanon’s cedars as somehow more violent, or more destructive, or more *anything*—at least *not on the basis of the verbal stem*. That reading must come from the broader context, possibly even from the use of “cedars of Lebanon” in Biblical Hebrew (the phrase occurs only five times).

At the end of the psalm (29.11), the two stems are again parallel, but this time in different verbal roots. The point, however, is not that the blessing of peace (11b) is somehow greater than the gift of strength (11a); they are coordinate blessings.

עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְהוָה YHWH *gives* strength to his people;
יְהוָה יְבָרֶכֶךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם: He *blesses* his people with peace (Ps 29.11).

Lesson 20

THE H-STEMS (*HIFIL*, *HOFAL*)

The *hifil* (H) and *hofal* (Hp) are also called “H-stems”, since they have a **prefixed** -ה in all conjugations except the imperfect and preterite (where the usual PGN prefixes replace the prefixed -ה, as they do in the *hitpael*), and participle (where the participial prefix -נִ replaces the -ה). This -ה is the primary diagnostic of the H-stems. Like *nifal* and *hitpael* (but unlike *qal*, *piel*, *pual*), the H-stems have a prefix in every form.

The main difference between *hifil* and *hofal* is the **prefix vowel**. If it is *hireq* (perfect only) or *pataḥ* (all other conjugations) the verb is *hifil*; if it is *qameṣ* *hiatuf* (usually) or *qibbuṣ* (some verbs, e.g., most forms of שָׁלַח), the form is *hofal*. A second difference is the vowel after the **second radical**: in *hofal*, it is always an *a*-vowel (*pataḥ* or *qameṣ*); in *hifil* it is usually an *i/e*-vowel (*hireq*, *ṣere*, *segol*).

20.1 Form

Perfect

No.	Person	Gender	H	Hp
Singular	1st	Common	הִמְשַׁלְּחִי	הִמְשַׁלְּחִי
	2nd	Masc.	הִמְשַׁלְּחָתָּ	הִמְשַׁלְּחָתָּ
		Fem.	הִמְשַׁלְּחָתְּ	הִמְשַׁלְּחָתְּ
	3rd	Masc.	הִמְשִׁילַּ	הִמְשִׁילַּ
		Fem.	הִמְשִׁילָהּ	הִמְשִׁילָהּ
	1st	Common	הִמְשַׁלְּחוּ	הִמְשַׁלְּחוּ
Plural	2nd	Masc.	הִמְשַׁלְּחֵם	הִמְשַׁלְּחֵם
		Fem.	הִמְשַׁלְּחֵנָּ	הִמְשַׁלְּחֵנָּ
	3rd	Common	הִמְשִׁילוּ	הִמְשִׁילוּ

1. The **prefixed** -ה occurs in **all** forms of the perfect.
2. The primary **diagnostic** for *hifil* and *hofal* perfect is the prefixed -ה and its vowel.
3. The **first radical** is always followed by silent *ṣewa*, so that the prefixes of the *hifil* and *hofal* form a closed syllable with the first radical (cf. *nifal* perfect & participle, and *qal* imperfect & preterite).
4. Like *nifal* and *hitpael*, the H-stems have a prefix in all forms.
5. The long *hireq* of the *hifil* occurs only in forms that do not have a consonantal ending.
6. The PGN indicators are the same in all stems.

Prefix Conjugations

	Person	Gender	Imperfect		Preterite	
			H	Hp	H	Hp
Singular	1st	Common	אֶמְשִׁיל	אֶמְשַׁל	וְאֶמְשַׁל	וְאֶמְשִׁיל
	2nd	Masc.	תִּמְשִׁיל	תִּמְשַׁל	וְתִמְשַׁל	וְתִמְשִׁיל
		Fem.	תִּמְשִׁילִי	תִּמְשְׁלִי	וְתִמְשִׁילִי	וְתִמְשְׁלִי
	3rd	Masc.	יִמְשִׁיל	יִמְשַׁל	וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּמְשִׁיל
		Fem.	תִּמְשִׁיל	תִּמְשַׁל	וְתִמְשַׁל	וְתִמְשִׁיל
	1st	Common	נִמְשִׁיל	נִמְשַׁל	וְנִמְשַׁל	וְנִמְשִׁיל
Plural	2nd	Masc.	תִּמְשִׁילוּ	תִּמְשְׁלוּ	וְתִמְשְׁלוּ	וְתִמְשִׁילוּ
		Fem.	תִּמְשִׁלְנָה	תִּמְשְׁלְנָה	וְתִמְשְׁלְנָה	וְתִמְשִׁלְנָה
	3rd	Masc.	יִמְשִׁילוּ	יִמְשְׁלוּ	וַיִּמְשְׁלוּ	וַיִּמְשִׁילוּ
		Fem.	תִּמְשִׁלְנָה	תִּמְשְׁלְנָה	וְתִמְשְׁלְנָה	וְתִמְשִׁלְנָה

1. The PGN prefixes replace the **ה** of the perfect.
2. The **prefix vowel** is *pataḥ* in all forms of H except the perfect.
3. The **prefix vowel** is *qameṣ ḥatuf* in all forms of Hp.
4. The **first radical** is followed by *šlent šewa* in all forms of H and Hp.
5. The preterite of both stems is like the imperfect, with prefixed **ו** and *dageš forte* in the PGN prefix. *Hifil* preterites without PGN endings have *šere* rather than *hireq yod* after the second radical (1cs, 2ms, 3ms, 3fs, 1cp):

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:	And God <i>divided</i> the light from the dark [... a separation/division between ...] (Gn 1.4).
וַתִּגְדֵּל חֶסֶדְךָ ...	And you <i>have exalted</i> your lovingkindness ... (Gn 19.19)
יִגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וַיֵּאֲדִיר	He <i>will exalt</i> and <i>make glorious</i> [the] teaching (Is 42.21b).

Imperative & Infinitives

The imperatives and infinitives resemble the imperfect, except that the prefix **ה** replaces the **ת**-PGN prefix (cf. *nifal*):

	Gender	H	Hp	N
Sg.	Masc.	הִמְשִׁיל		הִמְשִׁיל
	Fem.	הִמְשִׁילִי		הִמְשִׁילִי
Pl.	Masc.	הִמְשִׁילוּ		הִמְשִׁילוּ
	Fem.	הִמְשִׁלְנָה		הִמְשִׁלְנָה
NC		הִמְשִׁיל		
NA		הִמְשִׁיל	הִמְשִׁיל	

1. *Hofal* imperative occurs only twice in the Bible: וְהִשְׁכַּבָּהּ, *Be laid down!* (Ezk 32.19); הִפְנוּ, *Be turned back!* (Jr 49.8).
2. The **prefix vowel** is *pataḥ* in *hifil* (as in imperfect, preterite, and participle).

3. *Hifil* infinitive absolute and imperative are identical.
4. *Hofal* infinitives construct are extremely rare, and never occur in the strong verb.¹⁵¹

Participles

	Gender	H	Hp	Dp
S ₃	Masc.	מְשַׁלֵּם	מְשַׁלֵּם	מְשַׁלֵּם
	Fem.	מְשַׁלֶּה	מְשַׁלֶּה	מְשַׁלֶּה
Pl.	Masc.	מְשַׁלִּים	מְשַׁלִּים	מְשַׁלִּים
	Fem.	מְשַׁלּוֹת	מְשַׁלּוֹת	מְשַׁלּוֹת

1. Every form begins with **מְ**, which is the participial prefix for all stems except *qal* and *nifal* (cf. D, Dp, Dt, above); the first radical is followed by silent *šewa*, so that the prefix syllable is closed.
2. The **prefix vowel** is *pataḥ* in H and *qameṣ ḥatuf* in Hp.
3. The vowel after the second radical is always *qameṣ* in Hp participle (cf. Dp).

20.2 Summary of H-stem Diagnostics

This chart summarizes the main clues for identifying a H-stem form.

Diagnostics					
Conjugation	Prefix	Example	Parsing		
Perfect	ה־	הִיִּירֶק[-yod] after II	הַכְּבִיד	3ms H P	he honored
			הַכְּבֵר	3ms Hp P	he was honored
Imperative	ה־	<i>i/e</i> -vowel after II	הַכְּבֵר	2ms H V	Honor [someone]!
			הַכְּבִידוּ	2mp H V	Honor [someone]!
Infinitives			הַכְּבִיד	H NC	[to] honor
Imperfect & Preterite	PGN prefix	י־	יַכְּבִיד	3ms H F	he will honor
			וַיַּכְּבֵר	3ms H Pr	and he honored
			וַתַּכְּבֵר	3fs Hp Pr	and she honored
Participle	מ־	מ־	מַכְּבִיד	ms H Ptc	one how honors
			מַכְּבִידוֹת	fp H Ptc	they who honor
			מְכַבְּרִים	mp Hp Ptc	they who are honored

1. All forms have a **prefix**—either **ה־** (perfect, imperative, infinitives), **מ־** (participle), or **PGN** (imperfect, preterite).
2. *Hifil* perfect has *hireq* as prefix vowel; all other conjugations of H have *pataḥ*.
3. The “stem vowel” (after the second radical of the root) is either an *-i-* or an *-e-* vowel in all forms of H, and an *-a-* vowel in all forms of Hp.
4. All forms of Hp have *qameṣ ḥatuf* as their **prefix vowel**.
5. *Comparing the Stems*. The following chart reveals differences and similarities between the seven stems. Note the similarity between the H-stems:

151. Hp infinitive construct of **יָלַד** (הִלָּדָה) occurs three times (Gn 40.20; Ek 16.4, 5); the other four occurrences of hofal NC are of the root **שָׁמַע** (Lv 26.34, 35, 43; 2 Ch 36.21).

Conjugation	PGN	Q	N	D	Dp	Dt	H	Hp
Perfect	3ms	מָשַׁל	נִמְשַׁל	מִשַּׁל	מִשַּׁל	הִתְמַשַּׁל	הִמְשִׁיל	הִמְשַׁל
Imperfect	3ms	יִמְשַׁל	יִנְמַשֵּׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִתְמַשַּׁל	יִמְשִׁיל	יִמְשַׁל
Preterite	3ms	וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּנְמַשֵּׁל	וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּמְשַׁל	וַיִּתְמַשַּׁל	וַיִּמְשִׁיל	וַיִּמְשַׁל
Imperative	2ms	מִשַּׁל	הִמְשַׁל	מִשַּׁל		הִתְמַשַּׁל	הִמְשִׁיל	
Inf. Const.		מִשַּׁל	הִמְשַׁל	מִשַּׁל		הִתְמַשַּׁל	הִמְשִׁיל	
Inf. Abs.		מִשֹּׁל	הִמְשֹּׁל	מִשֹּׁל	מִשֹּׁל	הִתְמַשֹּׁל	הִמְשִׁיל	הִמְשֹּׁל
Participle	ms	מִשַּׁל	נִמְשַׁל	מִמְשַׁל	מִמְשַׁל	מִתְמַשַּׁל	מִמְשִׁיל	מִמְשַׁל

N.B.: If the second radical is a *b^egad-k^efat* letter, it will have *dageš lene* in all forms of *hifil* and *hofal*, *qal* imperfect and preterite, and *nifal* perfect and participle; all forms of the D-stems have *dageš forte*.

20.3 Function of the H-stems

The basic relationship between H and Hp is that *hifil* is always active, and *hofal* is its corresponding passive. Many reference works call *hifil* the “causative” of the *qal*, but many verbal roots occur in *hifil* but not in *qal*, or occur in both stems with little apparent relationship between their functions.

20.3.1 *Hifil* (HBI §2.1.7)

The *hifil* is an **active** stem. Beyond that it is necessary to determine the nuance of the *hifil* for each verbal root, and, even within each root, for each occurrence of the *hifil*, since its function depends, not only upon the verbal root, but also upon its context, and especially the subjects, objects, and even prepositions with which it occurs.

1. If a verb does not occur in Q, *hifil* is often simply transitive (also “singly” transitive, since it governs *one* object).

וַיַּהֲרֹק יְהוָה הַשְּׁלִיף עֲלֵיהֶם אֲבָנִים גְּדֹלוֹת
 ... (Josh 10.11; 3ms H P)
 וְאֶנְכִי הַסֵּתֶר אֶסְתִּיר פָּנַי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
 I will most surely *hide* my face on that day (Dt 31.19; H NA & 1cs H F)
 וְהִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֶת־בְּמֹתֵיכֶם
 ... and I will *destroy* your high places (Lv 26.30; 1cs H P + w)

2. When a verb occurs in Q or N and H, *hifil* is usually **causative** of Q or N. When glossing a *hifil*, it is often helpful to first translate it by saying “A caused B to do X”, and then to look for an appropriate gloss for the entire expression.

- a. The first pair of examples shows עָבַר in Q and H; the second shows אָבַר in N and H, and the third illustrates the use of שָׁמַע in all three stems (Q, N, H). Note the relationship between the subject, object, and action of the *hifil* verb.

וַיֵּלֶךְ לְעָבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן
 He went to *cross over* to the Ammonites (Jer 41.10; Q NC + ל)
 לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־יֶרֶד
 to *cause* the king to *cross* [= to *bring* the king over] the Jordan (2 Sa 19.16; H NC)

וּפְשָׁעִים נִשְׁמְדוּ יַחְדָּו
 but transgressors will *be destroyed* together (Ps 37.38; 3cp N P)
 וְאֶנְכִי הִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֶת־הָאֹמֹרִי
 But I *destroyed* the Amorite(s) before you (Am 2.9; 1cp H P)
 מִפְּנֵיכֶם

הֲלוֹא שָׁמַעַתָּ כִּי מֶלֶךְ אֲדֹנִיָּהוּ	Have you not <i>heard</i> that Adonijah has become king? (1 Kgs 1.11; 2fs Q P)
תִּשְׁמַע זַעֲקָה מִבְּתֵיהֶם	A cry <i>shall be heard</i> from their houses (Jr 18.11; 3fs N F)
תִּשְׁמִיעֵנִי שְׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה	You <i>cause</i> me to <i>hear</i> joy and gladness (Ps 51.10a; 2ms H F + 1cs)

- b. If the verb is transitive in *qal*, H is *doubly* transitive, that is, it takes two objects. The first object is the person (or thing) that the subject causes to perform the action of the verb; the second object is the direct object of that action. In this example the subject is 3ms (“he”), the first object us 1cp (“us”), and the second object is 3fs (“it” [the commandment]):

וַיִּשְׁמַעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ ... that he may *cause* us to *hear* it (Dt 30.12; 3ms **H F**)

- c. If the verb is stative in *qal*, H is factitive or resultative (see on *piel*, above), a type of causative in which a verb describes or names the process or action that brings the object to the condition or state described by the *qal*:

כָּל-הַבְּכוֹר ... תִּקְדִּישׁ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ	Every firstborn ... you shall <i>sanctify</i> [<i>≈ set apart</i>] to YHWH your God (Dt 15.19; 2ms H F).
הִגְדַּלְתִּי מַעֲשֵׂי	I <i>increased</i> my works (Qo 2.4; 1cs H P)

3. In some cases, however, the nature of the object suggests that a *hifil* verb is less than causative. In Is 8.13, the prophet contrasts the Judahites’ fear of the northern kings with the fear due YHWH:

וְאַתְּ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֹתוֹ תִקְדִּישׁוּ ... but [instead] you shall *sanctify* [*≈ recognize as holy*] YHWH Sabaoth (Is 8.13; 2mp **H F**)

4. H can also be called “tolerative” or “permissive”, that is, the subject *allows* something [not] to happen:

וְלֹא-תִשְׁמִיעַ אֶת-קוֹלְךָ	Do not <i>let</i> your voice <i>be heard</i> <i>≈ cause</i> [someone] to <i>hear</i> your voice (Jos 6.10; 2mp H F)
וְלֹא-הָפִיל מִכָּל-דְּבָרָיו אֶרֶץ:	And he [YHWH] did not <i>allow</i> any of his words to <i>fall</i> to the ground [i.e., to fail] (1 Sam 3.19; 3ms H P [נפל])

20.3.2 *Hofal* (HBI §2.1.8)

The *hofal* [Hp] is consistently passive. When it corresponds to *hifil* forms of the same verbal root, it makes the **causative** part of the *hifil* passive. If a verbal root occurs only in Q and Hp, then it will be a simple passive in Hp:

לִיהוָה אִזּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	Then Moses and the sons of Israel <i>sang</i>
אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת	this song to YHWH (Ex 15.1; 3ms Q F)
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹשֵׁר הַשִּׁירָה	In that day this song <i>will be sung</i>
	(Is 26.1a); 3ms Hp F

The following examples compare Q, H, and Hp (עמד) and Q, H, and Hp (זר). We have not yet studied the hollow verbs, but the point here is the *function* of the various stems, not their form. [Cf. also §20.3.1(2a).]

אֶךְ אִם-יֹוֹם אֶחָד יַעֲמֹד	..., but if he <i>stands</i> for a day or two days (Ex 21.21; 3ms Q F)
מֶלֶךְ בְּמִשְׁפַּט יַעֲמִיד אֶרֶץ	A king <i>causes</i> a land to <i>stand</i> [<i>preserves</i>] by justice (Pr 29.4a); 3ms H F
יַעֲמֹד-חַי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה	... [the goat] <i>shall be caused to stand</i> alive before YHWH (Lv 16.10); 3ms Hp F
<hr/>	
וַיָּמָת וַיִּקָּבֶר בְּשָׁמִיר:	He <i>died</i> and was buried in Shamir (Jg 10.2; 3ms Q Pr).
... וַיָּמִיתוּ אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּבֵיתוֹ:	... and they caused the king to die (<i>killed</i>) in his house (2 Kgs 21.23; 3mp H Pr).
... וַתּוֹמַת שָׁם:	... and there she was caused to die (<i>was put to death</i>) (2 Kgs 11.16; 3fs Hp Pr)

20.4 Frequency

There are 10,102 H-forms in the Bible (14% of all verbal forms). *Hifil* is the second most frequent stem in Biblical Hebrew; *hofal* is one of the least frequent.

H	9,671	13.1%	
Hp	531	0.7%	
Total	10,102	13.8%	of all verbal forms

20.5 Concepts

causative	permissive	tolerative
doubly transitive	stative	

20.6 Vocabulary

fight (N)	לָחָם	.300	אָז	.292
			מֵאָז (מֵאָז + זֶה)	formerly, since
escape (N); rescue, deliver (D)	מָלַט	.301	אָמֵן	.293
				be trustworthy, faithful; steady, firm (N); believe, trust (H)
relent, be sorry, rue (N); comfort, console (D)	נָחַם	.302	אֱמֶת	.294
				truth; trustworthiness
hide, conceal [oneself] (N, Dt); be hidden/concealed (N); hide [someone] (H)	סָתַר	.303	בְּכֹר	.295
				[the] firstborn
cow (female)	פָּרָה	.304	הִנֵּה	.296
				there is/was, here is/was (trad., Behold!)
bull (male)	פָּר		חוֹמָה	.297
				[city] wall
be ruined, spoiled, corrupt (N); ruin, spoil, corrupt (D); destroy (H)	שָׁחַת	.305	חֶק	.298
			חֻקָּה	ordinance, rule, prescription [something prescribed, required, commanded]
be destroyed, exterminated (N); destroy, exterminate (H)	שָׁמַד	.306	יַחַד	.299
			יַחְדּוֹ	together, simultaneously (adv.); phps. twice as community (Dt 33.5; 1 Ch 12.18)

20.7 Exercises

After learning the characteristics of the H-stems, *gloss* these sentences and clauses, *parsing* the verbs.

- 1 Kgs 3.7; David
Ps 8.7
ועתה יהוה אלהי אתה המלכת את-עבדך תחת הוד אבי
תמשילוהו במעשי ידך
- Ps 22.11; womb; בֶּטֶן belly, womb
עליך השלכתי מרחם
מבטן אמי אלי אתה:
- Dt 32.20
ויאמר אסתירה פני מהם
- Ps 143.8; בטח trust
השמיעני בבקר חסדך פי-בך בטחתי
- Lv 21.17
איש מזרעך ... לא יקרב להקריב לחם אלהיו:
- Lv 20.24; ברל separate (H)
אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר-הבדלתי אתכם מן-העמים:
- Is 8.17; חכה wait [for] (D); קיה
wait [for] (D)
וחפיתי ליהוה המסתיר פניו מבית יעקב
וקניתי-לו:
- Ex 24.4; שכם arise / awake / do [X]
early; וַיִּבֶן and he built (3ms Q Pr <
standing stone; add the
numerals for the total
ויכתב משה את כל-דברי יהוה וישכם בבקר
ויבן מזבח תחת ההר ושמים עשרה מצבה
לשנים עשר שבטי ישראל:
- Gn 1.14; מארת lights [-givers/bearers];
vault, firmament; וַהֲיוּ (3cp Q
be, become; ברל (see #7); אות
[a] sign
ויאמר אלהים יהי מארת ברקיע השמים
להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה
והיו לאת ולמועדים ולימים ושנים:
- Zc 13.2; נאם declaration, utterance;
idol; טמאה uncleanness;
each line is a clause
והיה ביום ההוא נאם יהוה צבאות
אכרית את-שמות העצבים מן-הארץ
ולא יזכרו עוד
וגם את-הנביאים ואת-רוח הטמאה אעביר מן-הארץ:
- 1 Ch 23.1; שבע be full, satisfied with;
have one's fill of; David, Solomon
ודויד זקן ושבע ימים
וימלך את-שלמה בנו על-ישראל:
- Nu 3.6; Levi, Aaron (in the following
verses YHWH assigns duties to the
Levitical clans)
ויאמר יהוה אל-משה לאמר
הקרב את-מטה לוי והעמדת אתו
לפני אהרן הכהן ושרתו אתו:
- Ps 17.8; אישון apple; צל shadow;
wing
שמרני כאישון בת-עין
בצל כנפיד תסתירני:
- Dt 31.18; על because of, on account
of; עשה do, make (3ms Q P);
turn (3ms Q P)
ואנכי הסתר אסתיר פני ביום ההוא
על כל-הרעה אשר עשה כי פנה אל-אלהים אחרים:
- Est 4.4; Esther is the subject
of וַתְּשַׁלַּח Mordecai
ותשלח בנדים להלביש את-מרדכי
- 1 Sam 25.15; כלם humiliate, trouble;
anything; בהיותנו while we
were (Q NC < היה + 1cp + ב)
והאנשים טובים לנו מאד
ולא הכללנו ולא-פקדנו מאומה
כל-ימי התהלכנו אתם בהיותנו בשדה:

Ps 119.19; גֵּר *sojourner; alien*
(i.e., non-native)

Ps 46.10; שָׁבַת *cease, stop*; קֵצָה *end, edge*; קֶשֶׁת *bow*; קָצַץ *break (D)*; חֲנִית *spear*; עֲגֹלָה *wagon, chariot*

Ho 2.20 [final ת of כרת doubles the perfect subject ending]; חַיָּה *living thing*; עוֹף *bird*; רֶמֶשׂ *creeping thing*; קֶשֶׁת *bow*; בָּטַח *securely*

18. גֵּר אֲנֹכִי בָאָרֶץ
אֶל־תִּסְתַּר מִמֶּנִּי מִצֹּתִיד:

19. מִשְׁבֵּית מַלְחָמוֹת עַד־קֵצָה הָאָרֶץ
קֶשֶׁת יִשְׁבֵּר וְקָצַץ חֲנִית עֲגֹלוֹת יִשְׁרֹף בָּאֵשׁ:

20. וְכִרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עִם־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה
וְעִם־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְרֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה
וְקֶשֶׁת וְחֶרֶב וּמַלְחָמָה אֲשַׁבֵּר מִן־הָאָרֶץ
וְהַשְׁכַּבְתִּים לְבָטָח:

20.8 Enrichment: Modality

English uses “helping verbs” to modify the function of the main verb in other ways than causation. Auxiliary verbs modify either the *temporal* reference (“they *have* gone”, “they *shall have* gone”) or can be *modal* (“you *must/could/should have* gone”). With rare exceptions Biblical Hebrew does not use helping verbs (יָכַל, *be able*, is the main exception), either modal or temporal. Modality and “tense” are translational (i.e., exegetical) decisions, so that, for example, Ps 5.12 could be rendered in various ways, all of which are grammatically defensible, even though they are not all equally probable. This does not mean that verbal function is somehow inherently ambiguous or indeterminate, but it does underline the importance of lexical value (semantic load) and context, alongside conjugation and stem.

וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כָּל־חוֹסֵי בְךָ	And let all [those] who take refuge in you rejoice
	And all [those] who take refuge in you shall rejoice
	And all [those] who take refuge in you rejoice
	And all [those] who take refuge in you should/must rejoice
	And all [those] who take refuge in you may rejoice
	And may all [those] who take refuge in you rejoice
יִרְנְנוּ לְעוֹלָם	For ever let them shout
	For ever shall they shout (etc.)
וְתִסְדֹּךְ עֲלֵימֹו	And may you shelter them
	And you shall shelter them (etc.)
וַיַּעֲלֲצוּ בְךָ אֲהַבֵּי שְׁמֹךְ:	And may those who love your name exult in you
	That those who love your name may exult in you (etc.)

Lesson 21

THE QAL PASSIVE / IDENTIFYING (PARSING) VERBAL FORMS

A number of verbs occur in forms which look like *pual* or *hofal*, but which have come to be recognized as the remnants of a *qal* passive [Qp] stem.¹⁵³

21.1.1 Form

The primary criteria for identifying forms as Qp rather than as Dp or Hp is that (1) the verbal root does not occur in *piel* or *hifil*; or (2) these forms function as the passive of the *qal* (i.e., rather than the passive of the *piel* or *hifil*); or both. Note, for example, the function of these verbs in their various stems:

	Q	Qp and N	D	H
אכל	<i>eat; consume, destroy</i>	<i>be eaten, consumed</i>	---	<i>feed</i>
ילד	<i>bear, give birth to</i>	<i>be born</i>	<i>deliver</i> (as a midwife)	<i>beget, become</i> father/ancestor of
לקח	<i>take</i>	<i>be taken</i>	---	---
נתן	<i>give</i>	<i>be given</i>	---	---
שדד	<i>destroy</i>	<i>be destroyed</i>	<i>assault, mistreat</i>	---

This charts some forms of the *qal* passive in these stems (not all are listed, forms not listed do not occur), as well as how relatively infrequent they are.¹⁵⁴

153. The existence of a *qal* passive stem was suggested by Ibn Jikatilla in the 10th century. On the *qal* passive, cf. Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University), §52e, 53u; Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Trans., Takamitsu Muraoka (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), §58; Bruce K. Waltke & M. O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), §22.6, 23.6.1, 24.6a, 25.1a, 27.1a; Ronald J. Williams, "The Passive *Qal* Theme in Hebrew" *Essays on the Ancient Semitic World*, ed. J.W. Wevers & D.B. Redford (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1970), 43-50.

154. The perfect and participle tend to follow the forms of *pual*, whereas the imperfect and infinitive construct are analogous to *hofal*, as the following distribution for these verbs shows.

Verbal Root	"Stem"	Perfect	Participle	Imperfect	Inf. Const.
אכל	"Pual"	3	1	1	
ילד	"Pual" "Hofal"	26	1		3
לקח	"Pual" "Hofal"	8	1	6	
נתן	"Hofal"			8	
שדד	"Pual" "Hofal"	20		2	
		all ≈ "Dp"	2/3 ≈ "Dp"	16/17 ≈ "Hp"	all ≈ "Hp"

Verbal Root	Perfect	Imperfect/ Preterite	Infinitive Construct	Participle	Gloss	Occurrences (Qp/total)
אכל	אָכַל	יֹאכַל		אֹכֵל	be eaten	5/809
ילד	יָלַד		הוֹלֵדֶת	יֹלֶדֶת	be born	30/499
לקח	לָקַח	יִקַּח		לֹקֵחַ	be taken	15/938
נתן		יִתֵּן			be given	8/2007
שרד	שָׂרַד	יִשָּׂרַד			be destroyed	22/43

21.1.2 Function (HBI §2.1.2)

As shown above, the *qal* passive is the passive of the function of the *qal* of the same verbal root.

וְהָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר-עָלְיוּ כְרָתָהּ ... and the Asherah which was beside it *had been cut down* (Jg 6.28)
 וּבָנוּת יִלְדוּ לָהֶם ... and daughters *were born* to them (Gn 6.1)

21.1.3 Frequency

It is difficult to garner statistics for the frequency of the *qal* passive. Whether or not to include the “regular” Qp participle, such as בָּרִיךְ, “blessed” (which occurs fairly frequently, and in a number of verbs, but which has a different morphology (i.e., not *pual*- or *hofal*-“like”) is problematic. Reference works tend to either (1) identify these forms as *pual* or *hofal* (e.g., DCH); or (2) mention the *qal* passive as a possible identification of *pual* or *hofal* (e.g., BDB, HALOT). The statistics used in this grammar suggest that *qal* passive occurs 1,277 times in Biblical Hebrew (1.7% of all verbal forms).

21.2 Identifying (Parsing) Verbal Forms

You may well wonder why we spend so much time identifying [parsing] verbs, especially given the availability of analytical lexicons (which parse every form in Biblical Hebrew), computerized databases, interlinears, and parsing guides. This emphasis does not imply that verbs are somehow more important or “key” to Biblical Hebrew. It merely reflects the nature of the language—Hebrew verbs are more complex than, for example, nouns or numerals, and therefore require more study.

As we begin reading the biblical text, and see verbal forms in their larger linguistic contexts, we will find that they are both more and less complex: more complex because their function is a direct reflection of their literary context (the words, clauses, and sentences around them), and less complex, because they become increasingly easier to recognize as we spend more time in the text itself.

Helpful as they can be, the tools mentioned above form yet another layer between the reader and the Hebrew text, one of the barriers that the study of Hebrew attempts to overcome. Furthermore, the greater our dependence on the “tools”, the more tools we need to gather and refer to in order to study the text. If we need to look up the parsing of every other verb form, we spend our study time interacting primarily with the tools, rather than the text. Also, no parsing guide—computerized or not—is infallible, and there are valid differences of opinion between grammarians and commentators regarding the parsing of some forms (most tools identify only one possibility).¹⁵⁴ A major reason for studying Hebrew is to enable the student of Scripture to interact with the text on a more immediate level,¹⁵⁵ as directly as possible with the Hebrew text.

21.2.1 Verbal Diagnostics (summary)

This section presents some diagnostics for identifying verbal forms in Hebrew. If one does not seem to work, try another! You will probably recognize something about most verbal forms (an ending,

154. These are more common when the verbal form is based on a weak verbal root (Lessons 24-31).

155. “[More] immediate” describes the relationship of the interpreter to the text, not to “layers” of meaning within the text itself (as might be implied by “deeper”). Students of the languages should *apprehend* or *interact with* the text in a different way than those who read it in their native tongue.

the stem, conjugation, lexical form, etc.). Begin from what you recognize, and then develop a routine method that allows you to identify the verb's subject, conjugation, stem, and lexical form.

Stem	Perfect	Imperfect & Preterite	Imperative	Infinitives	Participle
Q	no prefix; <i>a</i> -vowels	ִי ִי ִי	no prefix	no prefix	no prefix; <i>holem</i> after first radical
N	נִ	ִי ִי ִי	הִי	הִי נִ	נִ
D	no prefix	ִי ִי ִי	no prefix	no prefix	מִ
Dp	no prefix	ִי ִי ִי	---	no prefix	מִ
Dt	הִי	יִתִּי ִי ִי	הִי	הִי	מִתִּי
H	הִי	ִי ִי ִי	הִי	הִי	מִ
Hp	הִי	ִי ִי ִי	---	---	מִ

21.2.2 Diagnostic Questions

- Is there a *pronominal suffix* or *syntactical prefix* (conjunction, preposition, article, interrogative -ה)?
 - The conjunction *waw* and interrogative -ה can be prefixed to any verbal form.
 - A preposition occurs only with infinitives construct and participles.
 - The article occurs only with participles.
 - Pronominal suffixes can affect the pointing of, e.g., the prefix vowel; they can also obscure the subject ending of the verb.
- Is there a *PGN suffix* (i.e., an affix that identifies the person, gender, number of the subject)?
- Is there a *PGN prefix* (i.e., a prefix that is part of the verbal form, not a syntactical prefix [above], that identifies the person, gender, number of the subject)? Identify the *prefix vowel* (if any).
- In imperfect and preterite, if the prefix vowel is *hireq*, is the *first radical* of the verbal root *doubled*?
 - Yes → *nifal*
 - No → *qal* (unless root is I-נ or [certain] geminate verbs)
- Does the *second radical* of the verbal root have *dageš forte* (i.e., *dageš* preceded by a full vowel)?
Yes → *piel*, *pual*, *hitpael*
- If you can answer questions 1-5, and know only two forms of each stem (3ms P, 3ms F), you can parse nearly any form.

	Q	N	D	Dp	Dt	H	Hp
3ms perfect	מָשַׁל	נָמַשַׁל	מָשַׁל	מָשַׁל	הִתְמַשַׁל	הִמְשִׁיל	הִמְשַׁל
3ms imperfect	יִמְשַׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִמְשַׁל	יִתְמַשַׁל	יִמְשִׁיל	יִמְשַׁל

All stems except *qal* and *nifal* prefix the letter מִ- to form the participle; in those stems the prefix vowel for the participle is the same as the prefix vowel of the imperfect and preterite.

21.2.3 Summary

Forms Without a Prefix

1. A verbal form without a prefix must be *qal* (perfect, imperative, participle, infinitive) or *piel* or *pual* (perfect, imperative, infinitive).

Forms with a Prefix

1. A tri-radical form with a prefixed ה־ is either *nifal* perfect or participle, or 1cp imperfect or preterite (any stem).
2. A tri-radical form with a prefixed הִי־ is either *hifil*, *hofal*, or *hitpael* perfect, imperative, or infinitive; or *nifal* imperative or infinitive.
3. A tri-radical form with a prefixed הָ־ is a participle in either *piel*, *pual*, *hitpael*, *hifil*, or *hofal*; or a participle or infinitive construct with prefixed *min* (מִן־).

Prefix Vowel

1. If the prefix is הִי־ and there is י־ after the second radical, the form is *hifil* perfect.
2. If the prefix is הִי־ and the second radical is doubled, the form is *hitpael* (perfect, imperative, or infinitive).
3. If the prefix is הָ־ the form is *hofal* (perfect or infinitive).
4. *Hifil* is the only stem with a *pataḥ* prefix vowel in imperfect, preterite, imperative, infinitives, and participle (i.e., all conjugations except perfect).
5. If the prefix vowel of an imperfect or preterite form is *hireq*, the form is *qal*, *nifal*, or *hitpael*.

Doubled Radical

1. A tri-radical form with a doubled second radical must be *piel*, *pual*, or *hitpael* (all conjugations).
2. A tri-radical form with a doubled first radical must be *nifal* imperfect, preterite, imperative, or infinitive.

N.B.: As always, the goal is the ability to “figure out” a verbal form, not to memorize a set of “rules”.

21.3 Vocabulary

<i>gather, assemble</i>	קָבַץ .316	<i>sister, female relative</i>	אָחוֹת .307
<i>burn incense; cause a sacrifice or incense to smoke (D, H)</i>	קָטַר .317	<i>trust, be confident in / of</i>	בָּטַח .308
<i>meet, encounter (only as NC)</i>	קָרָא	<i>burn, consume (Q, D)</i>	בָּעַר .309
<i>happen, occur</i>	קָרָה .318	<i>walk, step on, tramp; cause to march, tread down, tread [string] a bow (both Q & H)</i>	הָרַךְ .310
<i>toward, against, opposite (Q inf. const. + לֵ)</i>	לִקְרָא	<i>like, just like (variant of כֹּפ־)</i>	כְּמוֹ .311
<i>hunger, famine</i>	רָעַב .319	<i>leader, member of ruling class</i>	נָשִׂיא .312
<i>burn (oft. specified with בָּאֵשׁ)</i>	שָׂרַף .320	<i>surrounding, [all] around (adv.)</i>	סָבִיב .313
<i>rise early (H; often in hendiadys: “do X early”); often with בִּבְקֹר “in the morning”</i>	שָׁכַם .321	<i>surrounding, [all] around (adv.);</i> <i>מן + סָבִיב</i>	מִסְבִּיב
<i>throw, cast, hurl (H)</i>	שָׁלַךְ .322	<i>close, shut (Q); give into someone’s power [hand] (H)</i>	סָגַר .314
		<i>pillar, column</i>	עַמּוּד .315

21.4 Exercises

After studying the diagnostics of the stems, *gloss* these clauses, *parsing* all verbal forms. If a verb's function is not clear due to its stem, consult a lexicon.

1. Lv 9.13; **מוצא** *present* (H); **נתח** *piece* [of a cut-up carcass]; **ל** *by*
וְאֶת־הָעֵלָה הַמִּצִּיאוֹ אֵלָיו לְנִתְחָהּ וְאֶת־הָרֹאשׁ וַיִּקְטֹרַע עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
2. 1 Ch 14.12; David; **אמר** probably functions here as “commanded”
וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ־שָׁם אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִיד וַיִּשְׁרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ:
3. 1 Kg 15.24; Asa; Jehoshaphat
וַיֵּשֶׁב אָסָא עִם־אֲבָתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר עִם־אֲבָתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד אָבִיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ יְהוֹשָׁפָט בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו:
4. Is 22.22; **ונתתי** *I will put/place/set* (< נתן); **מפתח** *key* (something showing that the wearer has authority or ability to open & close?); **שכם** *shoulder*; David
וְנָתַתִּי מִפְתָּח בֵּית־דָּוִד עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ וּפְתַח וְאֵין סֹגֵר וְסֹגֵר וְאֵין פְּתַח:
5. Jr 7.15; Ephraim
וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֹתְכֶם מֵעַל פְּנֵי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶת־כָּל־אֲחֵיכֶם אֶת כָּל־זֶרַע אֲפֹרִים:
6. Isai 36.15; **נתן** *give*; **בִּיד** *in[to] the hand of*; Hezekiah; Assyria; the first verb is volitional
וְאַל־יִבְטַח אֹתְכֶם חֲזָקִיהוּ אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר... לֹא תִתֵּן הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר:
7. Josh 10.6; **אל** *against* and **על** often overlap in function); Amorite(s)
נִקְבְּצוּ אֵלֵינוּ כָּל־מְלָכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי יֹשְׁבֵי הָהָר:
8. 1 Sam 28.4; **ויבאו** *they came/went*; **ויחנו** *they camped*; Philistines, Shunem, Saul, Gilboa; note the difference in function between the N & Q of **קבץ**
וַיִּקְבְּצוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּשׁוֹנִים וַיִּקְבֹּץ שָׁאוּל אֶת־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּגִלְבָּעַ:
9. Gn 3.19; the suffix on **מן** is 3fs because it refers to **אדמה** *dirt, dust*; **תשוב** *you shall return* (2ms Q F < שוב)
כִּי מִמָּוְנָה לִקְחָתָּהּ כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה וְאַל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב:
10. Is 15.1; **מושא** *oracle; burden*; **ליל** *|| לילה*; **שרד** *destroy, ruin, devastate* (3ms Dp P); Ar (capital?) city [cf. **עיר** of Moab]; **נדרמה** *it is destroyed/undone* (3ms N P); 1a is a “title”; 1b-d are clauses
מֹשֶׁא מוֹאָב כִּי בְּלִיל שָׂדֶד עָר מוֹאָב נִדְרָמָה כִּי בְּלִיל שָׂדֶד קִיר־מוֹאָב נִדְרָמָה:
11. 1 Kg 2.21; Abishag; Shunamite; Adonijah
וְתֹאמַר יֵתֵן אֶת־אֲבִישָׁג הַשְּׁנַמִּית לְאֲדֹנֶיהָ אֶחָיד לְאִשָּׁה:
12. 2 Chr 18.5; **הנלך** *shall we go*; Ramoth-gilead
וַיִּקְבֹּץ מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַנִּבְכָּאִים אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם הִנֵּלֶךְ אֶל־רָמֹת גִּלְעָד לְמַלְחָמָה
13. Ps 119.35; **נתיב** *path, way*
הַדְרִיכֵנִי בְּנִתִּיב מִצְוֹתֶיךָ כִּי־בֹ חָפְצָתִי:
14. Ps 125.1; Zion; **ימוט** *it/he moves/shall be moved*; **ישב** *it/he endures/shall endure*; these singular verbs are collectives; their subject is the first word
הַבְּשִׁחִים בִּיהוָה כְּתֹר־צִיּוֹן לְאִי־מוֹט לְעוֹלָם יֵשֶׁב:
15. Ps 31.9; **מרחב** *wide* [i.e., open] *place* (cf. **רחב**, *be wide*)
וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתִּינִי בְּיַד־אוֹיֵב הַעֲמַדְתָּ בְּמִרְחָב הַגָּלִי:

21.5 Enrichment: Nominal Formation

The lexicon of Biblical Hebrew has many words that are related to each other, so that knowing a verbal root can help you recognize new words, even when they are quite infrequent (e.g., רָפָאוּת, below). These lists also show that noun formation is not arbitrary in Biblical Hebrew. In English, for example, suffixing “-r” to a verb yields the noun that identifies someone characterized by that activity, such as “write+r” (one who writes), but adding “-r” to the beginning of a word does not change its function, since initial “-r” is not a functional prefix in English.

1. Nouns formed by suffixed רִית- are *feminine*, and tend to be abstract:

מֶלֶךְ	<i>reign, rule, be king</i>	מַלְכוּת	<i>royalty, royal authority; kingdom; reign</i>
סָכַל	<i>be insolent, foolish</i>	סִכְלוּת	<i>folly, insolence</i> (7x; all in Qo)
רָפָא	<i>heal</i>	רְפָאוּת	<i>healing</i> (only Pr 3.8)
אַלְמָנָה	<i>widow</i>	אַלְמָנוּת	<i>widowhood</i>

2. Nouns can be formed by prefixing נִ- to a root:

יָרָא	<i>fear, be afraid of</i>	מֹרָא	<i>fear</i>
יָשַׁב	<i>sit, stay; settle, live, dwell</i>	מִוֶּשֶׁב	<i>dwelling[-place]</i>
סָפַר	<i>count</i>	מִסְפָּר	<i>number, total</i>
עָשָׂה	<i>work, do, make, act</i>	מַעֲשֵׂה	<i>deed, act; thing done, work</i>
צִוָּה	<i>command, order, demand</i>	מִצְוָה	<i>command, order, demand</i>
קָנָה	<i>purchase, buy; acquire</i>	מִקְנָה	<i>property, acquisition(s); cattle</i>
קָרָה	<i>happen, befall; meet</i>	מִקְרָה	<i>happening, occurrence</i>
רָאָה	<i>see, observe, look [at]</i>	מִרְאָה	<i>sight, appearance</i>
שָׁפַט	<i>judge</i>	מִשְׁפָּט	<i>judgment; justice; custom</i>

3. Some of these designate the *place* of the activity described by the corresponding verb:

זָבַח	<i>sacrifice</i>	מִזְבֵּחַ	<i>altar; place of sacrifice</i>
מֶלֶךְ	<i>reign, rule, be king</i>	מַמְלָכָה	<i>kingdom; sovereignty, rule, reign, dominion</i>
צָפָה	<i>watch, guard</i>	מִצְפָּה	<i>watchtower</i> (Mizpah)
קָדַשׁ	<i>be[come] holy</i>	מִקְדָּשׁ	<i>sanctuary; holy place</i>
קָיָם	<i>stand</i>	מָקוֹם	<i>place; standing place</i>
רוּם	<i>be high, exalted</i>	מָרוֹם	<i>height</i>
רָכַב	<i>ride</i>	מִרְכָּבָה	<i>chariot</i> (cf. רֶכֶב, <i>chariot, chariotry</i>)
שָׁכַב	<i>lie down, sleep</i>	מִשְׁכָּב	<i>bed</i>
שָׁכַן	<i>live, dwell</i>	מִשְׁכָּן	<i>living / dwelling place; “tabernacle”</i>

4. *Participles* can be substantival so frequently that they essentially function as nouns:

יָשַׁב	<i>live, dwell, settle, remain</i>	יֹשֵׁב	<i>inhabitant; citizen (Q Ptc)</i>
כֹּהֵן	<i>be / act as priest</i>	כֹּהֵן	<i>priest (Q Ptc)</i>
רָגַל	<i>go about on foot; spy</i>	מְרַגֵּל	<i>spy, scout (D Ptc)</i>
שָׁפַט	<i>judge, administer justice</i>	שֹׁפֵט	<i>[a] judge (Q Ptc)</i>

5. Nouns “from” *geminate* roots can retain the repeated radical of the root (cf. *dageš forte*):

הִלֵּל	<i>praise</i>	תְּהִלָּה	<i>praise</i>
פָּלַל	<i>pray</i>	תְּפִלָּה	<i>prayer</i>

6. *False cognates*—words that share the same radicals, but have a different root (i.e., homonyms), as English “Put the money in the *bank*”, “a hole in the river *bank*”, and “The pilot put the plane into a *bank*”—are usually distinguished by Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) in the lexica; related adjectives, nouns, etc. are identified by the same Roman numeral.

I מִשַּׁל	<i>compare(?); use a proverb</i>	מִשְׁלַּל	<i>proverb, saying; parable</i>
II מִשַּׁל	<i>reign, rule</i>	מִמְשָׁלָה / מִמְשָׁלָת	<i>rule, dominion, kingdom</i>

Lesson 22

GUTTURAL VERBS

Verbal roots that have א, ה, ח, or ע as one of their root consonants belong to a subset of the basic verb called *guttural* verbs. There are five types, identified according to the position of the guttural consonant. Some verbs with ר also share the characteristics of the guttural verbal roots, since ר does not double.¹⁵⁶

I-guttural (and I-ר)	פ-guttural	עבר	cross over
I-א	א"פ ¹⁵⁷	אמר	say
II-guttural (and II-ר)	ע-guttural	בער	burn
	ע"ר	ברך	bless
III-guttural	ל-guttural	שלח	send
III-א	ל"א	מצא	find

22.1 The Basic Differences

Four characteristics of the gutturals (one of which they share with ר) cause the vowels of some forms to differ from those of the basic verb.

1. א, ה, ח, ע, ר *do not double* (geminate). In forms of the strong verb that have *dageš forte* in a position occupied by a guttural or ר (e.g., the middle radical in D, Dp, and Dt), the *dageš* is absent; this non-gemination often causes the preceding vowel to lengthen, because a syllable is open rather than being closed by *dageš forte*.
2. א, ה, ח, ע are followed by *hatef*-vowels instead of *šewa* (i.e., the half-vowel is *under* the guttural and thus “follows” it in pronunciation).
 - a. I-guttural verbs often have a *hatef*-vowel after the first radical instead of *šewa*
 - b. II-guttural roots have *hatef*-vowels instead of vocal *šewa* after the second radical (i.e., before vocalic endings)
3. ה, ח, ע tend to occur with *a*-vowels, either full vowels or *pataḥ furtivum*, so that *pataḥ* may occur where the basic verb (משל) has *holem* or *šere*.
4. Since א does not close a syllable, verbs whose roots end in א tend to have long vowels after the second radical. Although ה (i.e., without *mappiq*) does not close a syllable, verbs that end in ה are a type of weak root (below); verbs ending in ה- are strong, and considered III-guttural.

These characteristics cause most of the differences between guttural verbs and the basic verb. In this table, each pair of examples has the same parsing; the second example is the basic verb.

156. This lesson presents a great deal of information about guttural verbal roots; the rules merely demonstrate that the patterns are predictable, regular, and reflect the effect of the gutturals on vocalization.

157. The " means that this is to be read as an abbreviation or symbol, not a word. Labels such as א"פ are read from right to left (*pe'-alef*).

Guttural Verb	Basic Verb	Parsing	Nature of the Difference	Reason for the Difference
יִאָבֵק יִבְרָךְ	יִמְשֵׁל יִמְשֵׁל	3ms N F 2ms D V	no <i>dageš forte</i> ; long vowels instead of short	Since gutturals don't double, the syllable is open; this also affects roots I/II-ר in certain stems (below).
יִשְׁמַע יִשְׁמַע	יִמְשֵׁל יִמְשֵׁל	3ms Q F 3ms D F	<i>a</i> -vowels (esp. <i>pataḥ</i>) after the second radical	Word-final gutturals tend to be preceded by an <i>a</i> -vowel.
יִבְחֲרוּ יִמְדֹּתֶם	יִמְשֵׁלוּ יִמְשִׁלְתֶּם	3cp Q P 2mp Q P	<i>hatef</i> -vowels instead of vocal <i>šewa</i>	Gutturals have <i>hatef</i> -vowels where the basic verb has vocal <i>šewa</i>
יִעֲמֹד יִעֲמִיד	יִמְשֵׁל יִמְשִׁיל	3ms Q F 3ms H P	<i>hatef</i> -vowels under the first radical instead of silent <i>šewa</i> in forms with prefixes (F, Pr)	Initial guttural that closes the prefix syllable (i.e., where the first radical is followed by silent <i>šewa</i> in the basic verb) is often followed by the <i>hatef</i> -vowel that matches the prefix vowel.
יִחְדֹּל	יִמְשֵׁל	3ms Q F	<i>segol</i> as prefix vowel instead of <i>hireq</i>	Initial gutturals, especially ח, may have <i>segol</i> as a prefix vowel where the basic verb has <i>hireq</i> .
יִמְצֹאֲתִי יִמְצֹא	יִמְשִׁלְתִּי יִמְשִׁל	1cs Q P 3ms Dp F	long vowel after the second radical, no <i>šewa</i> before PGN ending; no <i>dageš</i> in ח of PGN ending	III-ש forms generally have a long vowel after the second radical of the verbal root. The ח of PGN endings lacks <i>dageš lene</i> since it is “preceded” by a vowel (final ש is not considered consonantal).
יִצְמִית יִמְצֹתִי וַיִּבּוֹ	יִמְשִׁלְתִּי יִמְשִׁלְתִּי וַיִּמְשֵׁל	2fs Q P 1cs Q P 3ms Q Pr	lack final ש	[Silent] ש drops out of some III-ש forms (usually noted in <i>Mp</i> ; Lesson 29).

22.2 I-Guttural Roots

These verbal roots differ from the basic verb wherever the first radical is followed by *šewa* (*qal* imperfect and preterite; *nifal* perfect and participle; all forms of *hifil* and *hofal*) or doubled (*nifal* imperfect, imperative, infinitive construct). The **D**-stems are **not** affected.

- 2mp and 2fp *qal* perfect have *hatef-pataḥ* under the first radical (יִמְשֵׁל is for comparison).

יִבְרַחְתֶּם You served 2mp Q P יִמְשִׁלְתֶּם

- Wherever the basic verb has silent *šewa* after the first radical, guttural roots have a *hatef*-vowel, with the corresponding full vowel under the prefix (יִמְשֵׁל is for comparison).

הִעֲבִיד He enslaved 3ms H P הִמְשִׁיל
אֶחָזֶק I [will] seize 1cs Q F אֶמְשִׁל

- Whenever the initial radical of the basic verb is doubled (*nifal* F, V, NC), the prefix vowel is long (*šere*). Since ר does not geminate, this also applies to verbs that are I-ר.

יִעֲזֹב He/It will be forsaken 3fs N F תִּמְשֹׁל You/she will be ruled
וְתִרְאֶה and she/it will appear 3ms N Pr וְתִמְשִׁל and she/it will appear

22.3 I-ש Roots

This sub-set of the I-guttural roots (cf. §6.2), contains only five verbs (אָמַר, אָכַל, אָבַד, אָבָה, אָפָה). They differ from other I-guttural verbs (above) only in *qal* imperfect (Q F) and *qal* preterite (Q Pr).

22.4 II-Guttural Roots

These verbal roots differ from the basic verb wherever the second radical is doubled (all three D-stems), or followed by vocal *šewa* (all forms with vocal PGN sufformatives, in all stems except *hifil*). The forms of II-guttural verbs are not affected in *hifil*.

1. The D-stems follow one of two patterns:
 - a. In some II-guttural roots the vowel after the first radical is *long* (*qameš* or *šere* in *piel*, *hitpael*; *holem* in *pual*), since that syllable is open.

בָּרַךְ	<i>He blessed</i>	3ms D P	מָשַׁל
בִּרְךָ	<i>He was blessed</i>	3ms Dp P	מִשַּׁל
מְבָרַךְ	<i>Blessed</i>	ms Dp Ptc	מְמַשֵּׁל

- b. Other II-guttural roots look just like the basic verb, but without *dageš forte*, so that the vowel after the first radical is *hireq* or *patah* (*piel*, *hitpael*) or *qibbuš* (*pual*).¹⁵⁸

בָּחַר	<i>He chose</i>	3ms D P	מָשַׁל
נִבְחַרְנוּ	<i>We will be chosen</i>	1cp Dp F	נִמְשָׁל

2. With vocalic PGN suffixes (וֹ-, הֶ-, יִ-, -), these roots have a *hatef*-vowel after the second radical instead of vocal *šewa* (all stems):

נִגְאָלוּ	<i>They redeemed.</i>	3cp Q P	מִשְׁלָו
בִּחְרוּ	<i>Choose!</i>	2mp Q V	מִשְׁלוּ
הִנְגָּלוּ	<i>Redeem yourselves!</i>	2mp N V	הִמְשָׁלוּ

22.5 III-Guttural Roots (III-ח/ע/ה only)

These verbal roots differ from the basic verb mainly by having *patah* after the second radical, or *patah furtivum* after its vowel. *Mappiq* in the final ה of these roots means that the ה is a consonant, not a vowel letter (as it is in roots III-ה; below).

1. If a form has no ending or suffix, the vowel after the second radical is *patah*, except in H (which will, nonetheless, have *patah furtivum*):

יָבַח	<i>He flees</i>	3ms Q F	יָמַשַׁל
יִשְׁמִיעַ	<i>He causes ____ to hear</i>	3ms H F	יִמְשִׁיל
וַיִּשְׁמַע	<i>and he heard</i>	3ms Q Pr	וַיִּמְשֵׁל
וַיִּשְׁמִיעַ	<i>and he caused ____ to hear</i>	3ms H Pr	וַיִּמְשִׁיל

2. If the vowel after the second radical is written with a vowel letter, *patah furtivum* is added (see also the last example in #1, above):

שָׁמַע	<i>Heard</i>	ms Qp Ptc	מְשׁוּל
יִשְׁמִיעַ	<i>He will cause ____ to hear</i>	3ms H F	יִמְשִׁיל

3. 2fs P (all stems) has *patah* after the third radical instead of silent *šewa*:

שָׁמַעְתְּ	<i>You heard</i>	2fs Q P	מְשַׁלְתְּ
הִשְׁמַעְתְּ	<i>You were caused to hear</i>	2fs Hp P	הִמְשַׁלְתְּ

158. This is called “virtual doubling” or “gemination”, because the Masoretes pointed the word with a short vowel (since the syllable would have been closed if the radical had been doubled)—the term is confusing, since nothing is in fact doubled.

22.6 III-א Roots

These forms differ from the basic verb because א cannot close a syllable; at the end of a syllable it becomes silent and the preceding vowel is long, usually *qameṣ* or *seṣe*. Forms with vocalic endings (וּ -, יּ -, הּ -,), where א begins the final syllable, are like the basic verb.

1. The vowel after the second radical is long, and the PGN ending (ת) does not have *dageš lene*, because the א is silent (and therefore ignored in pronunciation).

מָצָא	<i>He found</i>	3ms Q P	מָשַׁל
מָצָאתָ	<i>You found</i>	2ms Q P	מָשַׁלְתָּ

Silent א may even be missing (the verbal root is צמא; see table, §22.1):

צָמָאתָ	<i>You are thirsty</i> (Ru 2.9)	2fs Q P	מָשַׁלְתָּ
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2. With the ending נה (2/3fp F, Pr, V), the vowel after the second radical is *segol* (all stems):

תִּתְּמוּצְאָנָה	<i>You / they [will] find your / themselves</i>	2/3pf Dt F	תִּתְּמוּשַׁלְנָה
תִּתְּמוּצְאָנָה	<i>You / they [will] find</i>	2/3fp Q F	תִּתְּמוּשַׁלְנָה

22.7 Common Guttural Roots

This table lists all guttural roots with pointing *that is affected* by the presence of a guttural or ר that occur more than two hundred times in Biblical Hebrew, listed by type. Verbs are listed according to the type of weakness that actually occurs (e.g., ירא, “fear”, does not occur in the D-stems, and so is listed as III-א, but not as II-ר; ירד, “descend, go down”, does not occur in the D-stems, and so is not listed).

I-א	I-guttural (not I-א)
אמר <i>say, speak</i> (> 5000x)	עשה <i>do, make; act</i> [perform a deed] (2573x)
אכל <i>eat, devour, consume</i> (795x)	ראה <i>see</i> (1294x)
אהב <i>love</i> (205x)	עלה <i>go up, ascend</i> (879x)
III-guttural	עבר <i>cross / pass over / through / by</i> (539x)
שמע <i>hear, listen</i> [to]; obey (1136x)	עמד <i>stand; stop</i> (519x)
ידע <i>know, understand; notice, recognize</i> (924x)	ענה <i>answer; testify</i> (314x)
לקח <i>take, get, acquire</i> (964x)	עבד <i>serve, be servant to</i> (289x)
שלח <i>send</i> [away], <i>let go; stretch out, reach, extend</i> (839x)	חזק <i>be[come] strong</i> (Q); <i>seize, grab; hold</i> (H) (288x)
ישע <i>save, deliver, triumph</i> (205x)	חיה <i>live, be alive</i> (281x)
III-א	חטא <i>sin, miss</i> [a target] (237x)
בוא <i>come, go</i> [in], <i>enter</i> (2530x)	אסף <i>gather, collect</i> (203x)
יצא <i>go out, leave, exit</i> (1055x)	עזב <i>leave, forsake, abandon</i> (212x)
קרא <i>call; name; invite; read</i> (730x)	II-guttural (or ר)
נשא <i>lift up, carry, bear; forgive</i> (651x)	ברך <i>bless, worship</i> (D) (328x)
מצא <i>find, discover</i> (451x)	
ירא <i>fear, be afraid</i> [of] (377x)	
מלא <i>be[come] full</i> (250x)	
חטא <i>sin, miss</i> [a target] (237x)	

22.8 Concepts

doubling gemination	I-guttural פ-guttural	II-guttural ע-guttural	III-guttural ל-guttural	mappiq “virtual doubling”
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22.9 Vocabulary

<i>south, Negev</i>	332. נֶגֶב	<i>length</i>	323. אָרֶךְ
<i>skin, leather</i>	333. עוֹר	<i>turn, overturn, destroy</i>	324. הִפָּךְ
<i>cloud(s)</i>	334. עָנָן	<i>animal(s) [coll.], living thing</i>	325. חַיָּה
<i>footstep; time (i.e., once, thrice)</i>	335. פַּעַם	<i>wounded, slain, dead (adj.)</i>	326. חָלָל
<i>twice (dual)</i>	פַּעַמַּיִם	<i>male donkey/ass</i>	327. חֲמוֹר
<i>rest, sabbath</i>	336. שָׁבַת	<i>on account of, for the sake of (prp.); because [of] (cj.)</i>	328. יָעַן
<i>forget</i>	337. שָׁכַח	<i>vineyard</i>	329. כֶּרֶם
<i>regularly, continually (adv.)</i> ¹⁵⁹	338. תָּמִיד	<i>sell</i>	330. מָכַר
		<i>sight, appearance (cf. רָאָה)</i>	331. מַרְאֶה

22.10 Exercises

After studying the characteristics of the guttural verbs, *gloss* these clauses, *parsing* the verbs.

1. אֵיפֹה הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הִרְגָתָם Jg 8.18; אֵיפֹה? *Where?*
2. וַיַּחֲלֵם יוֹסֵף חֲלֹם Gn 37.5; חֲלֵם *dream*; Joseph
3. הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לְחֹשֶׁךְ וְהַיָּרֵחַ לְדָם Joel 3.4; יָרַח *moon*
4. וַיַּחֲזֹק הָרָעֵב בְּאַרְצָן מִצְרַיִם: Gn 41.56; חָזַק *sieze, be strong*
5. וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּנִי יְהוּדָה וַיֵּשְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמִינוּ בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְחַתְּמִנוּ הָאֲמִינוּ בְּנִבְיָאֵיו וְהִצְלִיחוּ: 2 Ch 20.20; צָלַח *succeed, prosper*; Judah, Jerusalem
6. וַעֲתָה קוּם עֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה אַתָּה וְכָל־הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נָתַן לָהֶם לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: Josh 1.2; קוּם *stand, rise* (2ms Q V; this form often introduces another imperative); Jordan
7. אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל Ps 38.22 (יהוה and אֱלֹהֵי are vocative; each line is a clause)
8. הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי בְּבִקְרָתְךָ כִּי־בָךְ בִּטְחֹתִי ... כִּי־אֵלֶיךָ נִשְׁאָתִי נַפְשִׁי: Ps 143.8a, bβ (in reading poetry, “bβ” refers to the second half (“β”) of the second poetic line (“b”))
9. וַאֲבֹדְתֶם בְּגוֹיִם וַאֲכָלְהָ אֶתְכֶם אֶרֶץ אֲבִיכֶם: Lv 26.38 (each line is a clause)
10. לָכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה Ex 6.6

159. In a construct chain, תָּמִיד refers to something repeated, regular, or perpetual (עֲלָה תָּמִיד, *perpetual offering*).

- Gn 3.2; נָחָשׁ *snake*; גֶּן *garden* 11. וְהָאִמֶּר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחַשׁ מִפִּרְי עֵץ־הֶגֶן נָאֵכָל:
- Ps 129.8; בִּרְכָה *blessing* 12. וְלֹא אָמְרוּ הַעֲבָרִים בִּרְפַת־יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם
בִּרְכָנוּ אַתְּכֶם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה:
- Ex 32.30; חַטָּא *sin* (v.); חַטָּאָה *sin* (n.), more commonly חַטָּאת; the second line contains the quotation; Moses 13. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם
אַתֶּם חַטָּאתֶם חַטָּאָה גְדֹלָה
- Pr 15.9; תוֹעֵבָה *abomination*; each line is a clause 14. תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ רָשָׁע
וּמִרְדֶּף צְדָקָה יֵאֱהָב:
- Jr 22.21 15. ... כִּי לֹא־שָׁמַעַתְ בְּקוֹלִי:
- Gn 27.34; צָעַק *cry out* [for help] ; צָעָה *cry* (n.); מָר *bitter* (adj.); אָבִי is vocative; Esau 16. כְּשָׁמַע עָשָׂו אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אָבִיו
וַיִּצְעַק צָעָה גְדֹלָה וּמָרָה עַד־מָאֹד
וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בִּרְכָנִי גַם־אֲנִי אָבִי:
- 1 Kgs 3.3; לָלֶכֶת *by walking* (Q NC < הִלֵּךְ + ל); רַק *only*; בִּמְהָ *high place, cultic center*; Solomon, David 17. וַיֵּאָהֵב שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת־יְהוָה
לָלֶכֶת בַּחֲקוֹת דָּוִד אָבִיו
רַק בַּבָּמוֹת הוּא מִזְבֵּחַ וּמִקְטִיר:
- Jr 17.14; תְּהִלָּה *praise* (n.) 18. רָפְאֲנִי יְהוָה וְאַרְפָּא ... כִּי תִהְלֹתִי אִתָּה:
- Ex 12.46; עֲצָם *bone*; this is from the instructions about the Passover 19. בְּבֵית אֶחָד יֵאָכֵל ... וְעֲצָם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּבוּ:
- Mi 3.4; צָעַק *cry out* [for help]; יַעֲנֶה *he will answer* (3ms Q F < עָנָה) 20. אֲזִי וְיַעֲקֹב אֶל־יְהוָה וְלֹא יַעֲנֶה אוֹתָם
וַיִּסְתֵּר פָּנָיו מֵהֶם בְּעַת הַהִיא
- 2 Kg 24.2; גָּדוּד *band, troop*; multiple national/ethnic names 21. וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה בּוֹ אֶת־גָּדוּדֵי כַשְׂדִּים
וְאֶת־גָּדוּדֵי אַרְם וְאֶת גָּדוּדֵי מוֹאָב
וְאֶת גָּדוּדֵי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן
וַיִּשְׁלַח בִּיהוּדָה לְהַאֲבִידוֹ
כְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים:
- Dt 7.24a 22. וְנָתַן מַלְכֵיהֶם בְּיָדָם
וְהֵאֱבַדְתָּ אֶת־שְׂמֹם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם

22.11 Enrichment: Vocabulary

A common standard for determining “fluency” in a language is a threshold vocabulary of about 1000 words. This seems to be the point at which most people can begin to communicate with native speakers with some degree of comfort. There are at least two effective ways to approach this goal; many students find that they work well in tandem.

1. Memorize *more vocabulary*, using, for example, Mitchel (see Bibliography), which allows you to learn glosses for words that occur in descending frequency in Biblical Hebrew. If you are learning new words *and* reading the text, you will find that the two often reinforce each other, as when you encounter a newly memorized word (or a closely related form) in the passage that you are reading.
2. Learn words *as they occur* in whatever text you are reading. For example, since fifty of the fifty-two occurrences of קָרַשׁ *plank* are in the book of Exodus (describing the Tabernacle), there is not much sense in learning to gloss this word unless you plan to read Exodus. But if you are going to read Exodus, then taking time to learn this word will be worth your while.

Continuing to strengthen your grasp of vocabulary (through memorization), and to see how it functions in a variety of contexts (through reading) will increase your ability to both read and understand the text.

Lesson 23

BASIC TOOLS

In addition to the Hebrew Bible itself, there are many tools designed to help you understand the biblical text. *Lexical aids* suggest glosses (lexicons and word lists), or discuss the use, distribution, and broader function of individual words (theological dictionaries and wordbooks). There are also *grammatical aids* (e.g., reference grammars), and guides to *textual criticism*, the *masora*, and other technical aspects of the biblical text. Most of these are discussed briefly in Appendix F (below). This Lesson focuses on the text of BHS and the major lexical tools.

23.1 Hebrew Bible

23.1.1 *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS)

Since its completion, BHS has been the basis for nearly every Bible translation, Hebrew-based commentary, and reference work on Biblical Hebrew, whether in print and or electronic. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), named for its place of publication, is the fourth “scholarly” edition of the Hebrew text. It began to appear in 1967 and was complete ten years later; several corrected versions have appeared since then. A fifth edition, to be known as *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (5th) is now being released (2010).

Prolegomena	III
Foreword (in German, English, French, Spanish, Latin)	III
Part I. A history of this edition of the Hebrew Bible, explains the differences between it and its predecessor, referred to as either BH ³ [3rd ed.] or BHK [“Kittel”, its editor].	
Part II. Explains the basis of the masora in <i>BHS</i> , and some of the masoretic notes and readings. The English version of this material is on pp. XI-XVIII.	
<i>Sigla et Compendia Apparatum</i> (List of Signs & Abbreviations)	XLVII
I. <i>Apparatus criticus</i> (The [Text-] Critical Apparatus)	XLVII
Sources	XLVII
An alphabetical list of abbreviations used in the textual apparatus (at the bottom of each page of the biblical text), with the documents to which they refer.	
Abbreviations	LIX
An alphabetical list of abbreviated Latin expressions used in the textual apparatus, with the full Latin terms.	
II. <i>Apparatus masorae</i> (The Masoretic Apparatus)	LIII
Lists alphabetically abbreviations used in the textual apparatus to refer to masoretic materials.	
<i>Index Siglorum et Abbreviationum Masorae Parvae</i> (Index of Signs & Abbreviations of the <i>Masora Parva</i>)	LIII
Lists the abbreviations in the margins of <i>BHS</i> in alphabetical [Hebrew] order; its Latin translations can be deciphered with the help of Kelley, <i>et al.</i> (1998).	
<i>Index Librorum Biblicorum</i> (Index of the Biblical Books)	[no page number]
Lists the biblical books in the order in which they are printed in <i>BHS</i> ; titles are in Latin & Hebrew.	

The Hebrew Bible 1

The order of the books differs slightly from that found in English Bibles, because they follow the general order of the Septuagint (pre-Christian, Greek translation of the Hebrew text), rather than the Hebrew Bible:

- Ruth, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, & Chronicles are among the Writings, rather than the historical and prophetic books.
- Samuel, Kings, Ezra-Nehemiah, & Chronicles are each a single book; there is no new title page for the second “book”, although the second “half” begins again with chapter 1.
- Because the Latin titles are used, some will not look familiar (e.g., *Regum* = Kings, *Threni* = Lamentations).
- Although BHS claims to reproduce the text of the codex, the book of Chronicles precedes Psalms in the codex, rather than concluding the Bible, as it does in BHS.

Text Pages

The name of the biblical book is listed at the top of each page (Hebrew on the right page, Latin on the left). Page numbers are on the upper inside corners; chapter/verse references on the upper outside corners.

There are four blocks of material on each page. In the center of each page is the biblical text itself. This reproduces the text of Codex Leningrad, which is considered the oldest representative of the best masoretic scribal tradition, manuscripts copied and corrected by the family of Ben Asher. This text therefore represents a single manuscript, and is therefore a single witness to the biblical text (much as Alexandrinus or Vaticanus is to the text of the GNT). The UBS and Nestle-Aland Greek New Testaments contain an *eclectic* text that represents a committee’s conclusions about the best reading for each verse, based on a comparison of many manuscripts, so that there is probably no single manuscript of the Greek NT with exactly the same text as the UBS/Nestle-Aland NT. *BHS* presents a single manuscript, and is thus no different in principle from a Greek NT that reproduces the text of only one manuscript, such as B (Codex Vaticanus).

In the outside margin are masoretic notes—*masora parva* [*mp*] or *masora marginalis*—which contains the Masoretes’ comments on anything that they thought worthy of note, often unusual or rare forms. Written in Hebrew and Aramaic, they refer to the words in the text with small circles over them. We will discuss some of these, and how to read them.

At the bottom of each page are two sets of footnotes. The first set, consisting of raised numbers followed by “Mm” and a number, refer you to Weil (1971) for further information about some of the notes in *mp*. The second set of footnotes records whatever variants the editor of that biblical book thought worthy of notice, along with suggested alternate readings that are unsupported by manuscript evidence.

Each verse is preceded by its number. In *prose* passages, the verse number is repeated on the *inner* margin of the line on which the verse begins (but not on the left page if the verse begins at the right margin). In *poetry*, most verses begin at the right margin of the page. There are many differences in verse numbering between the Hebrew and English texts, and quite a few differences in chapter divisions. You need to know which system a commentary or reference work is using, so that you can be sure that you are looking at the verse that the reference work is discussing.

Some Marks in the Text

: *sof pasûq*, “end of *pasûq*”, marks the end of nearly every “verse”, *not* the end of a sentence. The final masora (at the end of each biblical book) lists the number of *pasûqim* in the book

ס/פ Solitary unpointed *samek* and *pe* mark textual breaks that were apparently based on content. These “paragraph” endings, called פְּתִיחָה (“open”) or סְתִימָה (“closed”) were separated by either *samek* or *pe*, to indicate whether the next section began on the same line (ס) or on the next line (פ), i.e., “Leave the rest of this line open”. Because these have been collated from various reading traditions their occurrences in BHS are no longer consistent with this principle.

In the inner margin large *samek* headed by a rotated *qameṣ* marks the beginning of a *seḏer*, a system of indicating the weekly reading in the synagogues. Each is numbered by a small letter with a superscript dot under the *samek*. The final masora for each book also lists the total number of *sḏarim* in that book (except the Minor Prophets, which the rabbis considered one book).

accents Nearly every biblical word is marked with an accent that shows which syllable is accented, how the word should be sung (cantillated), and how closely it is related to the following word. Your copy of *BHS* should include a card marked *Tabula Accentum* that lists disjunctive and conjunctive accents from strongest to weakest. There are two lists because the accents have different musical value in Psalms, Job, and Proverbs (*Accentus poetici*). See Lesson 27 and HBI §4.

23.1.1 *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ)

This newest edition of *Biblia Hebraica* began to appear in 2004; it will eventually comprise two volumes, the first a biblical text much like BHS, and intended to replace it. The main differences between BHQ and BHS are the inclusion of the text of the *Masorah finalis* at the foot of the biblical text on each page, the *Masorah parva / marginalis* as it stands in Codex Leningradensis (i.e., not as corrected and expanded by Weil for BHS), a much more full textual apparatus that includes abbreviated explanations of the reason for each textual variant. You will also immediately notice the use of English rather than Latin (e.g., titles of books).

The second volume of BHQ will include a text-critical introduction to each biblical book (primarily a descriptive list of the witnesses used in compiling the apparatus), commentaries on textual variants and the *Masorah parva*, and a translation of the *Masorah magna*. These materials will be part of each fascicle as it is published; when the project is complete, the materials will be divided to create the two-volume set.

Since most of the material that describes BHS (above) also applies to BHQ, this section notes only some of the differences.

General Introduction (English, German, Spanish)

The main purpose of this section is to explain the differences between BHQ and BHS (i.e., what justifies the enormous investment of time, effort, and money), and especially to explain the critical apparatus of BHQ. Since the textual apparatus is the reason for this new edition, this is the most extensive section of the Introduction, and describes “The Selection of Cases and Inclusion Witnesses”, “The Evaluation of the Evidence”, “The Structure and Presentation of Cases”, “The Layout of a Page”, and so forth.

Following the general introduction are two figures: a “Sample of an Apparatus Entry Illustrating the Presentation of the Text Critical Cases” and a “Sample Page Illustrating the Features of the Layout”.

Sigla, Symbols and Abbreviations

Sigla for Textual Witnesses (alphabetical list of abbreviations used in the textual apparatus, with the documents to which they refer).

Symbols Used in the Apparatus.

Abbreviations (alphabetical list of abbreviated English terms used in the textual apparatus).

Definitions and Abbreviations for the Terms Used to Characterize Readings

The Typology Underlying the Characterizations (a “characterization” is the editor’s explanation of the reason for a textual variant), followed by an “Index by Type of Characterization” and an “Alphabetical List of the Characterizations and Their Definitions”.

Glossary of Common Terms in the Masorah Parva (Index of Signs & Abbreviations of the Masora Parva). An alphabetical list of the abbreviations in the margins of BHQ.

Table of Accents

Accents for the Twenty-One Prose Books

Accents for the Three Poetic Books (Psalms, Job, Proverbs)

Text Pages

The pages of the biblical text are similar to those of BHS. There are four blocks of material on each page.

In the center of each page is the *biblical text* itself—the “text block”, which reproduces the text of Codex Leningrad, as in BHS.

In the outside margin the *Masora parva* [*mp*] or *Masora marginalis*, is again much as in BHS.

At the bottom of each page are two sets of footnotes. The first set, consisting of unpointed text, is the *Masora magna*, reproduced from Codex L, with the addition of chapter-and-verse numbers.

The second set of footnotes records those textual variants that the editor of that particular portion of the Bible thought worthy of notice, along with a suggested reason for each variant.

The name of the biblical book is listed at the top of each page (Hebrew on the right page, English on the left).

23.2 Lexica

As the term is commonly used today, “lexicon” refers to a bi-lingual dictionary that offers a set of glosses to render words from one language into another. As noted above (Lesson 2), however, these are *glosses*, not definitions. For discussions of a word’s function within the language as a whole, it is necessary to turn to a theological wordbook or dictionary, which usually discusses each word’s frequency, patterns of occurrence, and suggests nuances of function, as well as its relationship to any synonyms and antonyms.

23.2.1 Lexicons

BDB Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, & Charles A. Briggs. 1907. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Words are grouped according to putative root (e.g., nouns, adjectives, and prepositions follow the verbal root from which they supposedly developed; so-called “denominative” verbs follow the noun which was their “source”). The list of abbreviations is helpful; the list of *sigla*—“signs” (p. xix)—is crucial. In addition to its eighteenth-century linguistics, major twentieth-century archaeological and epigraphic finds were not available to the editors. [See the appendix on BDB.]

HALOT Köhler, L., and W. Baumgartner, eds. 2001. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Study Edition. 2 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000.

The most complete modern lexicon of Biblical Hebrew. It generally follows the same classical approach as BDB, except that words are listed alphabetically rather than by root. [Holladay (below) contains the English portion of an earlier German-English edition, without the etymological and cognate information, and fewer references.] The third edition contains a plethora of bibliographic references, supplemented by an extensive bibliography at the end of the second volume.

DCH Clines, David J.A., et al., eds. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Vols. 1 - . Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1991.

Projected to fill ten volumes, DCH covers all Hebrew (Biblical Hebrew, seals, inscriptions, Ecclesiasticus, DSS) except rabbinic Hebrew. All words, including proper names, are listed alphabetically by actual spelling, which makes nouns and adjectives much easier to find. It includes no etymological or other cognate information, even when the suggested gloss depends on a cognate. It is essentially an analytical concordance, which lists, for example, every subject, object, and preposition with which every verb occurs, as well as synonyms and antonyms. This is unique to DCH; a computerized database should yield similar results.

HOLLADAY Holladay, W.L. 1971 *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

An abridgement of an earlier edition of KBL (above), Holladay is more current than BDB (i.e., cognate and extra-biblical evidence), but does not have nearly as much information about usage, occurrences, collocations, etc. as BDB, DCH, or KBL. Words are listed alphabetically, rather than grouped by root, and so are easier to find than in BDB. Popular because it is easy to use, but diligent students will outgrow its resources fairly rapidly.

23.2.2 Theological Dictionaries

TDOT	Botterweck, G.J., and H. Ringgren 1974 - <i>Theological Dictionary of the OT</i> . Vols. 1 - . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. A translation into English of a massive German work, appearing at the rate of one volume every 2-3 years. Copious information on etymology, usage, context, discussions of function, related terms, etc.
NIDOTTE	van Gemeren, Willem, ed. 1997 <i>The New International Dictionary of OT Theology & Exegesis</i> . 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Detailed studies of nearly every word (even words occurring only one or two times), essays on theological topics (e.g., “Theology of Retribution”), and an essay on the theology of every biblical book (e.g., “Theology of Samuel”). First volume includes essays on exegesis and theology (but not on the language itself).
TWOT	Harris, R.L., G.L. Archer Jr., and B.K. Waltke, eds. 1980 <i>Theological Wordbook of the OT</i> . 2 vols. Chicago: Moody. A basic tool with brief essays. A handy quick reference with more semantic information than a lexicon, but much less than either TDOT or NIDOTTE.

23.3 The challenges of Lexicons

If you don't find what you are looking for in a few minutes, then you are looking in the wrong place, or have misidentified the form. Skip it and come back later, or ask your teacher (bring the lexicon for reference). Difficulty often arises from:

1. Confusing letters that look alike (especially ה and ח, ש and שׁ);
2. Confusing letters that sound alike (especially נ and ע) when you say the word to yourself as you look for it;
3. Looking for a word that is written defectively (i.e., without a vowel letter) in your passage, but is listed in its “full” spelling in the lexicon (i.e., with the vowel letter);
4. Looking in the Aramaic section for a Hebrew word (especially words at the end of the alphabet, since the Aramaic section usually follows the listings for Hebrew);
5. Looking under the wrong “root” (for lexica arranged by “root”).
6. Having the wrong parsing.

23.4 Vocabulary

bone; essence (i.e., the inmost part)	עֶצֶם .347	cult center (trad., “high place”)	בִּמְה .339
dust, dirt, soil	עָפָר .348	redeem, purchase as a kinsman-redeemer; redeemer (Q Ptc.)	נָאַל .340 נִאֵל
fruit; descendants, offspring	פֶּרִי .349	straight, upright; honest (adj.)	יָשָׁר .341
chariot(s); chariot force	רֶכֶב .350	put on, clothe (oneself); wear	לָבַשׁ .342
who, which, what (with dageš forte in the following consonant); = אֲשֶׁר	שֶׁ- .351	tongue, language	לָשׁוֹן .343
pour [out]; shed [blood]	שָׁפַךְ .352	reject, refuse	מָאָס .344
lie, falsehood; deception	שָׁקַר .353	kingdom, realm; kingship, dominion, royal power/authority	מַמְלָכָה .345 מַלְכוּת
abomination (something horrific)	תּוֹעֵבָה .354	[permanent] river; both הַנָּהָר & הַנְּדוּל refer to Euphrates (rarely as נְהַר פְּרַת)	נָהָר .346

23.5 Exercises: The Hebrew Bible

1. Fill in the information missing from the following chart (not all biblical books are included):

Hebrew Title	Gloss the Hebrew Title	Latin Title (BHS)	English Title (BHQ)	Page No.
בראשית				1
ויקרא	And he called	Leviticus		
שמואל			Samuel	
		Reges		
ירמיה				
		Micha		
תהלים	Praises			1087
משלי				
שיר השירים		Canticum		
איכה				
דברי הימים				

2. Gloss these clauses, parsing the verbal forms, and using the lexicon where necessary.

Ps 19.10

a. יִרְאֵת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד
מִשְׁפָּטֵי־יְהוָה אֱמֶת צִדְקוֹ יַחְדּוֹ:

Ho 8.1; the context suggests that עָבַר (*cross over / through*) signifies a trespass or transgression; פָּשַׁע *revolt, rebel, transgress*

b. עָבְרוּ בְרִיתִי וְעַל־תּוֹרָתִי פָשְׁעוּ:

Jr 51.62; לְבַלְתִּי הָיִית׃ *so that there would not be*;
אֵל used here as שְׁמֹמָה *desolation, devastation*

c. יְהוָה אַתָּה דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
לְהַכְרִיתוֹ לְבַלְתִּי הָיִית־בוֹ יוֹשֵׁב
לְמֵאדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה כִּי־שְׁמָמוֹת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה:

Jos 24.9; וַיָּקָם *he rose* (<קום); קָלַל *curse; belittle*;
Balak, Zippor, Moab, Balaam, Beor

d. וַיָּקָם בָּלָק בֶּן־צִפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וַיִּלָּחֶם בִּישְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּקְרָא לְבַלְעָם בֶּן־בְּעוֹר לְקַלֵּל אֹתָם:

1 Kgs 2.42; Shimei

e. וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּקְרָא לְשִׁמְעִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
הֲלוֹא הִשְׁבַּעְתִּיךָ בַּיהוָה

Gn 42.4; Benjamin, Joseph, Jacob; אָסוֹן *trouble, disaster*

f. וְאֶת־בְּנֵימִין אָחִי יוֹסֵף לֹא־שָׁלַח יַעֲקֹב אֶת־אָחָיו
כִּי אָמַר פֶּן־יִקְרָאֵנוּ אָסוֹן:

Lv 1.5; שָׁחַט *slaughter, kill*; זָרַק *sprinkle*; Aaron;
since this is a set of instructions, the main verb
form ("backbone") is *w^{qatal}* (*waw+perfect*)

g. וְשָׁחַט אֶת־בֶּן הַבָּקָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם
וְזָרְקוּ אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

Jr 36.4; מְגִלָּה *scroll* ("something rolled up");
Jeremiah, Baruch, Neriaiah

h. וַיִּקְרָא יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶת־בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נֶרְיָה
וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּרוּךְ מִפִּי יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶת כָּל־דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו עַל־מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר:

Nu 27.1 ... 2; Zelophehad, Moses

i. וַתִּקְרְבֵנָה בְּנוֹת צֶלְפָּחָד ... וַתַּעֲמִדְנָה לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה

1 Kgs 15.7; Abijam; Jeroboam; Judah

j. וַיֹּתֵר דְּבָרֵי אֲבִיָּם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הִלּוּא־הֵם
כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה
וּמִלְחָמָה הָיְתָה בֵּין אֲבִיָּם וּבֵין יִרְבֵּעָם:

23.6 Enrichment: Using the Lexicon

Lexicons list *glosses*, not definitions, meanings, or descriptions. They therefore rarely give more or less information than a mere word-list *when it comes to exegesis*; their great benefit is the topical or functional arrangement of the occurrences of the word(s), as well as identifying collocations in which they occur, such as a particular combination of a verbal root with certain subjects or prepositions.

The glosses suggested for the various stems often assume that, for example, the *hifil* is the causative of the *qal*, or that the function of *any* stem in which a verb occurs is somehow related to its function in *qal*. This is often (but not always) true, and should *never* be assumed. Since lexica offer glosses instead of definitions, other tools, such as theological dictionaries and wordbooks, are often more helpful than a lexicon when determining the range of a word's function, and where within that range its use in a given passage lies.

The lexica will suggest this if the listing is exhaustive, by assigning each lemma to either a gloss or functional category. You will then need to examine the other passages listed under that gloss or function to be sure that they are related to passage that you are studying.

As an example, consider the verbal root בִּרַךְ, glossed as *kneel* (Q) or *bless* (D). Many contemporary translations of the Bible render the *piel* as “bless” when its object is human, but “praise” when the object is divine. Ps 103.1, for example, has traditionally been rendered as “*Bless* the LORD, O my soul” (KJV, NAS, ESV), but many contemporary translations read “*Praise* the LORD, O my soul”, apparently to avoid implying that anyone can somehow do something that will benefit YHWH.

HALOT suggests that the function of בִּרַךְ is either to “endue with special power” (with God as subject), or “declare God to be the source of special power = bless” (with a human subject and a divine object) (HALOT, I:160). Discovering the word's function requires searching the biblical text, looking for patterns of usage, and, perhaps asking whether or not “bless” (in this case) is still the best basic gloss for this verbal root, especially given our cultural understanding of the word “bless”.

A question that often concerns students is how to determine the precise “meaning” of a given word—why the author chose this word for this point in the text. This question is not always helpful.

The first danger in asking this question is that it assigns greater precision to the biblical authors than we are willing to accept ourselves. When someone asks us what we meant by a particular word, we are usually quite willing to list two or three synonyms (based on our internal “thesaurus”), rather than replying with the kind of definition found in a dictionary. Only when the word is a so-called technical term, such as might be used within a particular field of study (e.g., “synecdoche” (poetry), “synthetic compound” (organic chemistry)), might we resort to a dictionary-like explanation. Their question might also help us realize that we had chosen the “wrong” word for our hearer(s) (we assumed that they would understand it), or for the occasion (perhaps we used a highly formal word in an informal setting), or for some other reason.

Since they were human beings, using a human language to communicate with other people, we can assume that the biblical authors also used words “as they thought”, that is, without necessarily worrying about whether or not it was the “precise” term. Furthermore, there are many constraints upon an author's choice of terms, some of which we can [sometimes] determine, most of which we cannot. In attempting to discern the significance of a particular choice, therefore, we need to be aware of these constraints—or at least to realize *that* the author was constrained—before trying to assess or assign any special meaning or function to a particular word. What are some of those constraints?

1. The immediate *context* is the most obvious constraint. A word must fit its linguistic environment, contribute to the function of the overall text, and generally “make sense” to its hearers or readers. It is in this sense that we may, for example, find ourselves “stuck” for “just the right word” when writing a letter, paper, or sermon.

2. A less obvious constraint is that the author must *know* the word (syntagm, etc.) in order to use it, and would have known its *connotative* “load”—socially emotive associations that are lost to us. This load may privilege or neutralize a particular linguistic expression (lexical choice, morphosyntactic choice, etc.) for the author *and* for that context, in light of his purpose(s) for writing, his own background and his assumptions about his hearers. Further, since connotation is both personal and contextual, as well as societal, we must be extremely cautious about extrapolating the author’s motivation by merely studying its occurrences in Biblical Hebrew. This is far more important than the “root” or “basic” meaning of a word, which (cf. Lesson 2) is illusory.

None of this is intended to make us despair, but merely to caution us against over-reading the biblical text, seeking out “hidden treasures” of meaning. The languages in which the Bible was written were ordinary, working languages, spoken, written, and read by ordinary people. They are not secret or hidden “codes” which we need to decipher, but stories, poems, and sermons (and genealogies, and ...) written for us to read and enjoy, and to profit from reading them.

Reading the text in Hebrew (or Greek) forces us to slow down, to give more attention to the text itself, rather than to merely skim over its surface or “reading” it through the lenses of sermons heard or read, lessons learned, or other interpretations. We cannot rid ourselves of every assumption or prejudgement, but we can force ourselves to read more carefully, paying attention to *how* the biblical authors wrote, as well as to *what* (and *why*) they wrote it.

Since reading in Hebrew forces us to slow down, we are prone to pay far more attention to specific linguistic elements of the biblical text than we would ever pay to a book in our own language, such as an author’s choice of verbal tense. This is a good thing, but it also encourages us to lose sight of the forest for the trees, which is not helpful.

We need to be sure, therefore, to read the entire story, not merely the individual words that make up that story; the entire poem, not merely the words and lines of that poem; the entire sermon (prophecy), not merely its forms and lexical choices, just as we read any other text in a language that is more familiar to us.

Lesson 24

OTHER KINDS OF VERBAL ROOTS

There are two main types of verbal roots in Biblical Hebrew: those which “have three unchangeable root consonants” (Joüon-Muraoka 1991, §40c), and which are called “strong”, and those which lack one or more of their radicals in some forms, and may be called “weak” or “variable”.¹⁶⁰ Up to this point we have studied only the forms of verbs with strong roots, but we now turn to the other types.

Although it is tempting to think in terms of “regular” and “irregular” verbs, Hebrew verbs are more or less regular. Even the types of roots to which we now turn are fairly consistent. There are five main types of variable verbs in Biblical Hebrew, named according to the position of the weak letter, using either Roman numerals or the letters of the traditional paradigm verb **פַּעַל** (“do, make”).

24.1 The Types & Effect of Root Weakness

Name	Lexical Form	The Nature of the Variation (effect of the weakness)
Initial Weak	I-נ פ"ן נפל <i>fall</i>	Initial נ assimilates to (and doubles) the second radical of the verbal root whenever the first radical is followed by silent <i>šewa</i> .
	I-ו/ו פ"ו ישב <i>sit, settle</i>	Initial ו either disappears or becomes a vowel letter whenever the first radical is followed by silent <i>šewa</i> (and in a few other forms).
Middle Weak (Hollow)	II-ו/ו ע"ו שיר <i>sing</i>	Lacking a second radical (thus “hollow”), these roots differ from the basic verb in all forms except the D-stems (where they are rare). Unlike other verbs, their lexical form is Q NC.
Final Weak	ע"ע גמין סבב <i>surround</i>	The second and third radicals are the same (“geminate” means “twinned”); they are weak in most forms except the D-stems.
	III-ו/ו ל"ו בנה <i>build</i>	The final ו of the lexical form is a vowel letter, replacing an original ו, which is still present before verbal (PGN) endings; the most consistent weak verbs.

The nature and location of the different weaknesses means that not all forms of a weak verb are, in fact, weak (i.e., some forms look just like the forms of **בָּנָה**). This chart shows how each type relates to the strong verb.

Weakness	<i>Qal</i>	<i>Nifal</i>	D-stems	H-stems
I-נ I-ו/ו	Weak in imperfect, preterite imperative, infinitive construct	Weak in perfect & participle	Strong in all forms	Weak in all forms
II-ו/ו Geminate	Weak in nearly all forms		Replaced by <i>polel</i> , <i>polal</i> , <i>hitpolel</i>	
III-ו/ו	Weak in preterite, jussive, infinitive construct, & all forms with PGN endings			

160. English distinguishes strong from weak verbs by the form of their past tense. Verbs which add “-ed” to form the past are called “strong”, since the form of the verbal root does not change (“look”, “looked”), whereas verbs that indicate the past by changing a vowel (“run”, “ran”), or all or part of their form (“go”, “went”; “teach”, “taught”; “be”, “are”) are “weak”.

Any verbal form with only two root consonants has a weak root, which you can discover by elimination or by knowing vocabulary. For example, the form **יִבֶּךְ** must be from one of the following roots: **נִבַּךְ**, **יִבַּךְ**, **בִּכָּה**, **בִּוֶּךְ**, **בִּיַּךְ**, **בִּכָּךְ**. Checking the lexicon shows that only two of these roots occur in Biblical Hebrew: **בִּכָּה**, “weep, cry” (c. 100x) and **בִּוֶּךְ**, “be confused” (3x). Context should let you choose the correct root.

24.1.1 Consistency among Verbal Forms

Each verbal stem is fairly consistent, using, for example, the same prefix vowel for each type of weakness. In addition, the III-**ה** verbs (for example) are weak in many forms, but their weakness is consistent across all stems and conjugations, and—this is especially important—their weakness does not affect any of the diagnostics that we learned for the basic verb, which means that they are fairly easy to recognize.

It is tempting to see the strong and weak forms as vastly different, but they are in fact quite closely tied to the forms of the strong verb (more strongly than, e.g., “be”, “was”, “are”, and “am”, or even **βλέπω** and **εἶδον**).

1. The subject [PGN] affixes are the same in all verbal forms (e.g., **נִי**- is always 1cp perfect, whether the stem is strong or weak).
2. The weaknesses of these verbal roots are only morphological—they only affect the *shape* of the verbal form. They do not affect the function or syntax of the stems or conjugations (i.e., the preterite delineates the narrative backbone, and the *hifil* is generally transitive [occurs with an object]).

24.2 III-**ה** Verbs

The final **ה**- of the lexical form of these verbal roots is a vowel letter, not a consonant. These verbs originally ended in **י**, which thus “replaces” the final **ה**- before consonantal PGN endings and in Q passive participle. This weakness does not affect anything in front of the second radical of the verbal root, which means that their stem diagnostics are identical to those of the basic verb. These roots are also called **ל"ה** and “final **ה**”.

N.B.: Verbal roots ending in **ה**- (**ה** with *mappiq*) are *not weak*, but III-guttural (above); *mappiq* shows that the final **ה** is a consonant, not a vowel letter (e.g., **גִּבָּה**, “be high”; **נִנָּה**, “shine/be bright”).

24.2.1 Form

1. If there is *no PGN ending*
 - a) All forms except jussive, preterite, and infinitive construct end in **ה**. Each *conjugation* has a specific vowel before the final **ה**, regardless of the stem (on J, Pr, and NC, see below).

Ending	Conjugation	Example	Parsing	Where this Ending Occurs	
הָ -	perfect	בָּנָה	3ms Q P	3ms P only	
הֶ -	imperfect	יִבְנֶה	3ms Q F	1cs F, 2ms F, 3m/fs F, 1cp F only	all stems
	participle	מִבְנֶה	ms H Ptc	ms Ptc only	
הֻ -	imperative	בִּנֵּה	ms Q V	2ms V only	
	infinitive absolute	הִבְנֵה	H NA	H & Hp NA	H & Hp only
הֵ -	infinitive absolute	הִתְבְּנֵה	Dt NA	NA only	all stems except H & Hp
הִתְ -	infinitive construct	בְּנוֹת	Q NC	NC f.p. Ptc	all stems

- b) In the jussive and preterite of all stems, the final ה drops off forms without a PGN ending, and a “helping” vowel—usually *segol*—is added between the first and second radicals of the root.

	Perfect	Imperfect	Jussive	Preterite	
Q 3ms	בָּנָה	יִבְנֶה	יִבֵּן	וַיִּבֶן	<i>and he built</i>
1cp	גָּלִינוּ	נִגְלֶה	נִגַּל	וַנִּגַּל	<i>and we revealed</i>
N 3ms	נִרְאָה	יִרְאֶה	[יִרְאֵ]	וַיִּרְאֵ	<i>and he appeared</i>
D 3ms	צָוָה	יִצְוֶה	יִצֹּו	וַיִּצֹּו	<i>and he commanded</i>
Dp 3ms	צָוָה	יִצְוֶה	יִצֹּו	וַיִּצֹּו	<i>and he was commanded</i>
Dt 3ms	[הִתְכַּסֶּה]	יִתְכַּסֶּה	[יִתְכַּסֵּ]	וַיִּתְכַּסֵּ	<i>and he hid [himself]</i>
H 3ms	הִשָּׁקָה	יִשָּׁקֶה	יִשְׁקֹו	וַיִּשְׁקֹו	<i>and he poured out</i>
Hp 3ms	הִשָּׁקָה	[יִשָּׁקֶה]	[יִשְׁקֹו]	[וַיִּשְׁקֹו]	<i>and it was poured out</i>

- c) In the *qal* passive (Qp) participle the final radical is י instead of ה:

בָּנוּי	<i>built</i>	ms Qp Ptc
גָּלוּי	<i>revealed</i>	

2. If there is a *PGN ending*:

- a) *Vocalic* PGN endings are added directly to the second radical of the root. This occurs with י- and יִ-, but not with the 3fs perfect ending (הָ-, #3 below):

יִבְנוּ	<i>They will build</i>	3mp Q F
תִּבְנִי	<i>You (fs) will build</i>	2fs Q F
בִּנִי	<i>Build!</i>	2fs Q V
צִוִּי	<i>Command!</i>	mp D V

- b) With *consonantal* endings י replaces the ה of the lexical form,¹⁶¹ and comes between the verbal root and the ending. It is preceded by *hireq* or *sere* (in P), or *segol* (F, V).

בִּנִיתִי	<i>I built</i>	1cs Q P
הִשְׁקִיתִי	<i>You (ms) watered</i>	2ms H P
תִּבְנִינָה	<i>You / they (fp) will build</i>	2/3fp Q F

3. In 3fs P (all stems), הָ- is added to the second radical of the root:

בָּנְתָה	<i>She built</i>	3fs Q P
הִבְנִיתָה	<i>She was caused to build</i>	3fs Hp P
הִפְנִיתָה	<i>She caused to turn</i>	3fs H P

4. The infinitive construct in all stems is formed by replacing the final ה with ית :

בְּנוֹת	<i>to build</i>	Q NC
הִבְנוֹת	<i>to be built</i>	N NC
הִבְנוֹת	<i>to cause to build</i>	H NC

161. As mentioned above, י- was the original final letter of the III-ה verbs.

5. The cohortative and imperfect look alike (i.e., cohortative ה is not used), so that it can only be detected from the context.

נִבְנֶה	Let us build!	1cp Q C or
	We shall build	1cp Q F

6. III-ה roots which are also I-ע (עשה, ענה, עלה) have *hatef-patah* under the ע and *patah* as prefix vowel in both Q and H. When this is combined with the loss of the final ה in the preterite (#1b, above), some forms of *qal* and *hifil* look exactly alike, and can be distinguished only from the context. Many of these verbs are intransitive in *qal* (e.g., עלה), and so will *not* have a direct object (*He went up*), but will have one in H (*He took [X] up*).

עָשִׂיתֶם	You (mp) made	2mp Q P
תָּעַלְוּ	You (mp) go up/ascend or	2mp Q F or
	You (mp) take [cause to go] up	2mp H F
	[requires an object]	
וַיַּעַל	He went up (Q) or	3ms Q Pr or
	He [caused to go] took up (H)	3ms H Pr
	[requires an object]	
עָנָה	Answer [ms]!	2ms Q V

24.3 The Verb הִיָּה (Review)

The verb הִיָּה (introduced in §15.2) is the most common verb in the Bible (more than 3500x). Its forms are rather unusual due to its final ה- and medial י-. Since it is a III-ה root, it follows the patterns described above, but whenever the *yod* ends a verbal form (in, e.g., 1cs, 2ms, 3ms, and 3fs preterite), it becomes a vowel letter and the form ends in long *hireq* (ִיָּהֻ).

24.3.1 Common Forms of הִיָּה (*all qal*)¹⁶²

P 1cs	הָיִיתִי	<i>I was</i>	Pr 3ms	וַיְהִי	<i>Now he / it was</i>
3cp	הָיוּ	<i>They were</i>	3mp	וַיְהִיוּ	<i>Then there was a / some ...</i>
F 3ms	יְהִיָּה	<i>He shall be</i>	J 3ms	יְהִי	<i>They were</i>
3mp	יְהִיוּ	<i>They shall be</i>	NC	הַיֹּהוּת	<i>Let / May he / it be / happen</i>
				הַיֹּהוּת	<i>to be/[by] being</i>

24.3.2 Function of הִיָּה (cf. §15.2.2)

Although הִיָּה is often glossed “be” or “become”, its most common function in biblical narrative is to introduce a change of setting or circumstance—a shift of scene or focus—in a biblical narrative. The form most commonly used for this function is 3ms *qal* preterite (וַיְהִי), which functions as a discourse-level particle except when followed by a nominal subject.² In Ruth 1.1, for example, the first וַיְהִי is *introductory* and thus not represented in the translation, but the second is followed by a subject (רָעָב), and therefore is predicate (and glossed in English). The circumstantial clause is formed with NC, as is frequent in Biblical Hebrew:

וַיְהִי	[signals past reference]
בִּימֵי שְׁפָט שֹׁפְטִים	<i>In the days when the judges were judging,</i>
וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ	there was a famine in the land [וַיְהִי has a subject],
וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ	and [so] a man went ... (Ru 1.1)

162. הִיָּה also occurs in *nifal*. For a complete paradigm of the III-ה verb, see Appendix D.

The circumstantial element can also be a nominal prepositional phrase, usually with a word of time or place:

וְהָיָה	[signals future reference]
בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים	<i>at the end of the days</i>
וְהָיָה הָרַר בֵּית־יְהוָה נִבְנוֹן	the mountain of YHWH's house [temple] will be established (Mi 4.1)

24.4 Frequency

This lists all III-ה verbal roots that occur *fifty times or more* in Biblical Hebrew, in order of descending frequency.

היה	c. 3500x	חנה	<i>camp, encamp</i>	143x
עשה	<i>do, make, act</i> 2573x	פנה	<i>turn (aside)</i>	134x
ראה	<i>see</i> 1294x	בכה	<i>weep</i>	114x
עלה	<i>go up, ascend</i> 879x	ידה	<i>throw (D); thank, praise (H)</i>	115x
נכה	<i>hit, wound, defeat</i> 504x	זנה	<i>fornicate</i>	95x
צוה	<i>command (D)</i> 494x	חרה	<i>be(come) angry, hot</i>	94x
בנה	<i>build</i> 373x	ענה (II)	<i>be humbled, humiliated (Q)</i>	79x
ענה (I)	<i>answer</i> 314x	שקה	<i>water, give to drink (H)</i>	79x
חיה	<i>live</i> 281x	חלה	<i>be(come) weak, sick</i>	77x
רבה	<i>increase, multiply</i> 226x	קנה	<i>acquire, get, buy</i>	78x
כלה	<i>cease, finish, end</i> 204x	חזה	<i>see</i>	72x
נטה	<i>stretch out, turn</i> 215x	פדה	<i>buy, ransom</i>	56x
שתה	<i>drink</i> 217x	אבה	<i>agree, accept</i>	54x
גלה	<i>reveal, uncover</i> 187x	ירה (III)	<i>teach, instruct (H)</i>	54x
רעה (I)	<i>feed, graze, tend</i> 171x	רצה	<i>be pleased with, like</i>	50x
כסה	<i>cover, conceal (D)</i> 157x	תעה	<i>wander (lost)</i>	50x

24.5 Concepts

circumstantial strong verb weak verb

24.6 Vocabulary

<i>answer, reply; respond</i>	(I) עָנָה	.363	<i>build</i>	בָּנָה	.355
<i>be humbled, afflicted; humble, afflict (D)</i>	(II) עָנָה	.364	<i>uncover, reveal</i>	גָּלָה (√I)	.356
			<i>go into captivity/exile</i>	גָּלָה (√II)	
<i>do, make; act</i>	עָשָׂה	.365	<i>live, be/stay alive</i>	חָיָה	.357
<i>command, order (D)</i>	צָוָה	.366	<i>cease, finish, end, complete (often with inf. const.)</i>	כָּלָה	.358
<i>see</i>	רָאָה	.367	<i>cover, conceal (D)</i>	כָּסָה	.359
<i>increase, multiply</i>	רָבָה	.368	<i>stretch out; turn</i>	נָטָה	.360
<i>feed, graze, tend; herd</i>	רָעָה	.369	<i>hit, wound, defeat (H)</i>	נָכָה	.361
<i>drink</i>	שָׁתָה	.370	<i>go up, ascend</i>	עָלָה	.362

24.7 Exercises

After you have studied the III-ה verb, *gloss* these sentences, *parsing* all verbal forms.

1. וַיִּגְדֹּל כְּבוֹד יְהוָה
וְרָאוּ כָל-בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר:
Is 40.5; יחד together
2. דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ
וְאַקְרָא לָהֶם וְלֹא עָנוּ:
Jr 35.17; these are parallel poetic lines, each consisting of two clauses joined by וְ-
3. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו מִה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ
כִּי-יָדְעוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים
כִּי-מִלְפָּנֵי יְהוָה הוּא בָרַח
Jonah 1.10; the conjunction כִּי has two different functions
4. שָׁמַע-יְהוָה וַחֲנִנִי
יְהוָה הִיחֵד-עֹזֶר לִי:
Ps 30.11 [EV 30.10]; נִי = 1cs suffix; חֲנִן be gracious, show favour; there are three imperatives in this v.; both occurrences of יְהוָה are vocative
5. רְאוּ מִה-אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים
2 Ch 19.6
6. וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאַשְׁתּוֹ
וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לּוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הִנְגִּבָּה:
Gn 13.1; Egypt; Abram, Lot; Negev
7. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹזֶר וַיהִי-אֹזֶר:
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאֹזֶר כִּי-טוֹב
Gn 1.3–4a; the *athnah* (the accent under the first occurrence of אֹזֶר means “pause here”; see §27.3)
8. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַיּוֹם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם
אֶל-מָקוֹם אֶחָד וְתִקְאַה הַיִּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי-כֵן:
Gn 1.9; קוה be gathered (N)
9. לֹא-טוֹב הָיִית הָאָדָם לְבָדּוֹ
Gn 2.18; לְבָדּוֹ only, alone, here with 3ms suffix
10. וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד
Gn 2.24
11. וַיִּבֶן נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה
Gn 8.20; Noah
12. וַתְּהִי-לִי לְאִשָּׁה
Gn 20.12
13. וַיֹּאמֶר הָרָאנִי נָא אֶת-כְּבֹדְךָ:
Ex 33.18 [נִי = 1cs suffix]
14. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
Ex 32.4; יִשְׂרָאֵל is vocative; Egypt
15. לָחֶם לֹא אֲכָלְתִּי וַיָּמִים לֹא שָׁתִיתִי:
Dt 9.9
16. הִתְחַזְּקוּ וְהָיוּ לְאֲנָשִׁים פְּלִשְׁתִּים פֶּן תַּעֲבְדוּ
לְעַבְדֵי
פֶּאֶשֶׁר עָבְדוּ לָכֶם וְהָיִיתֶם לְאֲנָשִׁים וְנִלְחַמְתֶּם:
1 Sa 4.9; פְּלִשְׁתִּים is vocative; Philistines, Hebrews
17. וְלֹא אָבִיתִי לְשַׁלַּח יָדִי בְּמִשְׁיַח יְהוָה:
1 Sa 26.23; אָבָה be willing
18. וַיִּבֶן שָׂאוּל מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה
1 Sa 14.35; Saul
19. וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֶה אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָךְ מִמִּצְרַיִם
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ נִאֲצוֹת גְּדֻלוֹת:
Ne 9.18; נִאֲצָה contempt, blasphemy; Egypt
20. עֲרוֹת אֲשֶׁת-אֲבִיךָ לֹא תַגְלֶה עֲרוֹת אֲבִיךָ הוּא:
Lv 18.8; עֲרוֹה nakedness [The “nakedness” commandments occur in Lv 18.6-19.]

24.8 *Enrichment: Narrative Aperture*

Circumstantial clauses or phrases, as discussed above, often signal narrative onset (or “aperture”), and thus can signal the author’s organization of the story (cf. the examples under in §24.3.2). The significance of this is that we need to beware the tendency to rearrange a text in order to suit our own purposes (i.e., the temptation to use the text merely to make our point). To take the first point of a sermon or exposition from the middle of the story (or poem), the second point from the beginning, and our final point from near the end is merely a way of announcing to others that we would have written the passage differently. It is, in other words, to subordinate our own interests to the interests and concerns of its author.

Our message—which purports to re-present the text to our readers or hearers—must serve the text; the text does not exist to serve our sermon.

Noting narrative aperture is one means of being sure that we are paying attention to the authors’ arrangement of the material, and that we are attempting to follow their lead rather than to replace it with our own. Since every aperture also means that the previous section has closed, identifying apertures enables us to note the “breaks” in the story that correspond to the paragraphs, etc. of stories in English. Since the chapter breaks in our modern Bibles were not original, we need to be careful not to assume their priority in the organization of the story, even though they may indicate a “shift” of perspective within a larger, more general topic (cf. §26.8).

Semantic markers of aperture are mainly words that signal a change of some type—especially shifts in time (chronology), place (location), and participants (characters). By the same token, continuity of characters across chapter breaks suggests that the break is ill-placed. In Gn 18 (see §26.7) and 44, for example, the main character in the first unit of the chapter is not identified by name, implying in each case that he is the same person identified as the subject of the preceding clause(s). This in turn implies that the stories now separated by the chapter break are a single story that should be read and studied as a whole.

Lesson 25

“PRE-READING” BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

This lesson outlines six steps that will help you find your way through a biblical story by “pre-reading” it in order to prepare to read [translate]. The first four steps—marking preterites, *wayhi*, Masoretic accents, and clause-initial particles—are purely mechanical, and can be done after only a few weeks’ study; the last two—quotation formulae and disjunctive clauses (especially)—strengthen our interpretation. This process will prepare you to read, study, and understand biblical stories but without, of course, guaranteeing a valid reading or interpretation. Nor can these the process of itself (i.e., merely by applying it) yield an expository outline. Used carefully, however, it should both help you avoid misinterpreting the story and suggest how the passage might be well interpreted and explained.

25.1 Preterites

Preterites (also called “imperfect + *waw*-consecutive” or *wayyiqtol*) form the “backbone” of biblical narratives, and tie them together, much as sticking to the past tense in English tells the reader or hearer “what happened then” or “next”. **Locate and mark the preterites** in the narrative by circling, highlighting, underlining, etc. This does at least three things:

1. *Syntax*. Since a preterite always “opens” (comes first in) its clause, marking the preterites indicates where many, or even all, of the main narrative clauses begin. Each preterite clause should be read as a syntactical unit—do not move words “across” a preterite (e.g., we should not read אַבְרָם *Abram*, the last word in Gn 12.7a, as part of the following preterite clause).¹⁶³
Since the subject is often the second word in the preterite clause, marking the preterites also suggests where the subject of each clause can be found (this is far more of a tendency than a “rule”).
2. *Flow & Pace*. Preterites outline the story by their spacing and content (lexical function). If the preterites occur in clusters, with relatively larger stretches of material between clusters, there will probably be a great deal of direct quotation, or a large amount of descriptive material (background), introducing or supporting the chain of events (e.g., 1 Sam 3.1-3). They may also be spaced relatively evenly throughout the narrative.
3. *Content*. The content (semantic load) of the preterites also suggests the nature of the story. For example, in Gn 12.1-9, the preterite that opens the discourse (וַיֵּאמֶר) introduces three verses of direct quotation (12.1-3), which is followed by a stretch of six preterites (4-6), five of which are verbs of motion or travel. The next two preterites (7a) introduce another, very brief, divine speech (7b), followed by six more preterites, two of which describe the act of building (7c, 8b), and two of which are again verbs of motion (8a, 9a). Simply noting this suggests that the narrative contained in these verses centers on a person or persons moving from one place to another. Reading the story, therefore, you expect to find information about this type of activity (see Table I, below).

163. This does not address whether a particular translation might need or choose to place “Abram” in the following clause.

Preterites in Gn 12.1-9

Gloss	Next Form	Preterite	V.
<i>*and YHWH said</i>	יְהוָה	וַיֹּאמֶר	1
<i>and Abram went</i>	אַבְרָם	וַיֵּלֶךְ	4a
<i>and he went with him</i>	אִתּוֹ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	4b
<i>and Abram took</i>	אַבְרָם	וַיִּקַּח	5a
<i>and they left to go</i>	לָלֶכֶת	וַיֵּצְאוּ	5b
<i>and they entered the land</i>	אֶרֶצָה	וַיָּבֹאוּ	5c
<i>and Abram crossed / passed</i>	אַבְרָם	וַיַּעֲבֹר	6
<i>and YHWH appeared</i>	יְהוָה	וַיֵּרָא	7a
<i>and he said to your seed</i>	לְיִרְעָךָ	וַיֹּאמֶר	7b
<i>and he built there</i>	שָׁם	וַיִּבֶן	7c
<i>and he moved on from there</i>	מִשָּׁם	וַיַּעֲתֵק	8a
<i>and he pitched his tent</i>	אָהֳלָה	וַיֵּט	8b
<i>and he built there</i>	שָׁם	וַיִּבֶן	8c
<i>and he called on the name</i>	בְּשֵׁם	וַיִּקְרָא	8d
<i>and Abram set out</i>	אַבְרָם	וַיֵּסַע	9

Words in *italics* represent the verbal predicate;
regular type glosses the word after the preterite.

If, on the other hand, most or all of the preterites are verbs of speaking (e.g., Gn 17), you know that the “story” largely records a conversation, which in Scripture will tend to be one person telling another what to do (instruction, exhortation) or what he or she [the speaker] will do (prophecy, promise). In fact, in Gn 12.1-3, this is what we find. God tells Abram what to do (1), and then makes certain promises to him (2-3). This leads directly to a second aspect of narrative.

Identifying the preterites in a narrative reveals the beginning of the main narrative clausees, divides the narrative into smaller, more manageable pieces, outlines the flow of the story, suggests its pacing, and reveals some of its content.

25.2 *wayhî*-Clauses

A special preterite is וַיְהִי (3ms Q Pr of הָיָה), which has two primary syntagmatic functions, each of which is related to its function within the larger discourse.

1. *Circumstantial*. When *wayhî* is followed by a **temporal** expression—either a nominal phrase or a verbal clause (e.g., וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא preposition + infinitive construct)—its clause is *circumstantial*. These usually indicate a change in the temporal or locative setting (cf. Gropp 1995, 202).
2. *Predicate*. When a **subject** follows *wayhî*, the clause introduces a person or object, or describes a change in the larger setting or circumstances of the story.

Taking the next passage in Genesis as an example, the form *wayhî* occurs four times in Gn 12.10-16 (Table II). The first (10) and fourth (16b) have subjects and are therefore predicate, introducing changes in the narrative situation; the second (11) and third (14) are circumstantial, introducing [events at] stages in Abram’s journey to Egypt.

WAYHÎ in Gn 12.10-16

Narrative Shift	Gloss	wayhî Clause	Gn
A change in situation, implying that the famine began after Abram was in the land (background information for what follows)	<i>There was a famine</i> in the land	וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ	12.10
The second “stage” of Abram’s journey to Egypt (cf. v. 10b)	<i>When he was about to enter Egypt, ...</i>	וַיְהִי הַקָּרִיב לְבֹא מִצְרַיִם	12.11
The conclusion of Abram’s journey to Egypt	<i>When Abram entered Egypt, ...</i>	וַיְהִי כְּבֹא אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם	12.14
A change in Abram’s circumstance because of Sarai	<i>He had</i> flocks and herds, ...	וַיְהִי לוֹ צֹאן וּבָקָר	12.16

The beginning of 12.10 implies that when Abram had arrived and received the promise of God there was no famine; the clause in 12.16 implies that he now had [much?] more than before Pharaoh took Sarai.

When *wayhî* is *predicate* (as defined above), it is *morphologically* bound to (or cohesive with) the main storyline since it is a preterite, which suggests that *wayhî* clauses raise the description of a state or condition to the status of the narrative backbone, even though *they do not narrate a sequential or consequential event* (e.g., Gn 12.10).¹⁶⁴

This function is analogous to that of a preterite of a non-dynamic stative verb. For example, “Abram *was* very wealthy”, describes a general state or condition, while “Abram *became* [or *had become*] very wealthy”, describes either the beginning of his wealth (“became”) or his prior arrival at a state of wealth (“had become”). There is thus the possibility that predicate *wayhî* clauses may be inceptive, as in the traditional translation of the prophetic formula: וַיְהִי דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יוֹנָה בֶּן־אֲמֹתַי: “YHWH’s word *came* to Jonah ...” [Jon 1.1]; Gn 12.10 would then signal “A famine *came upon* the land”.

In fact, since both types of *wayhî* clauses can signal a change in setting or circumstance (e.g., Gn 12.10), they reveal some of the discontinuities in the story that mark what can be called narrative “seams” or “boundaries”, or the onset of the story’s narrative “chunks”.

Although we need to check our impressions of the function of *wayhî* against the relationship between the content of the *wayhî* clause and the rest of the discourse (especially the preceding clauses), this helps us look beyond the individual form to its literary cotext, and thus to avoid merely “literal” renderings such as “and it happened/came to pass”.

25.3 Rabbinic Accents

The Masoretic accents were inserted into the text c. 500-900 CE to help readers pronounce and understand what they read;¹⁶⁵ each is associated with a brief melody that tells the cantor how to chant the text during services. Most of them indicate the accented (“tone”) syllable, but they also signal each word’s relationship to the following word.¹⁶⁶ There are two types of accents, disjunctive¹⁶⁷ and conjunctive.¹⁶⁸

164. The exception to this “rule of non-narration” is when וַיְהִי (and other forms of *hayah*) are followed by a -ל in order to show a change in the subject’s status; the combination is generally rendered by a form of the verb “become”.

165. There are two accentual systems, one used in Psalms, Job, and Proverbs, the other in the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

166. Accents thus testify to a now-codified rabbinic reading of the verse; like the paragraphing and punctuation of a modern English version, they are part of the history of biblical interpretation, not part of the text *per se*.

167. The rabbis called these *melakhîm* (“kings”); Christian grammarians called them *domini* (“lords”).

168. The rabbis called these *meshartîm* (“servants”); Christian grammarians called them *servi* (“servants”).

A **disjunctive** accent means “Pause after this word”, that is, *separate* this word from the next one. The pause may be large or small, depending on the relative strength of the accent. The accent’s function applies only to the individual word that it marks. These six disjunctive accents are numbered according to the *Tabula Accentum* (included in *BHS*) according to their approximate “weight” or “strength” (there is little difference between #5 and #6).¹⁶⁹

Major Disjunctive Accents		
1. <i>sillûq</i>	מִלֵּךְ:	marks the last word in the verse; it is followed by the two “diamonds” called <i>sof pasuq</i> (“end of verse/pasuq”)
2. <i>’atnach</i>	מִלְךְ	divides the verse into two major sections (often called “halves”, but logical halves, not in number of words); there is only one <i>’atnach</i> per verse ¹⁷⁰
3. <i>s’gôltā</i>	מִלְךְ	the primary divider of the first “half” of the verse (as indicated by <i>’atnach</i>); written after its word (i.e., “postpositive”), and so does not mark the accented syllable
5. <i>zāqēf parva</i>	מִלְךְ	divides either “half” or both “halves” of the verse ¹⁷¹
6. <i>zāqēf magna</i>	מִלְךְ	essentially a variant of #5
7. <i>r^ebîa’</i>	מִלְךְ	resembles holem, but higher, larger, and diamond-shaped
8. <i>tifka</i>	מִלְךְ	regularly precedes words with <i>’atnach</i> (#2) and <i>silluq</i> (#1), i.e., before the major divisions of the verse ¹⁷²

The Masoretes used these accents to create divisions that were semantic, syntactical, or (often) both, much like English (European) punctuation. Furthermore, these disjunctive accents often precede preterites (and other clauses), reinforcing the first step (above). Just as preterites mark the ebb and flow of the story’s events, the major disjunctive accents suggest smaller units of textual organization that also help us “think our way through” the narrative.

We can read “between” the disjunctive accents (much like reading “between” preterites), since the material (words) between disjunctive accents functions as a unit. Although the accents are not original, and occasional accentual interpretations may even be questionable (e.g., 1 Sam 3.3b), they are quite venerable, and often help us read the text; at the very least, they are an important witness to the history of interpretation.

You will soon notice a certain amount of coordination and overlap between these two systems—preterites are normally preceded by disjunctive accents.

When pre-reading, putting a vertical line after words marked with one of these accents visibly divides the text into “meaningful” or “functional” clusters of words. The major disjunctive accents divide 1 Kings 1.1 into five “pieces”; the last word is not separate, but part of the verbal clause, despite *tifka*.

1 Kings 1.1		
וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד זָקֵן	Now King David was old,	<i>zaqef</i>
בָּא בַיָּמִים	advanced in days,	<i>’atnach</i>
וַיְכַסֵּהוּ בַּבְּגָדִים	and they covered him with garments,	<i>zaqef</i>
וְלֹא יָחַם לוֹ:	but he was not warm.	<i>tifka – silluq</i>

169. This table does not include *silluq* (#1), which tends to coincide with *sof pasuq* at the end of (nearly) every verse, or with the relatively rare accent *šalšelet* (#4).

170. It may be missing from short verses (e.g., Gn 18.1; Nu 27.5, 6; 28.1; Jon 1.1), or even longer ones (e.g., Dt 6.22).

171. *Zaqef* can occur more than once in either “half” of the verse.

172. *Tifka* can precede a short word cluster in which the last word has *’atnach* or *silluq*, and so can break up a “longer” string of words that might begin with, e.g., a word following *zaqef* and end with *silluq*. In Jon 1.6, *tifka* occurs before the last two words, which are a preterite clause.

The **conjunctive** accents, on the other hand, mean “Don’t pause after this word”, that is, *link* this word to the next one—they belong together. The strength of the link depends on the relative strength of the accent. The most important conjunctive accent (and the only one that this pre-reading exercise uses) is *munach* (מְנַחֵם). *Munach* can occur several times in a verse, and even under consecutive words, linking, for example, words in a construct chain. When *munach* occurs under a word that is also marked with a disjunctive accent, the disjunctive accent takes priority (cf. הַשְׁוֹנֵמִית in 1 Kgs 1.3). Noticing and marking *munach* keeps together words that belong together.

N.B.: Not every accent occurs in every verse (e.g., Gn 18.1 lacks *’atnach*; many verses lack *zaqef*, *r^ebīa’*); *munach* is often lacking.

25.4 Clause-Initial Particles

Another step of this pre-reading process is to mark any “clause-leading” or “clause-initial” particles. These function words usually begin or “introduce” their clause.¹⁷³ Having a basic idea of the function of these words, we can strengthen our expectations about the story by noting the relationships that these particles signal between clauses and larger chunks of the narrative.

Clause-Initial Particles		
אֲשֶׁר	<i>which, who, that</i>	introduces relative clause that usually refers to the preceding word
וְעַתָּה ¹⁷⁴	<i>therefore</i>	introduces volitional conclusions (i.e., calls for action/response: imperative, cohortative, jussive)
כַּאֲשֶׁר	<i>as, just as</i>	introduces comparison
כֵּן	<i>thus, so</i>	introduces clause of manner
	<i>that</i>	introduces content of indirect quotation
כִּי	<i>because, for</i>	introduces reason for, cause of
	<i>when/if</i>	introduces conditions (e.g., laws)
לְמַעַן	<i>in order that, so that</i>	introduces purpose or result (goal)
עַל-כֵּן	<i>therefore</i>	introduces logical conclusion (never calls for action/response)

25.5 Quotation Formulae

The narrative burden of many stories is carried by direct quotations, which are often introduced by preterites that someone said, spoke, commanded, etc.

Direct quotations are normally introduced by a verb of speaking (אָמַר, דָּבַר, שָׁאַל, etc.) that is often followed by the subject and addressee (introduced by the preposition ל־). The syntagm (e.g., “YHWH said to Abram”) helps us locate the beginning (*aperture*) of the quotation; if the form לֵאמֹר occurs, the next word almost always begins the quotation. The end of a speech is not as easily recognized, since other clauses may come between the end of the quotation and the next preterite. For now, merely noting the quotation formulae will alert you to the presence of speeches in the passage.

Many quotation formulae are preterites, but they also occur in other types of clauses (e.g., in Gn 12.12a וַאֲמָרוּ, *and they will say*, is a quote within a quote—it falls within Abram’s speech), which means that it is not enough merely to check the marked preterites for verbs of speaking; other clauses must also be examined.

173. Contrast the conjunction *waw*, which functions at all syntagmatic levels, from phrase to discourse.

174. Without the prefixed *waw*-, עַתָּה; refers to the present: “now”. *W^eattā* clauses are disjunctive (see below) by definition (*w*+non-verb), and mark the transition from argument to conclusion (and action or decision).

When a character instructs or directs another to do something, the narrator often says merely that “and he did so” (וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן) (Jg 6.20; 1 Kg 20.25; Est 2.4; Is 20.2) or “so they did what Moses [Josuha] had commanded”, without describing their actions or repeating the instructions. This means that although the preterites of quotation formulae may carry the narrative *flow* of the story, the content of the quotations often provides much of its *substance*. Key to pre-reading a narrative is therefore **identifying the quotations**.

Quotation formulae also serve another purpose: when *repeated* within a unified speech (i.e., a speech made by one person), they do not so much re-introduce the speaker (as though the author expects the reader to have forgotten who was speaking), but signal topical shifts within the speech. Here are three examples from Genesis.

Throughout the creation account (Gn 1.3-26), each occurrence of the quotation formula וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים signals the next divine creative activity. There was no one else to speak, so we must ask why the verb and its subject (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים) are repeated. Typically in Biblical Hebrew, the repeated quotation formulae break up and “outline” extended speeches; here, divine speech initiates each creative act.¹⁷⁵ These three examples demonstrate this function of quotation formulae.

1. At the end of that chapter, two quotation formulae divide, or “outline”, the divine speech to the newly created man and woman topically (Gn 1.28-30):

Topic	Gloss	Quotation Formula	Gn
The blessing of abundance & dominion	God blessed them ... and God said to them, “... ”	וַיְבָרֶךְ ... וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם	3.28
The provision of food	And God said, “... ”	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	3.29

2. In Gn 9.1-17, the author uses quotation formulae to organize a long divine speech:

Topic	Gloss	Quotation Formula	Gn
	And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “... ”	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-נוֹחַ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם	9.1
Divine covenant with all life	And God said to Noah & his sons with him [saying], “... ”	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-נוֹחַ וְאֶל-בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר	9.8
The sign of the covenant	And God said, “... ”	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	9.12
Reiteration: sign & scope of covt.	And God said to Noah, “... ”	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-נוֹחַ	9.17

3. Genesis 17 illustrates both points about quotation formulae, including the difference between an extended speech and conversation. The announcement of the covenantal sign of circumcision (Gn 17.3b-17) is divided into three sections by further quotative frames:

New Topic	Gloss	Quotation Formula	Gn
YHWH’s rôle in the covenant	And God spoke with him [saying], “... ”	וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר	17.3b
Abraham’s responsibility under the covenant (circumcision)	And God said to Abraham, “... ”	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְרָהָם	17.9
Sarah’s rôle in the covenantal promise	And God said to Abraham, “... ”	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְרָהָם	17.15

175. More precisely, as is often pointed out, the divine speech *is* the creative act; this theological issue is separate from its function within the *structure* of the narrative.

This is followed by three preterites that describe Abraham’s response (*He fell ... he laughed ... he said to himself ...* [17.17]),¹⁷⁶ after which two further quotation formulae introduce the next part the conversation between Abraham and YHWH:

Topic	Gloss	Quotation Formula	Ref.
Abraham asks about Ishmael	And Abraham said to God, “...	וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים	17.18
God reassures him about Ishmael	And God said, “...	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	17.19

Noting quotational formulae should fill some of the visual “gaps” in the preterite chain. Just as the preterite chain suggests the pace of the story, quotation plays a rôle in pacing by slowing a narrative.¹⁷⁷ While we read a quotation, no other events are being narrated, which stops the flow of events—the only “event” is the words of the quotation.

If a passage consists largely of quotation (as in, e.g., Gn 1.3-26; 9.1-17; 17.3b-21), not much “happens”, even if the passage is fairly lengthy, although, to be fair (and to invoke a false dichotomy), *what* is said (the content of the quotations) often overshadows *that* something is being said (the narrated event).

25.6 Disjunctive Clauses

Another key to reading a biblical narrative is the location and content of disjunctive clauses. A *clause* consists of a **topic** (the subject) and a **comment** about that topic (the predicate).¹⁷⁸ A sentence always consists of at least one clause, but a single clause can also be a sentence. In Biblical Hebrew, topics and comments can belong to several “classes” of words, and nearly anything that can be a topic can also be a comment (nearly all of these combinations occur; this chart does not imply that any are more frequent or prominent than others):

“Word-classes” in Clauses			
Topic (word-classes)		Comment (word-classes)	
noun (generic)	נָבִיא	noun (generic)	מֶלֶךְ
noun (proper)	אַבְרָם	noun (proper)	דָּוִד
pronoun (independent)	אַתָּה	participle (predicate)	סָפֵר
pronoun (suffixed to NC)	לְלִכְתֹּךְ	participle (substantive)	הַפֹּתֵב
pronoun (subject PGN affix)	כְּתִבְתָּן	adjective (predicate)	רַע
participle (substantive)	הַפֹּתֵב	adjective (substantive)	הַגְּדֹלִים
adjective (substantive)	הַגְּדֹלִים	infinitive construct	לֶכֶת
infinitive construct	לִהְיוֹת	prepositional phrase (usually locative)	בְּבֵית
		finite verb (perfect, imperfect, preterite, imperative)	יִשְׁכַּב לֵךְ

Clauses often have other elements that relate primarily to the entire clause—to the relationship between the topic and comment, rather than specifically to one or the other. For example, a prepositional phrase that tells us *where* something occurred may also tell us where the subject/topic was when it happened. Such a phrase relates to the entire predication, not just to one of its elements.

176. This rapid succession of preterites—which is quite unlike the surrounding narrative—suggests that the author saw these actions as some sort of narrative “peak” or “climax”.

177. In a movie, for example, dialogue often controls pace. Unlike a movie (in which we can both listen to and watch a speaker or listener), text can only mention one thing at a time.

178. The term “comment” seeks to avoid the confusion caused by “predicate”, which connotes “verb” to many readers (verbs are only one of a number of potential grammatical forms that can function as a comment in Biblical Hebrew).

Disjunctive clauses begin with the conjunction *waw* + a **non-verb** (i.e., *anything except a finite verbal form*). Backgrounded actions, activities, setting, and *irrealis* (i.e., what *didn't* happen) tend to occur in disjunctive clauses, but it is not primarily the verbal conjugation that determines the relative status or function of a clause. Instead, a disjunctive clause signals the reader that it (the clause) is not on the narrative “backbone”, or the preterite “story-line”. After noting this, we can address the separate question of what the clause suggests about its status relative to the storyline. Disjunctive clauses have two primary functions:

1. They describe an activity or state that *parallels* that described in the previous clause. The syntax of the disjunctive clause often reverses or inverts the syntax of the clause that it parallels. After Naomi’s second statement urging Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab, the contrasting responses of her daughters-in-law are described in a preterite clause (“and Orpah kissed ...”) and a disjunctive clause (“but Ruth clung ...”):

וַתִּשָּׁק עֹרְפָּה לַחֲמוּתָהּ and-she-kissed Orpah her-mother-in-law,
וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ but-Ruth she-clung to-her. (Ru 1.14b; cf. 1 Sam 1.2b)

On the other hand, the wives of Abram and Nahor are introduced in parallel clauses with no implied contrast, the first is asyndetic, and the second disjunctive (Gn 11.29b):

שֵׁם אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם שָׂרַי The-name-of the-wife-of Abram [was] Sarai,
וְשֵׁם אִשְׁת־נָחוֹר מִלְכָּה and-the-name-of the-wife-of Nahor [was] Milkah.

2. Disjunctive clauses also present *parenthetical* information, which tends to be either flashback (information about earlier events), setting, or other information that the reader will need in order to understand events upcoming in the narrative. For example, the Canaanite presence in the land, noted in a disjunctive clause (Gn 12.6) creates narrative tension with Abram’s preceding call (Gn 12.1) and YHWH’s following promise (Gn 12.7):

וְהַכְנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ: Now-the-Canaanite [was] then in-the-land.

This information is expanded in a later disjunctive clause that helps the reader understand why Abram and Lot could not stay together (Gn 13.7b):

וְהַכְנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אָז יָשָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ: Now-the-Canaanite and-the-Perizzite then lived in-the-land.

Genesis 12 contains four disjunctive clauses. They identify Abram’s age, which becomes increasingly important in his ongoing search for an heir (Gn 12.4b); the potential tension between YHWH’s promise and the Canaanite presence (Gn 12.6b); Pharaoh’s good treatment of Abram for Sarai’s sake (Gn 12.16a), as he had predicted (Gn 12.13b); and what Abram was to do after Pharaoh discovered his deception about his relationship to Sarai (Gn 12.19b); it therefore begins with *וַעֲתָה*, *therefore* (see “clause-initial particles”, above).

Marking disjunctive clauses highlights information that is *crucial* to the story; it also reminds us that they probably do *not* describe the next event in the narrative sequence.

25.7 What’s Next?

After pre-reading, the next step is to *translate* the passage *in writing*; this has at least four purposes: (1) it slows down our reading, compelling us to pay attention to the text itself; (2) it forces us to choose a rendering (rather than merely note all of the possibilities); (3) it quickly reveals that translation entails far more than choosing the “right” gloss or creating a “word-for-word” running gloss; and thus (4) it should protect us against the arrogance that can come from a facility with the biblical languages, as we realize the number and nature of choices and compromises entailed in preparing a written translation.

25.8 Vocabulary

teach, instruct (H)	יָרָה (III) .379	be willing, agree	אָבָה .371
ransom, buy (back)	פָּדָה .380	weep, mourn, wail	בָּכָה .372
turn (toward)	פָּנָה .381	fornicate, commit illicit sex	זָנָה .373
acquire, get, buy	קָנָה .382	see, observe, gaze [at]	חָזָה .374
be pleased with, like	רָצָה .383	be / become weak, sick, ill	חָלָה .375
pleasure, favor	רָצוֹן .384	camp, encamp	חָנָה .376
water, give a drink [to someone or something] (H)	שָׁקָה .385	be / become angry, hot	חָרָה .377
wander (lost)	תָּעָה .386	thank, praise (H)	יָדָה .378

25.9 Exercise

In the reading passage for the next class, (1) mark (highlight, underline) the preterites; (2) quotation formulae; and (3) any occurrences of *wayhi* (and identify their function as either circumstantial or predicate).

25.10 Enrichment: Pre-reading Ruth 2.1-7

What is the result of pre-reading a passage of biblical narrative? In Ru 2.1-7 the underlining and shading show that the author used two disjunctive clauses flanking two appositional phrases to describe Boaz (1). The next disjunctive clause in these verses also refers to Boaz, this time to his arrival at the field (4). The shading (quotations) shows the increasingly dialogical nature of the story (5-7), as well as the use of preterites within the direct speech of the servant's report on Ruth's actions (v. 7). The sequence of three preterites (3) stands out from the rest of the passage (there are no other consecutive preterites), suggesting that these actions form some sort of anticipatory climax.

Having been pre-read, these verses no longer consist of either a single block of text or 105 individual concatenated words, but are revealed as a series of brief functional units of two to four words that together tell a well-crafted story:

וַיִּלְנְעֵמי מִידֵּעַ לְאִישָׁהּ || אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חֵיל || מִמְשַׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ || וְשָׁמוּ בָּעֵז: ²וְתֹאמַר רֹות
הַמּוֹאָבִיָּה אֶל־נַעֲמִי || אֶלְכָּה־נָּא הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶלְקָטָה בַּשְּׂבָלִים || אַחֵר || אֲשֶׁר אִמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו ||
וְתֹאמַר לָהּ לְכִי בָתִּי: ³וְתִלְכִּי וְתִבּוֹא וְתִלְקָט בַּשָּׂדֶה || אַחֲרֵי הַקִּצְרִים || וַיִּקֶּר מִקֶּרֶךְ || חֲלָקַת
הַשָּׂדֶה לְבָעֵז || אֲשֶׁר מִמְשַׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ: ⁴וְהִגַּם־בָּעֵז || בָּא מִבֵּית־לֶחֶם || וַיֹּאמֶר לְקוֹצְרִים יְהוָה
עִמָּכֶם || וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ וַיִּבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה: ⁵וַיֹּאמֶר בָּעֵז לְנַעֲרָה || הִנָּצַב עַל־הַקֹּצְרִים || לְמִי תִנְעָרָה הַזֹּאת:
⁶וַיַּעַן || הַנַּעַר הִנָּצַב עַל־הַקֹּצְרִים וַיֹּאמֶר || נַעֲרָה מוֹאָבִיָּה הִיא || הַשָּׂבָה עִם־נַעֲמִי מִשָּׂדֶה מוֹאָב:
⁷וְתֹאמַר || אֶלְקָטָה־נָּא וְאֶסְפְּתִי בַּעֲמָרִים || אַחֲרֵי הַקֹּצְרִים || וְתִבּוֹא וְתַעֲמֹד || מֵאֵז הַבָּקָר וְעַד־
עֶתָּה || זֶה שְׂבָתָהּ הַבַּיִת מֵעַתָּה:

Key

<u>Double underline</u>	preterite (<i>wayyiqtol</i>)
<u>Single underline</u>	disjunctive clause (<i>waw</i> +non-finite-verb)
<u>Wavy double underline</u>	clause-initial particle
Shaded	quotation
	major disjunctive accent (as described above)

Lesson 26

I-נ VERBS

Verbal roots that begin with נ are weak whenever the first radical of a verbal form is followed by silent *šewa*, since the נ assimilates to the following consonant. Verbs I-נ are therefore weak throughout *hifil* and *hofal*, and in some forms of *nifal* (P, Ptc) and *qal* (F, Pr, V, NC). They are strong throughout all three D-stems, and in some conjugations of *nifal* (F, Pr, V, NC) and *qal* (P, NA, Ptc). This general pattern is the same as the I-י verb (below), so that some forms of these roots are exactly alike, and the lexical form can be determined only by knowing the vocabulary or from context, or both.

Stem	Weak Forms	Strong Forms
Q	F, Pr, V [NC,NA]	P, Ptc [NC, NA]
N	P, Ptc	F, Pr, V [NC,NA]
D, Dp, Dt	None	All forms
H, Hp	All forms	None

When the first radical of a verbal form is followed by silent *šewa* (e.g., נִמְשַׁל), the initial נ assimilates to the following consonant and doubles it. Each of the following pair of forms has the same parsing; the second verb of each pair is I-נ.

Form	Root	Parsing	Gloss	<i>Dageš forte</i>
נִמְשַׁל	מִשַׁל	3ms N P	<i>He was kept</i>	In נִנָּשׁ the initial –נ of נִנָּשׁ has assimilated to the נ; the –נ is the prefix of the <i>nifal</i> perfect.
נָנַשׁ	נָנַשׁ		<i>He approached</i>	
יִמְשַׁל	מִשַׁל	3ms Q F	<i>He keeps (will keep)</i>	In יִפֹּל the initial –נ of נִפֹּל has assimilated to the פ.
יָפַל	נִפֹּל		<i>He falls (will fall)</i>	
הִמְשִׁיל	מִשַׁל	3ms H P	<i>He caused to keep</i>	In הִצִּיל the initial –נ of נִצִּיל has assimilated to the צ.
הִצִּיל	נִצִּיל		<i>He rescued</i>	

1. The primary clue that a verbal form is from a I-נ root is that there are only two radicals, the first of which is doubled (if there is any type of stem or subject prefix).
2. If the second radical of a I-נ root is a guttural or ר, the root is like the basic verb (נ does not assimilate).
3. Roots that are both I-נ and hollow (vowel-medial, e.g., נִיט) follow the rules of the hollow verbs (Lesson 28), not I-נ verbs.
4. Some forms of I-נ roots in Q look exactly like I-י forms (Lesson 30).

26.1 I-נ Verbal Roots in Qal

There are three main types of I-נ verb (creatively called Types I, II, and III). Type I occurs in all stems, Type II in Q of some verbal roots; Type III consists of only one verb (נָתַן). There is no distinction in the other stems (i.e., the differences between Types I, II, & III only appear in *qal*).

26.1.1 Type I (Q F with *holem*)

This is the most common type of I- \aleph verb; when the initial \aleph is followed by silent *šewa* it assimilates to the second radical and doubles it. Type I verbal forms from I- \aleph roots are therefore weak throughout the H-stems (*hifil*, *hofal*), in *qal* imperfect (Q F) and preterite (Q Pr), and in *nifal* perfect (N P) and participle (N Ptc). This skeleton paradigm shows the forms of Type I verbs that are affected (*weak*):

Type I		Q	N	H	Hp
P	3ms	נָפַל	נָפַל	הִפִּיל	הִפִּיל
F	3ms	יִפֹּל	יִנָּפַל	יִפִּיל	יִפִּיל
V	ms	נָפַל	הִנָּפַל	הִפִּיל	---
	mp	נִפְּלוּ	הִנָּפְּלוּ	הִפִּילוּ	---
NC		נָפַל	הִנָּפַל	הִפִּיל	הִפִּיל
Ptc	ms	נֹפֵל	נֹפֵל	מִפִּיל	מִפִּיל

1. Forms in shaded spaces are not weak (“---” means that this form does not occur).
2. The prefix and its vowel are unaffected (except in Hp, where the prefix vowel is always *qibbuš*).
3. The endings and vowels after the second radical are the same as those of the basic verb.

26.1.2 Type II (Q F with *patah*)

These verbs differ from Type I only in *qal* imperfect, preterite, imperative, and infinitive construct; all other forms are the same as Type I (above). The paradigm shows only the *weak* forms of this type of I- \aleph verb, using נגש and לקח, and lists Q forms only, since the other stems are the same as Type I (above).

Type II (Qal)		נגש	לקח
F	3ms	יִגַּשׁ <i>he approaches / will approach</i>	יִקַּח <i>he takes / will take</i>
	3mp	יִגַּשׁוּ <i>they approach / will approach</i>	יִקַּחוּ <i>they take / will take</i>
Pr	3ms	וַיִּגַּשׁ <i>and he approached</i>	וַיִּקַּח <i>and he took</i>
	3mp	וַיִּגַּשׁוּ <i>and they approached</i>	וַיִּקַּחוּ <i>and they took</i>
V	ms	גַּשׁ <i>Approach!</i>	קַח <i>Take!</i>
	mp	גַּשׁוּ <i>Approach!</i>	קַחוּ <i>Take!</i>
NC		נִגְשָׁה [to] approach	קִיחָה [to] take

1. The root sign (√) is used in studying Hebrew to show that we are discussing or describing forms from a particular verbal root.
2. *Qal* imperfect has *patah* after the second radical.
3. In Q imperative and infinitive construct the initial \aleph drops off (apocopates).
4. A final ה- is added to Q NC, which has two *seghols* (two *patahs* in II- and III-guttural roots), and looks just like Q NC of some I- \aleph verbs (below).
5. The forms of the verb לקח look just like the forms of a I- \aleph verb (Type II); any verbal form with קח- or -קח is therefore a form of לקח. It is the only I- \aleph verb that does this. The medial ק loses *dageš forte* before *šewa*; cf. 3 mp Q F (above).

26.1.3 Type III (נתן *only*)

The most common I-נ verb (nearly 2000x in Biblical Hebrew), נתן, is the only verb of this type. In *nifal* (the only non-*qal* stem in which it occurs), it is like Type II (above). Its main difference from other verbs in *qal* is that the final ך assimilates to consonantal PGN endings:

Q P	1cs	נָתַתִּי	<i>I gave</i>
N P	2mp	נָתַתֶּם	<i>You were given (put, set, made)</i>

The other forms of נתן look like Type II (above), except that its stem vowel is *se*. In addition, Q NC lacks both נ's.

F	3ms	יָתֵן	<i>He gives/will give</i>
	3mp	יָתְנוּ	<i>They [will] give</i>
Pr	1cs	נָתַתֵּן	<i>I gave</i>
	3ms	נָתַתָּן	<i>He gave</i>
V	2ms	תֵּן	
		תִּנֵּה	<i>Give!</i>
	2mp	תִּנּוּ	
NC		תֵּת	<i>to give</i>
	+1cs sfx	תִּתִּי	<i>my giving</i>
	+2ms sfx	תִּתֶּךָ	<i>your giving</i>

A paradigm listing all forms of נתן that occur in Biblical Hebrew follows the I-נ paradigm (Appendix E).

26.2 Nifal of I-נ Verbal Roots

Like the strong verb (Lesson 18), I-נ verbal roots appear in two basic forms in *nifal*, with a doubled second radical (P, Ptc) or a doubled first radical (F, Pr, V):

		נִפְלֵ
P	3ms	נִפְּלָ
F	3ms	יִנְפֹּל
Pr	3ms	וַיִּנְפֹּל
V	ms	נִפְּלָ
NC		נִפְּלָ
Ptc	ms	נִפְּלָ

1. In the perfect and participle, the initial נ- assimilates to the second radical. The נ- is the נ- prefix of the *nifal*.
2. In the other conjugations, the נ- of the *nifal* prefix assimilates to the initial נ- of the verbal root; these forms look just like the strong verb. The visible נ- is the initial radical of the verbal root.
3. Unlike *qal*, the *nifal* of I-נ verbal roots appears in only one set of forms.

26.3 Hifil & Hofal (H, Hp) of I-נ Verbal Roots

Since the *nun* is assimilated in all forms of the *hifil* and *hofal*,¹⁷⁹ the initial נ of I-נ verbal roots that occur only in the H-stems (e.g., נגד, נשג) *never* appears:

		נגד/√		נשג/√
		H	Hp	H
P	3ms	הִגִּיד	הִגִּיד	הִשִּׁיג
F	3ms	יִגִּיד	---	יִשִּׁיג
Pr	3ms	וַיִּגִּיד	וַיִּגִּיד	וַיִּשִּׁיג
V	ms	הִגִּיד	---	---
NC		הִגִּיד	---	---
Ptc	ms	מִגִּיד	---	מִשִּׁיג

*Forms marked with “---” do not occur; Hp of נשג does not occur.

26.4 Frequency

This table lists all I-נ verbs that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew.

נתן	<i>give</i>	1994x	נבא	<i>prophecy</i> (N)	115x
נכה	<i>hit, wound, defeat</i> (H; once each in N, Dp)	504x	נצב	<i>take one's stand/place</i> (N, H)	75x
נשא	<i>lift, carry, forgive</i>	651x	נבט	<i>look at, pay attention</i> (once in D; therefore “always” בט-)	70x
נפל	<i>fall</i>	433x	נצח	<i>lead</i> (D)	65x
נגד	<i>tell; declare, report, announce</i> (H; always גר-)	369x	נצר	<i>watch, guard</i>	63x
נטה	<i>stretch out; turn</i>	215x	נטע	<i>plant</i>	57x
נצל	<i>snatch, rescue, deliver</i> (H)	208x	נדה	<i>be scattered</i> (N); <i>scatter</i> (H)	51x
נגע	<i>touch; reach, come to</i>	150x	נכר	<i>recognize</i> (H); a few times in N, D; therefore usually כר-	50x
נסע	<i>depart, break camp</i>	146x	נשג	<i>overtake</i> (H; always שג-)	50x
ננש	<i>approach, come near</i>	125x			

179. This assimilation always takes place because the first radical of every form in H and Hp is followed by silent *šewa*.

26.5 Vocabulary

<i>depart, break camp, travel</i>	נָסַע .395	<i>prophecy (N)</i>	נָבֵא .387
<i>fall</i>	נָפַל .396	<i>look at, pay attention to (H)</i>	נָבַט .388
<i>take one's stand / place; be assigned (N)</i>	נָצַב .397	<i>tell; report, declare, announce (H)</i>	נָגַד .389
<i>lead (D)</i>	נָצַח .398	<i>touch; reach, come to</i>	נָגַע .390
<i>rescue, deliver; snatch (all H)</i>	נָצַל .399	<i>blow, assault; plague</i>	נָגַע .390
<i>watch, guard, keep, protect</i>	נָצַר .400	<i>come near, approach</i>	נָגַשׁ .391
<i>lift, carry; forgive</i>	נָשָׂא .401	<i>be scattered (st. vb.)</i>	נָדַח .392
<i>give</i>	נָתַן .402	<i>plant</i>	נָטַע .393
		<i>pretend (N); recognize (H)</i>	נָכַר .394

26.6 Exercises

After you have studied the I-נ verb, *gloss* these texts, and *then* parse all of the I-נ verbs in Genesis 11.27-13.14.

1. וַיִּשְׂאֵל יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּידָה נָא שְׁמֶךָ
Gen 32.30; 2ms V with הָ - ending;
Jacob
2. וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ תִּנּוּלְנוּ מִיָּם וְנִשְׁתָּה
Ex 17.2; וַיִּרְבּוּ *strive* (3ms Q Pr);
Moses
3. וַיִּרְעוּ הַדְּבָר בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמוּאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ תִּנְהַלְנוּ
מִלֶּךָ לְשִׁפְטָנוּ וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־יְהוָה:
1 Sa 8.6; וַיִּרְעוּ *but it was wrong (evil, wicked)*; 2ms V with הָ - ending;
פלל; Samuel
4. וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל אֶל־יוֹנָתָן הַגִּידָה לִּי מָה עָשִׂיתָ
וַיַּגִּיד־לוֹ יוֹנָתָן
1 Sa 14.43; Saul, Jonathan
5. הִבֵּט מִשְׁמַיִם וַרְאָה
מִזֹּבֶל קָדְשֶׁךָ וַתַּפְאֲרֶתְךָ
Is 63.15; זֶבֶל *dwelling*
6. אֶל־תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי־אַתָּה אֲנִי לְהַצִּלְךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
Jr 1.8; יִרָא *fear, be afraid*
7. וַיִּקְחֵנִי יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרֵי הַצֹּאן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה
לֵךְ הִנֵּבָא אֶל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
Am 7.15 לֵךְ (2ms QV); the
speaker is Amos
8. וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיָו וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עֵמָהּ וַיֹּאכַל:
Gen 3.6
9. כִּי הִצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת
Ps 56.14a [ET 15a]; this nomenclature
means that the English and Hebrew
texts are divided differently; in English
this verse is Ps 56.15
10. יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכְפֹּה וַיִּרַח בְּלִילָה:
Ps 121.6; כָּה - is a 2ms suffix; יָרַח *moon*
11. וְאִישׁ אֶחָד מִבְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים אָמַר אֶל־רַעְיָהוּ
בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה הִפְיֵנִי נָא וַיִּמָּאן הָאִישׁ לְהַכְתּוֹ:
1Kg 20.35
12. אֶת־קִשְׁתִּי נָתַתִּי בַעֲנָן וְהִיתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית
בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ:
Gn 9.13; קִשְׁתִּי *bow (n.)*

- Gn 34.16 וַנִּחַנּוּ אֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ לָכֶם וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵיכֶם נִקַּח־לָנוּ
וַיִּשְׁבְּנוּ אִתְּכֶם וְהָיִינוּ לָעַם אֶחָד:
- Ex 20.7; שׁוּא *vanity, in vain*; נָקָה *acquit, leave unpunished* לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא
כִּי לֹא יִנָּקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוּא:
- Jos 3.6; Joshua וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר
שָׂאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית וְעָבְרוּ לִפְנֵי הָעָם
וַיִּשָּׂאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית וַיֵּלְכוּ לִפְנֵי הָעָם:
- Jg 4.7; מִשָּׁךְ *draw [pull] [out]*; הַמּוֹן *host, multitude; tumult, confusion*; Kishon, Sisera, Jabin וּמִשְׁכַּתִּי אֵלַיךְ אֶל־נַחַל קִישׁוֹן אֶת־סִיסְרָא
יָבִין וְאֶת־רָכְבוֹ וְאֶת־הַמּוֹנוֹ
וַנִּתְּתֵהוּ בְיָדְךָ: שֶׁרֶצְבָּא
- 2 Kgs 19.7; שְׂמוּעָה *report, rumour*; וָשֵׁב *return, go back* הֲנִי נָתַן בּוֹ רוּחַ וְשָׁמַע שְׂמוּעָה
וָשֵׁב לְאַרְצוֹ וְהַפְּלֵתִיו בַּחֲרָב בְּאַרְצוֹ:
- Jr 1.9; נָתַתִּי *may be performative (§10.9)* וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּגַּע עַל־פִּי
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי דְּבָרִי בְּפִיךָ:

26.7 Enrichment: Participant Reference

Noting the preterites, quotation formulae, and *wayhî*-clauses in a biblical narrative helps us study the text more carefully (Lesson 25), but other types of information in narrative also need to be recognized and accounted for. One that can be especially helpful in understanding the author's intention in a passage is *participant identification*. You have probably noticed that the biblical authors tend to identify the main characters (actors) in the story, either by name, or title, or both.

In Genesis 16, for example, the use of appositional descriptors underlines the dysfunctionality of the triad of Sarai, Hagar, and Abram (to name them in the order in which they appear in the story). The passage begins with three disjunctive clauses (Gn 16.1) that set the stage for the story by identifying the major participants, Sarai and Hagar:

- 1a וְשָׂרַי אִשְׁתּ אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not born [a child] to/for him,
1b וְלָהּ שִׁפְחָה מִצְרַיִת and she had an Egyptian maid,
1c וּשְׁמָהּ הָגָר: and her name was Hagar (Gn 16.1).

Sarai is identified by her relationship to Abram, and Hagar in relationship to her, as well as by her ethnicity. Abram is mentioned only to establish his relationship to Sarai—to “remind” readers that Sarai was his wife.

In Gn 16.2, Sarai is explicitly named as the subject of the leading preterite, but this is a necessary identification. Since two women were named in v. 1, the 3fs preterite וַתֹּאמֶר requires an explicit subject in order for the reader to know—as the quotation begins—which woman spoke to Abram. At the end of the verse, when Abram acquiesced to Sarai, both actors, already named at the beginning of the verse, are again called by name. On the other hand, Sarai does not mention Hagar's name, referring to her merely as “my maid” (שִׁפְחָתִי).

- וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם ... And Sarai said to Abram, “...
וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרַי: and Abram listened to Sarai's voice
(Gn 16.2).

In Gn 16.3, both Sarai and Hagar are identified as fully as they were in v. 1, and Abram is named “in both directions”—Sarai as his wife, and he as her husband, probably to highlight the tangled relationships that are being created:

וַתִּקַּח שָׂרַי אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם אֶת־הָגָר הַמִּצְרַיִת שִׁפְחָתָהּ	And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, the Egyptian, her maid, ...
וַתֵּתֵן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ לֹו לְאִשָּׁה:	and she gave her to Abram her husband, to become his wife (Gn 16.3).

When the relationship between Hagar and Sarai deteriorates (Gn 16.4), the author places Sarai and Abram on the same level by introducing both of their quotations with both names:

וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם ...	And Sarai said to Abram, "... (Gn 16.5)
וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־שָׂרַי ...	and Abram said to Sarai, "... (Gn 16.6)

Throughout this brief conversation, Hagar is again demoted implicitly, since she is not called by her name, but merely called "my/your maid". At the end of the story, however, Hagar is named three times—always as the subject of the verb יָלַד (a preterite [15a], a perfect in a relative clause [15b], and an infinitive construct in a temporal clause within the final disjunctive clause [16]).

וַתֵּלֶד הָגָר לְאַבְרָם בֶּן	And Hagar bore Abram a son,
וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָם שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ	and Abram called the name of his son,
אִשְׁרֵי־יָלְדָהּ הָגָר	whom Hagar bore ... (Gn 16.15)
וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים	(now Abram was eighty-six years old when
בָּלְדָתָהּ הָגָר אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל לְאַבְרָם:	Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram). (Gn 16.16)

Although she is not called Abram's "wife" after v. 3, at the end of the story she is no longer defined in terms of her relationship to Sarai, but in her own right as the mother of Ishmael, which implies some change in her standing within the home.

In Genesis 18.1-5, the author's ways of referring to the participants suggests that Gn 18.1-15 (the story of Abraham's hospitality and the repeated promise of an heir) was meant to be read as the consummation of the story recorded in Gn 17 (the institution of the covenantal sign of circumcision and its attendant promises).

The narrator identifies the subject of the first clause by name (יְהוָה), but does not name another subject until Gn 18.6a (below); he instead uses pronominal suffixes, an independent pronoun, and PGN affixes. Nor does he identify the pronominal object of the preposition (אֵלָיו). The significance of this lack of identification again comes from the tendency of Hebrew narrative to identify participants (one of the functions of the passive stems is to *avoid* identifying the subject).

In fact, apart from "YHWH" (18.1a) the participants in these verses are identified only by pronouns and generic nouns (i.e., אֲנָשִׁים; 18.2a):

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלְנֵי מִמְרָא	YHWH appeared to <i>him</i> among the oaks of Mamre	1a
וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֹהֶל ...	(now <i>he</i> was sitting at the entrance to the tent ...)	1b
וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו	and <i>he</i> lifted <i>his</i> eyes	2a
וַיֵּרָא ... עָלָיו	and <i>he</i> saw ... near <i>him</i>	2b
וַיֵּרָא	and <i>he</i> saw	2c
וַיָּרֶץ לִקְרֹאתָם ...	and <i>he</i> ran to meet <i>them</i> ...	2d
וַיִּשְׁתָּחוּ אֶרְצָה:	and <i>he</i> bowed to the ground.	2e
וַיֹּאמֶר ...	and <i>he</i> said, "... (18.3)	3a
וַיֹּאמְרוּ ...	and <i>they</i> said, "...	5d

During his speech (3b-5c), he does not identify himself except as "I" (as 1cs verbal PGN affix) and עֲבָדְךָ "your servant". There is no contextual clue to his identity, except that he was a male, who was authorized to offer the hospitality of his home to three strangers, and who was also conscious of the social niceties of abasing himself ("your servant").

Only after the “three men” accept this unnamed person’s offer of hospitality (18.4-5) does the author call him “Abraham” (18.6a), and then, as if to confirm or reinforce his identity, names “Abraham” as the subject of two of the next three narrative clauses:

וַיַּמְהֵר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵלֶּהָ אֶל-שָׂרָה	And <i>Abraham</i> hastened to the tent, to Sarah,	6a
וַיֹּאמֶר ...	and <i>he</i> said, “...	6b
וְאֶל-הֶבְקֵר רֵץ אַבְרָהָם	and [then?] to the herd ran <i>Abraham</i> , and ...	7a

The point is that this repeated “non-identification” of the subject, followed by his repeated identification *by name* is that these verses—and the story that they open—were written as part of the preceding story: they do not record a meal isolated from the promises and commandments of Gn 17, but rather the meal that ratifies the covenant that had just been sealed by circumcision (17.23-27).¹⁸⁰ This contextual setting also explains the promises about Sarai’s rôle in the covenant’s fulfillment (18.9-15; cf. 17.15-16), and YHWH’s musings about telling Abraham what he [YHWH] was about to do (18.17-19).

Because we read the biblical stories having heard them in sermons and Bible lessons, we often find it difficult to read them *as they were written*, so that in this case (for example), we already “know” that Abraham is the main participant in verses 1-5, even though he is never identified (English versions tend to supply “Abraham” in these verses). Paying close attention to the Hebrew text—especially in light of the normally explicit nature of Hebrew narrative—reveals the misleading nature of this chapter break, and encourages us to read the story *in light of* the covenantal statements of Gn 17.

Finally, this table lays out all participant references in Ruth 2.1-7. You can study the manners of reference (proper name, noun, independent pronoun, pronominal suffix, verbal PGN affix), and their relationship to the person(s) mentioned. This sort of exercise will help you focus on *how* the author is telling his story, which is in turn a clue to how he or she intends us to understand it.

Person referred to & Manner of Mention

Others	Boaz	Ruth	Naomi	“Voice”	V.
	לְנַעֲמִי		נַעֲמִי	author	1
	מִיָּדָע לְאִשָּׁה				
	אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חַיִּל				
	מִמְשַׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ				
	וּשְׁמוֹ בְּעַז				
		וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה		author	2
	אֲשֶׁר אִמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו			Ruth	
			נַעֲמִי	author	
		לָהּ	וַתֹּאמֶר	author	
		לְכִי בְּתִי		Naomi	

180. For another account of a covenant ratification followed by a meal between the parties, see Ex 24.4-11.

3	author	וּתְלַךְ וּתְבוֹא	
	author	וּתְלַקֵּט	הַקְצָרִים
	author	מִקְרָה	
	author	אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ בְּעַז	
4	author	בְּעַז	
	author	וַיֹּאמֶר	לְקָצָרִים
	Boaz		עֲמָכֶם
	author	לֹא	וַיֹּאמְרוּ
5	author	וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעַז	לְנֶעֱר הַנָּצֵב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים
	Boaz	הַנֶּעֱרָה הַזֹּאת	
6	author		וַיַּעַן הַנֶּעֱר הַנָּצֵב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים וַיֹּאמֶר
	Boaz's servant	נֶעֱמִי נַעֲרָה מִזִּמְרָה הִיא הַשִּׁבָּה עִם־נַעֲמִי מִשְׁרָה מִזִּמְרָה	
7	Boaz's servant	וּתֹאמֶר וּתְבוֹא וּתַעֲמֹד שְׁבִתָּה	

Lesson 27

PRE-READING A BIBLICAL POEM

Poetry has been called the “other use [or “kind”] of language”; it does not communicate like “ordinary” speech or thought, but rather functions as language “for its own sake”; this suggests that it needs to be read in a different manner. Nor is this “other kind” of language limited to the “poetic books” (so-called), but also occurs widely throughout the prophetic books, so that nearly one-half of the Hebrew Bible is poetic.

A major challenge in reading a biblical poem in Hebrew is that a careful translation will often not “sound right”. There are several reasons for this: (1) poetry’s linguistic “compression” often yields ambiguous syntax, especially in non-verbal clauses; (2) poetry often uses unusual or rare vocabulary; (3) verbal conjugations in poetry do not have the same functions as in narrative; (4) scholars disagree about the nature and structure of biblical poetry, so that the results of their studies differ; and (5) the translation tradition in English often controls or determines the English text.

All of these reasons (there are more) mean that it is crucial to translate the Hebrew text *before* studying, or checking, published translations.¹⁸¹

This lesson presents some points to consider when trying to understand a biblical poem; it aims to protect us from interpreting the text based only on our impressions by encouraging us to pay close attention to specific aspects of the text itself. These “steps” should prepare you to begin to read a biblical poem as a poetic text.

27.1 Lineation: One Clause per Line

Begin by dividing the poetic text into clauses, and then making each clause a separate poetic line. [A clause consists of a subject (topic) and predicate (comment).]¹⁸² In doing this, you *must not assume* (1) that a verse contains a certain number of lines; or (2) the validity of the layout in either BHS or the English versions.

27.1.1 Nominal/Substantive Subjects & Objects

First, list the nouns in the poem, keeping construct chains together. There are nine in Ps 117, three of which are in construct:

Nouns	Construct	Absolute
1	כָּל-גִּוִּים	יְהוָה
	כָּל-הָאֲמִים:	
2		חֲסִדוֹ
	וְאֶמֶת יְהוָה	יְהוָה

181. You will also find that commentaries and reference grammars often justify traditional renderings. These comments are not meant to disparage the work of Bible translators, in light of the very severe constraints under which translators work—there is simply not time to do detailed research, and so the tendency is to default to the standard. [Other considerations also skew the process, such as the public’s desire for what is familiar.]

182. Poetic passages in BHS were arranged typographically by the editor(s); don’t assume that the lines, or even the half-lines (separated by an extra space, called a *caesura* [Lat., “cut”]), correspond to poetic lines—they may or may not.

Nouns tell us what a poem is *about*—its topic. Two of these six nominal phrases refer to humanity (“all” people), the other four refer to YHWH. The repeated divine name (in two forms) suggests an *inclusio* or “envelope” (because the same form “envelops” a section of text).

27.1.2 Verbal Predicates

After listing the nominal forms, list the verbs, again in sequence; it can be helpful to divide this list by conjugation (there is no column for conjugations that do not occur), and to parse each verbal form.

Verbs	Imperative	Perfect	Parsing
1	הִלְלוּ		2mp DV
	שִׁבְחוּהוּ		2mp DV+3ms
2		נָבַר	3ms QP
	הִלְלוּ		2mp DV

Verbs tell us what the poet says *about* the topic revealed by the list of nouns: three of these forms (all *piel* imperative) describe an act of worship or praise, one (נָבַר) describes rank or position. The *inclusio* suggested by the list of nouns (above) is even more apparent here where the same form (הִלְלוּ) is repeated. As it does in Ps 117, any aspect of verbal morphology (conjugation, PGN, stem)—or more than one, in combination—can reveal the poem’s structure.

27.1.3 Clausal Lineation

In order to have some control over our “reconstruction” of the poem, we can make each clause a single poetic line, based on its subject and predicate (no matter how long or short the resultant line).¹⁸³ When the two lists are thus combined, they yield very nearly all of Psalm 117, except for one conjunction (2a) and two prepositional phrases (2a, 2b):

	Subject	Object	Imperative	Perfect
1a ¹⁸⁴	כָּל־גּוֹיִם	יהוה	הִלְלוּ	
1b	כָּל־הָאֲמִים:		שִׁבְחוּהוּ	
2a	חֲסִדוֹ			נָבַר
2b	וְאֶמְתִּי־הוּא			
2c		יה	הִלְלוּ	

When we add the conjunction and prepositional phrases to the lines, we realize that the first prepositional phrase is “part of” the predicate of 2a, and that the second *is* the predicate of 2b. The resultant full text is organized by line, so that we can translate the poem and then begin to analyze the particulars of its semantics and syntax.

	Predicate	Subject	Object	Predicate	Conj.
1a		כָּל־גּוֹיִם	יהוה	הִלְלוּ	
1b		כָּל־הָאֲמִים:		שִׁבְחוּהוּ	
2a		חֲסִדוֹ		נָבַר עָלֵינוּ	כִּי
2b	לְעוֹלָם	וְאֶמְתִּי־הוּא			
2c			יה	הִלְלוּ	

183. A quick glance at nearly any translation of a biblical poem will reveal single clauses divided between two lines (or more), largely based on the theory that poetic lines had roughly the same length.

184. Each line is identified by its verse number and a letter; this is conventional in reference works, commentaries, and other sources.

You may wonder what you have learned that makes it worth doing this rather than merely translating the poem. The point is that this is intended to help ensure that you read *this* text in Hebrew, rather than merely repeat what you have heard or read that it says. This is only a beginning—the first few of many things to consider in studying a biblical poem—but it should help give some form to the poetic text before you.

27.5 Vocabulary

sanctuary, holy place	מִקְדָּשׁ .411	[a] blessing	בְּרָכָה .403
dead (adj.)	מֵת .412	breath, idol; vanity; Abel	הֶבֶל .404
[a] witness	עֵד עֵדָה .413	cry out [for help], shout (cf. צַעַק)	זַעַק .405
reach, overtake (H)	נָשַׁג .414	strange, foreign; illicit	זָר .406
only, surely (often begins clause)	רַק .415	disgrace, reproach	חֲרָפָה .407
cry out [for help], shout (cf. צַעַק)	צַעַק .416	sin, miss [a mark]	חָטָא .408
bird, insect [any flying thing]	עוֹף .417	sin, error, fault; sin-offering	חַטָּאת .408
bow, worship, do obeisance; show respect or honor (mainly Dt)	שָׁחָה .418*	Why?	מָדוּעַ .409
		sunrise, east	מִזְרֵחַ .410

* Because of its initial sibilant, the root שָׁחָה never appears as שָׁחָה, but only with the initial -ש- and the -ת- of the prefix inverted: -שָׁחָה- (metathesized). Forms that end in *šureq* (חִי) are singular, those in חִי or -חִי (waw followed by *šureq*) are plural. Since it is fairly frequent (172x), here is a skeleton paradigm:

				שח/ה√		Dt		
P	3ms	הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה	F	3ms	יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה	Pr	3ms	וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה
	3cp	הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ		3mp	יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ		3mp	וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ
V	mp	הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ					3fp	תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶינָה
Ptc	ms	מִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה					NC	הַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת ^{*185}

27.6 Exercises

This is the text of **Ps 114**, laid out more or less as in the Hebrew Bible. Divide it into lines (you should end up with sixteen), list the verbal predicates, and identify any repetitions.

1. בְּצֹאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעֹז:
2. הַיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקָדְשׁוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלֹּתָיו:
3. הַיִּם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס תִּירְדֵּן יֹסֵב לְאַחֹר:
4. הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאִילִים גִּבְעוֹת כְּבְנֵי־צֹאן:
5. מִה־לֵּךְ הַיִּם כִּי תָנוּס תִּירְדֵּן תֹּסֵב לְאַחֹר:
6. הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאִילִים גִּבְעוֹת כְּבְנֵי־צֹאן:
7. מִלְּנִי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אֶרֶץ מִלְּפָנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
8. הַהִפְכִי הַצּוּר אֲנִים־מִים חֲלָמִישׁ לְמַעֲיֵנו־מִים:

In this psalm you should see three sections that are clearly defined by the parallels between lines. The the question is *not* “Does this line parallel the other line of this *verse*?” but rather “How can we describe the relationship between this line and the next line (and the preceding)?”

185. The end of this word is pronounced as though there were two *waws*, the first a consonant, the second the *mater lectionis*: -wôt.

27.7 Enrichment: Reading a Poem

Analyzing the lineation, semantics, syntax, and morphology of a biblical poem often reveals patterns that are obscured by the differences between languages. This table presents one approach to the preliminary study of a poem—“preliminary”, because this analysis is not the poem’s meaning, but is instead a way of forcing ourselves to pay attention to every aspect of a poem. We have no way of knowing in advance what will or will not help us establish the meaning of any particular poem; we therefore pay as close attention as possible to everything.

Ps 117

L.	MT/BHS	Semantics	Word Count	Syntax	Predicate
1a	הִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־גּוֹיִם	a . b . c	5: 1.2.2	P/v – O – S/cc	2mp DV
1b	שִׁבְּחוּהוּ כָּל־הָאֲמִיּוֹת:	a ¹ +b ¹ . c ¹	3: 1.2	P/v+O – S/cc	2mp DV
2a	כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ חֲסִדּוֹ	a . b . c	4: 2.1.1	ki – P/v – pp – S/cc	3ms QP
2b	וְאִמְתִּיּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם	c ¹ . a ¹	3: 2.1	w+S – P/pp	
2c	הִלְלוּ־יְהוָה:	a . b	2: 1.1	P/v – O	2mp DV

Key

L.	line no.																
MT/BHS	The Masoretic text as represented by BHS																
Semantics	Each letter represents a functional semantic unit in the line (a construct chain, e.g., is a single functional unit); repeated units in parallel lines have the same letter, with a superscript numeral if they are not exactly identical.																
Word Count	The total number of words—groups of letters between spaces or linked by <i>maqṣef</i> —in the line, followed by the number of forms in each of the semantic units identified in the “semantics” column.																
Syntax	The syntax of the clause (these are all that apply to Ps 117): <table border="1"> <tr><td>P</td><td>Predicate</td></tr> <tr><td>/</td><td>consists of</td></tr> <tr><td>v</td><td>[finite] verb</td></tr> <tr><td>pp</td><td>prepositional phrase</td></tr> <tr><td>O</td><td>object (“direct” or “indirect”)</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>subject</td></tr> <tr><td>/</td><td>function</td></tr> <tr><td>cc</td><td>construct chain</td></tr> </table>	P	Predicate	/	consists of	v	[finite] verb	pp	prepositional phrase	O	object (“direct” or “indirect”)	S	subject	/	function	cc	construct chain
P	Predicate																
/	consists of																
v	[finite] verb																
pp	prepositional phrase																
O	object (“direct” or “indirect”)																
S	subject																
/	function																
cc	construct chain																
Predicate	The parsing of the verbal predicate.																

Translation can be done in at least two stages: a very wooden, “interlinear” translation, designed to show the underlying Hebrew text, followed by a rendering into “sensible” and well-formed English:

1a	praise-ye! YHWH all-of nations
1b	commend-ye-him all-of peoples
2a	for he-is-strong over-us his-lovingkindness
2b	and-the-truth-of YHWH for-long-time
2c	praise-ye! YH
1a	Praise YHWH, all nations!
1b	Commend him, all peoples!
2a	For his lovingkindness is strong over us,
2b	And YHWH’s truth is strong for a long-time.
2c	Praise YH!

Lesson 28

HOLLOW (II-ו/י) VERBS

Hollow verbal roots consist of two root consonants with a medial vowel. Their lexical form is *qal* infinitive construct (they are the only verbs not listed by 3ms *qal* perfect). Some verbs, for example, קום, *rise, stand*, have medial *šureq* (-ו -י), others have medial *hireq* (-י -י, e.g., שׁיר, *sing*). The lexica identify their roots in different ways, so if you do not find the root listed with medial -ו/י-, try the same root with -י -י- (or *vice versa*). This skeleton paradigm compares the basic forms of the verb:

קום√		Q	N	H	Hp
P	3ms	קם	נָקום	הָקום	הוֹקם
F	3ms	יָקום	יָקום	יָקום	יֹקם
V	2ms	קום	הָקום	הָקום	
NC		קום	הָקום	הָקום	הוֹקם
Ptc	ms	קם	נָקום	מִקום	מוֹקם

The hollow verbs are weak in all forms (apart from rare occurrences in the D-stems, when they have doubled medial -י-, regardless of the stem vowel of the lexical form).

28.1 Hollow Verbs in *Qal* (Q)

	<i>Qal</i>	קום√ (II-ו)	שׁים√ (II-י)
P	3ms	קם	שָׁם
	2mp	קָמָתם	שָׁמָתם
	3cp	קָמוּ	שָׁמוּ
F	3ms	יָקום	יָשׁים
	2fs	תָּקוּמוּ	תָּשׁוּמוּ
	2fp	תָּקֻמְנָה	תָּשׁוּמְנָה
Pr	3ms	וִיקָם	וִישָׁם
	3mp	וִיקָמוּ	וִישָׁמוּ
V	2ms	קום	שׁים
	2mp	קומו	שׁומו
NC		קום	שׁים
NA		קום	שׁום
Ptc	ms	קם	שָׁם
	fs	קָמָה	שָׁמָה

1. There is no difference between II-י and II-ו in the *qal* perfect and participle.
2. Since the 3ms Q perfect and ms Q participle are identical, they cannot always be identified with certainty.
3. The original [lexical] vowel appears in the conjugations other than the perfect and participle.
4. In Q jussive and 2/3fp Q F, the stem vowel is often *holem* in verbs II-ו and *segol* in roots II-י:

	<i>Qal</i>	קום√	שים√
J	2/3fp	תִּקְמָנָה	תִּשְׁמָנָה
	3ms	יָקַם	יָשַׁם

28.1a Unique Hollow Verbs

Although most hollow verbs have either medial ו- (like קום) or י- (cf. שים), three are unique in *qal*:

1. בוא, “come, go, enter” (c. 2350x in Biblical Hebrew), is III-א, so its stem syllable is always open, and its stem vowel is always long (*qameṣ* in Q P and Ptc; and ו- elsewhere in Q):

	<i>Qal</i>	בוא√
P	2ms	בָּאתָ
F	3ms	יָבוֹא
Pr	2ms/3fs	וְתָבוֹא
V	2ms	בֹּא
	2mp	בֹּאוּ בֹאוּ
NC		בֹּא

2. בוש, “be ashamed” (126x in Biblical Hebrew), has *holem* (with or without ו) in all forms of Q, and *šere* as its prefix vowel in Q F and Pr.

	<i>Qal</i>	בוש√
P	1cp	בוֹשָׁנוּ
F	2mp	תְּבוֹשׁוּ
Pr	3mp	וַיְבוֹשׁוּ
V	2fp	בוֹשְׁנָה
NC		בוֹשׁ
Ptc ¹⁸⁶	mp	בוֹשִׁים

3. מות, “die” (737x in Biblical Hebrew) has *šiere* in Q P forms without consonantal endings, as well as in Q Ptc. Its other forms look like קום (above).

	<i>Qal</i>	מות√
P	3ms	מָת
	3fs	מָתָה
Ptc	mp	מֹתִים

186. There is one *qal* participle of בוש (Ek 32.30).

28.2 Hollow Verbs in Nifal (N)

	<i>Nifal</i>	קום (II-ו) √	שיר (II-י) √
P	3ms	נָקוּם	נָשׁוּר
	2mp	נָקוּמְתֶם	נָשׁוּרְתֶם
	3cp	נָקוּמוּ	נָשׁוּרוּ
F	3ms	יָקוּם	יָשׁוּר
	2fs	תָּקוּמִי	תָּשׁוּרִי
	2mp	תָּקוּמוּ	תָּשׁוּרוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיָּקוּם	וַיָּשׁוּר
V	2ms	הָקוּם	הָשׁוּר
	2mp	הָקוּמוּ	הָשׁוּרוּ
NC		הָקוּם	הָשׁוּר
Ptc	ms	נֹקֵם	נֹשֵׂר

1. The stem vowel in N is either *holem* (most forms) or *šureq* (*nifal* perfect with consonantal PGN endings).
2. The prefix vowel in N is either *qameš* (P, Ptc) or *hireq* (F, V, NC, NA).
3. As in H (below), there is a helping vowel before consonantal PGN endings.
4. As in the basic verb, the prefixed -נ is orthographically present in N P and Ptc, and assimilates to the first radical in the other conjugations in *nifal*.
5. Unlike the basic verb, the prefix vowel in the perfect and participle is long, since the syllable is open.
6. The form is identical for either type of stem vowel (-û- or -î-).

28.3 Hollow Verbs in Hifil & Hofal (H, Hp)

	קום √	H	Hp	Q (II-י)	Q (II-ו)
P	3ms	הָקִים	הוֹקֵם	שָׁם	קָם
	1cp	הִקְמוּנִי	הוֹקְמוּנִי	שָׁמוּ	קָמוּ
	3cp	הִקְמוּ	הוֹקְמוּ	שָׁמוּ	קָמוּ
F	3ms	יָקִים	יוֹקֵם	יָשִׁים	יָקִים
	2fs	תִּקְיָמִי	תוֹקְמִי	תִּשְׁיָמִי	תִּקְיָמִי
	2fp	תִּקְיָמִינָה	תוֹקְמִינָה	תִּשְׁיָמִינָה	תִּקְיָמִינָה
Pr	3ms	וַיָּקֵם	וַיּוֹקֵם	וַיִּשֶׂם	וַיָּקֵם
	3mp	וַיִּקְמוּ	וַיּוֹקְמוּ	וַיִּשְׁמוּ	וַיִּקְמוּ
V	2ms	הָקֵם	---	שִׁים	קִים
	2mp	הִקְמוּ	---	שִׁמוּ	קִמוּ
NC		הָקֵם	הוֹקֵם	שִׁים	קִים
NA		הָקֵם	הוֹקֵם	שִׁים	קִים
Ptc	ms	מֹקֵם	מוֹקֵם	שֹׁם	קֹם
	fs	מֹקְמָה	הוֹקְמָה	שֹׁמָה	קֹמָה

Hifil

1. The stem vowel in *hifil* is *hireq* in all forms except infinitive absolute and 2ms imperative (which have *šere*).
2. Its prefix vowel is *gameš* (H F, V, NC, NA) and *šere* (H P, Ptc).
3. In *hifil*, a helping vowel (י) joins consonantal PGN endings to the verbal root.
4. Q F and H F look alike in II-י verbs, and must be distinguished by context; in the II-י verbs they are distinguished by the stem (central) vowel, which will be a *u/o*-vowel in Q and an *i/e*-vowel in H.

Hofal

1. In Hp, the prefix vowel is always *šureq* (י). Its stem vowel is *pataḥ* or *šewa*. This skeleton paradigm displays the H-stems with *qal* of two hollow verbs.

28.4 Hollow Verbs in *Polel*, *Polal*, *Hitpolel* (P, Pp, Pt)

In the hollow verbs the D-stems are usually replaced by another set of stems in which the second radical is reduplicated to create a tri-radical “root”.

These stems, *polel* (P), *polal* (Pp), and *hitpolel* (Pt) correspond in function to *piel* (D), *pual* (Dp), and *hitpaal* (Dt), respectively.

	קוּם	Polel	Polal	Hitpolel
P	3ms	קוּמִים	קוּמִים	הִתְקוּמִים
	1cs	קוּמִמְתִּי	קוּמִמְתִּי	הִתְקוּמִמְתִּי
	3cp	קוּמְמוּ	קוּמְמוּ	הִתְקוּמְמוּ
F	3ms	יְקוּמִים	יְקוּמִים	יְהִתְקוּמִים
	3mp	יְקוּמְמוּ	יְקוּמְמוּ	יְהִתְקוּמְמוּ
V	2ms	קוּמִם	---	הִתְקוּמִם
	2mp	קוּמְמוּ	---	הִתְקוּמְמוּ
NC		קוּמִים	קוּמִים	הִתְקוּמִים
Ptc	ms	מְקוּמִים	מְקוּמִים	מְהִתְקוּמִים
	fs	מְקוּמְמָה	מְקוּמְמָה	מְהִתְקוּמְמָה

1. *Šewa* is the prefix vowel in the imperfect, preterite, and participle of both *polel* and *polal*.
2. *Holem* follows the first radical, either with or without the vowel letter (י).
3. If the form has a sufformative, *polel* and *polal* are identical, and can only be distinguished by context.
4. *Hitpolel* is directly analogous to Dt (*hitpaal*), looking just like P with prefixed הִתְ-. As in Dt, the הִתְ- of the prefix switches places (metathesizes) with the initial sibilant of the verbal root:

מִה־תִּשְׁתַּחֲחִי נַפְשִׁי Why do you despair [melt?], my soul? (Ps 42.6; שח)
 וְאֶשְׁתוּמִים עַל־הַמְּרָאָה ... and I was astonished at the vision (Dn 8.27; שמם)

5. Hollow verbs rarely occur in D, Dp, or Dt. When they do, their middle radical is doubled *yod* (י):

קִימֵנִי כְּדִבְרְךָ: Restore me according to your word (Ps 119.28b); 2ms D V + 1cs

28.5 Frequency

This table lists all **twenty-three** hollow verbs that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew.

בוא	come, go (in), enter	2530x	בוש	be(come) ashamed	126x
שוב	turn, turn back, return; repent	1055x	רוץ	run	103x
מות	die	737x	טוב	be(come) good, pleasant	90x
קום	rise, stand	624x	שיר	sing	88x
טוב	be good ¹⁸⁷	612x	שית	put, place, set	87x
שים	put, place, set	584x	גור	reside as alien, sojourn	81x
סור	turn (aside); remove (H)	298x	עור	awake, arouse	76x
כון	be established; prepare (H)	219x	לין	spend the night, lodge	71x
רום	be(come) high, exalted	195x	פוז	scatter, disperse (intrans.)	65x
בין	understand, perceive	171x	ריב	sue, strive, contend	64x
נוס	flee	160x	חיל	be [writhe] in labor	57x
ניח	rest (Q); deposit (H)	143x			

28.6 Vocabulary

die	מות	.427	come, go [in], enter	בוא	.419
rest (Q); deposit (H)	ניח	.428	be/become ashamed (st. vb.)	בוש	.420
flee	נוס	.429	understand, discern	בין	.421
turn (aside); take away, remove (H)	סור	.430	reside as an alien (i.e., live in a land other than your native land; trad., sojourner)	גור	.422
awake, arouse	עור	.431	alien; stranger (trad., sojourner)	גר	
scatter, disperse (intrans.)	פוז	.432	writhe, tremble; [be in] labour	חיל	.423
sue, strive, contend	ריב	.433	be/become good, pleasant (st. vb.)	טוב	.424
[law]suit, strife, contention (n.)	ריב	.434	be established, fixed (in place); prepare (H)	כון	.425
			lodge, spend the night	לין	.426

N.B.: The lexical form of hollow verbs is *qal* infinitive construct (= ms *qal* imperative).

28.7 Exercises

After studying the hollow verbs, gloss these texts, parsing all verbal forms, and then locate and identify all hollow verbal forms in Genesis 14–15.

Is 60.1; זרח dawn, shine; אור shine, give light

1. קומי אורי כי בא אורח
וכבוד יהוה עליך זרח:

Ps 103.19

2. יהוה בשמים הכין כסאו
ומלכותו בכל משלה:

187. It is often difficult to distinguish the verb from the (predicate) adjective טוב. Furthermore, this verb does not occur in the imperfect; the imperfect function uses the I-י root יטב.

- Ps 100.4; תודה *thanks, thanksgiving*; חָצַר *court*; 2mp H V < ירה *praise, profess; thank* (H)
3. באו שְׁעָרָיו בְּתוֹדָה
חֲצֵרָתָיו בְּתִהְלָה
הוֹדוּלוּ
בְּרַכּוּ שְׁמוֹ:
- Ps 96.1-2; תְּשׁוּעָה *proclaim, announce*; בָּשָׂר *victory, salvation*
4. שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֹדֶשׁ
שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:
שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה
בְּרַכּוּ שְׁמוֹ
בְּשָׂרוֹ מִיּוֹם־לֵוִים יְשׁוּעָתוֹ:
- Gn 4.8; Cain, Abel
5. וַיֹּאמֶר קַן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו
וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה
וַיִּקָּם קַן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ:
- Gn 2.17
6. וּמַעַץ הַדֶּעַת טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ
כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת:
- 2 Sam 21.17; Philistine
7. וַיִּךְ אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיְמִיתֵהוּ
- Ps 23.3; מַעְגָּל *path, track*
8. נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב
וַיַּנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְּלֵי־צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:
- Is 58.1; שׁוֹפָר *ram's horn; trumpet*; רוּם *be high, exalted*; Jacob
9. כְּשׁוֹפָר הָרִם קוֹלְךָ
וַהֲגִד לְעַמִּי פִשְׁעָם
וּלְבֵית יַעֲקֹב חֲטָאתָם:
- 2 Sam 4.10; Saul
10. הִנֵּה־מֵת שָׂאוּל
- Josh 9.8; מֵאֵין *from where?*; Joshua
11. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲנַחְנוּ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ מִי אַתֶּם וּמֵאֵין תָּבֹאוּ:
- 1 Sam 8.5
12. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה אַתָּה זִקְנָתָ
וּבְנֶיךָ לֹא הִלְכוּ בְּדַרְכֶּיךָ
עֲתָה שִׁמְמָה־לָּנוּ מֶלֶךְ לְשַׁפְטֵנוּ כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם:
- 2 Kgs 4.20; 3ms Q Pr < יָשָׁב *stay, sit*; כָּרַךְ *knee*; צָהָרִים *noon*
13. וַיִּשְׁאַהוּ וַיְבִיֵּאֵהוּ אֶל־אִמּוֹ
וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־בְּרִפְיָה עַד־הַצָּהָרִים וַיָּמָת:
- Gn 2.22; צִלָּע *piece* [trad., *rib*]
14. וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַצֶּלַע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח
מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיַּבְאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדָם:
- 1 Sam 2.31; גָּרַע *cut / chop off*
15. הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים וְגִדַּעְתִּי אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ
וְאֶת־זֶרַע בֵּית אָבִיךָ מִהָיֹת זָקֵן בְּבֵיתְךָ:
- Ex 20.24
16. בְּכָל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכִּיר אֶת־שְׁמִי
אָבֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבִרְכָתִיךָ:
- Ne 2.18
17. וַיֹּאמְרוּ נָקוּם וּבְנִינוּ וַיַּחֲזְקוּ יְדֵיהֶם לְטוֹבָה:
- 2 Kgs 6.22; when *waw* + imperfect follows an imperative, it is often telic (purpose or result)
18. שִׁים לָחֶם וַיִּמֵּם לַפְּנִיָּהם וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ
וַיִּלְכוּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיהֶם:

Ps 119.73

19. יָדִיד עֲשׂוּנִי וַיְכַנְנֵנִי
הַבִּינִי וְאַלמִדָּה מִצֹּחֲדִי:

Ps 1.5-6

20. עַל־כֵּן לֹא־יָקֻמוּ רָשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט
וְחַטָּאִים בַּעֲדַת צְדִיקִים:
כִּי־יִודַע יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים
וְדֶרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:

Is 40.9; גְּבוּהָ *high* (not III-ה); מְבַשֶּׁרֶת *messenger*
(f.s. D Ptc); Zion, Jerusalem

21. עַל הַר־גְּבוּהָ עָלִי־לָךְ מְבַשֶּׁרֶת צִיּוֹן
הָרִימִי בִכְחַ קוֹלְךָ מְבַשֶּׁרֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם
הָרִימִי אֶל־תִּירְאִי
אֲמַרִי לְעַרְי יְהוּדָה הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

28.8 *Enrichment: Dating Haggai*

One of the most carefully dated biblical books contains the prophecy of Haggai, חַגִּי (Ezekiel is a close second), with five date formulae in thirty-eight verses (the second and third are divided between two verses).

לַחֹדֶשׁ בִּשְׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לְדָרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁשִׁי בְּיוֹם אֶחָד	In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, ... (Hg 1.1)	29 August 520
בְּיוֹם עֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בִּשְׁשִׁי	... on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month (Hg 1.15a).	21 September 520
לַחֹדֶשׁ בִּשְׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לְדָרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ: בַּשְּׁבִיעִי בְּעֶשְׂרִים וָאֶחָד	In the second year of Darius the king, in the seventh [month], on the twenty- first day of the month (Hg 1.15b–2.1)	17 October 520
בְּעֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֲשִׁיעִי בִּשְׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לְדָרְיוֹשׁ	In the twenty-fourth [day] of the ninth [month], in the second year of Darius ... (Hg 2.10)	18 December 520
וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה שֵׁנִית אֶל־חַגִּי בְּעֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֲשִׁיעִי	The word of YHWH came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth [day] of the ninth [month] (Hg 2.20)	18 December 520

Such careful dating allows us to identify precisely the time of Haggai's ministry, and demonstrates the ancient Near Eastern tendency to date events by the king (cf. also Dn 1.1; Ezk *passim*) and other important figures (cf. the cross-references to the kings of Israel and Judah in the book of Kings), and events (cf. Amos 1.1). Although the result is not always a precise chronology in the modern sense, it nonetheless lets us see Israel's development and some of their history (or, in this case, the circumstances of the Persian province of Yehud).

In this case (as also in, e.g. the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah), it establishes a relative chronology for the prophet's messages, and allows us to see how he adapted his message to the changing times (even if we do not know exactly what changes he was addressing).

Lesson 29

THE MASORA

In the outer margin and directly below the text block of BHS lie two sets of notes. The *masora*¹⁸⁸ *marginalis* (marginal *masora*)—also called *Masora parva* ([Mp]; “Small Masora”)—consists of single letters, and unpointed words and expressions in Hebrew and Palestinian Aramaic, often with overhead dots, along with occasional superscript Arabic numerals. Below the text block, the first set of footnotes, which in BHS consists largely of “Mm” followed by a numeral, is a cross-reference system, the *Masora magna* ([Mm]; “Great Masora”), which directed the scribe to similar occurrences of the same or similar word(s).

Both parts of the *masora* are parts of an elaborate system designed to encourage scribal accuracy in copying the text, by telling the scribe to copy the word or phrase just as it stood in the text. The Masoretes—the “scribes” who copied biblical manuscripts, and developed the *masora*. were thus concerned to protect the text from scribes who might take it upon themselves to correct what they thought were mistakes. Masoretic notes, in essence, admit that the textual form was strange, unusual, disputed, or even wrong, but warn the copyist that it was better to leave a known error than for every scribe to begin “correcting” the text as he saw fit.¹⁸⁹ The Masoretes were saying in essence, “We know that this form is unusual—it only occurs a few other times in the Bible—but copy it as it stands. Don’t change it to something more familiar or ‘correct’.”

29.1 Reading the Masora

29.1.1 The Masora Marginalis

1. A *circellus* (“little circle”) over a word or between words refer to notes in Mp. A *circellus* over a word (מִרְחָק; Gn 37.18) means that the note refers only to that word; a *circellus* between two words (אֶל-בְּנֵי; Gn 37.35), or a series of *circelli* between more than two words means that the note refers to that sequence of words. These are occasionally interwoven, so that a note refers to a single word in the middle of a marked series of words. You have to sort out which note refers to which piece of the text.

In Gn 13.10 (בְּנֵי-יִהוּדָה) the circles mean that the first note is to בְּנֵי and the second to the entire phrase (בְּנֵי-יִהוּדָה). In Gn 37.25, seven consecutive words are marked, but the circles are over the words, not between them. There are seven marginal notes, one for each word.

2. The usual syntax of a masoretic note is the main statistic first, followed by any further explanation or discussion, including real or apparent exceptions or limitations to the number. The first example in Gn 37.18 (זֶה חָם בְּתוֹרָה), above, restricts the statistic to the Torah (בְּתוֹרָה ≈ *in Torah*).
3. Heavy dots separate masoretic notes, which are read from right to left. The rightmost note, therefore, refers to the first marked word or group of words in the line, *in the order of the Hebrew text*.
4. Superscript dots have several purposes:
 - a. A dot over a *single* letter means that it is a *numeral*, and that the form in the text occurs that many times (e.g., Gn 37.18 י = 7 times).

188. It seems that the *masora* was originally so-called because the notes restricted the interpretation of the text (מִסְרָה, “fetter” or “bond”, occurs only in Ezk 20.37) by eliminating discrepancies (as they thought). It was later connected to the root מִסַּר (“to assign”, “hand down/over”; it occurs only in Nu 31.5, 16) in the sense of “received tradition”.

189. For an extended description of the *masora* and how to read and use it, see Kelley, Mynatt, & Crawford (1998).

- b. A dot over *every* letter in a group of letters means that it is a compound *numeral* (e.g., in Gn 37.18 י"ז = 17 (10 + 7); Gn 37.22 ה"י = 15 (10 + 5)).
- c. A dot over the *last* letter in a group of letters means that the word is *abbreviated* (e.g., in Gn 37.18 בתור חס represents, respectively, חסר (*lacking* or *defective*; i.e., without the expected vowel letter) and בתורה (*in Torah*)).
5. Numerals mean that the particular form of the word (morphological form, along with any prefixes and suffixes) occurs only that number of times (e.g., the 1cp Q F + 3ms suffix + *w* of the verb הרג occurs only in Gn 37.20; the root הרג occurs 168 times in all).
6. In the *Prolegomena* of BHS is the *Index siglorum et abbreviationum masorae parvae* ("Index of the Signs & Abbreviations of the Mp"). This lists most of the words and abbreviations used in Mp in alphabetical order, and glosses them into Latin. Glosses for these Latin terms are listed in "An English Key to the Latin Words and Abbreviations and Symbols of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia" (Rüger 1985), which is printed as a separate booklet, or included in newer printings of BHS immediately following the Latin index.
7. Superscript numerals in Mp (cf. Gn 37.20: ²⁰ר) refer to the first set of footnotes in BHS, which consists of a list of notes in the form: "Mm" followed by a numeral (in this case "Mm 276"). These refer in turn to numbered lists in G. Weil (*Massorah Gedolah*. Vol. 1. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971), which lists the verses containing the occurrences of the form described in the note. You can check this quickly with a modern concordance (e.g., Even-Shoshan).
8. ק̣ in Mp stands for *qere*, Aramaic for "Read!" (קרא, ms imperative), and means that the vowels in the text should be read with the consonants written above the ק̣ in the margin. The consonants in the text are known as the *ketib* (כתיב, "[that which is] written"), which is a combination of consonants and vowel points that cannot be pronounced as written. The *qere* "corrects" the problem by suggesting the appropriate reading, but putting it in the margin meant that they did not have to change the consonantal text. These *qere/ketib* readings are important in textual criticism; they are referred to as Q and K, respectively, in the textual footnotes. In Gn 39.20, for example:

Interpretation	Masora	Lemma
Read אֲסִירִי as though it were written אֲסִירִי. The text (K) has the consonants of the Qp Ptc (אֲסִירִי, <i>prisoners</i> ; as in Gn 40.3, 5); the Masoretes preferred the tradition that read this as mp of the noun אֲסִיר, <i>prisoner</i> , which occurs in Gn 39.22. [For further examples, see "Enrichment", below.]	אֲסִירִי ק̣	אֲסִירִי

9. Finally, remember that although you can use a lexicon, Hebrew concordance (e.g., Even-Shoshan, Mandelkern), or electronic database to look up the form that is described in the note, such resources had not yet been invented when the Masoretes were at work—a testimony to their knowledge of the text!

29.1.2 The Ending Masora

1. At the end of every biblical document, the Masoretes appended a list of statistics for that text. In order to help them ensure that they had not left out or doubled any verses, the scribes counted the number of verses (הַפְסוּקִים *pasûqîm*, marked off by *sof pasûq*), and wrote the total at the end, as well as the first word(s) of the middle verse (וְחֲצִי, *and its half*). A scribe could thus determine which half of the document had an extra or missing *pasûq*. [*Pasûqîm* do not always correspond to verses, since a few "verses" do not end with *sof pasûq*].
2. They also totaled the *s'darîm* (סְדָרִים) for each text, "reading sections" for reading through the Torah on the Sabbath in three years, which are marked by a large *samek* in the inner margin, "crowned" by a sideways *qamesi*, and numbered by small Hebrew letters within square brackets. One of these (#33) comes at Gn 37.1, which also coincides with the beginning of a much larger unit called a *paraš* (marked פָּרָשׁ in the inner margin), which were used to read through the Torah on the Sabbath in one year (*p'rašôt* were not listed in the final

Masora). Within the text block a Hebrew numeral in small letters records the number of *pasûqîm* in the previous *paraš* (קנ"ד = 154 *pasûqîm*).

3. Since the Masoretes treated the Minor Prophets as a single entity—"The Twelve"—their final masora lists only the number of verses; Malachi also lists the central verse for the entire prophetic corpus (Joshua – Malachi) and the number of *sedarîm* for the Twelve. More elaborate lists follow Deuteronomy and Chronicles.
4. This is the ending *masora* for Qohelet (Ecclesiastes):

סכום הפסוקים	<i>The total of the "verses"</i>
של ספר ר"כב	<i>of the work [is] 222</i>
והציו מה שהיה כבר ²¹	<i>and its middle / half [is the verse that begins]</i>
	<i>מה שהיה כבר²¹</i>
וסדרים ד'	<i>and sedarim [are] 4.</i>

The superscript (²¹) at the end of the line that identifies the middle verse (והציו) directs us to #21 in the first set of notes at the bottom of the page—the apparatus for the *Masora Magna*, which then sends us to Qo 6.10; where Mp reads הספר בפסוקים חצי ("the middle of the work in verses").

29.2 Masoretic Numerals

These are the values of the letters of the alphabet in the *masora* (note the superlinear dot that indicates their numerical function).

Numeral	Value	Notes	Numeral	Value	Notes
א	1	used in combinations only (see ל, below)	ק - ת	100-400	
ב	2	On ב ל see below.	ך	500	
ג - ד	3-9		ם	600	
ה	10		ן	700	
ו	20		ף	800	
ז	1	used alone for unique forms	ץ	900	
	30	used in combinations for 31-39 (e.g., א ל = 31)	א	1000	The dot is supposed to be slightly larger than the numeral for "one" (and so down the alphabet); some traditions use two dots to show thousands; in BHS the letter's position shows that it refers to thousands.
ח	40	This can also be an abbreviation for חן, from; the combination ח ב means either "two of" or "except for, with the exception of".			
ט	50		ב	2000	
י - יז	60-90		etc.		

29.3 Summary

The Masoretes' aim was to safeguard the continued integrity of the biblical text as it was copied by hand from one MS to another. Thus was the biblical text preserved for many centuries until the printing press began to make their work superfluous. With the passage of time, the masora came to be viewed as more ornamental than helpful, and [at least some of] its purpose and function was lost. We pay attention to the masoretic notes because they offer ancient suggestions about difficult readings (e.g., *qere/ketib*), because they signal unusual forms (e.g., *malē'/hasēr*), and because they

may point out interesting statistical coincidences that we might otherwise overlook (e.g., the clause לַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ, “there was a famine in the land”, occurs twice in the Bible, Gn 12.10; Ru 1.1).

29.4 Vocabulary

<i>rise, stand</i>	קום .443	<i>goat; goat hair</i>	עז .435
<i>be / become high, exalted</i>	רום .444	<i>be wonderful, amazing, miraculous</i>	פלא .436
<i>run</i>	רוץ .445	<i>wall, city</i>	קיר .437
<i>put, place, set</i> (cf. שִׁית) ¹⁹⁰	שים .446	<i>wash (oneself)</i>	רחץ .438
<i>turn (back), return, repent</i>	שוב .447	<i>rest; stop (doing something)</i>	שבת .439
<i>sing, chant</i>	שיר .448	<i>ram's horn (“trumpet”)</i>	שופר .440
<i>song, chant (n.)</i>	שיר .448	<i>inherited / owned property (real estate)</i>	אחוזת .441
<i>put, place, set</i> (cf. שִׁים)	שית .449	<i>friend (n), familiar (adj); chief (n)</i>	אלוף .442

29.5 Exercises

- Using the final masora, how many verses (פסוקים) and reading sections (סדרים) are in each of these biblical books? Locate the middle verse and its page no.

Book	פסוקים ("Verses")	סדרים ("Sections")	Middle verse (חציו)	
			Ref.	Page no.
Genesis				
Kings				
Ezra-Nehemiah				

- Interpret one or two masoretic notes on the assigned reading passage, and check their accuracy with a concordance or electronic database (see the example on the next page). Do any of them affect the reading or function of the text? If so, how, and how will you determine which reading to prefer?

29.6 Enrichment: The Masora Marginalis to Genesis 37.18-22

Interpretation	Masora	Lemma	V.
[This word is written] seven times “defectively” [חסר] (i.e., with <i>holem</i> rather than <i>holem-waw</i>) in Torah. You could find the other six occurrences (Gn 22.4; Ex 2.4; 20.18, 21; 24.1; Nu 9.10) in a Hebrew concordance. Checking all of its occurrences shows that the note refers to the entire form (preposition + adjective).	ז חס בתור	מרחק	18
[This word occurs] three times in the Bible (cf. Jr 1.5; 13.16).	נ	ובטן	
[This word is written] seventeen times “full” [מלא] (also called <i>plene</i> , Latin for “full”), i.e., with the vowel letter ך. The occurrences are listed in Mm #250 (the same form and note occur in cf. Gn 37.6).	יז מל בתור	אליהם	

190. Although these two verbs are nearly synonymous, שִׁית occurs more than 550 times, whereas שִׁית occurs only about 80 times (and never in a book in which שִׁית does not also occur).

This is the only occurrence of this form in the Bible.	וַיִּתְנַבְּלוּ ל	
[This word is written] two times <i>defectively</i> [חסר] (i.e., without the vowel letter [holem without waw]) in the Bible (cf. Gn 42.9).	הַחֲלָמוֹת ב חס	19
This form occurs twice in the Bible (cf. Gn 24.65)	הַלֵּזָה ב	
This is the only occurrence of this form in the Bible.	וַיִּתְרַגְּדוּ ל	20
This form occurs four times in the Bible (cf. Gn 37.33; Ezk 15.5; 19.12).	אֶקְלָתָהּ ד	
This form occurs four times in the Bible, listed in #276 (cf. 2Kg 7.13; Is 41.23; 66.5).	וַיִּרְאֶה ד ²⁰	
This form occurs three times in the Bible (cf. Gn 37.8; Dn 2.2).	חֲלָמוֹתָיו ג	
This is the only defective occurrence of this word (i.e., without the vowel letter ם) in the Bible. Even-Shoshan's concordance shows that this is the only time that a form of נִצַּל could have the <i>yod</i> but does not.	וַיִּצַּלְהוּ ל וחס	21
This form occurs twice closely following [i.e., immediately after] the accent <i>zarqa</i> (over רֵאיוֹבֶן; it is the “hook”, and occurs right before words marked with <i>segolta</i> —the “upside-down supra-linear <i>segol</i>).	לִזְרָקָא ²¹ ב דסמיוכ	22
This form occurs three times in the Bible (cf. Ezk 18.31; 20.7).	הַשְּׁלִיכוּ ג	
This form occurs fifteen times in the Bible (the numerals are reversed to avoid abbreviating the divine name), three of which [מִנֵּה] have <i>qames</i> (abbreviated קִמָּ).	וַיִּדְּ הִי ג מִנֵּה קִמָּ	

None of these notes affects the readings or interpretation (content) of the text, although they should keep a scribe from changing less common forms to match what was more familiar. This may seem mere pedantry in a world after Gutenberg; it is nonetheless a reminder of the faithfulness of many generations of now-unknown scribes without whose work the Bible as we know it would not exist.

Lesson 30

I-י/ו VERBS

Like I-י roots (Lesson 26), I-י/ו verbs are weak whenever the initial letter of the root is followed by silent *šewa*—that is, throughout the H-stems, as well as in some forms of *qal* (F, Pr, V, NC) and *nifal* (P, Ptc). They are strong throughout the D-stems. Some I-י verbs therefore look just like I-י forms, but whereas I-י forms tend to have two radicals with *dageš forte* in the first letter, I-י forms tend to have a *long* prefix vowel, *without* a doubled second radical.¹⁹¹

Stem	Weak Forms	Strong Forms
Q	F, Pr, V [NC,NA]	P, Ptc [NC, NA]
N	P, Ptc	F, Pr, V [NC,NA]
D, Dp, Dt	None	All forms
H, Hp	All forms	None

30.1 *Nifal, Hifil, Hofal* (N, H, Hp)

The original initial י- appears as a long vowel in N P and Ptc (י-), and throughout H (י-) and Hp (י-). The other forms of N are strong, with doubled *waw* [+ *qameš*] (י-) as the first radical. The long prefix vowel, or the doubled *waw*, is the main clue to the presence of a I-י root:

Prefix/ Prefix Vowel	Stem	Conjugations
י- -	N	perfect, participle
י- -	H	1cs imperfect, preterite
י- -	N	imperfect, preterite (strong, with doubled י- for initial י-)
י- -	N	imperative, infinitive construct
י- -	H	
י- -	Hp	all forms

The skeleton paradigm of these stems illustrates the basic principle:

	יִשְׁבַּ	Q	N	H	Hp
P 3ms	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ
F 3ms	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ
V 2ms	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	---
NC	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ
Ptc ms	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ	יִשְׁבַּ

191. This chart of weak and strong forms is identical to that for I-י roots.

30.2 *Qal* (F, Pr, V, NC)

I-י verbs are **strong** in the *qal* perfect and participle, which are therefore not discussed. I-י verbs have three forms in *qal* F, Pr, V, & NC. Some verbs are mixed in type.

1. **Type I** (*qal* imperfect with *šere*). The prefix and stem vowels are both *šere*, and the initial י- of the verbal root is missing in Q F, Pr, V, NC. הלך is not I-י, but follows this pattern as well (it is the only non-I-י verbal root that does this). The skeleton paradigm shows forms that *differ* from the basic verb.

	<i>Qal</i>	הלך	ישב
F	3ms	יָלַךְ	יָשָׁב
	2fs	תָּלַכְּ	תָּשָׁבְּ
	3mp	יָלְכוּ	יָשְׁבוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּשֶׁב
V	2ms	לָךְ	שָׁב
	2mp	לָכוּ	שָׁבוּ
NC		לֹכֵת	שֹׁבֵת

N.B.: Some forms of these roots look just like forms from I-י roots, and can be distinguished from them only by knowing the vocabulary, or from the context. There is a paradigm of similar forms from different roots in Appendix D.

2. **Type II** (*qal* imperfect with *pataḥ*). In these roots the initial י- is a vowel letter in Q F, but disappears in Q V and NC of some verbs. The prefix vowel is *hireq* and the stem vowel *pataḥ*.

	<i>Qal</i>	ירש	יבש
F	3ms	יָרַשׁ	יָבֹשׁ
	2fs	תִּירַשְׁ	---
	3mp	יָרְשׁוּ	יִבְשׁוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיִּירַשׁ	וַיִּבֹשׁ
V	2ms	רַשׁ	בֹּשׁ
	2mp	רְשׁוּ	---
NC		רֹשֵׁת	יֹבֵשׁ

3. **Type III** (original I-י roots). There are only six verbs of this type (יָמַן, יָקַץ, יָשַׁר, יָלַל, יָנַק, יָטַב). They all occur primarily in Q and H. Since the initial י- is present in all forms, either as a vowel letter or consonant, these are also called I-י roots. The prefix vowel is *hireq-yod* in Q (like Type II, above), and *šere-yod* in H.

		<i>Qal</i>	<i>Hifil</i>
P	3ms	יָטַב	הִיטִיב
	3cp	יָטְבוּ	הִיטִיבוּ
F	3ms	יִיטַב	יִיטִיב
	2fs	תִּיטַבְּ	תִּיטִיבְּ
	3mp	יִיטְבוּ	יִיטִיבוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיִּיטַב	וַיִּיטִב
V	2ms	יָטַב	הִיטִב
	2mp	יָטְבוּ	הִיטִיבוּ
NC		יָטַב	הִיטִיב
Ptc	ms	יָטַב	מִיטִיב

30.3 Frequency

These are all **nineteen** I-י verbs that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew, listed by frequency.

יָשַׁב	<i>sit, dwell, remain</i>	1078x	יָטַב	<i>be(come) good</i>	120x
יָצָא	<i>leave, go out</i>	1055x	יָרָה	<i>throw (D); thank (H)</i>	115x
יָדַע	<i>know</i>	924x	יָתַר	<i>remain, be left (N), leave (H)</i>	106x
יָלַד	<i>bear, give birth, beget</i>	488x	יָעַץ	<i>counsel, advise</i>	82x
יָרַד	<i>go down, descend</i>	380x	יָצַר	<i>shape, form, mold</i>	64x
יָרָא	<i>fear, be afraid [of]</i>	377x	יָכַח	<i>dispute (N); rebuke (H)</i>	56x
יָרַשׁ	<i>subdue, [dis]possess</i>	231x	יָבֵשׁ	<i>be(come) dry</i>	55x
יָסַף	<i>add (Q), repeat (H)</i>	212x	יָרָה	<i>throw; teach (H)</i>	54x
יָשַׁע	<i>save (H)</i>	205x	יָצַק	<i>serve (food); pour (liquid)</i>	53x
יָכַל	<i>be able, prevail</i>	194x			

30.4 Vocabulary

<i>serve (food); pour (liquid)</i>	יָצַק	.457	<i>be[come] dry, dry up (st. vb.)</i>	יָבֵשׁ	.450
<i>shape, form, mold</i>	יָצַר	.458	<i>know, understand</i>	יָדַע	.451
<i>inhabitant, citizen, dweller (Q Ptc)</i>	יָשַׁב	.459	<i>be[come] good (cf. טוב, טוב)</i>	יָטַב	.452
<i>save, deliver (implied: by winning a victory) (H)</i>	יָשַׁע	.460	<i>dispute (N); correct, rebuke (H)</i>	יָכַח	.453
<i>deliverance, salvation; victory</i>	יְשׁוּעָה		<i>repeat, do again (with inf. const.); add (H); add (Q)</i>	יָסַף	.454
<i>remain, be left [behind/over] (N)</i>	יָתַר	.461	<i>counsel, advise</i>	יָעַץ	.455
<i>be[come] small, insignificant (st. vb.); small, insignificant (adj.)</i>	קָטַן	.462	<i>advice, counsel</i>	עֵצָה	
			<i>leave, go out, exit, depart</i>	יָצָא	.456

30.5 Exercises

1. After learning to recognize the I-י verbs, locate and identify (parse) any I-י verbs in whatever biblical passage your teacher assigns.
2. Gloss these verses, parsing all verbal forms.

S2 15.19; נָכְרִי *foreigner*

1. לָמָּה תֵּלֵךְ גַּם־אֶתָּה אֶתָּנוּ
שׁוּב וְשֵׁב עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־נָכְרִי אַתָּה

Ps 100.3; מִרְעִית *flock; pasturing, shepherding; pasturage*

2. דָּעוּ כִּי־יְהוָה הוּא אֱלֹהִים
הוּא־עָשָׂנוּ וְלוֹ אֲנַחְנוּ
עֲמוֹ וְצֹאן מִרְעִיתוֹ:

Ps 100.4

3. בָּאוּ שְׁעָרָיו בְּתוֹדָה
חֲצִרָתָיו בְּתִהְלָה
הוֹדוּ־לוֹ בְּרִכּוֹ שְׁמוֹ:

4. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־גִּדְעוֹן עוֹד הָעָם רָב
הוֹרֵד אוֹתָם אֶל־הַמַּיִם ...
וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלָיְךָ זֶה יִלְךְ אַתָּה הוּא יִלְךְ אַתָּה
וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר אֵלָיְךָ זֶה לֹא־יִלְךְ עִמָּךְ
הוּא לֹא יִלְךְ:
5. וְלֹא יָכְלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָקוּם לִפְנֵי אִיבֵיהֶם
עַרְף יָפְנוּ לִפְנֵי אִיבֵיהֶם
6. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים בֶּן־מֶאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה אָנֹכִי הַיּוֹם
לֹא־אוּכַל עוֹד לָצֵאת וּלְבוֹא
וַיִּהְיֶה אָמַר אֵלִי לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה:
7. כָּעַת מִחֵר אֲשַׁלַּח אֵלֶיךָ אִישׁ מֵאַרְצֵן בְּנִימִן
וּמִשְׁחָתוֹ לְגִנִּיד עַל־עַמֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת־עַמִּי מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים
כִּי רָאִיתִי אֶת־עַמִּי כִּי בָאָה צַעֲקָתוֹ אֵלַי:
8. וַיְהִי כִּהְיוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֹא הַבֵּיתָה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכָתוֹ
וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת שֵׁם בְּבִית:
9. אֲבָרְהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק:
10. וַיִּשְׁמַע הָאֱלֹהִים בְּקוֹל מְנוּחַ
וַיָּבֹא מִלֵּאךְ הָאֱלֹהִים עוֹד אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה
וְהָיָה יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּשָׂדֶה וּמְנוּחַ אִשָּׁה אֵין עִמָּה:
11. וַנִּתְחַדֵּף לָעָם הַזֶּה לַחֲזוּמַת נַחֲשֶׁת בְּצוּרָה
וְנִלְחַמוּ אֵלָיְךָ וְלֹא־יִוָּכְלוּ לָךְ
כִּי־אַתָּה אָנִי לְהוֹשִׁיעַךָ וּלְהַצִּילְךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
12. אָנֹכִי אֲרַד עִמָּךְ מִצְרִימָה וְאָנֹכִי אַעֲלֶךָ
13. כִּי־יִלְד יִלְד־לָנוּ בֶּן נַתַּן־לָנוּ
וְתִהְיֶה הַמִּשְׁרָה עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ
וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ אֵל גְּבוּר אֲבִיעֵד
שֶׁר־שְׁלוֹם:
14. כִּי יֵדַע אֱלֹהִים כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכַלְכֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ
וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וְהִיטְתֶּם כְּאֱלֹהִים יֵדְעִי טוֹב וְרָע:
15. וְאַת־שֵׁם קָדְשִׁי אוֹדִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְלֹא־אֲחַל אֶת־שֵׁם־קָדְשִׁי עוֹד
וַיֵּדְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה קָדוֹשׁ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:
16. וְאַתֶּם עֲזַבְתֶּם אוֹתִי וַתַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
לָכֵן לֹא־אוֹסִיף לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם:
17. וְלֹא יָכְלוּ בְנֵי מִנְשָׁה לְהוֹרִישׁ אֶת־הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
וַיִּוָּאֵל הַכְּנַעֲנִי לְשֶׁבֶת בְּאַרְצֵן הַזֹּאת:
18. וַיֹּאמֶר צֹא וְעַמְדַת כְּהֵר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה עֹבֵר וְרוּחַ גְּדוּלָּה וְחֹזֶק מִפָּרֶךְ הָרִים
- Jg 7.4
- Josh 7.12; עַרְף [back of] neck
- Dt 31.2
- 1 Sam 9.16; גִּנִּיד leader; Benjamin, Israel, Philistines
- Gn 39.11
- Gn 25.19; Abraham, Isaac
- Jg 13.9; Manoah
- Jr 15.20; בְּצוּרָה fortified; overcome (without a complementary NC)
- Gn 46.4; Egypt
- Is 9.5; מִשְׁרָה, rule, dominion; שִׁכְמוֹ, shoulder; עַד + אֲבִיעֵד, Eternal Father
- Gn 3.5; פָּקַח, open (vb.)
- Ezk 39.7; חָלַל, pollute, defile (1cs H F)
- Jg 10.13
- Josh 17.12; יָאֵל, be determined; Manasseh, Canaanite(s)
- 1 Kgs 19.11; פָּרַק, tear / break off (D)

Pr 27.1; מָחָר, *tomorrow*19. אֶל־תִּתְּהַלֵּל בְּיוֹם מָחָר
כִּי לֹא־תִרְדַּע מַה־יִּלְד יוֹם:

Gn 12.19

20. לְמַה אָמַרְתָּ אֲחֵתִי הוּא וְאָקַח אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה
וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ קַח וְלֹדִי:30.6 *Enrichment: Pay Attention While Reading*

One way to strengthen our grasp of Biblical Hebrew is to choose some aspect of grammar or syntax, note its occurrences as we read, and analyze its function. Paying attention to one aspect of the text will encourage you to pay attention to other things as well, but—and far more important—it will help you form a view of how Hebrew actually functions, as opposed to merely reading a description in a book and translating a few exercises. If we then write a brief description of our results; we have a resource on the grammar or syntax (or even vocabulary) of a biblical book (with a cross-reference in your favourite reference grammar or lexicon), so that we can interact with statements like “The participle in ... always/never/rarely ...” based on our knowledge of what actually happens in the text.

We might, for example, try to note all of the asyndetic clauses in a passage to see if they have anything in common, such as type of material, morphology, syntax, or some other characteristic. Or to describe the function of the infinitive construct in the book of Judges, or the participle in Jonah (below).

This is an example of how you might describe all of the participles in the book of Jonah.

Participles in the Book of Jonah

As noted in Lessons 11 and 12, the participle (so-called) in Biblical Hebrew has three functions, which are precisely the same as the functions of the adjective, hence it is often called a “verbal adjective”. Its three functions are: (1) verbal/predicate; (2) nominal/substantive; and (3) adjectival/attributive. In a syntagm of a different type, it (4) accompanies the verbal root *hyh*, apparently as a temporally specific parallel to the verbal/predicate function.¹⁹²

This paper tests the validity of the three-fold division of participial function in Biblical Hebrew by reviewing all of the participles in the biblical book of Jonah. Only the first three functions occur in the book of Jonah, as this table shows:

Attrib.	Pred.	Subst.	<i>hyh</i>
2	10	1	---
15%	77%	7.5%	

Description

The first and last participles in the book are *attributive/adjectival*; both are anarthrous, describing a grammatically indefinite noun: “a ship [that was] *going* to Tarshish (1.3). The second modifies YHWH, but here Jonah refers to him as “a god ... *relenting* [who *relents*] over the evil” (4.2), which follows four other attributes: “a god [who is] gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in lovingkindness”. Since the phrases all modify the anarthrous אל “god”, they are themselves anarthrous and attributive.

The single *substantive/nominal* occurs in the poem found in Jonah 2. The participle מְשֹׁמְרִים “those who regard” is the only *piel* occurrence of the root שָׁמַר *šmr* in the Bible. (This substantive function of the participle is extremely frequent in biblical poetry, apparently as a means of syntactic compression.)

192. The “predicate adjective” function is rarely fulfilled by *hyh* + adjective, but rather by the verbal/predicate function of stative verbs. This (the fourth) function does not occur in the book of Jonah.

The majority of participles in Jonah (8 or 10/11) are *predicate/verbal*, functioning as the predicate of their clauses. The repeated hendiadys הוֹלֵךְ וְסָעַר “continuing to rage/storm” (1.11, 13) accounts for four of these occurrences. If they are counted individually, they account for ten of thirteen occurrences; if they are counted as “compound” forms (i.e., as genuine cases of hendiadys), they account for eight of eleven.

These predicate participles modify pronominal subjects (1.10, 12; 3.2, 9), nominal subjects (1.11a-b, 13a-b, 3.4); one occurs in a syntagm that is difficult to identify: מִה־לֵךְ נִרְדָּם “What’s with you—asleep?” (perhaps i.e., “Why are you sleeping?”), but in which the participle, being masculine singular, seems to modify the 2 ms pronominal suffix that is the object of the preposition.

All of the participles in Jonah can be assigned to one of the three functions (above); there are no “exceptions” or unexplained “remainders”.

Examples (all)

A	P	S	H		
A				וַיִּמָּצָא אֹנִיָּה בָּאָה תְּרָשִׁישׁ	1.3
	P			וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מִה־לֵךְ נִרְדָּם	1.6
	P			כִּי מִלְפָּנַי יְהוּה הוּא בָּרַח	1.10
	P(bis)			כִּי הֵימ הוֹלֵךְ וְסָעַר:	1.11a-b
	P			כִּי יוֹדַע אֲנִי כִּי ...	1.12
	P(bis)			כִּי הֵימ הוֹלֵךְ וְסָעַר עֲלֵיהֶם:	1.13a-b
		S		מִשְׁמָרִים תְּבַלִּי־שׁוּא חֲסָדָם יַעֲזֹבוּ:	2.9
	P			אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי דָּבַר אֵלָיְךָ:	3.2
	P			וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְנִינֹה נִהְפָּכֶת:	3.4
	P			מִי־יֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנַחֵם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ	3.9
A				יִדְעֹתִי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי־חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אֶרְךָ אַפִּים וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְנַחֵם עַל־הָרָעָה:	4.2

In this case, the goal is not to establish a new theory of participial function, but rather to force ourselves to pay attention to how the text means what it says, how the author used his language to convey his message, and thus allow us to learn how we ought to expect that language to function as we read other parts of the Bible. It is obviously much easier to do this for a short book like Jonah than for, e.g., the book of Judges, with nearly two hundred participles. But the work that we do on Jonah ought to prepare us for the larger task of studying Judges.

Nor is it necessary to do this for an entire (long) book. Looking at the function of *wayhi* or of the participle (as here), or of any particular aspect of syntax or morphology for a few chapters will both stretch and strengthen our understanding of how Biblical Hebrew “works”.

Lesson 31

GEMINATE (ע"ע) VERBS

Geminate verbs have the same consonant as their second and third radicals, such as רעע and סבב (the term “geminate”, or “twinned”, reflects the theory that they were coined from biradical roots by repeating the second radical). They are strong in three forms of Q P (3ms, 3fs, 3cp), and in Q Ptc and NA. They are weak in all other stems and conjugations. Some verbs occur in *polet*, *polal*, and *hitpolel*, like the hollow verbs (above), others (e.g., הלל, *praise*, פלל, *pray*) occur primarily in the regular D-stems and so look like the basic verb (i.e., all three radicals are present in all forms).

31.1 Forms

The prefix vowel of the geminate verbs is nearly always the same as that of the hollow verbs (Lesson 28); a “helping [anaptyctic] vowel” joins PGN endings to the verbal root (-ו- in perfect; -י- in imperfect, preterite, & imperative). The second and third radicals often coalesce and are written once with *dageš forte*. The verbal root occurs in three basic forms:

Form of the Verbal Root	Occurs in
סב	forms without PGN endings
סב-	forms with PGN endings (but not imperative)
סבב	a few forms (<i>all</i> forms in the D-stems)

This skeleton paradigm illustrates these characteristics:

סבב√	Q	N	H	Hp	Po
P 2ms	סבות	נסבות	הסבות	הוסבות	סובבת
3ms	סבב קל	נסב	הסב	הוסב	סבב
3cp	סבבו קלו	נסבו	הסבו	הוסבו	סבבו
F 3ms	יסב יקל	יסב	יסב	יוסב	יסובב
2fs	תסבי	תסבי	תסבי	תוסבי	תסובבי
2fp	תסבינה	תסבינה	תסבינה	תוסבינה	תסבבנה
V 2ms	סב	הסב	הסב		סבב
NC	סב	הסב	הסב		סבב

31.2 Geminate Verbs in *Qal*

<i>Qal</i>		קלל√	סבב√
P	1cs	קָלוּתִי	סָבַוְתִי
	2ms	קָלוּתְךָ	סָבַוְתְךָ
	2fs	קָלוּתְךָ	סָבַוְתְךָ
	3ms	קָל	סָבַב
	3fs	קָלָהּ	סָבְבָהּ
	1cp	קָלוּנוֹ	סָבַוְנוֹ
	2mp	קָלוּתְכֶם	סָבַוְתְכֶם
	2fp	קָלוּתְכֶן	סָבַוְתְכֶן
	3cp	קָלוּ	סָבְבוּ
F	1cs	אָקַל	אָסַב
	2ms	תָּקַלְךָ	תָּסַבְךָ
	2fs	תָּקַלְךָ	תָּסַבְךָ
	3ms	יָקַל	יָסַב
	3fs	תָּקַלָּהּ	תָּסַבְהָ
	1cp	יָקַלְנוּ	נָסַבְנוּ
	2mp	תָּקַלְכֶם	תָּסַבְכֶם
	2fp	תָּקַלְכֶן	תָּסַבְכֶן
	3mp	יָקַלוּ	יָסַבוּ
	3fp	תָּקַלְיֶנָּה	תָּסַבְיֶנָּה
Pr	3ms	וַיִּקַּל	וַיִּסַּב
V	2ms	סָב	
	2fs	סָבִי	
	2mp	סָבוּ	
	2fp	סָבִינָה	
NC		קָל	סָב
Ptc	ms	קָל	סָבֵב

1. *Qal* participle and infinitive absolute are **strong**, as are *qal* perfect forms with vocalic or no PGN sufformative (i.e., 3ms, 3fs, 3cp).
2. The stem syllable looks like the second syllable of the basic verb (*pataḥ* in Q P, *ḥolem* in Q F and V).
3. The three forms of the *qal* are compared in this table (their vertical alignment is merely for convenience; it does *not* imply that these would have been thought of as “types”).
4. The middle column shows alternate forms, which in Q imperfect, look exactly like I-נ roots (cf. נָפַל, §26.1); they can be distinguished only in context by knowing the vocabulary.

31.3 *Geminate Verbs in Nifal*

This is a skeletal paradigm (the full paradigm is in Appendix D).

Nifal		סבב/√
P	3ms	נָסַב
	1cp	נִסְבוּנוּ
F	3ms	יָסַב
	3mp	יִסְבוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיִּסַּב
V	2ms	הָסַב
	2mp	הִסְבוּ
NC		הָסַב
Ptc	ms	נֹסֵב

1. The prefix looks exactly like the hollow verbs (*qameš* or *šewa* in *nifal* perfect and participle; *hireq* with doubled first radical in all other forms).
2. Some forms (e.g., 3ms N F) look exactly like 3ms Q F of a I-נ verbal root (cf. יָפַל, *he will fall*).
3. The stem vowel is *pataḥ*, except in N P forms with consonantal PGN endings (see paradigm, above).

31.4 *Geminate Verbs in Hifil & Hofal*

This skeleton paradigm lists the H-stems of both סבב and שׁיב for comparison.

		Hifil		Hofal	
		סבב/√	שׁיב/√	סבב/√	שׁיב/√
P	1cs	הִסְבוֹתִי	הִשְׁיבוֹתִי	הוֹסְבוֹתִי	הוֹשְׁבוֹתִי
	3ms	הִסְבּ	הִשְׁיב	הוֹסְבּ	הוֹשְׁבּ
F	3ms	יִסְבּ	יִשְׁיב	יּוֹסְבּ	יּוֹשְׁבּ
	3mp	יִסְבוּ	יִשְׁיבוּ	יּוֹסְבוּ	יּוֹשְׁבוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיִּסְבּ	וַיִּשְׁבּ	וַיּוֹסְבּ	וַיּוֹשְׁבּ
V	2ms	הִסְבּ	הִשְׁבּ		
	2mp	הִסְבוּ	הִשְׁבוּ		
NC		הִסְבּ	הִשְׁבּ		הוֹשְׁבּ
Ptc	ms	מִסְבּ	שֹׁב	מוֹסְבּ	מוֹשְׁבּ

1. The prefix in *hifil* looks exactly like the hollow verbs (*šere* in H P and Ptc; *qameš* in all other forms).
2. The stem vowel is *šere* or *hireq* (before consonantal PGN endings). It is similar to the hollow verbs; geminate verbs tend to have *šere* rather than *hireq* as a stem vowel.
3. In *hofal*, the prefix vowel is always *šureq*, as in the I-י verbs, and the stem vowel is *pataḥ* in all forms, so that Hp geminates without PGN endings look exactly like Hp of I-י verbs without endings.

31.5 Geminate Verbs in *Polel*, *Polal*, & *Hitpolel*

Geminate verbs that use these forms look just like hollow verbs. This skeleton paradigm lists forms of a hollow verb (קום) for comparison. *Hitpolel* (Pt) looks exactly like *polel* with the prefixes הִתְ- (perfect, etc.) and יִתְ- (etc.).

P-stems		סבב√	קום√	Pt (both roots)
P	1cs	סִבַּבְתִּי	קִמַּמְתִּי	הִתְסַבַּבְתִּי
	3ms	סִבַּב	קִמַּם	הִתְסַבַּב
	1cp	סִבַּבְנוּ	קִמַּמְנוּ	הִתְסַבַּבְנוּ
F	3ms	יִסְבַּב	יִקְמַם	יִתְסַבַּב
	3mp	יִסְבְּבוּ	יִקְמְמוּ	יִתְסַבְּבוּ
Pr	3ms	וַיִּסְבַּב	וַיִּקְמַם	וַיִּתְסַבַּב
V	2ms	סִבַּב	קִמַּם	
	2mp	סִבְּבוּ	קִמְמוּ	
NC		סִבַּב	קִמַּם	
Ptc	ms	מִסְבֵּב	מִקְמֵם	

1. The only way to know whether a form in *polel*, *polal*, or *hitpolel* is from a hollow or geminate root is to know the vocabulary (which word best fits the context) or check a lexicon (most lexica cross-reference these forms to their putative root).
2. *Polal*, *et al.* occur with and without the vowel letter (וּ). The stem vowel only distinguishes the active (*polel*) from the passive (*polal*; not listed) when there is no ending, so that the function of most forms must be determined from the context.

31.6 “Double” Verbs

A number of hollow, III-ה, and geminate roots are apparently “double” verbs—different roots that share some of their consonants and overlap in function. For example,

הָמוּם	הוּם	<i>be in turmoil</i>
פָּרַר	פּוּר	<i>break, destroy</i>
צָרַר	צוּר	<i>bind, be in distress</i>
רָבַב	רְבָה	<i>be numerous, many</i>
שָׁגַג	שָׁנָה	<i>go astray, sin</i>

31.7 Identical & “Ambiguous” Verbal Forms

The results of the particular weaknesses of weak verbal roots creates two additional complications:

1. Forms can appear to be based on different verbal roots (one of which may not be attested). For example,

וַיִּסְבֵּ	3ms <i>qal</i> preterite < סבב	<i>He went around</i>
	looks like 3ms <i>qal</i> preterite < נסב	[The root does not exist in Biblical Hebrew.]

2. Some forms of a verbal root can be parsed in more than one way—that is, they are ambiguous *apart from a context*. A form may be located in more than one conjugation (below, נִשַּׁר, נִשָּׁר) or stem (below, וַיִּשָּׁם, וַיִּשְׁל). A form does not have several functions in a given context—its context restricts every form’s function, but the same form may be ambiguous *apart from its context*. This means that a form must be read and its function identified only within the requirements of its context.

מָוֹת	3ms <i>qal</i> perfect ms <i>qal</i> participle	<i>He died</i> [one who] [is] <i>dead</i>
שָׁרַח	3ms <i>qal</i> perfect ms <i>qal</i> participle	<i>He sang</i> [one who] <i>sings</i>
וַיִּשֶׂם	3ms <i>qal</i> preterite 3ms <i>hifil</i> preterite	<i>He placed / set</i> [someone/something] (one object) <i>He caused</i> [someone] <i>to place / set</i> [something] (two objects)
וַיַּעַל	3ms <i>qal</i> preterite 3ms <i>hifil</i> preterite	<i>He went up</i> (intransitive—no object) <i>He brought up</i> (transitive)

31.8 Frequency

This is a list of all **sixteen** geminate verbs that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew, in descending order of frequency.

סָבַב	<i>surround, go around</i>	162x	הָמוּם	<i>be complete, have integrity</i>	64x
הָלַל	<i>praise (P); boast (Dt)</i>	145x	צָרַר	<i>wrap up, be hostile to, confine</i>	61x
חָלַל	<i>be defiled (N); defile (D); begin (H)</i>	134x	אָרַר	<i>curse</i>	59x
רָעַע	<i>be evil, wicked, bad</i>	99x	שָׁדַד	<i>devastate, destroy, lay waste</i>	56x
שָׁמַם	<i>be astonished, desolate</i>	95x	חָתַת	<i>be shattered, dismayed</i>	53x
קָלַל	<i>be light, swift; slight, trifling, accursed</i>	82x	מָדַד	<i>measure</i>	52x
פָּלַל	<i>pray (Dt)</i>	80x	רָנַן	<i>shout (in joy, triumph)</i>	52x
חָנַן	<i>be gracious to, favor</i>	77x	פָּרַר	<i>break out, burst forth (H)</i>	50x

31.9 Concepts

anaptyctic coalesce double verbs gemination

31.10 Vocabulary

<i>confine, constrain, wrap up, be hostile to</i>	צָרַר		<i>curse</i>	אָרַר	.463
<i>distress, trouble; confinement</i>	צָרָה	.469	<i>praise, exult in (D); boast (Dt)</i>	הָלַל	
<i>enemy, foe</i>	צָר		<i>praise, glory</i>	תְּהַלָּה	.464
<i>be[come] light, swift; slight, trifling, accursed (st. vb.)</i>	קָלַל	.470	<i>measure</i>	מָדַד	.465
<i>shout (in joy, triumph, celebration)</i>	רָנַן	.471	<i>surround, go around; encircle; turn around</i>	סָבַב	.466
<i>be[come] bad, evil, wicked (st. vb.)</i>	רָעַע	.472	<i>pray (Dt)</i>	פָּלַל	
<i>devastate, lay waste; cf. §21.1</i>	שָׁדַד	.472	<i>prayer</i>	תְּפִלָּה	.467
<i>be[come] astounded, astonished, dumbfounded; desolate</i>	שָׁמַם	.473	<i>break out, burst forth (H)</i>	פָּרַר	.468

31.11 Exercises

1. After learning to recognize geminate verbs, identify any geminate verbal forms in whatever biblical passage your teacher assigns.
2. Gloss these verses, parsing all verbal forms.

1. תָּמוּ דְּבָרֵי אִיּוֹב: Jb 31.40; Job
2. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בִּלְעָם לֹא תֵלֵךְ עִמָּהֶם
לֹא תֵאָדָר אֶת-הָעָם כִּי בְרוּךְ הוּא: Nu 22.12; Balaam
3. וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה
וַתֹּאכַל עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת-הָעֹלָה וְאֶת-הַחֲלָבִים
וַיֵּרָא כָּל-הָעָם וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם: Lv 9.24
4. הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה הַלְלֵי נַפְשֵׁי אֶת-יְהוָה: Ps 146.1; נַפְשִׁי is vocative
5. וַאֲבִרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אָאֵר
וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל מְשַׁפְּחַת הָאָדָמָה: Gn 12.3
6. גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמִהֲלֵל מְאֹד וְלִגְדֻלָּתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר: Ps 145.3; גָּדֹל, greatness; חֶקֶר, searchable; searching
7. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵם עֲבְרוּ וְסִבּוּ אֶת-הָעִיר Josh 6.7
8. הִים רָאָה וַיֵּנֶס
הִירְדֵן יִסֹּב לְאַחֹרַי: Ps 114.3; אָחֹר, back, rear (n.); Jordan
9. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּ לַעֲבָדְךָ
וְלָמָּה לֹא-מָצֵיתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ
לָשׁוּם אֶת-מִשְׁאֵל כָּל-הָעָם הַזֶּה עָלַי: Nu 11.11; מִצָּא lacks its final א; מִשָּׁא, burden
10. וְהִשְׁמַתִּי אֲנִי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
וְשָׁמְמוּ עָלֶיהָ אִיבִיכֶם הַיֹּשְׁבִים בָּהּ: Lv 26.32
11. בְּכָל-יוֹם אֲבָרְכְּךָ
וְאֶהְלֵלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: Ps 145.2; עֶד, age (a duration of time)
12. רָנִי בַת-צִיּוֹן הֲרִיעֵנו יִשְׂרָאֵל
שִׁמְחִי וְעֲלִזִּי בְּכָל-לֵב בֵּית יְרוּשָׁלַם: Zp 3.14; רוּע, shout; עֲלִז, exult; Zion
13. שָׁמוּ שָׁמַיִם עַל-זֹאת וְשָׁעֲרוּ חֲרָבוֹ מְאֹד
נֶאֱסִי-יְהוָה: Jr 2.12; חָרַב, dry up; שָׁעַר, bristle [with horror]
14. כִּי מְבָרְכֵי יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וּמְקַלְלֵי וַיִּכְרְתוּ: Ps 37.22
15. וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְלֹא הִטּוּ אֶת-אָזְנָם
וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת-עַרְפָּם הִרְעוּ מַאֲבֹתָם: Jr 7.26; עֵרֶף, neck
16. חֲבִלִי שְׂאוֹל סִבְנִי קִדְמֹנִי מִקִּשְׁי-מוֹת: S2 22.6; חֲבֵל, cord; קִדְּם, precede, go before; מוֹקֵשׁ, snare; bait, lure; Sheol
17. וְנָהָר יִסְבִּבֵנִי כָּל-מִשְׁפָּרֶיךָ וְגִלְיָד עָלַי עָבְרוּ: Jn 2.4; מִשְׁבֵּר, breaker (wave); גֵּל, heap (wave)
18. כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הִנְנִי מִסֵּב אֶת-כָּלִי הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְכֶם
אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם נֹלְחָמִים בָּם אֶת-מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל
וְאֶת-הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַצָּרִים עֲלֵיכֶם מִחוּץ לַחוֹמָה
וְאֶסְפָּתִי אוֹתָם אֶל-תּוֹךְ הָעִיר הַזֹּאת: Jr 21.4; סִבֵּב, turn back, reverse [Most of this v. is a quotation.]

Dt 3.24; גָּדַל, *greatness* (n.); the first occurrence of אֲשֶׁר is probably causal (*because*)

19. אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה אַתָּה הַחֲלוּתָ לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַבְדְּךָ
אֶת־גָּדְלְךָ וְאֶת־יָדְךָ הַחֲזֹקָה
אֲשֶׁר מִי־אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה כַּמַּעֲשִׂיךָ וְכַגְּבוּרָתְךָ:

Dt 15.10; בְּגִלָּל, *on account of, because of*;
מִשְׁלַח, *outstretching* (i.e., *attempt*)

20. נָתַן תָּתֵן לוֹ וְלֹא־יִרְעַע לְבָבְךָ בְּתַתֶּךָ לוֹ
כִּי בְּגִלָּל תִּדְבָּר תִּזְהָ וְיִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּבְכָל־מִשְׁלַח יָדְךָ:

K1 8.35; עָצַר, *be closed, shut up* (N);
מָטָר, *rain*; this is not a complete sentence, but the protasis [*“if”-clause*] of a conditional sentence; the next verse contains the the apodosis [*“then”-clause*]

21. בְּהָעָצָר שָׁמַיִם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר כִּי יַחֲטְאוּ־לְךָ
וְהִתְפַּלְּלוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְהוֹדוּ אֶת־שִׁמְךָ
וּמִחֲטָאתָם יֵשׁוּבוּן כִּי תַעֲנֶם:

31.12 *Some Encouragement*

Congratulations! Having invested a great deal of time, effort, and energy (not to mention money) on Biblical Hebrew, how can you continue to grow in your ability to use what you have learned?

1. Continue to *read* the Hebrew text *aloud*, in order to strengthen your ability to see and hear “in Hebrew”.
2. Continue to *gloss* the Hebrew text into another language, preferably *in writing*, but orally is better than nothing. Don’t worry at this point about getting every word, or even getting every word “right” (when I first did this, I just skipped words that I didn’t yet know or couldn’t recognize and often ran into the same root in another context and recognized it there, so that I could go back and “insert” it in its earlier occurrence). It is more important that you see as much text as possible.
3. Continue to develop a *vocabulary* base by learning the words in the passage that you are reading. As you come across unknown words, check a tool such as Armstrong, Busby, & Carr (1988) or a concordance to see how frequently they occur in Biblical Hebrew. If they are relatively infrequent (fewer than ten times), you may not want to invest the time to learn them, but if they have the same root of a word that you already know, you can add them to your stock of vocabulary without much effort.
4. Use the *reading notes* (online at www.fredputnam.org) to review what you have already read, and to explore new passages.
5. The most important contribution to growing in your understanding of Biblical Hebrew is continued exposure to *passages* of text, not merely to a verse here or there. This is because the minimal unit of communication is not the word, but the sentence, and in order to think about *how* the biblical writers communicated, it is necessary to read their communications as they intended them to be read—as stories, poems, songs, oracles, &c., not as isolated phrases, clauses, or even verses.

The main benefit of seeing a lot of Hebrew is that you will gradually begin to say, “I’ve never seen that before”, or “That’s the fourth time in this chapter that the author repeated that word [syntagm, etc.]”—that is, you will begin to sense what is and is not significant, and to gain appreciation for the craft of the biblical authors. Since much of interpretation is asking questions about the text, the greater your familiarity with that text, the more appropriate—and therefore helpful—the questions will be.

You will also gain the ability to understand commentators’ remarks, since you will have a fund of information on which to draw in interpreting both the accuracy and significance of what they say.

Appendices

- A. **Supplementary Vocabulary.** Ten lists that, together with the vocabulary lists in the lessons, entail all words that occur *fifty times or more* in Biblical Hebrew.
- B. **Hebrew – English Glossary.** An alphabetic list of all words in the lessons and Appendix A of this grammar.
- C. **Glossary.** Grammatical and linguistic terms used in this grammar.
- D. **Paradigms.** Pronominal and verbal forms, including a brief comparison of the forms of several weak verbs that may be confused due to their similarity.
- E. **Bibliography.** An annotated list of [primarily] reference works on Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew Bible.

Appendix A

SUPPLEMENTARY VOCABULARY

Supplementary Vocabulary 1

<i>declaration, utterance; often in the prophets as נִאֻם יְהוָה</i>	נִאֻם .483	<i>wickedness, guilt, iniquity</i>	אָוֶן .475
<i>there, in that place</i>	שָׁם .484	<i>not</i>	בְּלִי .476
<i>area inside something else</i>	תָּוֶךְ .485	<i>also, even, indeed (adv., cj.)</i>	גַּם .477
<i>in, within, inside [always construct to the following word]; trad. in the midst of</i>	בְּתוֹךְ .485	<i>prefixed interrogative particle (not directly translated)</i>	הֶ- .478
<i>seize, take hold of</i>	תָּפַשׁ .486	<i>daily, by day, daytime (cf. יוֹם)</i>	יוֹמָם .479
<i>ornament, decoration</i>	תְּפאָרֶת .487	<i>bear, give birth [to] (of women); father; become the father of (of men)</i>	יָלַד .480
<i>tribute; [heave-] offering</i>	תְּרוּמָה .488	<i>wing; edge / end of, e.g., garment (hem) or the earth/land</i>	כְּנָף .481
		<i>why? (לָּמָּה + מָּה)</i>	לָּמָּה לָּמָּה .482

Supplementary Vocabulary 2

<i>[the] dark, darkness</i>	חֹשֶׁךְ .496	<i>treasury, storehouse</i>	אוֹצָר .489
<i>testimony, command, precept (of divine law)</i>	עֲדָה עֲדוּת .497	<i>[miraculous] sign</i>	אוֹת .490
<i>help, assist</i>	עָזַר .498	<i>bind, tie, imprison</i>	אָסַר .491
<i>cliff, crag, outcropping; rock</i>	צוּר .499	<i>lion</i>	אַרְיֵה אָרִי .492
<i>end, edge; border</i>	קֶצֶה .500	<i>iron</i>	בַּרְזֵל .493
<i>offering, gift (cf. Mk 7.11)</i>	קָרְבָּן .501	<i>large building; palace, temple (cf. בֵּית)</i>	הַיִּכָּל .494
<i>slaughter, kill</i>	שָׁחַט .502	<i>man (male); male being (animal)</i>	זָכָר .495

Supplementary Vocabulary 3

<i>bury</i>	511. קָבַר	<i>cedar</i>	503. אֲרֹז
<i>horn</i> (oft. as symbol of strength)	512. קֶרֶן	<i>belly, abdomen; womb</i>	504. בֶּטֶן
<i>bow</i> (weapon); <i>rainbow</i>	513. קֶשֶׁת	<i>lot; allotment</i> (what the lot reveals/awards)	505. גּוֹרֵל
<i>ride</i>	514. רָכַב	<i>property, possession(s)</i>	506. מִזְקָנָה
<i>succeed, prosper; understand</i> (H)	515. שָׁכַל	<i>guard; obligation, duty</i>	507. מִשְׁמֶרֶת
<i>remainder, what is left</i> (cf. שָׂאר)	516. שְׂאֵרִית	<i>afflicted, poor, humble</i>	508. עָנִי
<i>table</i>	517. שֻׁלְחָן	<i>arrange, set in order</i>	509. עָרַךְ
<i>plunder, booty, spoil</i>	518. שָׁלַל	<i>valley, lowland</i>	510. עֵמֶק

Supplementary Vocabulary 4

<i>shoulder[blade]</i>	527. כָּתֵף	<i>cistern, well</i> (i.e., a hole dug for water; cf. Gn 37.22; Jr 2.13)	519. בּוֹר
<i>anoint</i>	528. מָשַׁח	<i>man</i> (male)	520. אִישׁ
<i>here, in this place</i>	529. פֹּה פֹּה פֹּה	<i>dream</i>	521. חֲלוֹם
<i>spread out</i>	530. פָּרַשׁ	<i>favor, grace</i>	522. חֵן
<i>tomb, grave</i> (usually hollowed out of rock, not dug in soil)	531. קֶבֶר	<i>remainder, left-over</i> (n.)	523. יֵתֶר
<i>assembly, congregation</i> ; refers to assembly of Israelite adult males	532. קָהָל	<i>loaf, talent, region</i> (all were, or could be, roughly “circular”)	524. כֶּכֶר
<i>heal, cure</i> (vb.)	533. רָפָא	<i>foolish, insolent</i> (often substantive)	525. כְּסִיל
<i>female slave/servant</i>	534. שִׁפְחָה	<i>according to</i> (כִּי + פֶּה, לִי + פֶּה); always followed by a noun	526. לְפִי כְּפִי

Supplementary Vocabulary 5

<i>stumble, fall, sway, rock, waver</i>	543. כָּשַׁל	<i>grasp, seize, hold</i>	535. אָחַז
<i>shield</i>	544. מָגֵן	<i>burnt offering, offering by fire</i> (contrast אִשָּׁה, woman, wife)	536. אִשָּׁה
[young] girl, maid	545. נַעֲרָה	<i>hill; [cultic] high place; Gibeah</i>	537. גִּבְעָה
<i>end; limit, boundary</i>	546. קֵץ	<i>be defiled, polluted</i> (N); <i>defile, pollute</i> (D); <i>begin</i> (H)	538. חָלַל
<i>succeed, be effective/strong</i>	547. צָלַח	<i>share, portion, part</i> (cf. חֵלֶק)	539. חֵלֶק
<i>Sheol</i>	548. שְׁאוֹל	<i>be gracious to, compassionate toward, favour; request favor/compassion</i> (Dt)	540. חָנַן
<i>be complete, have integrity</i> (st. vb.)	549. תָּמַם	<i>be shattered, dismayed</i> (st. vb.)	541. חָתַת
<i>whole, blameless, entire</i>	תָּמִים	<i>large river</i> (esp. the Nile)	542. יָאֵר

Supplementary Vocabulary 6

<i>feast, festival; procession</i>	חג .557	<i>poor, needy, destitute, oppressed</i>	אֲבִיוֹן .550
<i>violence, wrong, injury</i>	חַמָּס .558	<i>end, outcome</i>	אֲחֵרִית .551
<i>vow, oath</i>	נֶדָר .559	<i>How? How! (either interrogative or exclamatory); אֵיכָּהּ is the first word in Lam 1, 2, 4, and the Hebrew title of Lam</i>	אֵיךְ .552
[to] <i>vow; swear an oath / vow</i>	נָדַר		
<i>inherit, obtain</i>	נָחַל .560	<i>side (n.); beside, near (prp.)</i>	אֶצֶל .553
<i>drink offering, libation</i>	נֶסֶךְ .561	<i>flee, run away</i>	בָּרַח .554
<i>pour [out] (as a drink offering)</i>	נָסַךְ	<i>strength, power (cf. גִּבּוֹר, גִּבּוּר)</i>	גִּבּוּרָה .555
<i>plain, desert (often Jordan plain or valley & wilderness of Judah)</i>	עֲרֶבָה .562	<i>love, loved one, beloved</i>	דּוּר .556

Supplementary Vocabulary 7

<i>before, not yet (a following imperfect functions as past: וְטָרָם יָגִלָּה אֱלֹהֵי דְבַר־יְהוָה: Yawh's word had not yet been revealed to him (Sam 3:7)</i>	טָרָם בְּטָרָם .572	<i>drive, thrust (a weapon); blow (a horn/trumpet)</i>	תָּקַע .563
		<i>widow</i>	אַלְמָנָה .564
		<i>female slave / servant</i>	אִמָּה .565
<i>undergrowth, thicket, woods</i>	יַעַר .573	<i>path, way</i>	אֶרֶץ .566
<i>thought, intention, plan</i>	מַחְשָׁבָה .574	<i>grapevine</i>	גִּפְּן .567
<i>rock, crag, cliff</i>	סֶלֶע .575	<i>sow, plant (cf. זֶרַע, seed)</i>	זָרַע .568
<i>highest (trad. Most High); upper</i>	עֲלִיוֹן .576	<i>strong; hard</i>	חָזָק .569
<i>distress, trouble; labour</i>	עִמּוּל .577	<i>divide, apportion, assign (cf. חֲלָקָה)</i>	חָלַק .570
<i>incense; smoke (from incense)</i>	קִטְרֶת .578	<i>arrow; arrows</i>	חֵץ .571

Supplementary Vocabulary 8

<i>cease, stop (with inf. const.)</i>	חָדַל .587	<i>prp. after, behind; last (adj.)</i>	אַחֲרוֹן .579
<i>new, renewed; fresh</i>	חֲדָשׁ .588	<i>Where [is / are]?</i>	אֵינָה .580
<i>shadow, shade</i>	צֶל .589	<i>trustworthiness, faithfulness</i>	אֱמוּנָה .581
<i>be angry, furious</i>	כָּעַס .590	<i>split, cleave</i>	בָּקַע .582
<i>horseman (coll.); horse</i>	פָּרָשׁ .591	<i>virgin, [marriageable] young woman</i>	בְּתוּלָה .583
<i>reed (for measuring)</i>	קָנָה .592	<i>camel</i>	גִּמְלָה .584
<i>tear (esp. clothing)</i>	קָרַע .593	<i>cling / stick to</i>	דָּבַק .585
<i>fellowship [trad., peace] offering</i>	שָׁלָם .594	<i>honey</i>	דְּבַשׁ .586

Supplementary Vocabulary 9

<i>break through, burst out</i> (cf. Perez; Gn 38.29))	פָּרַץ .602	<i>destroy utterly</i> [as belonging to Y _{HWH}] (trad. <i>devote to the ban</i>)	חָרַם .595
<i>smell, odor, scent</i>	רִיחַ .603	<i>wash, clean</i>	כָּבַס .596
<i>left</i> [side / hand]	שְׂמָאל .604	<i>measure</i> (n.) (cf. מִדָּר)	מִזְרָה .597
<i>worthlessness, in vain</i>	שָׁוָא .605	<i>correction, discipline, instruction</i>	מוֹסָר .598
<i>desolation, devastation; horror</i> (cf. שֹׁמֵם)	שְׁמָמָה .606	<i>tomorrow</i>	מָחָר .599
<i>tooth; crag, outcropping</i>	שֵׁן .607	<i>unleavened bread</i>	מִצָּה .600
<i>do, make</i>	פָּעַל .608	<i>height</i> (cf. רֹם)	מָרוֹם .601

Supplementary Vocabulary 10¹⁹³

The function of this word is unknown. [Pss]	סֻלָּה .616	<i>pedestal, socket</i> [Ex] (N.B.: not “Eden”, which is עֵדֶן)	אֵדֶן .609
<i>finely ground wheat flour</i> [43/53 in Lv, Nu]	סֻלָּת .617	<i>porch, vestibule</i> (of the Temple [1 Kg, 2 Chr, Ezk])	אוֹלָם .610
<i>nakedness</i> [Lv (32/54)]	עֲרוּהָ .618	<i>porch, vestibule</i> [Ezk]	אֵילָם .611
<i>corner, rim, side</i> [Ex & Ezk (63/86)]	פֶּאֶה .619	[tent] <i>fabric / curtain</i> [44/54 in Ex]	יְרִיעָה .612
<i>east</i> [Ezk (53/67)]	קָרִים .620	<i>pasture, uncultivated land</i> [Josh & 1 Chr (98/110)]	מִגְרָשׁ .613
<i>plank, board, beam</i> [Ex (48/51)]	קֶרֶשׁ .621	<i>psalm</i> (this transliterates LX: <i>yavlmō</i>) [Ps]	מִזְמוֹר .614
		<i>choir leader, conductor(?)</i> [Ps]	מְנַצֵּחַ .615

193. The words in this list occur fifty times or more, but they occur entirely or primarily in one or two biblical “books” (identified in brackets [Ps]); the number of occurrences is given as a fraction following the abbreviation of the title of the “book” (e.g., “Lv 35/54” (עֲרוּהָ)) means that עֲרוּהָ occurs 35 times in Leviticus out of a total of 54 occurrences in Biblical Hebrew).

Appendix B

HEBREW – ENGLISH GLOSSARY

1. An alphabetical list of all Hebrew words in the lessons and Appendix A of this grammar (i.e., all words that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew), together with one or more glosses. [This is not intended to replace the need to learn to use the lexicon.]
2. Each gloss is preceded by an abbreviation (“n.”, “v.”, etc.) identifying its main function as, e.g., “noun”, “verb”, etc.
3. followed by the number of the vocabulary list in which the word is introduced (e.g., (3) = Lesson 3). An “S” before the numeral means that it appears in a supplementary list (Appendix A).
4. Multiple forms are either alternate forms or singular and plural of the same word.
5. Unpredictable plurals (e.g., נָשִׁים / נָשִׁים) are listed twice—with their singular and alphabetically.
6. Occasionally nouns that occur with both masculine and feminine forms are listed with both (e.g., סוּס, סוּסָה).
7. Gender is indicated only when the grammatical and morphological gender do not match. Feminine nouns that do not end in הַ - or תַּ / , etc. are marked as “(f.)” (e.g., עֵיר); masculine nouns with those endings are marked “(m.)” (e.g., לֵילָה).
8. If no stem is marked for the verb, the gloss reflects its function in the *qal*.
9. If a verb does not occur in *qal*, it is listed without vowels (e.g., שָׁכַם).
10. Words listed with a numeral followed by “x” occur that many times in Biblical Hebrew (e.g., (2x) = two occurrences).

Abbreviations

adj.	adjective	N	N-stem (<i>nifal</i>)
adv.	adverb	pl.	plural
D	D-active (<i>piel</i>)	prn.	pronoun
Dp	D-passive (<i>pual</i>)	prp.	preposition
Dt	D-t-infix (<i>hitpaal</i>)	Q	<i>qal</i>
f.	feminine	Qp	<i>qal</i> -passive
H	H-active (<i>hifil</i>)	st. vb.	stative verb
Hp	H-passive (<i>hofal</i>)	trad.	“traditionally translated by/as ...”
m.	masculine	us.	usually
n.	noun	v.	verb

N.B.: Other abbreviations may be added as needed.

n. <i>father, male ancestor</i> (2) (pl. אָבוֹת)	אָב	Where is /are ...?	אֵיפֹה
v. <i>perish</i> (10)	אָבַד	n. <i>man</i> (not Man), <i>husband each</i> (as subject of a plural verb)	אִישׁ
v. <i>be willing, agree</i> (often with NC) (25)	אָבַה	(pl. אֲנָשִׁים) (2)	
n. <i>fathers</i> (pl. of אָב) (2)	אָבוֹת	n. <i>pupil</i> [of eye] (3x); <i>darkness</i> (2x)	אִישׁוֹן
n. <i>poor, needy, destitute, oppressed</i> (S6)	אֲבִיוֹן	adv. <i>only, surely</i> (adv.) (18)	אֲדָךְ
n. <i>stone</i> (cf. אֶבֶן הָעֶזְרָה, Ebenezer, “the stone of help”) (8)	אֶבֶן	v. <i>eat, devour, consume</i> (3)	אָכַל
n. <i>lord, master; (my) Lord, Master</i> (4)	אֲדוֹנָי אֲדוֹן	there is /are not /no; without (וְאֵין) (16)	אֵין אֵין
n. <i>humanity, humankind, man; Adam</i> (3)	אָדָם	adv. <i>no, not</i> (5)	אֵל
n. <i>ground</i> (cf. אָדָם, Gn 3.19) (8)	אֲדָמָה	prp. <i>to, toward</i> (7)	אֵל
n. <i>pedestal, socket</i> [Ex] (S10)	אֲדָן	n. <i>God; god, gods</i> (used of YHWH, the God of Israel, and of pagan gods) (2)	אֱלֹהִים אֵל
v. <i>love, like; desire</i> (cf. Amnon & Tamar) (9)	אָהַב	dem. <i>these</i> (cp) (13)	אֵלֶּה
n. <i>tent; occasionally home, house</i> (4)	אֹהֶל	n. <i>friend; adj. familiar; n. chief</i> (29)	אֵלֹף
cj. <i>or</i> (18)	אוּ	n. <i>widow</i> (S7)	אֵלְמָנָה
n. <i>enemy</i> (ms Q Ptc < אֹיֵב) (6)	אֹיֵב	thousand (17)	אֶלֶף
n. <i>porch, vestibule</i> [Ezk]; also אֵילָם (S10)	אוּלָם	two thousand (17)	אֶלְפִים
n. <i>wickedness, guilt, iniquity</i> (S1)	אוֹן	cj. <i>if, then</i> (15)	אִם
n. <i>treasury, storehouse</i> (S2)	אוֹצָר	n. <i>mother; ancestress</i> (9)	אִם
n. <i>light</i> (18)	אוֹר	n. <i>female slave / servant</i> (S7)	אִמָּה
n. [miraculous] <i>sign</i> (pl. אֲמוֹת) (S2)	אוֹת	n. <i>cubit; forearm</i> (7)	אִמָּה
adv./cj. <i>then, at that time; formerly, since; cf. נִאֲזָר</i> (20)	אִז	n. <i>trustworthiness, faithfulness</i> (S8)	אִמּוּנָה
n. <i>ear, hearing</i> (10)	אָזן	v. <i>be trustworthy, faithful; steady, firm</i> (N); <i>believe, trust</i> (H)f (20)	אָמֵן
n. <i>brother, male relative</i> (3)	אָח	st. v. <i>be[come] strong, bold</i>	אָמִץ
n. <i>one</i> (17)	אָחַד	v. <i>say, speak; think</i> (3)	אָמַר
n. <i>inherited / owned property</i> (real estate) (29)	אֲחוּזָה	n. <i>truth; trustworthiness</i> (20)	אֲמוּת
n. <i>sister, female relative</i> (21)	אָחוֹת	prn. <i>we</i> (1cp) (13)	אֲנַחְנוּ
v. <i>grasp, seize, hold</i> (S5)	אָחַז	prn. <i>I</i> (1cs); also אֲנֹכִי (13)	אֲנִי
n./adj. <i>other, another</i> (11)	אֲחֵר	prn. <i>I</i> (1cs); also אֲנִי (13)	אֲנִי
prp. <i>behind, after</i> (7)	אֲחֵרִי אַחֵר	n. <i>men, husbands</i> (2)	אֲנָשִׁים
prp. <i>after, behind; adj. last</i> (S8)	אֲחֵרוֹן	v. <i>gather, take in</i> (9)	אָסַף
n. <i>end, outcome</i> (S6)	אֲחֵרִית	v. <i>bind, tie, imprison</i> (S2)	אָסַר
Where [is/are]? (S8)	אֵיפֹה אֵי	(I) <i>even, also; all the more</i> (cj.) (6)	אֲף
n. <i>enemy</i> (m.s. Q Ptc < אֹיֵב) (6)	אֹיֵב	n. (II) <i>nose, nostril; anger</i> (6)	אֲף
How? How! (interrogative & exclamatory); אֵיכָּה is the Hebrew title of Lamentations (S6)	אֵיכָּה אֵיךְ	n. <i>end, edge, limit; כִּי אֶפֶס but</i>	אֶפֶס
n. <i>ram</i> (12)	אֵיל	n. <i>side; pr. beside, near</i> (S6)	אֶצֶל
n. <i>porch, vestibule</i> [Ezk]; also אֵילָם (S10)	אֵילָם	n. <i>treasure; treasury, storehouse</i> (pl. אוֹצְרוֹת)	אוֹצָר
adv. <i>no, not; There is /was not</i> (opp. of אִישׁ); can occur with pronomial suffixes) (16)	אֵין אֵין	four (17)	אַרְבַּע
		n. <i>chest, box; ark</i> (of the covenant) (9)	אַרֹן
		n. <i>cedar</i> (S3)	אַרְזִי
		n. <i>path, way</i> (S7)	אַרְחִי
		n. <i>lion</i> (S2)	אַרִּי
		n. <i>length</i> (22)	אַרְיָה
			אַרְךָ

n. <i>land</i> (geo-political region), <i>earth</i> (as in “heaven and earth”) (f.) (2)	אָרֶץ	n. <i>son, male descendant</i> (cf. בְּנִימִין, Benjamin, “son of [my] right hand”) (2)	בֶּן
v. <i>curse</i> (31)	אָרַר	v. <i>build</i> (24)	בָּנָה
n. <i>fire</i> (4)	אֵשׁ	n. <i>daughters</i> (pl. of בַּת) (3)	בָּנוֹת
n. <i>woman, wife</i> (pl. נָשִׁים) (2)	אִשָּׁה	prp. <i>on behalf of, about; away from; behind</i> (7)	בְּעֵד
n. <i>burnt offering, offering by fire</i> (not אִשָּׁה) (S5)	אִשָּׁה	n. <i>master, owner, husband, Baal</i> (10)	בֹּעַל
rel. <i>who, which, what; that, because, ...</i> (11)	אֲשֶׁר	v. <i>burn, consume</i> (Q, D) (21)	בָּעַר
prp. <i>with</i> ; sign of the direct object (not translated); with suffixes -אֶת- or -אֵת- (5)	אֶת־	v. <i>fortify, reinforced</i> (4x)	בָּצַר
prn. <i>you</i> (2ms) (13)	אַתָּה	n. <i>morning</i> (9)	בֹּקֶר
prn. <i>you</i> (2fs) (13)	אַתְּ	n. <i>herd</i> (large cattle) (10)	בָּקָר
prn. <i>you</i> (2mp) (13)	אַתֶּם	prp.+n. <i>inside, within</i> (בְּ + [q.v.] קָרָב) (9)	בְּקָרֵב
prn. <i>you</i> (2fp) [4/5x are in Ezekiel] (13)	אַתְּמָה	v. <i>search, seek</i> (D) (19)	בָּקַשׁ
	אַתֶּן	v. <i>flee, run away</i> (S6)	בָּרַח
		n. <i>knee</i>	בִּרְךָ
		v. <i>kneel</i> (I: Q); <i>bless</i> (II: D) (19)	בָּרַךְ
		n. <i>blessing</i> (27)	בְּרָכָה
prp. <i>in, by, on, against, ...</i> (7)	בִּי־	n. <i>covenant, treaty, agreement</i> (6)	בְּרִית
n. <i>garment, clothing</i> (9)	בִּגְדִי	v. <i>split, cleave</i> (S8)	בָּקַע
prp.+n. <i>on account of, because of</i>	בְּגִלְלִי	v. <i>look for, seek, search</i> (D) (19)	בָּקַשׁ
v. <i>divide, separate</i> (H)	בָּדַל	n. <i>iron</i> (S2)	בָּרָז
n. <i>cistern, well</i> (hole dug for water) (S4)	בּוֹר	n. <i>flesh, meat</i> (6)	בָּשָׂר
st. v. <i>bel/become ashamed</i> (28)	בּוֹשׁ	v. <i>proclaim, report, announce</i> (D)	בָּשַׂר
v. <i>choose</i> (often introduces object with בְּ) (12)	בָּחַר	n. <i>daughter, female descendant</i> (pl. בָּנוֹת) (3)	בַּת
v. <i>trust, be confident in / of</i> (21)	בָּטַח	prp.+n. <i>within, inside</i> (בְּ + תוֹךְ) (S1)	בְּתוֹךְ
n. <i>security</i> ; also as adv., <i>securely</i>	בִּטָּחָה	n. <i>virgin, young woman</i> (S8)	בְּתוּלָה
n. <i>cattle; animals</i> (10)	בְּהֵמָה	n. <i>houses</i> (pl. of בֵּית) (2)	בָּתִּים
v. <i>come, go [in], enter</i> (28)	בּוֹא		
n. <i>belly, abdomen; womb</i> (S3)	בֶּטֶן	v. <i>redeem, purchase as a kinsman- redeemer; redeemer</i> (Q Ptc.) (23)	נָאַל
<i>before, not yet</i> (בְּ + טָרָם) (S7)	בְּטָרָם	st. v. <i>be / become high, exalted</i> (23)	נָבִיחַ
prp. <i>between</i> (7)	בֵּין	n. <i>boundary, territory</i> (8)	נְבוֹלָה
v. <i>understand, discern</i> (cf. תִּבְוֶנָה) (28)	בִּין	n. <i>mighty man, warrior</i> (12)	נְבוֹרָה
n. <i>house, home, household</i> (pl. בָּתִּים) (2)	בֵּית	n. <i>strength, power</i> (cf. 147) (S6)	נְבוֹרָה
v. <i>weep, mourn, wail</i> (25)	בָּכָה	n. <i>hill; [cultic] high place</i> (S5)	נִבְעָה
n. [the] <i>firstborn</i> (20)	בְּכֹר	st. v. <i>be strong, mighty; prevail over</i> (-בְּ, עַל) (24x)	נָבַר
adv. <i>no, not</i> (poetic) (16)	בֹּל	n. <i>man</i> (male) (S4)	נָבַר
adv. <i>not</i> (S1)	בְּלִי	n. <i>band, troop(s)</i>	נְדוּרָה
prp. <i>apart from, except for, without</i> (16x)	בְּלֵעֲדֵי	st. v. <i>be[come] large, great; adj. large, big, great</i> (adj.) (11)	נָדוּל
adv. <i>not; cj. except, unless; us. לְבִלְתִּי or מִבְּלִיתִי</i> (with inf. const.) (16)	בְּלִיתִי	n. <i>greatness</i>	נִדְלָה
n. <i>cult center</i> (trad., “high place”) (23)	בְּמִזְבֵּחַ	v. <i>chop / cut off</i>	נִדְעָה

n. <i>people</i> [group], <i>nation</i> , <i>folk</i> (3)	גוי	v. <i>come, go, walk, travel</i> (3)	הָלַךְ
v. <i>reside as an alien; immigrate</i> (trad., <i>sojourn</i>) (S8)	גור	v. <i>praise, exult in</i> (D); <i>boast</i> (Dt) (31)	הָלַל
n. <i>lot; allotment</i> (what the lot reveals) (S3)	גורל	[to] <i>here</i>	הֵלם
n. <i>heap</i> (wave)	גל	<i>they</i> (3mp pers. pron.); <i>those</i> (dem. pron.) (13)	הֵם
v. <i>uncover, reveal</i> [I] (24)	גלה	n. <i>tumult, uproar; crowd, multitude</i> (14)	הֵנָּה
v. <i>go into captivity/exile</i> [II] (24)	גלה	<i>they</i> (3fp pers. pron.); <i>those</i> (dem. pron.) (13)	הֵמוֹן
adv./cj. <i>also, even, indeed</i> (S1)	גם	<i>there is / was, here is / was</i> (trad., <i>Behold!</i>) (20)	הֵן
n. <i>camel</i> (S8)	גמל	<i>turn, overturn, destroy; change</i> (22)	הֵנָּה
v. <i>steal</i>	גנב	n. <i>mountain, mountain range, hill country, highlands</i> (i.e., not level land, valleys) (13)	הֵנָּה
n. <i>thief</i>	גנב	v. <i>kill</i> (12)	הָפַךְ
n. <i>stolen thing</i>	גנבה	<i>and, but, or, also, even ...</i> (4)	הָרַ
n. <i>grapevine</i> (S7)	גפן	<i>this</i> (fs dem.) (13)	זאת
n. <i>alien; stranger; immigrant</i> [a non-native] (trad., <i>sojourner</i>) (28)	גר	n. <i>dwelling</i> (5x)	זבל
v. <i>drive away/out</i> (mainly D)	גרש	n. <i>sacrifice</i> (12)	זבח
		v. <i>slaughter; sacrifice</i> (14)	זבח
v. <i>cling / stick to</i> (S8)	דבק	n. <i>gold</i> (8)	זהב
v. <i>speak</i> (D; in Q only as ptc.) (19)	דבר	<i>this</i> (ms dem.) (13)	זה
n. <i>word, thing; event, affair, matter</i> (2)	דבר	v. <i>remember</i> (8)	זכר
n. <i>honey</i> (S8)	דבש	n. <i>man</i> (male); <i>male being</i> (animal) (S2)	זָכָר
n. <i>grain</i> (i.e., wheat, spelt, rye, barley)	דגן	v. <i>fornicate, engage in illicit sex</i> (25)	זנה
n. <i>love, loved one, beloved</i> (S6)	דוד	v. <i>cry out [for help], shout</i> (cf. צָעַק (27)	זעק
n. <i>generation, life-span</i> (12)	דור	st. v. <i>be / become old; adj. old; elder</i> (11)	זָקֵן
n. <i>door[way]</i> (14)	דלת	<i>strange, foreign; illicit</i> (27)	זָר
n. <i>blood</i> (8)	דם	n. <i>arm, forearm; strength</i> (14)	זֶרַע
v. <i>destroy, cut off</i>	דמה	v. <i>dawn, shine, rise</i> (cf. מָזְרָח)	זרח
n. <i>knowledge, understanding</i> (14)	דעת	v. <i>sow, plant</i> (cf. זָרַע (S7)	זרע
v. <i>walk, step on, tramp; cause to march, tread down, tread [string] a bow</i> (H) (21)	דרכ	n. <i>seed</i> (sg. & coll.) (8)	זָרַע
n. <i>road, way, path, journey; custom</i> (f.) (3)	דֶּרֶךְ		
v. <i>seek, inquire</i> (cf. מְדַרֵּשׁ (12)	דרש		
	ה -		
art. <i>the</i> (also -הַ, -הָ) (4)	ה -	n. <i>cord; property</i> (area measured by cord)	חָבֶל
pref. interrogative particle (untranslated) (S1)	ה -	n. <i>feast, festival; pilgrimage</i> (cf. <i>hajj</i> —the Muslim's journey to Mecca) (S6)	חג
n. <i>breath, idol; vanity</i> (27)	הבל	v. <i>cease, stop</i> (with inf. const.); <i>hold back, withhold</i> (S8)	חָג
prn. <i>he</i> (3ms); dem. <i>That</i> (13)	הוא	<i>new, renewed; fresh</i> (S8)	חדל
<i>she</i> (3fs pers. pron.); <i>that</i> (dem.) [the first form occurs primarily in the Torah] (13)	היא	n. <i>month, new moon</i> (6)	חֹדֶשׁ
<i>be, become</i> (often with ל), <i>happen</i> (10)	היה	n. [city] <i>wall</i> (20)	חומָה
n. <i>large building; palace, temple</i> (usually called בַּיִת (S2)	היכל	<i>outside</i> (noun & prp.); <i>street</i> (12)	חוּץ
<i>Is not ...?</i> (לֹא + interrogative -הֲ) (13)	הלא		

v. <i>see, observe, gaze</i> [at] (25)	חזה	v. <i>dry up</i>	חרב
v. <i>be[come] strong</i> (st. vb.) (6)	חזק	st. v. <i>be[come] angry, hot</i> (always 3ms with “subject” indicated by לִי) (25)	חָרָה
adj. <i>strong; hard</i> (S7)	חָזָק	v. <i>destroy utterly</i> [as belonging to YHWH] (trad. <i>devote to the ban</i>) (S9)	חרם
v. <i>sin, miss</i> [a mark] (27)	חטא	n. <i>disgrace, reproach, embarrassment</i> (27)	חֲרָפָה
n. <i>sin, error, fault; sin-offering</i> (27)	חַטָּאת	v. <i>account, regard, value, reckon</i> (19)	חשב
adj. <i>living, alive</i> (19)	חַי	n. [the] <i>dark; darkness</i> (S2)	חֹשֶׁךְ
v. <i>live, be/stay alive</i> (24)	חיה	st. v. <i>be shattered, dismayed</i> (S5)	חתת
n. <i>animal(s)</i> [coll.] (22)	חַיָּה		
n. <i>life, lifetime</i> (always plural) (19)	חַיִּים	[ceremonially] <i>clean, pure</i> (15)	טָהֵר
n. <i>strength; army; wealth</i> (8)	חַיִל	st. v. <i>be/become</i> [ceremonially] <i>clean, pure</i> (15)	טָהַר
v. <i>writhe, tremble; [be in] labour</i> (28)	חיל	adj. <i>good</i> (11)	טוב
v. <i>wait [for]</i> (D)	חכה	st. v. <i>be[come] good, pleasant</i> (28)	טוב טוב
adj. <i>wise, skilled</i> (18)	חכם	st. v. <i>be/become</i> [ceremonially] <i>unclean, impure</i> ; adj. <i>unclean, impure</i> (15)	טָמֵא
n. <i>wisdom, skill</i> (cf. 243) (12)	חֲכָמָה	n. <i>uncleanness, impurity</i>	טְמֵאָה
n. <i>fat</i> (14)	חֶלֶב	<i>before, not yet</i> (often as בְּטָרֵם) (S7)	טָרֵם
v. <i>be/become weak, sick, ill</i> (25)	חָלָה		
n. <i>dream</i> (cf. חֲלֹם) (S4)	חֲלוּם	v. [III] <i>be determined/pleased; undertake</i> (H; with inf. const.)	יָאֵל
adj. <i>wounded, slain, dead</i> (22)	חָלָל	n. [large?] <i>river</i> (esp. the Nile) (S5)	יָאֵר
v. <i>be defiled, polluted</i> (N); <i>defile, pollute, stain</i> (D); <i>begin</i> (H) (S5)	חָלַל	st. v. <i>be[come] dry, dry up</i> (30)	יָבֵשׁ
v. <i>dream</i> (cf. חֲלֹם) (25x)	חלם	n. <i>dry land</i> (i.e., not the sea; cf. יָבֵשׁ)	יַבְשָׁה
n. <i>share, portion, part</i> (cf. חֲלֵק) (S5)	חֵלֶק	n. <i>ram’s horn; jubilee</i> [marked by blowing the ram’s horn]	יֹבֵל
v. <i>divide, apportion, assign</i> (cf. חֲלָק) (S7)	חלק	n. <i>hand, power, authority</i> (2)	יָד
n. <i>wrath, anger; heat</i> (19)	חֲמָה	v. <i>thank, praise, acclaim</i> (H); cf. יְהוֹדָה (25)	ידה
n. <i>male donkey/ass</i> (22)	חֲמֹר	v. <i>know, understand; recognize</i> (30)	ידע
n. <i>violence, wrong, injury</i> (S6)	חֲמָס	n. YHWH (proper name of Israel’s god); also <i>Yah</i> , יָהּ, יְהֹ (4)	יהוה
<i>five</i> (17)	חֲמִשׁ	n. <i>day; when</i> (e.g., בַּיּוֹם + inf. const. constructions); pl. יָמִים (2)	יום
n. <i>favor, grace</i> (cf. חֲנֹן) (S4)	חֵן	<i>daily, by day, daytime</i> (יּוֹם + “adverbial” ending) (S1)	יוֹמָם
v. <i>camp, encamp</i> (cf. מִחַנָּה) (25)	חנה	<i>together; simultaneously</i> (adv.) (20)	יָחַד
n. <i>javelin, spear</i> (40x)	חֲנִית	st. v. <i>be[come] good</i> ; cf. טוב (30)	יָטַב
v. <i>be gracious to, compassionate toward, favour; ask for favor, compassion</i> (Dt) (cf. חָן) (S5)	חָנַן	n. <i>wine</i> (16)	יַיִן
n. <i>love, loyalty, kindness</i> (trad. “loving-kindness”) (8)	חֶסֶד	v. <i>dispute</i> (N); <i>correct, rebuke</i> (H) (30)	יכח
<i>pious, godly</i> (32x)	חֲסִיד	st. v. <i>be able</i> [to] (with infinitive construct; Lesson 14) (15)	יָכַל
st. v. <i>be pleased [with], delight [in]</i> (14)	חָפֵץ	v. <i>bear, give birth</i> [to], <i>become the mother/ancestress of</i> (of women); <i>become the father/ancestor of</i> (of men) (S1)	יָלַד
n. <i>arrow(s); pl. חֲצִיִּים</i> (S7)	חֵץ		
n. <i>half</i> (17)	חֲצִי		
n. <i>court, enclosure, settlement</i> (18)	חֲצָר		
n. <i>ordinance, rule, prescription</i> [sthg. prescribed, required, commanded] (20)	חֹק		
n. <i>searching; understanding, comprehending</i>	חֻקָּה		
n.f. <i>sword, dagger, knife</i> (4)	חֶרֶב		

n. (male or female) <i>child</i> (14)	יָלֵד יְלִידָה	n. <i>strength, power</i> (14)	כֹּחַ
n. <i>sea</i> (Mediterranean, Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea); <i>west</i> (pl. יַמִּים) (4)	יָם	cj. <i>for, because; that; but; since; when, if</i> (15)	כִּי
n. <i>right</i> (hand, side); <i>south</i> (16)	יָמִין	n. <i>loaf, talent, region</i> (all ≈ “circular”) (S4)	כֶּכֶר
v. <i>repeat, do again</i> (with inf. const.) (H); <i>add</i> (30)	יָסַף	n. <i>all, each, every</i> (n., not an adj.); -כֻּלְּ- with suffixes (2)	כָּל כָּל
prp. <i>on account of, for the sake of; because [of]</i> (cj.) (22)	יָעַן	v. <i>cease, finish, end, complete</i> (often with inf. const.) (24)	כָּלָה
v. <i>counsel, advise</i> ; cf. עֲצָה (30)	יַעֲזֵן	n. <i>utensil, tool; container</i> (5)	כֶּלִי
n. <i>undergrowth, thicket, woods</i> (S7)	יַעַר	v. <i>humiliate, trouble</i>	כָּלַם
adj. <i>attractive, beautiful</i> (fem. sg. יְפָה)	יָפָה	<i>like, just like; as; when</i> (adv. & cj.) (21)	כְּמוֹ
v. <i>leave, go out, exit</i> (30)	יָצָא	<i>honest, upright, right</i> (adj.); <i>thus, so, in this / that way</i> (adv.) (11)	כֵּן
v. <i>serve / dish out</i> (food); <i>pour</i> (liquid) (30)	יָצַק	n. <i>wing; hem</i> (of garment) (S1)	כְּנָף
v. <i>shape, form, mold</i> (30)	יָצַר	n. <i>seat, throne</i> (16)	כִּסֵּא
st. v. <i>fear, be afraid of</i> (thing or person introduced by מִן, מִפְּנֵי, אֵת) (15)	יָרָא	v. <i>cover, conceal</i> (D) (24)	כָּסָה
v. <i>go down, descend</i> (5)	יָרַד	<i>foolish, insolent</i> (often substantive) (S4)	כְּסִיל
n. <i>moon, month</i>	יָרֵחַ	n. <i>silver</i> (8)	כֶּסֶף
n. [tent] <i>fabric / curtain</i> [Ex] (S10)	יְרִיעָה	v. <i>be angry, furious</i> (S8)	כָּעַס
v. <i>possess, subdue; dispossess</i> [someone] (H) (8)	יָרַשׁ	n. <i>palm of hand, sole of foot</i> (10)	כַּף
there is/are (opposite of אֵין) (12)	יֵשׁ	<i>according to; as, just as</i> (כִּי + פֶּה); cf. לְפִי (S4)	כְּפִי
v. <i>sit, live</i> [dwell], <i>settle, stay, remain</i> (3)	יָשַׁב	v. <i>cover</i> (Q); <i>atone</i> [for] (D) (19)	כָּפַר
n. <i>inhabitant, citizen, dweller</i> (Q Ptc) (30)	יֹשֵׁב	n. <i>cherub</i> (probably a winged bull with human head; <i>not</i> winged baby!) (14)	כְּרוּב
n. <i>deliverance, salvation; victory</i> ; cf. יִשְׁעַ	יְשׁוּעָה	n. <i>vineyard</i> (22)	כֶּרֶם
v. <i>save, deliver</i> (implied: by winning a victory); cf. יְשׁוּעָה (30)	יִשַׁע	v. <i>stumble, fall, sway, rock, waver</i> (S5)	כָּשַׁל
<i>straight, upright; honest</i> (adj.) (23)	יָשָׁר	v. <i>cut, cut off; make a treaty</i> (6)	כָּרַת
v. <i>remain, be left</i> [behind/over] (N) (30)	יָתַר	v. <i>write</i> (8)	כָּתַב
n. <i>remainder, left-over</i> (S4)	יָתֵר	n. <i>shoulder</i> [blade] (S4)	כְּתָף
<i>like, as, according to; approximately</i> (with numbers); <i>when</i> (with infinitive construct) (7)	כִּי	prp. <i>to, for</i> (7)	לְ
<i>as, just as, like; when</i> (כִּי + אֲשֶׁר) (11)	כַּאֲשֶׁר	adv. <i>no, not</i> (5)	לֹא
st. v. <i>be / become heavy, severe; wealthy, honored</i> ; adj. <i>heavy, severe, etc.</i> (15)	כָּבֵד	n. <i>heart</i> (the center of the person, often used where English uses “mind”) (2)	לֵב לֵב
n. <i>glory, honor, wealth</i> (9)	כְּבוֹד	v. <i>put on, clothe</i> (oneself); <i>wear</i> (23)	לָבַשׁ
v. <i>wash, [make physically] clean</i> (S9)	כָּבַס	v. <i>fight</i> (N) (20)	לָחַם
n. <i>young sheep: young ram</i> (m.; also written כֶּסֶב); <i>ewe-lamb</i> (f.) (19)	כֶּבֶשׂ	n. <i>bread, food</i> (6)	לֶחֶם
<i>in this way / manner, thus, so</i> (19)	כֵּן	n. <i>night</i> (8)	לַיְלָה לַיִל
n. <i>priest</i> (2)	כֹּהֵן	v. <i>lodge, spend the night</i> (28)	לִין
v. <i>be established, fixed</i> (in place) (Q); <i>prepare</i> (H) (28)	כִּוֵּן	v. <i>capture, seize</i> (19)	לָכַד
		<i>therefore</i> (כֵּן + לְ; cj.); <i>not usually volitional</i> ; <i>for the sake of, on account of</i> (prp.); <i>in order that / to</i> (cj.) (18)	לְכֵן
		v. <i>learn</i> (Q); <i>teach</i> (D) (19)	לָמַד

<i>why?</i> (also לָמָּה (S1)	לָמָּה	n. tomorrow (S9)	מָחָר
<i>in order that, so that</i> (18)	לְמַעַן	n. thought, intention, plan; cf. חָשַׁב (S7)	מַחְשָׁבָה
<i>according to; as, just as</i> (לְ + פֶּה); cf. כָּפִי (S4)	לְפִי	m.n. rod, staff (sign of office); tribe (10)	מִטָּה
<i>before</i> (temporal & locative), <i>in the presence of, in front of</i> (לְ + פָּנִים) (11)	לְפָנַי	n. rain	מָטָר
v. take, get, acquire; buy; marry (4)	לָקַח	Who? (13)	מִי
[prp.] toward, against, opposite (Q inf. const. + לְ) (21)	לְקִרְאָה	n. waters of (const. of מַיִם) (4)	מַיִם
n. tongue, language (23)	לָשׁוֹן	n. water (4)	מַיִם
		v. sell (22)	מָכַר
		st. v. be / become full; adj. full (15)	מָלֵא
<i>very, exceedingly</i> (adv.); <i>power, might</i> (n.) (18)	מְאֹד	n. messenger (cf. מַלְאָכִי, Malachi, “my messenger”) (9)	מַלְאָךְ
num. hundred (17)	מֵאָה	n. work, occupation (12)	מְלָאכָה
<i>then, at that time; formerly; since</i> (אָז + בֵּן) (20)	מֵאָז	n. war, battle (5)	מִלְחָמָה
v. refuse (D)	מָאָן	v. escape (N); rescue, deliver (D) (20)	מָלַט
v. reject, refuse (23)	מָאָס	v. reign, rule (as monarch, king), be king (5)	מָלַךְ
n. anything	מְאוּמָה	n. king, monarch (2)	מֶלֶךְ
n. light [-source] (pl. מְאוֹרִים & מְאוֹרֵי)	מְאוֹר	n. kingdom, realm; kingship, dominion, royal power/authority; cf. מְלִיכָה (23)	מַלְכוּת
prp. from (אֶת [with] + מֵן)	מֵאֵת	n. kingdom, realm; kingship, dominion, royal power/authority; cf. מְלִיכָה (23)	מִמְלָכָה
num. two hundred; cf. מֵאָה (17)	מֵאֵתִים	prp. from; than ... (מִן + prn. suffix) (7)	מִמֶּנִּי
n. entrance; west (of the sun)	מִבּוֹא	prp. from, out of; some of; than (7)	מִן
n. flood (only in Gn 6–11 and Ps 29.10)	מִבּוּל	n. flight (cf. נֹס)	מָנוֹס
n. shield (S5)	מִגֶּן	n. gift, offering, tribute (7)	מִנְחָה
n. pasture, uncultivated land; produce (S10)	מִגְרָשׁ	n. choir leader, conductor(?) [Ps] (S10)	מְנַצֵּחַ
n. wilderness (uncultivated or “unclaimed” land) (6)	מִדְבָּר	n. number, total; cf. סָפַר (16)	מִסְפָּר
v. measure; cf. מָדַד (31)	מָדַד	n. path, track	מַעְגָּל
n. measure; cf. מִדָּר (S9)	מִדָּה	adj. [a] few, little (15)	מְעַט
Why? (27)	מִדּוּעַ	prp. above (usually מִמַּעַל); higher (adv., usually מִמַּעְלָה) (19)	מִמַּעַל
What? How? (also מַה, מָה, מַה־) (13)	מָה	m.n. work, deed, thing done; cf. עָשָׂה (8)	מַעֲשֵׂה
v. hasten, act quickly (D) [often in adverbial hendiadys] (19)	מַהֵר	n. key(?); sthg. used to open (3x)	מַפְתָּח
v. move, totter, slip [metonymy for death or destruction]	מוֹט	v. find (18)	מָצָא
n. correction, discipline, instruction (S9)	מוֹסָר	n. standing stone, monolith	מַצֵּבָה
n. something appointed (place, time); season (8)	מוֹעֵד	n. unleavened bread (S9)	מִצָּה
v. die, be[come] dead; cf. מָת (28)	מוֹת	n. command[ment], order; cf. צִוָּה (10)	מִצְוָה
n. death; מוֹת ≈ death of (12)	מֹתֵת	n. sanctuary, holy place; cf. קָדֵשׁ (27)	מִקְדָּשׁ
n. altar (4)	מִזְבֵּחַ	n. place (5)	מָקוֹם
n. psalm (this transliterates LX) [Ps only] (S10)	מִזְמוֹר	n. property, possession(s); cf. קָנָה (S3)	מִקְנָה
n. sunrise; east (27)	מִזְרָח	adj. bitter (cf. Marah)	מָר
n. camp, army (9)	מַחֲנֶה	sight, appearance; cf. רָאָה (22)	מַרְאֶה
		n. spy (D Ptc; see רִגֵּל)	מַרְגֵּל
		n. height; cf. רֹם (S9)	מָרוֹם

n. <i>open place</i> (cf. רחב)	מִרְחָב	v. <i>stretch out; turn</i> (24)	נָטָה
n. <i>pasture, shepherding; pasturage</i>	מִרְעִית	v. <i>plant</i> (26)	נָטַע
n. <i>oracle; burden</i> (us. prophetic speech)	מִשָּׁא	v. <i>hit, wound, defeat</i> (H) (24)	נָכַח
n. <i>breaker</i> (i.e., wave)	מִשְׁבֵּר	v. <i>pretend</i> (N); <i>recognize</i> (H) (26)	נָכַר
v. <i>anoint</i> (S4)	מִשַּׁח	n. <i>foreigner</i>	נָכָרִי
v. <i>draw, pull</i> [out]	מִשָּׁךְ	v. <i>depart, break camp, travel</i> (26)	נָסַע
n. <i>dwelling; Tabernacle</i> (6)	מִשְׁכָּן	n. <i>young man</i> (upper class) (9)	נָעַר
v. <i>rule, reign</i> (does not imply kingship; cf. מִלְּךָ (5))	מִשַּׁל	n. <i>young, girl, maid</i> (S5)	נַעֲרָה
n. <i>rule, reign, dominion</i>	מִשָּׁל	v. <i>pour</i> [out] (as a drink offering) (S6)	נָסַךְ
n. <i>guard; obligation, duty</i> ; cf. שָׁמֹר (S3)	מִשְׁמֹרֶת	n. <i>drink offering, libation</i> (wine poured/offered to a god) (S6)	נִסְכָּךְ
n. <i>clan, extended family</i> (smaller than a tribe) (6)	מִשְׁפָּחָה	v. <i>fall</i> (26)	נָפַל
n. <i>judgment, justice; justly; custom</i> ; cf. שָׁפַט (4)	מִשְׁפָּט	n. <i>life, self</i> (f.); trad., <i>soul</i> (2)	נַפְשׁוֹ
adj. <i>dead</i> ; cf. מוֹת (27)	מֵוֹת	v. <i>take one's stand/place; be assigned</i> (N) (26)	נָצַב
		v. <i>lead</i> (D) (26)	נָצַח
		v. <i>rescue, deliver; snatch</i> (H) (26)	נָצַל
untranslatable particle indicating volition (trad. "please") (8)	נָא	v. <i>watch, guard, keep, protect</i> (26)	נָצַר
n. <i>declaration, utterance</i> (S1)	נְאֻם	v. <i>lift, carry; forgive</i> (26)	נָשָׂא
v. <i>prophesy</i> (N); cf. נָבִיא (26)	נָבֵא	v. <i>reach, overtake</i> (H) (27)	נָשַׁג
v. <i>look at, pay attention to</i> (H) (26)	נָבַט	n. <i>leader, member of ruling class</i> (21)	נָשִׂיא
n. <i>prophet</i> ; cf. נָבִיא (9)	נָבִיא	n. <i>piece</i> [of a cut-up carcass] (11/12x = pl.)	נֶתַח
n. <i>south, Negev</i> (22)	נֶגֶב	n. <i>women, wives</i> (pl. of אִשָּׁה (2))	נָשִׁים
v. <i>report, declare, announce</i> (26)	נָגַד	n. <i>path, way</i>	נֶתִיב
prp. <i>in front of, before, opposite</i> (16)	נֶגֶד	v. <i>give; put, set; make</i> (sthg. into ...) (26)	נָתַן
v. <i>shine</i> (not a III-ה־ verb)	נָגַה		
n. <i>leader</i>	נָגִיד	v. <i>surround, go around; encircle; turn around</i> (31)	סָבַב
v. <i>touch; reach, come to</i> (26)	נָגַע	adv. <i>surrounding, [all] around</i> (21)	סָבִיב
n. <i>blow, assault; plague</i> (26)	נֶגַע	v. <i>close, shut</i> (Q); <i>give into someone's power</i> (H) (21)	מִסָּבִיב
v. <i>come near, approach</i> (26)	נָגַשׁ		סָגַר
v. <i>be scattered</i> (26)	נָדַח	n. <i>horse, stallion</i> (m.), <i>mare</i> (f.) (11)	סוּסָה
v. [to] <i>vow; swear an oath / a vow</i> (S6)	נָדַר	v. <i>turn</i> (aside); <i>remove</i> (H) (28)	סוּס
n. <i>vow, oath</i> (also נֶדֶר) (S6)	נֶדֶר	mng. unknown [Pss]; trad., <i>Selah</i> (S10)	סוּר
n. [permanent] <i>river</i> ; הַנָּהָר refers to Euphrates (rarely פְּרַת (23))	נָהָר	n. <i>rock, crag, cliff</i> (S7)	סָלָה
v. <i>rest</i> (Q); <i>deposit</i> (H) (23)	נָחַ	n. <i>fine wheat flour</i> [Lv, Nu] (S10)	סָלַע
v. <i>flee</i> (28)	נָס	v. <i>lean on; support</i>	סָלַח
n. <i>wadi</i> (temporary stream or its valley) (11)	נַחַל	v. <i>count, number; tell</i> [recount]; <i>record</i> (12)	סָמַךְ
v. <i>inherit, obtain</i> (S6)	נָחַל	n. <i>scribe, writer, secretary; recorder</i> (ms Q Ptc of סָפַר (12))	סָפַר
n. <i>inheritance, property</i> (9)	נַחֲלָה	n. <i>scroll, document</i> (trad., "book") (10)	סֵפֶר
v. <i>relent, be sorry, rue</i> (N); <i>comfort, console</i> (D) (20)	נָחַם	v. <i>hide, conceal</i> [oneself] (N, Dt); <i>be hidden / concealed</i> (N); <i>hide</i> [someone] (H) (20)	סָתַר
n. <i>snake</i>	נָחַשׁ		
n. <i>copper, bronze</i> (11)	נְחֹשֶׁת		

v. <i>serve</i> (cf. עֲבָד; עֲבוּדָה) (6)	עבד	n. <i>afflicted, poor, humble</i> ; cf. עָנָה (II) (S3)	עָנִי
n. <i>servant, slave</i> ; cf. עֲבָד (2)	עֲבָד	n. <i>cloud(s)</i> (22)	עָנָן
n. <i>service, servitude, labour, work</i> (11)	עֲבוּדָה	n. <i>dust, dirt, soil</i> (23)	עָפָר
v. <i>cross over, pass through / by</i> (4)	עבר	n. <i>tree</i> (sg. & coll.), <i>wood</i> (5)	עֵץ
n. <i>other side; region beyond</i> [sthg.] (14)	עֵבֶר	n. <i>idol</i> (only pl.)	עֲצָבִים
n. <i>Hebrew</i> (gentilic); <i>Eber</i> (proper name)	עֵבְרִי	n. <i>advice, counsel</i> ; cf. יַעֲזֵן (30)	עֲצָה
n. <i>calf</i>	עֵגֶל	n. <i>bone; essence</i> (i.e., the inmost part) (23)	עֲצָם
n. <i>cart, wagon, chariot</i>	עֲגָלָה	v. <i>be closed, shut; restrain</i> (N) (2)	עָצַר
n. <i>age</i> (duration of time)	עֵר	n. <i>evening</i> (6)	עֶרֶב
prp./adv. <i>to, as far as; until, while</i> (7)	עַד	n. <i>plain, desert</i> (often of Jordan plain/valley & wilderness of Judah) (S6)	עֲרֵבָה
n. <i>witness</i> (27)	עֵד	n. <i>nakedness, weakness</i> [Lv, Nu] (S10)	עֲרוּהָ
n. <i>testimony, command, precept</i> (of divine law) (S2)	עֲדָה	n. <i>cities</i> ; pl. of עִיר (2)	עָרִים
n. <i>assembly</i> (trad. “congregation”) (16)	עֲדוּת	v. <i>arrange, set in order</i> (S3)	עָרַךְ
adv. <i>still, yet, again</i> (18)	עֲדָה	n. [back of] <i>neck</i>	עֵרֶךְ
n. <i>long / remote time; ages past</i> (trad. “forever”) (4)	עוֹד	v. <i>do, make; act</i> (24)	עָשָׂה
n. <i>guilt, trespass, sin</i> (4)	עוֹלָם	<i>ten</i> (17)	עֶשֶׂר עֲשָׂרָה
n. <i>bird, insect</i> [any flying thing]; collective (27)	עוֹף	<i>twenty</i> (17)	עֶשְׂרִים
v. <i>awake, arouse</i> (28)	עוֹר	n. <i>time</i> (i.e., a particular moment) (6)	עֵת
n. <i>skin, leather</i> (22)	עוֹר	<i>now</i> ; וְעַתָּה ≈ <i>therefore</i> (us.), followed by a volitional form (18)	עַתָּה
n. <i>goat; goat hair</i> (29)	עֹז		
n. <i>power, strength</i> (14)	עֹז	n. <i>corner, rim, side</i> (S10)	פֶּאֶה
v. <i>leave, forsake, abandon</i> (7)	עָזַב	v. <i>ransom, buy</i> (back) (25)	פָּדָה
v. <i>help, assist</i> (S2)	עָזַר	<i>here, in this place</i> (S4)	פֹּה פָּה פֹּה פֹּה
n. <i>eye; water-source, well</i> (cf. עֵין-גִּדִּי, En-gedi, “the well of the kid”) (3)	עֵין	n. <i>mouth</i> (const. פִּי) (11)	פֶּה
n. <i>city</i> (f.); pl. עָרִים (2)	עִיר	v. <i>scatter, disperse</i> (intrans.) (28)	פִּזֵּן
prp. <i>on, upon, over; against; concerning</i> (7)	עַל	n. <i>mouth of</i> (cf. פֶּה) (11)	פִּי
v. <i>go up, ascend</i> (24)	עָלָה	st. v. <i>be wonderful, amazing, miraculous</i> (29)	פִּלְאָה
n. [whole] <i>burnt offering</i> (18)	עֹלָה	v. <i>pray</i> (Dt); cf. תְּפִלָּה (31)	פָּלַל
v. <i>exult, rejoice</i> (cf. עָלָץ)	עָלָז	<i>so that not</i> (i.e., פֶּן is a negative telic particle, trad., “lest”) (19)	פֶּן
adj.? <i>highest</i> (trad. <i>Most High</i>); <i>upper</i> (S7)	עֲלִיוֹן	v. <i>turn</i> (25)	פָּנָה
prp. <i>with</i> (7)	עִם	n. <i>face, presence</i> (alw. pl.) (3)	פָּנִים
n. <i>people</i> [group], <i>nation</i> (10)	עִם	v. <i>do, make</i> (S9)	פָּעַל
v. <i>stand; stop</i> (4)	עָמַד	n. <i>foot, step; time</i> (i.e., once, three times); <i>twice</i> (dual) (22)	פָּעַם
n. <i>pillar, column</i> ; cf. עָמֹד (21)	עָמֹד	v. <i>do something</i> [good or bad] for/to [someone]; trad. “visit” (6)	פָּעַמִּים
n. <i>distress, trouble; labour</i> (S7)	עָמָל	n. <i>bull; פָּרָה cow</i> (fem.; 22x) (20)	פָּקַד
n. <i>valley, lowland</i> (S3)	עָמָק	v. <i>be fruitful, produce fruit</i> ; cf. פָּרָה	פָּרָה
v. <i>answer</i> (I) (24)	עָנָה	n. <i>fruit; descendants</i> (23)	פְּרִי
st. v. <i>be humbled, afflicted; humble, afflict</i> (D) (II) (24)	עָנָה	v. <i>break through, burst out</i> (cf. Perez) (S9)	פָּרַץ

v. <i>break / tear off</i> (D)	פרק	n. <i>voice, sound</i> (5)	קול
v. <i>break out, burst forth</i> (H) (31)	פרר	v. <i>rise, stand</i> (29)	קום
v. <i>spread out</i> (S4)	פרש	st. v. <i>be[come] small, insignificant</i> ; adj. <i>small, insignificant</i> (30)	קטון
n. <i>horseman</i> (coll.); <i>horse</i> (S8)	פָּרָשׁ	v. <i>cause a sacrifice or incense to smoke</i> (D, H) (21)	קטר
n. <i>rebellion, revolt; transgression</i> (14)	פָּשַׁע	n. <i>incense; smoke</i> (from incense) (S7)	קִטְרֶת
v. <i>open</i> (16)	פתח	v. <i>vomit, spit up / out</i>	קיא
n. <i>opening, entrance</i> (12)	פֶּתַח	n. <i>wall, city</i> (cf. Carthage < קִיר חָדָשׁ < “new city”) (129)	קיר
n. <i>flock</i> (sheep, goats) (6)	צֹאן	adj. <i>swift, light</i>	קל
n. <i>army, host; military duty</i> (4)	צָבָא	st. v. <i>be[come] light, swift; slight, trifling, accursed</i> (31)	קלל
adj. <i>innocent, just; righteous</i> (7)	צָדִיק	n. <i>reed</i> (for measuring); cf. <i>canon</i> (S8)	קנה
st. v. <i>be[come] innocent, righteous, just; justify, declare innocent, etc.</i> (H)	צַדִּיק	v. <i>acquire, get, buy</i> ; cf. מִקְנֶה (25)	קנה
n. <i>that which is right, just, innocent; righteousness</i> (7)	צֶדֶק	n. <i>end; limit, boundary</i> (S5)	קץ
n. <i>innocence, righteousness</i> (16)	צִדְקָה	n. <i>end, edge; border</i> (S2)	קצה
n. <i>noon, mid-day</i>	צֹהָרִים	v. <i>break, shatter</i> (D)	קצץ
v. <i>command, order</i> (D); cf. מִצְוָה (24)	צוה	v. <i>call, invite, summon; name; read; proclaim</i> (15)	קרא
n. <i>cliff, crag, outcropping; rock</i> (S2)	צור	v. <i>meet, encounter</i> (cf. לִקְרָאתָ as <i>qal</i> NC: <i>to meet</i>); <i>happen, occur</i> (21)	קרא
n. <i>shadow, shade</i> (S8)	צל	v. <i>approach, come near; offer</i> (H); קָרְבָן (6)	קרה
v. <i>succeed, prosper; be effective / strong</i> (S5)	צלח	n. <i>inward part</i> (9)	קרב
n. <i>piece</i> (trad. “rib”)	צלע	n. <i>offering, gift</i> ; cf. Mk 7.11; קָרַב (H) (S2)	קרֶבֶן
v. <i>cry out [for help], shout</i> (≈ צַעַק) (27)	צעק	adj. <i>near, close</i> ; cf. קָרַב (15)	קרוב
n. <i>north</i> (16)	צפון	n. <i>horn</i> (oft. as symbol of strength) (S3)	קרן
n. <i>enemy, foe</i> (31)	צר	v. <i>tear</i> (esp. clothing) (S8)	קרע
n. <i>distress, confinement</i> (31)	צָרָה	n. <i>plank, board, beam</i> [Ex] (S10)	קֶרֶשׁ
v. <i>confine, constrain, wrap up; be hostile</i> (31)	צַר	n. <i>bow</i> (weapon); <i>rainbow</i> (S3)	קִשֶּׁת
v. <i>gather, assemble</i> (21)	קבץ	v. <i>see</i> (24)	ראה
v. <i>bury; lay in tomb / grave</i> (see קָבַר) (S3)	קבר	n. <i>head; peak, top</i> (of a hill or mountain) (4)	ראש
n. <i>tomb, grave</i> (rock-hewn, rarely dug) (S4)	קֶבֶר	<i>first</i> (ord.) (17)	ראשון
<i>holy</i> (11)	קדוש	n. <i>first; beginning</i> (17)	רֵאשִׁית
n. <i>east</i> (S10)	קִדְמִים	v. <i>increase, multiply</i> (24)	רבה
v. <i>precede, go in front of</i> (D)	קדם	n. <i>abundance, multitude, great quantity</i> (16)	רב
<i>in front, east; eastward</i> ; also קִדְמָה (14)	קִדְמָה	<i>much, many</i> (adj.) (11)	רב
st. v. <i>be / become holy; restricted in use</i> (15)	קדש	n. <i>foot, leg</i> ; [male] <i>genitals</i> (9)	רגל
adj./n. <i>holy</i> (11)	קִדְשׁ	v. <i>spy</i> (D; cf. מְרַגֵּל)	רגל
n. [national] <i>assembly</i> (prob. males over 20 years old); trad. “congregation” (S4)	קהל	v. <i>chase, persecute, pursue</i> (16)	רדף
v. <i>I wait for</i> (D)	קוה	n. <i>breath, wind, spirit</i> (5)	רוח
v. <i>II be gathered, collect</i> (N) (3x)	קוה	st. v. <i>be[come] high, exalted</i> (29)	רום

v. <i>run</i> (29)	רוץ	n. <i>Sheol</i> (S5)	שְׁאוֹל
n. <i>womb, belly, abdomen</i>	רֶחֶם	v. <i>ask</i> [for], <i>request</i> (12)	שָׁאֵל
v. <i>wash</i> (oneself) (29)	רחץ	v. <i>remain, be left over</i> (N); <i>spare, leave</i> (H) (19)	שָׁאַר
st. v. <i>be / become far, remote, distant</i> (15)	רחק	n. <i>remainder, what is left</i> (S3)	שְׁאֵרִית
<i>far, remote, distant</i> (adj.) (15)	רָחֵק	n. <i>rod, staff; tribe</i> (10)	שֵׁבֶט
v. <i>sue, strive, contend</i> (28)	ריב	v. <i>swear</i> [an oath] (N) (10)	שָׁבַע
n. [law]suit, strife, contention (28)	ריב	seven (17)	שִׁבְעָה
n. <i>smell, odor, scent</i> (S9)	ריח	v. <i>break, smash</i> (Q, D) (16)	שָׁבַר
v. <i>ride</i> (S3)	רכב	v. <i>cease, stop</i> [doing sthg.]; <i>rest</i> (29)	שָׁבַת
n. <i>chariot(s); chariot force</i> ; cf. מִרְכָּבָה; רֶכֶב (S3)	רֶכֶב	n. <i>rest, sabbath</i> (22)	שַׁבָּת
n. <i>creeping animal / reptile</i>	רֶמֶשׂ	v. <i>devastate, lay waste</i> (31)	שָׁדַד
v. <i>shout</i> (in joy, triumph, celebration) (31)	רָנָה	n. <i>worthlessness, in vain, to no purpose</i> (S9)	שָׁוָא
adj. <i>bad, disastrous; evil, wicked</i> ; cf. רָעָה (11)	רָע	v. <i>turn</i> (back), <i>return, repent</i> (29)	שָׁוָה
n. <i>friend, companion</i> (10)	רֵעַ	n. <i>ram's horn</i> ("trumpet") (29)	שׁוֹפָר
n. <i>hunger, famine</i> (21)	רָעָב	n. <i>bull, young bull; steer</i> (14)	שׁוֹר
v. <i>feed, graze, tend; herd</i> (24)	רָעָה	v. <i>do obeisance</i> [only Dt, with metathesis and final הַשְׁתַּחוּוָה] (27)	שָׁחָה
n. <i>shepherd</i> (Q Ptc) (18)	רֹעֶה	v. <i>slaughter, kill</i> (S2)	שָׁחַט
st. v. <i>be / become bad, evil, wicked</i> (31)	רָעָה	v. <i>be ruined, corrupt</i> (N); <i>ruin, spoil</i> (D); <i>destroy</i> (H) (20)	שָׁחַת
v. <i>heal</i> (S4)	רָפָא	v. <i>sing, chant</i> (29)	שָׁיר
v. <i>be pleased with, like</i> ; cf. רָצוֹן (25)	רָצָה	n. <i>song, chant</i> (29)	שִׁיר
n. <i>pleasure, favour</i> ; cf. רָצָה (25)	רָצוֹן	v. <i>put, place, set</i> (\approx שָׁים) (29)	שָׁית
<i>only, surely</i> (often begins clause) (27)	רָק	v. <i>lie down, sleep</i> (with), <i>have sexual relations with</i> (7)	שָׁכַב
<i>bad, disastrous, evil, wicked</i> (adj.) (11)	רָשָׁע	v. <i>forget</i> (22)	שָׁכַח
		v. <i>rise early</i> (H; often in hendiadys: "do X early") (21)	שָׁכַם
v. <i>be satisfied, satiated</i> (14)	שָׂבַע	n. <i>shoulder; Shechem</i>	שֵׁכֶם
n. <i>cultivated ground</i> (trad. "field"); contrast מִדְּבָר (5)	שָׂדֶה	n. <i>peace, health, welfare</i> (29)	שָׁלוֹם
v. <i>put, place, set</i> (\approx שָׁית) (29)	שָׁים	v. <i>stretch out, reach; let go, send</i> (away) (3)	שָׁלַח
v. <i>succeed, prosper; understand</i> (H) (cf. שָׂכַל) (S3)	שָׂכַל	n. <i>table</i> (S3)	שֻׁלְחָן
n. <i>success, prosperity, well-being; prudence</i> (cf. שָׂכַל)	שָׂכָל	v. <i>throw, cast, hurl</i> (H) (21)	שָׁלַךְ
v. <i>rejoice, be glad</i> (16)	שָׂמַח	n. <i>plunder, booty, spoil</i> (S3)	שָׁלָל
n. <i>joy, rejoicing, gladness</i> (18)	שִׂמְחָה	n. <i>fellowship offering</i> (trad., <i>peace offering</i>) (S8)	שֵׁלֶם
n. <i>left</i> [side / hand] (S9)	שְׂמָאל	st/ v. <i>be / become whole, complete</i> ; [re]pay (D) (15)	שָׁלַם
v. <i>hate</i> (16)	שָׂנָא	three (17)	שָׁלֹשׁ
v. <i>bristle</i> [with horror] (4x)	שָׁעַר	n. <i>name; fame, reputation</i> (3)	שֵׁם
n. <i>lip, language; edge, shore</i> (10)	שִׁפָּה	<i>there, in that place</i> (S1)	שָׁם
n. <i>official, leader, ruler</i> (5)	שָׂר	v. <i>be destroyed, exterminated</i> (N); <i>destroy, exterminate</i> (H) (20)	שָׁמַד
v. <i>burn</i> (oft. specified with בָּאֵשׁ) (21)	שָׂרַף		
<i>who, which, what</i> (with <i>dages forte</i> in the following consonant); = אָשַׁר (23)	שָׁרַף		
	שָׁרַף		

<i>eight</i> (17)	שְׁמוּנָה	n. <i>insight, understanding, realization</i> (cf. בִּין)	תְּבוּנָה
n. <i>report; rumor</i> (sthg. heard)	שְׁמוּעָה	n. <i>praise, glory</i> ; cf. הָלַל (31)	תְּהִלָּה
n. <i>heaven(s), sky</i> (5)	שָׁמַיִם	n. <i>thanks[giving]</i>	תּוֹדָה
st. v. <i>be[come] astounded, astonished, dumfounded; desolate</i> (31)	שָׁמַם	n. <i>area inside something else</i> (cf. בְּתוֹךְ) (S1)	תּוֹךְ
n. <i>desolation, devastation; horror</i> (S9)	שְׁמֹמָה	n. <i>abomination; something horrific</i> (23)	תועֵבָה
n. [olive] <i>oil</i> (12)	שֶׁמֶן	n. <i>teaching, instruction; law</i> (trad., “law”) (9)	תּוֹרָה
v. <i>hear, listen, obey</i> (3)	שָׁמַע	<i>under, beneath; instead of, in [the] place of</i> (7)	תַּחַת
v. <i>watch, guard, protect</i> (5)	שָׁמַר	n. [new] <i>wine</i>	תִּירוֹשׁ
n. <i>sun</i> (18)	שֶׁמֶשׁ	[adv.] <i>regularly, continually, always</i> ; a noun ending a construct chain, referring to sthg. that is repeated, continual, or regular (e.g., תָּמִיד, <i>perpetual offering</i>) (22)	תָּמִיד
n. <i>tooth; crag, outcropping</i> (S9)	שֵׁן	<i>whole, blameless, entire</i> (S5)	תָּמִים
n. <i>year</i> (cf. רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה (3)	שָׁנָה	st. v. <i>be complete, have integrity</i> (st. vb.) (S5)	תָּמַם
<i>second</i> (ord.) (18)	שְׁנִי	v. <i>wander, be lost</i> (25)	תַּעָה
<i>two</i> ; שְׁנֵי <i>both</i> (const.) (17)	שְׁנַיִם	n. <i>ornament, decoration</i> (S1)	תְּפִאֲרֶת
n. <i>gate</i> (of a city) (11)	שַׁעַר	n. <i>prayer</i> ; cf. פָּלַל (31)	תְּפִלָּה
n. <i>female slave / servant</i> (2S4)	שִׁפְחָה	v. <i>seize, take hold of</i> (in order to use) (31)	תִּפְשׁ
v. <i>judge</i> (10)	שָׁפַט	v. <i>drive, thrust</i> (a weapon); <i>blow</i> (a horn) (S7)	תִּקַּע
n. <i>judge</i> (Q Ptc) (18)	שֹׁפֵט	n. <i>tribute</i> ; [heave-] <i>offering</i> (S1)	תְּרוּמָה
v. <i>pour [out]; shed [blood]</i> (23)	שָׁפַךְ	num. <i>nine</i> (17)	תִּשְׁעָה
v. <i>water, give a drink [to]</i> (H) (25)	שָׁקָה		
n. <i>shekel</i> (approx. 11.4g, 0.5 oz.) (17)	שֶׁקֶל		
n. <i>lie, falsehood; deception</i> (23)	שָׁקָר		
v. <i>serve, minister to</i> (D) (19)	שָׁרַת		
<i>six</i> (17)	שֵׁשׁ		
v. <i>drink</i> (24)	שָׁתָה		
num. <i>two</i> (f.) (17)	שְׁתַּיִם		

The Most Common “Proper” Nouns

This lists all personal, national, gentile, and locational names that occur fifty times or more in Biblical Hebrew, in alphabetical order. The numeral with “x” in parentheses after the name is the number of occurrences.

Abimelech (67x)	אַבִּימֶלֶךְ	Elisha (58x)	אֵלִישָׁע
Abner (63x)	אַבְנֵר	Eleazar (72x)	אֶלְעָזָר
Abram, Abraham (235x)	אַבְרָם	Amorite(sx) (86x)	אַמֹּרִי
Absalom (107x)	אַבְרָהָם	Asa (58x)	אַסָּא
Edom (112x)	אַבְשָׁלוֹם	Esther (55x)	אֶסְתֵּר
Aaron (347x)	אֶדוֹם	Ephraim (182x)	אֶפְרַיִם
Ahab (93x)	אַהֲרֹן	Aram (“Syria”; 155x)	אַרָם
Job (58x)	אַחָאב	Assyria (152x)	אַשּׁוּר
Elijah (71x)	אֵיזֹב	Babylon (288x)	בָּבֶל
	אֵלִיָּה	Benjamin (180x)	בִּנְיָמִן
	אֵלִיהוּ	Balaam (64x)	בִּלְעָם

Bashan (60x)	בָּשָׁן	Chaldea [Mesopotamia] (89x)	כַּשְׁדִּים
Gad (85x)	גָּד	Laban (54x)	לָבָן
Gilead (108x)	גִּלְעָד	Lebanon (71x)	לְבָנוֹן
David (1031x)	דָּוִד	Levi (353x)	לֵוִי
Dan (78x)	דָּן	Midian (67x)	מִדְיָן
Haman (54x)	הָמָן	Moab (199x)	מוֹאָב
Hezekiah (131x)	חִזְקִיָּה	Micah (3 spellings; 63x)	מִיכָה
Heth; Hittite (62x)	חֶת חֲתִי	Manasseh (150x)	מְנַשֶּׁה
Hebron (77x)	חֶבְרוֹן	Egypt (708x)	מִצְרַיִם
Josiah (51x)	יֹאשִׁיָּה	Mordecai (60x)	מֶרְדֳּכַי
Jehu (58x)	יְהוּא	Moses (763x)	מֹשֶׁה
Judah (889x)	יְהוּדָה	Nebuchadnezzar (5 spellings; 91x)	נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר
Jehoiada (56x)	יְהוֹיָדָע	Naphtali (50x)	נַפְתָּלִי
Jonathan (124x)	יְהוֹנָתָן	Ammon (122x)	עַמּוֹן
Joshua (247x)	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	Amalek (51x)	עַמְלֵק
Jehoshaphat (86x)	יְהוֹשָׁפָט	Esau (96x)	עֵשָׂו
Joab (146x)	יֹאָב	Philistine (294x)	פְּלִשְׁתִּי
Joash (64x)	יֹאָשׁ	Pharaoh (273x)	פַּרְעֹה
Joseph (214x)	יוֹסֵף	Zadok (53x)	צָדוֹק
Jacob (348x)	יַעֲקֹב	Zedekiah (2 spellings; 63x)	צִדְקִיָּה
Isaac (112x)	יִצְחָק	Zion (154x)	צִיּוֹן
Jeroboam (104x)	יֶרְבֹּעַם	Reuben (87x)	רְאוּבֵן
Jordan (181x)	יַרְדֵּן	Rehoboam (50x)	רְחַבְעָם
Jerusalem (667x)	יְרוּשָׁלַם	Sarai; Sarah (53x)	שָׂרָה שָׂרִי
Jericho (57x)	יֶרִיחוֹ	Saul (406x)	שָׂאוּל
Jeremiah (147x)	יֵרֵמְיָה	Shechem (64x)	שֶׁכֶם
Israel (person, nation; 2513x)	יִשְׂרָאֵל	Solomon (293x)	שְׁלֹמֹה
Ishmael (56x)	יִשְׁמָעֵאל	Samuel (139x)	שָׁמוּאֵל
Cush [Ethiopia] (54x)	כוּשׁ	Samaria (112x)	שֶׁמְרוֹן
Canaan (163x)	כְּנָעַן		

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF MORPHOSYNTACTICAL TERMS

The numeral in parentheses (6) indicates the lesson in which the term is introduced.

absolute	a word or phrase that is not “connected” to the rest of a sentence; i.e., not dependent on anything else (9)
accent(s)	mark(s) in the text that indicate the accented [tone] syllable of a word, as well as its logical relationship to the following word (27)
accusative	the supposed original function of the LOCATIVE ם- (7)
acrostic	a poem or text in which each line or group of lines begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet; e.g., Pss 111, 112, 119; La 1-4 (1)
active	another term for FIENTIVE (12)
adjectival/adjective	any word used to modify another (9, 11)
<i>Adonai</i>	“lord/master/Lord”; the vowels of this word were combined with the TETRAGRAMMATON, producing the form יהוה, misinterpreted as “Jehovah” (3)
affix	any morphological unit attached directly to another (e.g., the ARTICLE), so that a WORD can be made up of as many as five ELEMENTS—a base or root, plus four affixes (4)
alphabet	the collection of symbols, usually in a static [traditional] order, that are used to represent a language visually (1)
anaptyctic	a phonetic element (vowel or syllable) added to a word, either to aid in pronouncing it, or to make it more like other forms (31)
anarthrous	lacking the article (4)
antecedent	the word (usually a noun or other SUBSTANTIVE) to which a PRONOUN refers (10)
apposition/apposed	a noun or noun phrase placed next to another noun or noun phrase in order to modify or define it; e.g., <i>David the king</i> (11)
article	a prefixed -י with DAGEŠ FORTE in the first letter of the word (4)
articular	having the article (4)
ascender	a portion of a letter that projects above the basic shape of other letters; ך is the only letter with an ascender in Biblical Hebrew (1)
assimilation	the process of one thing—in phonetics, one sound—becoming like another; assimilation may be partial or complete (7)
attribution	to assign a quality or characteristic to something, to describe it (9)
bilabial	a sound made with both lips: /b/, /m/(4)
cardinal numeral	the numerals used in all numerical descriptions exception descriptions of order or sequence; see ORDINAL (17)
causative	an activity in which the subject causes an object to do something (which may be a second object; see DOUBLY TRANSITIVE) (20)
circumstantial clause	a clause that identifies the temporal (usually) or locative (rarely) circumstances in which an event occurs (16)
clause	a syntagm with at least two main components: a topic (subject) and comment (predicate) (11)
closed syllable	a syllable that ends in a consonant; if unaccented, with a short vowel (3)
coalesce	to merge, or join (31)

cohortative	a first-person VOLITIONAL verbal form; in Biblical Hebrew usually indicating determination or desire; sometimes indicated by suffixed הָ - (8)
command	see IMPERATIVE (8)
comment	a clause's PREDICATE; what the clause says <i>about</i> its TOPIC (11)
complementary	a function of the INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, in which it “completes” a VAGUE VERB (e.g., יכל, חדר, כלל)
compound form(s)	a “word” with more than one ELEMENT, such as preposition+lexeme+suffix (4)
conjugation	a pattern of verbal formation that designates or identifies the verb's function; the major conjugations in Biblical Hebrew are the imperfect, preterite, and perfect (5)
conjunction	a word or element that links or joins two or more words, phrases, or clauses (4)
conjunctive accent	a masoretic accent that joins a word to the following; the main conjunctive accent is munahi (27)
consonant	letters that represent the non-vocalic “sounds” of the language (1)
construct (chain)	an uninterrupted series of substantives in which each defines or modifies the preceding word by the “of” relationship (9)
content	the function and semantics of any distinguishable segment of text (word, phrase, etc.) (10)
context	the entire setting of an UTTERANCE, including, e.g., its historical circumstance, culture, language (10)
cotext	the <i>linguistic</i> material surrounding a [portion of an] UTTERANCE (10)
dageš forte	a <i>dot</i> in the “bosom” of a letter, showing that the letter is doubled [i.e., to be read twice]; does not occur in the GUTTURALS or reš (3)
dageš lene	a <i>dot</i> in the “bosom” of ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, ת to indicate a different pronunciation (3)
defective spelling	see <i>HASER</i> SPELLING (2)
definiteness	the quality of specificity, with or without the article (14)
demonstrative	a DEICTIC form or expression that, specifying something by “pointing to” it, depends heavily on the context for its function (13)
denominative	a verb that supposedly derived from a noun; i.e., the root first occurred as a noun, and then as a verb; e.g., דבר (<i>word</i> → <i>say/speak</i>) (19)
descender	a portion of a letter that is lower than the basic shape of other letters; in Biblical Hebrew only ך and four of five final forms (ך, ן, ף, ץ) have descenders (1)
diagnostic(s)	those vowel points (including doubling) and prefixes that distinguish verbal STEMS (6)
directional	LOCATIVE; ACCUSATIVE (7)
disjunctive accent	a MASORETIC ACCENT that separates (“disjoins”) a word from the following; major disjunctive accents call for such a significant separation that they are called “pausal” (27)
disjunctive clause	any CLAUSE that begins with <i>waw</i> prefixed to a non-verbal form (וְאֵכָרְהֶם זָקֵן); used in narrative for ancillary (background or proleptic), contrastive, or summary information (6)
double-status	an action described by a verb, in which the subject both does the action verb and is affected by that activity; also called “reflexive”, “middle”, “reciprocal” “tolerative” (18)
double verbs	pairs of verbal roots that seem to be semantic synonyms; פור/פרר, <i>break</i> (31)
doubly transitive	a verb with two objects one of which causes the other to do something (20)
dual	the ׁ - ending used on some nouns to show that there are two of the referent, especially parts of the body and certain numerals (4, 17)
dynamic	a verb that describes or identifies an event (i.e., <i>not</i> STATIVE or STATIC); also FIENTIVE
dynamic equivalence	a theory of translation that defines the translator's responsibility as making the translation as accessible as possible to the reader, emphasizing ease of understanding; assumes that we ought to translate “thought for thought” rather than “word by word” (5)

element	any morphological unit that can be combined with (AFFIXED to) another to form a larger word; the maximum number of elements in Biblical Hebrew is five (root, plural, pronominal suffix, preposition, conjunction)
factitive	a verbal function associated with D & H that describes an activity that brings about a change of state or condition (19)
feminine	see GENDER (4)
fientive	any verb that describes an ACTION, rather than a STATE (15)
final form	a form of a letter that occurs only when that letter is the final letter in the word; this applies only to five forms in Biblical Hebrew: ם, ך, ם, ן, ן (1)
flashback	information about a former event; i.e., past non-sequential narrative material (6)
full vowel	any vowel except the HATEF-VOWELS (2)
functional equivalence	a newer term for DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE (5)
furtive patahi	a patahi placed by the Masoretes between a final long [non-a] vowel and a final guttural, e.g., the patahi in [ːAbl.GI, Gilboa (3)
gemination	the doubling of a sound, either a consonant or syllable (22)
gender	part of a language's concord system, used to indicate which words in a syntagm refer to or modify each other; the term "gender" reflects the tendency for one set of endings to be used for nouns that refer to male and female beings (4)
genre	"type" (Fr.); often distinguished because each kind of discourse in Biblical Hebrew (e.g., NARRATIVE, INSTRUCTION) makes its own use of the verbal system (6)
gerundive	a verbal function of the INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, by which it specifies the manner or means of accomplishing an activity named by a preceding verb (16)
gloss	an English word that "represents" or "stands for" a Hebrew word; N.B.: A gloss is <i>not</i> a definition, nor does it represent the word's reference or function. (2)
guttural	"throat" (Lat.); the radicals ך, ן, ן, or ן; ן is sometimes called a guttural, but is not, sharing only the characteristic of not doubling (1, 22)
guttural verbs	verbal roots with one or more of the above radicals
half vowel	a non-descript vowel (e.g., the sound represented by final 'a' in "umbrella"); represented in Biblical Hebrew by vocal <i>šewa</i> and the HATEF VOWELS (2)
<i>ḥaser</i> spelling	"lacking" (Hb.); an occurrence of a word (usually written PLENE) that lacks the vowel letter (2)
<i>ḥatef-vowel</i>	any one of four vowel signs representing a HALF VOWEL; vocal <i>šewa</i> and three signs that combine <i>šewa</i> with a sign for a full vowel (<i>ḥatef-qameṣ</i> , <i>ḥatef-pataḥ</i> , <i>ḥatef-segol</i>) (2)
I-guttural	verbal roots with ך, ן, ן, or ן as their initial consonant; GUTTURAL VERBS (22)
II-guttural	verbal roots with ך, ן, ן, or ן as their middle consonant; verbs with middle ן occasionally resemble verbs with a middle guttural; GUTTURAL VERBS (22)
III-guttural	verbal roots with ן, ן, or ן as their final consonant; GUTTURAL VERBS (22)
imperative	second-person VOLITIONAL verbal forms directing the hearer to do the will of the speaker; formed like the IMPERFECT without the PGN prefix (8)
imperfect	one of two prefix verbal CONJUGATIONS in Biblical Hebrew, generally representing the present, future, or some MODAL function (5)
independent pronoun	pronouns that function as separate words (i.e., not suffixed); independent pronouns in Biblical Hebrew are primarily clausal SUBJECTS (13)
infinitive absolute	a verbal CONJUGATION that primarily modifies a verbal clausal PREDICATE, apparently by "strengthening" it; it has no single functional GLOSS (16)
infinitive construct	a verbal CONJUGATION that occurs often with prepositions in temporal clauses, or with the preposition ך with TELIC or COMPLEMENTARY force (16)
inseparable	ELEMENTS that do not function as independent WORDS, but only as affixes (4)
inseparable preposition	three prepositions (ב, ב, ב) that only occur as prefixes (7)
instructional material	a genre of biblical prose that explains how a task is to be done; e.g., the laws of sacrifice in Lv 1-7 (10)

interlinear	a word-by-word gloss and [usually] analysis of a text from one language into another, purportedly to enable people who do not know the language of the original to understand it more fully (5)
interrogative	a question, whether indicated in Biblical Hebrew by the prefixed הֲ , an interrogative verb (e.g., $\text{הֲיָדָעְתָּ שְׂאֵל}$), or the context (13)
intransitive	any verb that describes a state (STATIVE) or an activity that does not immediately or directly affect an object; e.g., verbs of motion (15)
jussive	a MODAL function of the IMPERFECT by which the speaker directs a third party to do something (8)
lemma	the word(s) in the text that are under discussion; a common term in textual criticism (29)
lexeme	a member of the LEXICON of a language; a “word” as listed in the lexicon [book] (2)
lexicon	all the words [lexemes] of a language; a bilingual reference book (2)
locative	an ending on selected nouns indicating that motion or direction is <i>toward</i> that object [a.k.a. ACCUSATIVE] (7)
long vowel	any vowel that can stand in an open or closed & accented syllable; vowel signs with <i>MATRES LECTIONIS</i> are always long (<i>hireq-yod</i> , <i>šere-yod</i> , <i>holem-waw</i> , <i>qibbuš</i>); others mark both long and short vowels (<i>qameš</i> , <i>šere</i> , <i>hireq</i> , <i>qibbuš</i>); <i>šere</i> and <i>holem</i> are always long, with or without the <i>MATER</i> (3)
<i>male’</i> spelling	“full” (Hb.); = <i>PLENE</i> (2)
<i>mappiq</i>	a dot in a final ה - showing that the ה - is a consonant rather than a <i>MATER</i> (3)
<i>maqqef</i>	a horizontal line, at the level of the top “surface” of the “letter square”, linking two or more words into one accentual unit (5)
masculine	see <i>GENDER</i> (4)
<i>masora marginalis</i>	notes written in the margin by the Masoretes to note unexpected forms, or to offer alternate readings of the text (29)
Masoretes	the scribes who copied the biblical text (c. AD 500-1000), adding vowel points, accent marks, and other notes to the pages; the Hebrew Bible in use today is an example of the Masoretic Text (29)
<i>mater lectionis</i>	a consonantal sign used more or less sporadically to indicate the presence of a preceding long vowel (pl., <i>MATRES LECTIONIS</i>) (2)
medial form	the forms of consonants used at the beginning of or within a word; contrast <i>FINAL FORM</i> (1)
middle voice	an event in which the activity directly affects or necessarily involves the actor; primarily signalled in Biblical Hebrew by <i>nifal</i> and <i>hitpael</i> (18)
modal	any non-indicative verbal function, such as <i>IMPERATIVE</i> , <i>COHORTATIVE</i> , <i>JUSSIVE</i>
modify/modification	to define something by describing it more closely (4)
narrative	the <i>GENRE</i> used to tell stories (10)
narrative backbone	the primary sequence of events as outlined by the narrator; indicated in Biblical Hebrew by the <i>PRETERITE</i> (6)
negation	a statement that an event did <i>not</i> happen; <i>irrealis</i> (17)
non-verbal clause	a <i>CLAUSE</i> without a finite verbal form as its predicate (17)
number	morphological information indicating how many of the referent are being identified; Biblical Hebrew has three numbers—singular, dual, plural (4)
objective construct	a <i>CONSTRUCT</i> chain in which the second [later] element of the chain might be described as the <i>OBJECT</i> , result, or goal of the preceding element; e.g., in the phrase <i>Saul’s death</i> , Saul is the one who died (9)
open syllable	a syllable that ends in a vowel; its vowel is [usually] long (3)
ordinal numeral	the numerals used in describing something’s position in an order; first, second, etc.; in Biblical Hebrew, the ordinals end in י -, e.g., שִׁשִּׁי , <i>sixth</i> (17)
parenthetic information	material that stands apart from the flow of the narrative, generally supplying information needed to understand what has just been, or is about to be, described (6)

parse	to analyze a word's morphology by identifying, e.g., a verb's subject [PGN], stem, conjugation, etc. (5)
participle	verbal conjugation with primarily adjectival function (12)
passive	an event in which the subject is the object or recipient of the activity described by the verb; signalled in Biblical Hebrew by <i>nifal</i> , <i>pual</i> , and <i>hofal</i> (18)
<i>penult</i>	the next-to-last syllable of a word (2)
perfect	the suffixed verbal CONJUGATIONS in Biblical Hebrew, generally representing the past, unless <i>waw</i> is prefixed (10)
permissive	a MODAL function in which the SUBJECT allows ("permits") the activity (20)
person	the relationship of the subject to the activity described by the verb; there are three persons in both English and Biblical Hebrew (5)
PGN	a verb's inflection to show the person, gender, and number of its subject (5)
<i>plene</i> spelling	"full" (Lat.); a word spelled with a vowel letter; = MALE' (2)
plural	reference to more than one of an entity; the grammatical forms that indicate such reference (4)
pointing	marks added to the consonantal text that indicate vowels ("vowel points") and accentuation ("accents")
polar question	a question that expects an answer of either "yes" or "no" (17)
possessive	showing that one entity belongs to another (9)
predicate	the COMMENT portion of a clause; what the clause says <i>about</i> its TOPIC (11)
prefix	define as both noun & verb (4)
preposition	a "pre-posed" form that indicates a word's function in the CLAUSE or SENTENCE (4)
prepositional phrase	a non-clausal string of word(s) governed by the PREPOSITION (7)
prohibition	a negative command (8)
proleptic	"clues"; information anticipating a future development, especially in narrative (10)
pronominal subject	a non-nominal SUBJECT of a CLAUSE; indicated by either an INDEPENDENT PRONOUN, PRONOMINAL SUFFIX (on INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT), or the PGN affixes of the prefix and suffix CONJUGATIONS (13)
pronominal suffix	a shortened form of an independent pronoun, used to show pronominal possession, objects of verbs or prepositions, and subjects of infinitive constructs (14)
radical	another name for the consonants that make up the ROOT of a word; e.g., "second radical" is shorthand for "the second consonant of the root"
range of reference	a word's relative specificity; e.g., "animal" has a much wider range than "dog" (2)
reciprocal	an activity in which two or more parties simultaneously participate (e.g., fighting) (18)
reflexive	an activity in which the actor more or less directs the action toward him or herself (18)
relative	that which relates information to or about something else (11)
resultative	a verbal function associated with D & H that describes an activity that brings about a change of state or condition; see CAUSATIVE, FACTITIVE (19)
rhetorical question	a question asked, not seeking information, but in order to make an assertion (17)
root	the theoretical reconstructed base—usually of three RADICALS—that is common to a group of forms (5)
separable preposition	the preposition ך, <i>from</i> , which is often—but not necessarily—prefixed to the word that it governs (7)
<i>šewa</i>	see VOCAL ŠEWA (2)
short vowel	any vowel that can stand in a closed, unaccented syllable (i.e., <i>pataḥ</i> , <i>segol</i> , <i>qameṣ ḥatuf</i>); some vowel signs (<i>hireq</i> , <i>qibbuṣ</i>) mark both long and short vowels; their function must be determined from their phonetic environment (3)
silent <i>šewa</i>	a sign () used to mark the <i>absence</i> of a vowel between consonants, and unvocalized final <i>kaf</i> (ך-) (3)

singular	something referred to that consists of one, or a group considered collectively, or the form that identifies the referent as singular (4)
stative	a verb that describes the state or condition of its subject, rather than an ACTION; contrasted with DYNAMIC (10); also called “static”
status, change of	a change in the condition or situation of a clausal subject (15)
stem	a combination of prefixes, infixes (doubling), and vowels that indicate a verb’s function (5)
strong verb	any verbal root in which all three radicals are present in all forms of the verb (24)
subject	the TOPIC of a clause—what the clause <i>describes</i> (5)
subjective construct	a CONSTRUCT chain in which the second [later] element of the chain might be described as the SUBJECT or source of the preceding element; e.g., in the phrase <i>Saul’s death</i> , Saul is the one who died (9)
substantive	any form that can serve as a clausal SUBJECT, OBJECT, or PREDICATE NOMINATIVE, or function within a CONSTRUCT chain (11)
syllable	a cluster of sounds, both consonant and vowel; all syllables in Biblical Hebrew begin with a consonant (except the prefixed conjunction -וּ); syllables are OPEN or CLOSED
syntagm	one of the syntactical patterns of a language; any identifiable <i>syntactical</i> combination of specific grammatical forms which may be specific (e.g., <i>w</i> +perfect; -וּ + הָיָה) or general (e.g., “construct chain”, “sequential preterites”; disjunctive clause”)
telic	a clause that identifies the intended or desired outcome—purpose or result—of an event or state
temporal clause/phrase	a clause or phrase that describes the <i>time at which</i> something happened (16)
Tetragrammaton	“four letters” (Greek); the divine name יהוה; see YHWH (3)
tittle	the small horizontal stroke that distinguishes, e.g., כּ from כ, and ך from ך (1)
tolerative	a function of the <i>nifal</i> in which someone <i>allows</i> or <i>permits</i> something to be done (18)
topic	the SUBJECT of a clause—what the clause is <i>about</i> (11)
toponym	place name
transitive	any FIENTIVE verb that can direct its action toward an OBJECT (15)
translate	the process of attempting to present in one language a message originally expressed in another (5)
transliterate	to represent the <i>sounds</i> of one language in the <i>alphabet</i> of another; transliteration can be phonetically technical or exact, or relatively casual (1)
ultima	the final syllable of a word; in Biblical Hebrew, the ultima is usually the accented syllable (2)
utterance	any product of a linguistic act, whether written or oral
vague verb	a verb that is functionally/semantically incomplete, and thus requires another form (usually an infinitive construct in Biblical Hebrew); e.g., “be able”, “finish” (16)
virtual doubling	when a letter that is normally doubled in a given form lacks <i>dages forte</i> , but the preceding vowel is short, as though the letter had been doubled (22)
vocal <i>šewa</i>	the main HALF-VOWEL (3)
volitional	verbal forms that indicate the imposition of someone’s will on another person; a collective term for the JUSSIVE, COHORTATIVE, and IMPERATIVE (8)
vowel letter	letters of the alphabet used to indicate the presence of a long vowel (2)
VSO	verb-subject-object as the usual word order of main narrative [PRETERITE] clauses (6)
weak verb	verbal roots with consonants or vowel letters that are in the lexical form, but do not appear in all verbal forms (24)
word	any form in Biblical Hebrew separated by a blank space or joined to another by MAQQEF
YHWH	the TETRAGRAMMATON (“four letters”) the traditionally unpronounced proper name of the God of the Bible, pointed יהוה in BHS (3)

Appendix D

PARADIGMS

Pronouns

Person Gender Number	Independent (subject)	Suffixes				
		Basic Form	w/MS Noun	w/MP Noun	w/FS Noun	w/FP Noun
1cs	אֲנִי אֲנֹכִי	יְ -	סוּסִי	סוּסִי	סוּסְתִי	סוּסוֹתִי
2ms	אַתָּה	ךָ -	סוּסְךָ	סוּסֶיךָ	סוּסְתֶיךָ	סוּסוֹתֶיךָ
2fs	אַתְּ	ךְ -	סוּסְךְ	סוּסֶיךְ	סוּסְתֶיךְ	סוּסוֹתֶיךְ
3ms	הוא	וְ -	סוּסוֹ		סוּסָתוֹ	
		הָ -	סוּסָהּ			
		הוּ -	סוּסֵהוּ			
		יוֹ -		סוּסָיו		סוּסוֹתָיו
3fs	היא	הָ -	סוּסָהּ		סוּסָתָהּ	
	הוא	הָ -		סוּסֶיהָ		סוּסוֹתֶיהָ
1cp	אֲנַחְנוּ נַחְנוּ	נוּ -	סוּסֵנוּ	סוּסֵינוּ	סוּסְתָנוּ	סוּסוֹתֵינוּ
2mp	אַתֶּם	כֶּם -	סוּסְכֶם	סוּסֵיכֶם	סוּסְתְּכֶם	סוּסוֹתֵיכֶם
2fp	אַתֶּן אַתֶּנָּה	כֶּן -	סוּסְכֶן	סוּסֵיכֶן	סוּסְתְּכֶן	סוּסוֹתֵיכֶן
3mp	הֵם	הֶם -		סוּסֵיהֶם	סוּסְתֵיהֶם	סוּסוֹתֵיהֶם
	הֵמָּה	הֵם -	סוּסָם			סוּסוֹתָם
		בוֹ -				
3fp	הֵנָּה	הֵן -		סוּסֵיהֶן	סוּסְתֵיהֶן	סוּסוֹתֵיהֶן
		וְ -	סוּסָן			

- Throughout the *Pentateuch*, הִיא (3fs) is written הוּא, with only eleven exceptions (e.g., Gn 14.2).
- These suffixes are used with nouns, prepositions, infinitives construct, and participles. Suffixes on finite verbs and the imperative are similar, but show greater variety in form.
 - if the verb ends in a vowel, the suffix either begins with or consists of a consonant (the 1cs verbal suffix is נִי -):

שְׂאוּנִי וְהִטְלֵנִי אֶל-הַיָּם Pick *me* up and throw *me* into the sea (Jon 1.12)

- if the verb ends in a consonant, either silent *šewa* or a vowel links the consonantal suffix to the verb; vocalic suffixes are affixed directly to the verb:

וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ He killed *him* (Gn 4.8).
לָכַד יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-הָעִי וַיַּהַרְיֶמָה Joshua had captured Ai and destroyed *it* (Jos 10.1)

Strong Verb, I

	Forms	Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hofal	Piel	Pual	Hitpael
P	1cs	מִשְׁלָּחִי	נִמְשָׁלָחִי	הִמְשָׁלָחִי	הִמְשָׁלָחִי	מִשְׁלָּחִי	מִשְׁלָּחִי	הִתְמַשְׁלָּחִי
	2ms	מִשְׁלָּחְךָ	נִמְשָׁלָחְךָ	הִמְשָׁלָחְךָ	הִמְשָׁלָחְךָ	מִשְׁלָּחְךָ	מִשְׁלָּחְךָ	הִתְמַשְׁלָּחְךָ
	2fs	מִשְׁלָּחֶיךָ	נִמְשָׁלָחֶיךָ	הִמְשָׁלָחֶיךָ	הִמְשָׁלָחֶיךָ	מִשְׁלָּחֶיךָ	מִשְׁלָּחֶיךָ	הִתְמַשְׁלָּחֶיךָ
	3ms	מִשְׁלָּח	נִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל	מִשְׁלָּח	מִשְׁלָּח	הִתְמַשְׁלָּח
	3fs	מִשְׁלָּחָהּ	נִמְשָׁלָהּ	הִמְשָׁלָהּ	הִמְשָׁלָהּ	מִשְׁלָּחָהּ	מִשְׁלָּחָהּ	הִתְמַשְׁלָּחָהּ
	1cp	מִשְׁלָּלָנוּ	נִמְשָׁלָנוּ	הִמְשָׁלָנוּ	הִמְשָׁלָנוּ	מִשְׁלָּלָנוּ	מִשְׁלָּלָנוּ	הִתְמַשְׁלָּלָנוּ
	2mp	מִשְׁלָּלְתֶּם	נִמְשָׁלְתֶּם	הִמְשָׁלְתֶּם	הִמְשָׁלְתֶּם	מִשְׁלָּלְתֶּם	מִשְׁלָּלְתֶּם	הִתְמַשְׁלָּלְתֶּם
	2fp	מִשְׁלָּלְתֶּיךָ	נִמְשָׁלְתֶּיךָ	הִמְשָׁלְתֶּיךָ	הִמְשָׁלְתֶּיךָ	מִשְׁלָּלְתֶּיךָ	מִשְׁלָּלְתֶּיךָ	הִתְמַשְׁלָּלְתֶּיךָ
	3cp	מִשְׁלָּלוּ	נִמְשָׁלוּ	הִמְשָׁלוּ	הִמְשָׁלוּ	מִשְׁלָּלוּ	מִשְׁלָּלוּ	הִתְמַשְׁלָּלוּ
F	1cs	אֶמְשָׁל	אֶמְשָׁל	אֶמְשִׁיל	אֶמְשָׁל	אֶמְשָׁל	אֶמְשָׁל	אֶתְמַשָּׁל
	2ms/3fs	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּמְשִׁיל	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּמְשָׁל	תִּתְמַשָּׁל
	2fs	תִּמְשָׁלִי	תִּמְשָׁלִי	תִּמְשִׁילִי	תִּמְשָׁלִי	תִּמְשָׁלִי	תִּמְשָׁלִי	תִּתְמַשָּׁלִי
	3ms	יִמְשָׁל	יִמְשָׁל	יִמְשִׁיל	יִמְשָׁל	יִמְשָׁל	יִמְשָׁל	יִתְמַשָּׁל
	1cp	נִמְשָׁל	נִמְשָׁל	נִמְשִׁיל	נִמְשָׁל	נִמְשָׁל	נִמְשָׁל	נִתְמַשָּׁל
	2mp	תִּמְשָׁלוּ	תִּמְשָׁלוּ	תִּמְשִׁילוּ	תִּמְשָׁלוּ	תִּמְשָׁלוּ	תִּמְשָׁלוּ	תִּתְמַשָּׁלוּ
	2/3fp	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה	תִּמְשִׁלְנָה	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה	תִּמְשָׁלְנָה	תִּתְמַשָּׁלְנָה
V	ms	מִשָּׁל	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל		מִשָּׁל		הִתְמַשָּׁל
	fs	מִשָּׁלִי	הִמְשָׁלִי	הִמְשָׁלִי		מִשָּׁלִי		הִתְמַשָּׁלִי
	mp	מִשָּׁלוּ	הִמְשָׁלוּ	הִמְשָׁלוּ		מִשָּׁלוּ		הִתְמַשָּׁלוּ
	fp	מִשָּׁלְנָה	הִמְשָׁלְנָה	הִמְשָׁלְנָה		מִשָּׁלְנָה		הִתְמַשָּׁלְנָה
NC		מִשָּׁל	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל	מִשָּׁל		הִתְמַשָּׁל
NA		מִשָּׁל	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל	הִמְשָׁל	מִשָּׁל	מִשָּׁל	הִתְמַשָּׁל
Participle	ms	מִשָּׁל	נִמְשָׁל	מִמְשָׁל	מִמְשָׁל	מִמְשָׁל	מִמְשָׁל	מִתְמַשָּׁל
	fs	מִשָּׁלָה	נִמְשָׁלָה	מִמְשָׁלָה	מִמְשָׁלָה	מִמְשָׁלָה	מִמְשָׁלָה	מִתְמַשָּׁלָה
		מִשָּׁלֵת						
	mp	מִשָּׁלִים	נִמְשָׁלִים	מִמְשָׁלִים	מִמְשָׁלִים	מִמְשָׁלִים	מִמְשָׁלִים	מִתְמַשָּׁלִים
	fp	מִשָּׁלוֹת	נִמְשָׁלוֹת	מִמְשָׁלוֹת	מִמְשָׁלוֹת	מִמְשָׁלוֹת	מִמְשָׁלוֹת	מִתְמַשָּׁלוֹת

1. If the verbal root begins with a sibilant (ס, צ, ש, שׁ), the ת of the *hitpael* prefix and the sibilant exchange positions (metathesize): הִשְׁתַּמְרָתִי, “I kept myself”; if the root begins with שׁ, the ת both metathesizes and becomes ט (partial assimilation): הִצְטַדֵּק, “he sanctified himself”.
2. If the verbal root ends with ת, this assimilates to the ת of the perfect endings (e.g., 1cs, 2ms), which is then written with *dages forte*: כָּרַתְּ, “you (ms) cut”. In some III-נ verbs, final נ occasionally assimilates to the consonant of the ending: נָתַתְּ (< נתן, for which this is especially true); שָׁכַנְּנוּ (< שכן).

Strong Verb, II(with medial *b^egad-k^efat* letter [occasional *dageš lene*])

Conj/Sbj		Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hofal	Piel	Pual	Hitpael
P	1cs	כָּתַבְתִּי	נִכְתַּבְתִּי	הִכְתַּבְתִּי	הִכְתַּבְתִּי	פָּתַבְתִּי	פָּתַבְתִּי	הִתְפַּתַּבְתִּי
	2ms	כָּתַבְתָּ	נִכְתַּבְתָּ	הִכְתַּבְתָּ	הִכְתַּבְתָּ	פָּתַבְתָּ	פָּתַבְתָּ	הִתְפַּתַּבְתָּ
	2fs	כָּתַבְתְּ	נִכְתַּבְתְּ	הִכְתַּבְתְּ	הִכְתַּבְתְּ	פָּתַבְתְּ	פָּתַבְתְּ	הִתְפַּתַּבְתְּ
	3ms	כָּתַב	נִכְתַּב	הִכְתִּיב	הִכְתִּב	פָּתַב	פָּתַב	הִתְפַּתַּב
	3fs	כָּתְבָה	נִכְתְּבָה	הִכְתִּיבָה	הִכְתְּבָה	פָּתְבָה	פָּתְבָה	הִתְפַּתְּבָה
	1cp	כָּתַבְנוּ	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	הִכְתַּבְנוּ	הִכְתַּבְנוּ	פָּתַבְנוּ	פָּתַבְנוּ	הִתְפַּתַּבְנוּ
	2mp	כָּתַבְתֶּם	נִכְתַּבְתֶּם	הִכְתַּבְתֶּם	הִכְתַּבְתֶּם	פָּתַבְתֶּם	פָּתַבְתֶּם	הִתְפַּתַּבְתֶּם
	2fp	כָּתַבְתֶּן	נִכְתַּבְתֶּן	הִכְתַּבְתֶּן	הִכְתַּבְתֶּן	פָּתַבְתֶּן	פָּתַבְתֶּן	הִתְפַּתַּבְתֶּן
	3cp	כָּתְבוּ	נִכְתְּבוּ	הִכְתִּיבוּ	הִכְתְּבוּ	פָּתְבוּ	פָּתְבוּ	הִתְפַּתְּבוּ
F	1cs	אָכַתְבִּי	אִכְתַּבְתִּי	אִכְתַּבְתִּי	אָכַתְבִּי	אָכַתְבִּי	אָכַתְבִּי	אִתְכַּתַּבְתִּי
	2m/3fs	תְּכַתֵּב	תִּכְתַּבְתְּ	תִּכְתַּבְתְּ	תְּכַתֵּב	תְּכַתֵּב	תְּכַתֵּב	תִּתְכַּתֵּב
	2fs	תְּכַתֵּבִי	תִּכְתַּבְתִּי	תִּכְתַּבְתִּי	תְּכַתֵּבִי	תְּכַתֵּבִי	תְּכַתֵּבִי	תִּתְכַּתֵּבִי
	3ms	יָכַתְבִּי	יִכְתַּבְתְּ	יִכְתַּבְתְּ	יָכַתְבִּי	יָכַתְבִּי	יָכַתְבִּי	יִתְכַּתֵּב
	1cp	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	נִכְתַּבְנוּ	נִתְכַּתַּבְנוּ
	2mp	תְּכַתֵּבוּ	תִּכְתַּבְתֶּם	תִּכְתַּבְתֶּם	תְּכַתֵּבוּ	תְּכַתֵּבוּ	תְּכַתֵּבוּ	תִּתְכַּתֵּבוּ
	2/3fp	תְּכַתֵּבְנָה	תִּכְתַּבְתֶּנּוּ	תִּכְתַּבְתֶּנּוּ	תְּכַתֵּבְנָה	תְּכַתֵּבְנָה	תְּכַתֵּבְנָה	תִּתְכַּתֵּבְנָה
	3mp	יָכַתְבוּ	יִכְתַּבְתֶּם	יִכְתַּבְתֶּם	יָכַתְבוּ	יָכַתְבוּ	יָכַתְבוּ	יִתְכַּתֵּבוּ
V	ms	כָּתַב	הִכְתִּיב	הִכְתִּיב		פָּתַב		הִתְפַּתַּב
	fs	כָּתְבָה	הִכְתִּיבָה	הִכְתִּיבָה		פָּתְבָה		הִתְפַּתְּבָה
	mp	כָּתְבוּ	הִכְתִּיבוּ	הִכְתִּיבוּ		פָּתְבוּ		הִתְפַּתְּבוּ
	fp	כָּתְבְנָה	הִכְתִּיבְנָה	הִכְתִּיבְנָה		פָּתְבְנָה		הִתְפַּתְּבְנָה
NC		כָּתַב	הִכְתִּיב	הִכְתִּיב	הִכְתִּיב	פָּתַב		הִתְפַּתַּב
NA		כָּתוּב	הִכְתִּיב	הִכְתִּיב	הִכְתִּיב	כָּתוּב	כָּתוּב	הִתְפַּתַּב
Participle	ms	כָּתוּב	נִכְתֵּב	מִכְתִּיב	מִכְתֵּב	מִכְתֵּב	מִכְתֵּב	מִתְכַּתֵּב
	fs	כָּתוּבָה	נִכְתֵּבָה	מִכְתִּיבָה	מִכְתֵּבָה	מִכְתֵּבָה	מִכְתֵּבָה	מִתְכַּתֵּבָה
	mp	כָּתוּבִים	נִכְתֵּבִים	מִכְתִּיבִים	מִכְתֵּבִים	מִכְתֵּבִים	מִכְתֵּבִים	מִתְכַּתֵּבִים
	fp	כָּתוּבוֹת	נִכְתֵּבוֹת	מִכְתִּיבוֹת	מִכְתֵּבוֹת	מִכְתֵּבוֹת	מִכְתֵּבוֹת	מִתְכַּתֵּבוֹת

- When a verbal root begins with a sibilant (ז, ס, צ, ש, שׁ), the ת of the *hitpael* prefix and the sibilant exchange positions (metathesize): הִשְׁתַּמְרֵתִי, “I kept myself”; if the root begins with צ, the ת both metathesizes and becomes ט (partial assimilation): הִצְטַמְדֵּךְ, “Sanctify yourself!”.
- When a verbal root ends with ת, this assimilates to the ת of the perfect endings (e.g., 1cs, 2ms), which is then written with *dageš forte*: כָּרַתְּ, “you (ms) cut”. The final ך- of some III-נ verbs occasionally assimilates to the consonant of the ending: נָתַתְּ (< נָתַן, for which this is especially true).

Guttural Verbs

Verbs with gutturals (א, ה, ח, ע) are strong (i.e., all three radicals of the root are present), except for occasional forms of III-א roots (below). They differ from the strong verb for four reasons:

- (1) The gutturals (and ר) do not double
- (2) The gutturals are followed by *hatef*-vowels rather than vocal *šewa*
- (3) The gutturals tend to occur with *a*-vowels.
- (4) When א comes at the end of a syllable, it becomes silent and the preceding vowel is long.

These characteristics mean that they differ from the strong verb in six ways (non-guttural forms in [] for comparison):

1. *long* vowels instead of short; gutturals don't double, so syllables that are closed in non-guttural forms are *open* and short vowels *lengthen*:

יַעֲמֹד 3ms N F [יִשְׁמֹר] בִּרְךָ 3ms D P [כִּכְּבֹד]

2. *a*-vowels (especially *patach* and *patach furtivum*):

יִשְׁמַע 3ms Q F [יִכְתֹּב] יִשְׁמַע 3ms D F [יִשְׁמֹר]

3. *hatef*-vowels instead of vocal *shewa* under gutturals:

בִּחְרוּ 3cp Q P [כְּתִבּוּ] עֲמִדְתֶּם 2mp Q P [כְּתִבְתֶּם]

4. *segol* instead of *hireq* before non-final gutturals, especially in prefix:

יִחְדַּל 3ms Q F [יִכְתֹּב]

5. short prefix vowel followed by *hatef*-vowel instead of silent *shewa*:

יַעֲמִיר 3ms Q F [יִכְתֹּב] יַעֲמִיר 3ms H F [יִמְשִׁיל]

6. III-א forms generally have the vowel of the basic verb after the second radical of the verbal root, if that vowel is long. The ה of PGN endings lacks *dageš lene* since it is preceded by a vowel (silent א is not counted as a consonant).

מִצַּחֲתִי 1cs Q P [שְׁמַרְתִּי] יִמְצֹא 3ms Dp F [יִשְׁמֹר]

Some III-א forms lack the א completely (this is usually noted in the *masora marginalis*, as, e.g., in Ru 2.9, where וְצִמֵּת is noted as a unique occurrence [i.e., lacking final א]):

וְצִמֵּת 2fs Q P [שְׁמַרְתִּי] מִצַּחֲתִי 1cs Q P [שְׁמַרְתִּי]
וְיָבוּ 3ms Q Pr [Qere: וַיָּבֹא]

III-ה (ל"ה) Verbs

Conj/Sbj		Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hofal	Piel	Pual	Hitpaal
P	1cs	בָּנִיתִי	נִבְנִיתִי	הִבְנִיתִי	הִבְנִיתִי	בָּנִיתִי	בָּנִיתִי	הִתְבְּנִיתִי
	2ms	בָּנִיתָ	נִבְנִיתָ	הִבְנִיתָ	הִבְנִיתָ	בָּנִיתָ	בָּנִיתָ	הִתְבְּנִיתָ
	2fs	בָּנִיתְּ	נִבְנִיתְּ	הִבְנִיתְּ	הִבְנִיתְּ	בָּנִיתְּ	בָּנִיתְּ	הִתְבְּנִיתְּ
	3ms	בָּנָה	נִבְנָה	הִבְנָה	הִבְנָה	בָּנָה	בָּנָה	הִתְבְּנָה
	3fs	בָּנְתָה	נִבְנְתָה	הִבְנְתָה	הִבְנְתָה	בָּנְתָה	בָּנְתָה	הִתְבְּנְתָה
	1cp	בָּנִינוּ	נִבְנִינוּ	הִבְנִינוּ	הִבְנִינוּ	בָּנִינוּ	בָּנִינוּ	הִתְבְּנִינוּ
	2mp	בָּנִיתֶם	נִבְנִיתֶם	הִבְנִיתֶם	הִבְנִיתֶם	בָּנִיתֶם	בָּנִיתֶם	הִתְבְּנִיתֶם
	2fp	בָּנִיתֶן	נִבְנִיתֶן	הִבְנִיתֶן	הִבְנִיתֶן	בָּנִיתֶן	בָּנִיתֶן	הִתְבְּנִיתֶן
	3cp	בָּנוּ	נִבְנוּ	הִבְנוּ	הִבְנוּ	בָּנוּ	בָּנוּ	הִתְבְּנוּ
F	1cs	אֲבָנָה	אֲבָנָה	אֲבָנָה	אֲבָנָה	אֲבָנָה	אֲבָנָה	אֲתִבְנָה
	2m/3f	תִּבְנֶה	תִּבְנֶה	תִּבְנֶה	תִּבְנֶה	תִּבְנֶה	תִּבְנֶה	תִּתְבְּנֶה
	2fs	תִּבְנִי	תִּבְנִי	תִּבְנִי	תִּבְנִי	תִּבְנִי	תִּבְנִי	תִּתְבְּנִי
	3ms	יִבְנֶה	יִבְנֶה	יִבְנֶה	יִבְנֶה	יִבְנֶה	יִבְנֶה	יִתְבְּנֶה
	1cp	נִבְנָה	נִבְנָה	נִבְנָה	נִבְנָה	נִבְנָה	נִבְנָה	נִתְבְּנָה
	2mp	תִּבְנוּ	תִּבְנוּ	תִּבְנוּ	תִּבְנוּ	תִּבְנוּ	תִּבְנוּ	תִּתְבְּנוּ
	2/3fp	תִּבְנִינָה	תִּבְנִינָה	תִּבְנִינָה	תִּבְנִינָה	תִּבְנִינָה	תִּבְנִינָה	תִּתְבְּנִינָה
	3mp	יִבְנוּ	יִבְנוּ	יִבְנוּ	יִבְנוּ	יִבְנוּ	יִבְנוּ	יִתְבְּנוּ
V	ms	בָּנָה	הִבְנָה	הִבְנָה		בָּנָה		הִתְבְּנָה
	fs	בָּנִי	הִבְנִי	הִבְנִי		בָּנִי		הִתְבְּנִי
	mp	בָּנוּ	הִבְנוּ	הִבְנוּ		בָּנוּ		הִתְבְּנוּ
	fp	בָּנִינָה	הִבְנִינָה	הִבְנִינָה		בָּנִינָה		הִתְבְּנִינָה
NC		בָּנוּת	הִבְנוּת	הִבְנוּת	הִבְנוּת	בָּנוּת	בָּנוּת	הִתְבְּנוּת
NA		בָּנָה	הִבְנָה	הִבְנָה	הִבְנָה	בָּנָה	בָּנָה	הִתְבְּנָה
Participle	ms	בָּנָה	נִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִתְבְּנָה
	fs	בָּנָה	נִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִבְנָה	מִתְבְּנָה
	mp	בָּנִים	נִבְנִים	מִבְנִים	מִבְנִים	מִבְנִים	מִבְנִים	מִתְבְּנִים
	fp	בָּנוּת	נִבְנוּת	מִבְנוּת	מִבְנוּת	מִבְנוּת	מִבְנוּת	מִתְבְּנוּת

III-ה Verbal Roots

1. The final ה- (originally י-) “appears” as י between the second radical and consonantal endings, and is replaced by vocalic endings and the וּת- of NC. Because the weakness lies at the end of the verbal root, it affects all stems equally, but only the pointing *after* the *second* radical of the verbal root.
2. If there is no PGN ending, the ending is ה -, preceded by the following vowels (all stems):

הַ -	perfect
הֵ -	imperative
הִ -	imperative, participle (ms)
הִי -	infinitive absolute

3. NC of all stems replaces final ה with וּת-.
4. Some forms of *qal* and *hifil* imperfect and preterite look exactly alike in roots which are both III-ה and I-guttural (especially I-ע); the stem can be determined only from the context (e.g., if וַיַּעַל has a direct object, it is H, if not, it is Q).

I-נ (פ"נ) Verbs (see next page for נתן)

Conj/Sbj	Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hofal	D-Stems
P 1cs		נִפְלְתִּי	הִפְלַתִּי	הִפְלִיתִי	
2ms		נִפְלַתְּ	הִפְלַתְּ	הִפְלִיתְּ	
2fs		נִפְלַתְּ	הִפְלַתְּ	הִפְלִיתְּ	
3ms	These forms are the same as the strong verb in <i>qal</i> perfect.	נִפְלָה	הִפִּילָה	הִפְלִיָּה	
3fs		נִפְלְהָ	הִפִּילְהָ	הִפְלִיָּהּ	
1cp		נִפְלַנּוּ	הִפְלַנּוּ	הִפְלִינוּ	
2mp		נִפְלַתֶּם	הִפְלַתֶּם	הִפְלִיתֶם	
2fp		נִפְלַתְּ	הִפְלַתְּ	הִפְלִיתְּ	
3cp		נִפְּלוּ	הִפִּילוּ	הִפְּלִיּוּ	
F 1cs	אָפַל	אָנַשׁ	אָפִיל	אָפַל	Verbs based on I-נ roots are strong in all forms of the D-stems.
2m/3f	תָּפַל	תָּנַשׁ	תָּפִיל	תָּפַל	
2fs	תִּפְּלִי	תִּנְשִׁי	תִּפִּילִי	תִּפְּלִי	
3ms	יָפַל	יָנַשׁ	יָפִיל	יָפַל	
1cp	נִפְּלוּ	נִנְשׁוּ	נִפִּילוּ	נִפְּלוּ	
2mp	תִּפְּלוּ	תִּנְשׁוּ	תִּפִּילוּ	תִּפְּלוּ	
2/3fp	תִּפְּלֶנָּה	תִּנְשֶׁנָּה	תִּפִּלְנָה	תִּפְּלֶנָּה	
3mp	יִפְּלוּ	יִנְשׁוּ	יִפִּילוּ	יִפְּלוּ	
V ms		נָשׁ	הִפִּיל		
fs		נָשִׁי	הִפִּילִי		
mp	In <i>qal</i> , the imperative, infinitives, and participles of <i>o</i> -imperfect	נָשׁוּ	הִפִּילוּ		
fp		נָשְׁנָה	הִפִּילְנָה		
NC		נָשֶׁת	הִפִּיל	הִפִּיל	
NA	of <i>o</i> -imperfect	נָשׁוּ	הִפִּיל	הִפִּיל	
Participle ms	I-נ verbs are the same as the strong verb in Q.	The participles are the same as the strong verb.	נִפְּלָה	מִפִּיל	מִפְּלָה
fs			נִפְּלָהּ	מִפִּילָהּ	מִפְּלָהּ
mp			נִפְּלִים	מִפִּילִים	מִפְּלִים
fp			נִפְּלוֹת	מִפִּילוֹת	מִפְּלוֹת

- These roots are weak whenever the first radical of the verbal root is followed by silent *shewa* (*qal* F,V; N P, Ptc; all forms of *hifil* and *hofal*); they are strong throughout the D-stems.
- When followed by silent *šewa*, initial -נ assimilates to the second radical, doubling it. In *qal* V and NC of *holem*-imperfect roots, -נ drops off; תִּ or תִּ is added to NC (just as in some I-י verbs).
- לִקַּח is formed just like נָשׁ throughout the verbal system; any verbal form with -קַח- is from לִקַּח.

נתן (*all attested forms*)

Conj/Sbj		Qal	Qal Passive	Nifal
P	1cs	נָתַתִּי		
	2ms	נָתַתָּ		
	2fs	נָתַתְּ		
	3ms	נָתַן		נָתַן
	3fs	נָתְנָה		נָתְנָה
	1cp	נָתַנּוּ		נָתַנּוּ
	2mp	נָתַתֶּם		
	3cp	נָתְנוּ		
F	1cs	אָתַן		
	2m/3f	תָּתַן		תָּתַן
	2fs	תָּתְנִי		
	3ms	יָתַן	יָתַן	יָתַן
	1cp	נָתַן		
	2mp	תָּתַנּוּ		
	3mp	יָתְנוּ		יָתְנוּ
V	ms	תֵּן		
		תָּנָה		
	fs	תְּנִי		
	mp	תְּנוּ		
NC		תַּת		הִנָּתַן
		תַּת־		
		(with suffixes)		
NA Participle		נָתוֹן		הִנָּתוֹן
	ms	נָתַן	נָתוֹן	נָתַן
	mp	נָתְנִים	נָתוֹנִים	
	fp		נָתוֹנוֹת	

1. Forms listed do not occur; several forms occur only once or twice (e.g., 2fs *qal* P of נתן occurs only twice, in Ezk 16.33, 36).
2. The final ך- assimilates into all consonantal endings, doubling the consonant.
3. The initial ך- assimilates into the medial ת- whenever silent *šewa* follows the first radical.
4. The stem-vowel in *qal* F, V, NC is *šere*.

I-י (י") Verbs

Conj/Sbj		Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hifil (I-י)	Hofal	D-Stems
P	1cs		נִרְשָׁתִי	הִרְשָׁתִי	הִיטְבֹתִי	הִרְשָׁתִי	
	2ms		נִרְשָׁתָּ	הִרְשָׁתָּ	הִיטְבֹתָּ	הִרְשָׁתָּ	
	2fs		נִרְשָׁתְּ	הִרְשָׁתְּ	הִיטְבֹתְּ	הִרְשָׁתְּ	
	3ms	These forms are the same as the strong verb in <i>qal</i> perfect.	נִרְשָׁה	הִרְשָׁה	הִיטְבָהּ	הִרְשָׁה	
	3fs		נִרְשָׁה	הִרְשָׁה	הִיטְבָהּ	הִרְשָׁה	
	1cp		נִרְשָׁנוּ	הִרְשָׁנוּ	הִיטְבָנוּ	הִרְשָׁנוּ	
	2mp		נִרְשָׁתֶם	הִרְשָׁתֶם	הִיטְבָתֶם	הִרְשָׁתֶם	
	2fp		נִרְשָׁתֶן	הִרְשָׁתֶן	הִיטְבָתֶן	הִרְשָׁתֶן	
	3cp		נִרְשָׁו	הִרְשָׁו	הִיטְבָו	הִרְשָׁו	
F	1cs	אִירָשׁ	אֶשָּׁב	אֹרִישׁ	אֵיטִיב	אֹרִישׁ	
	2m/3f	תִּירָשׁ	תֵּשָׁב	תֹּרִישׁ	תֵּיטִיב	תֹּרִישׁ	
	2fs	תִּירָשִׁי	תֵּשָׁבִי	תֹּרִישִׁי	תֵּיטִיבִי	תֹּרִישִׁי	
	3ms	יִירָשׁ	יֵשָׁב	יֹרִישׁ	יֵיטִיב	יֹרִישׁ	Verbs based on I-י roots are strong in all forms of the D-stems.
	1cp	נִירָשׁ	נֵשָׁב	נֹרִישׁ	נֵיטִיב	נֹרִישׁ	
	2mp	תִּירָשׁוּ	תֵּשָׁבוּ	תֹּרִישׁוּ	תֵּיטִיבוּ	תֹּרִישׁוּ	
	2/3fp	תִּירָשְׁנָה	תֵּשָׁבְנָה	תֹּרִישְׁנָה	תֵּיטִיבְנָה	תֹּרִישְׁנָה	
	3mp	יִירָשׁוּ	יֵשָׁבוּ	יֹרִישׁוּ	יֵיטִיבוּ	יֹרִישׁוּ	
V	ms	רָשׁ	שָׁב	הִרְשָׁה	הִיטְבָהּ		
	fs	רָשִׁי	שָׁבִי	הִרְשִׁי	הִיטְבִּי		
	mp	רָשׁוּ	שָׁבוּ	הִרְשָׁו	הִיטְבָו		
	fp	רָשְׁנָה	שָׁבְנָה	הִרְשְׁנָה	הִיטְבְּנָה		
NC		רָשָׁתָּ	שָׁבָתָּ	הִרְשָׁתָּ	הִיטְבָתָּ	הִרְשָׁתָּ	
NA		יִרָשׁ	יֵשָׁב	הִרְשָׁה	הִיטְבָהּ	הִרְשָׁה	
Participle	ms	יֹרֵשׁ	יֹשֵׁב	מֹרִישׁ	מֵיטִיב	מֹרִישׁ	
	fs	יֹרֶשֶׁת	יֹשֶׁבֶת	מֹרִישָׁה	מֵיטִיבָהּ	מֹרִישָׁה	
		יֹרֶשֶׁה	יֹשֶׁבֶה				
	mp	יֹרְשִׁים	יֹשְׁבִים	מֹרִישִׁים	מֵיטִיבִים	מֹרִישִׁים	
	fp	יֹרְשֹׁת	יֹשְׁבוֹת	מֹרִישֹׁת	מֵיטִיבוֹת	מֹרִישֹׁת	

1. These roots are weak whenever the first radical of the verbal root is followed by silent *šewa* (Q F, V; N P, Ptc; all forms of H, Hp); strong throughout D, Dp, Dt.
2. When followed by silent *šewa*, initial *-י* assimilates to the preceding vowel, which becomes long; the initial *-י* may become a vowel letter or disappear.
3. In Q V and NC of many verbs the initial *-י* drops off and *ת* - or *ת* - is added to *qal* NC, so that some forms look exactly like the corresponding forms of I-י roots.
4. *הִלֵּךְ* is formed like *יֵשָׁב* (all forms).

Hollow Verbs (II-י or ו-י/ע; “monosyllabic roots”)

Conj/Sbj		Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hofal	Polel	Polal	Hitpolel
P	1cs	קִמַּחְתִּי	נִקְדַּחְתִּי	הִקְדַּחְתִּי	הוֹקְדַּחְתִּי	קִמְדַּחְתִּי	קִמְדַּחְתִּי	הִתְקִמְדַּחְתִּי
	2ms	קִמַּחְתָּ	נִקְדַּחְתָּ	הִקְדַּחְתָּ	הוֹקְדַּחְתָּ	קִמְדַּחְתָּ	קִמְדַּחְתָּ	הִתְקִמְדַּחְתָּ
	2fs	קִמַּחְתְּ	נִקְדַּחְתְּ	הִקְדַּחְתְּ	הוֹקְדַּחְתְּ	קִמְדַּחְתְּ	קִמְדַּחְתְּ	הִתְקִמְדַּחְתְּ
	3ms	קָם	נִקָּם	הִקָּם	הוֹקָם	קִמָּם	קִמָּם	הִתְקִמָּם
	3fs	קָמָה	נִקָּמָה	הִקָּמָה	הוֹקָמָה	קִמָּמָה	קִמָּמָה	הִתְקִמָּמָה
	1cp	קִמְנוּ	נִקְדַּמְנוּ	הִקְדַּמְנוּ	הוֹקְדַּמְנוּ	קִמְדַּמְנוּ	קִמְדַּמְנוּ	הִתְקִמְדַּמְנוּ
	2mp	קִמַּחְתֶּם	נִקְדַּחְתֶּם	הִקְדַּחְתֶּם	הוֹקְדַּחְתֶּם	קִמְדַּחְתֶּם	קִמְדַּחְתֶּם	הִתְקִמְדַּחְתֶּם
	2fp	קִמַּחְתֶּן	נִקְדַּחְתֶּן	הִקְדַּחְתֶּן	הוֹקְדַּחְתֶּן	קִמְדַּחְתֶּן	קִמְדַּחְתֶּן	הִתְקִמְדַּחְתֶּן
	3cp	קָמוּ	נִקְדָּמוּ	הִקְדָּמוּ	הוֹקְדָּמוּ	קִמְדָּמוּ	קִמְדָּמוּ	הִתְקִמְדָּמוּ
F	1cs	אֶקָּם	אֶקָּם	אֶקָּם	אֶקָּם	אֶקָּם	אֶקָּם	אֶתְקָּם
	2m/3f	תִּקָּם	תִּקָּם	תִּקָּם	תִּקָּם	תִּקָּם	תִּקָּם	תִּתְקָּם
	2fs	תִּקְדָּמִי	תִּקְדָּמִי	תִּקְדָּמִי	תִּקְדָּמִי	תִּקְדָּמִי	תִּקְדָּמִי	תִּתְקְדָּמִי
	3ms	יִקָּם	יִקָּם	יִקָּם	יִקָּם	יִקָּם	יִקָּם	יִתְקָּם
	1cp	נִקָּם	נִקָּם	נִקָּם	נִקָּם	נִקָּם	נִקָּם	נִתְקָּם
	2mp	תִּקְדָּמוּ	תִּקְדָּמוּ	תִּקְדָּמוּ	תִּקְדָּמוּ	תִּקְדָּמוּ	תִּקְדָּמוּ	תִּתְקְדָּמוּ
	2/3fp	תִּקְדָּמְנָה	תִּקְדָּמְנָה	תִּקְדָּמְנָה	תִּקְדָּמְנָה	תִּקְדָּמְנָה	תִּקְדָּמְנָה	תִּתְקְדָּמְנָה
		תִּקְדָּמִינָה		תִּקְדָּמִינָה				
	3mp	יִקְדָּמוּ	יִקְדָּמוּ	יִקְדָּמוּ	יִקְדָּמוּ	יִקְדָּמוּ	יִקְדָּמוּ	יִתְקְדָּמוּ
V	ms	קָם	הִקָּם	הִקָּם		קָם		הִתְקָּם
	fs	קָמִי	הִקָּמִי	הִקָּמִי		קָמִי		הִתְקָּמִי
	mp	קָמוּ	הִקָּמוּ	הִקָּמוּ		קָמוּ		הִתְקָּמוּ
	fp	קָמְנָה	הִקָּמְנָה	הִקָּמְנָה		קָמְנָה		הִתְקָּמְנָה
NC		קָם	הִקָּם	הִקָּם	הוֹקָם	קָם	קָם	הִתְקָּם
NA		קָם	הִקָּם	הִקָּם				
Participle	ms	קָם	נִקָּם	מִקָּם	מוֹקָם	מִקָּם	מִקָּם	מִתְקָּם
	fs	קָמָה		מִקָּמָה	מוֹקָמָה			
	mp	קָמִים			מוֹקָמִים			
	fp	קָמוֹת			מוֹקָמוֹת			

1. II-י verbs (e.g., שָׁיַר, *sing*) look just like the II-ו verbs (קָם), except that they have *hireq-yod* in the *qal* where קָם has *šureq* (*qal* F, V, NC).
2. *Polel*, *polal*, & *hitpolel* substitute for D, Dp, and Dt (and thus look like geminates). Most forms of *polel* and *polal* look alike; *hitpolel* = *polel* with prefixed הִתְ- / יִתְ- / בִּתְ-.
3. The jussive and preterite of the hollow verbs have shorter vowels than the imperfect:

	Qal	Hifil
3ms Jussive	יִקָּם	יִקָּם
3ms Preterite	וִיקָּם	וִיקָּם

Geminate (ע"ע) Verbs

Conj/Sbj	Qal	Nifal	Hifil	Hofal	D-stems
P					
1cs	סְבוֹתִי	נִסְבוֹתִי	הִסְבוֹתִי	הוֹסְבוֹתִי	
2ms	סְבוֹתָ	נִסְבוֹתָ	הִסְבוֹתָ	הוֹסְבוֹתָ	
2fs	סְבוֹתְךָ	נִסְבוֹתְךָ	הִסְבוֹתְךָ	הוֹסְבוֹתְךָ	
3ms	סָבַב	נָסַב	הָסַב	הוֹסַב	
3fs	סָבְהָ	נָסְבָהּ	הָסְבָהּ	הוֹסְבָהּ	
1cp	סְבוֹנוּ	נִסְבוֹנוּ	הִסְבוֹנוּ	הוֹסְבוֹנוּ	
2mp	סְבוֹתֶם	נִסְבוֹתֶם	הִסְבוֹתֶם	הוֹסְבוֹתֶם	
2fp	סְבוֹתֵיכֶם	נִסְבוֹתֵיכֶם	הִסְבוֹתֵיכֶם	הוֹסְבוֹתֵיכֶם	
3cp	סָבוּ	נָסְבוּ	הָסְבוּ	הוֹסְבוּ	
F					
1cs	אָסַב	אָסַב	אָסַב	אָסַב	Geminate verbs have either the same forms in the D-stems as the <i>strong</i> verb or occur in <i>po'el</i> , <i>po'al</i> , and <i>hitpo'el</i> (these forms cannot be distinguished from the <i>polel</i> , <i>polal</i> , and <i>hitpolel</i> of the <i>hollow</i> verbal roots).
2m/3f	תָּסַב	תָּסַב	תָּסַב	תָּסַב	
2fs	תִּסְבִּי	תִּסְבִּי	תִּסְבִּי	תִּסְבִּי	
3ms	יָסַב	יָסַב	יָסַב	יָסַב	
1cp	נָסַב	נָסַב	נָסַב	נָסַב	
2mp	תִּסְבוּ	תִּסְבוּ	תִּסְבוּ	תִּסְבוּ	
2/3fp	תִּסְבִּינָה	תִּסְבִּינָה	תִּסְבִּינָה	תִּסְבִּינָה	
3mp	יִסְבוּ	יִסְבוּ	יִסְבוּ	יִסְבוּ	
V					
ms	סָב	הָסַב	הָסַב		
fs	סָבִי	הָסְבִי	הָסְבִי		
mp	סָבוּ	הָסְבוּ	הָסְבוּ		
fp	סָבִינָה	הָסְבִינָה	הָסְבִינָה		
NC	סָב	הָסַב	הָסַב		
NA	סָבוּב	הָסַב	הָסַב		
Participle					
ms	סָבֵב	נָסַב	מְסַב	מוֹסַב	
fs	סָבְבָהּ	נָסְבָהּ	מְסְבָהּ	מוֹסְבָהּ	
mp	סָבְבִים	נָסְבִים	מְסְבִים	מוֹסְבִים	
fp	סָבְבוֹת	נָסְבוֹת	מְסְבוֹת	מוֹסְבוֹת	

1. There are three base forms of the geminates סָב [forms without PGN endings], סָבֵב [forms with PGN endings (except imperative)]; סָבֵב [a few forms]).
2. Geminates are weak throughout Q, N, H, Hp. The D-stems either substitute *polel*, etc. (and thus look like *hollow* verbs), or look like the strong verb.
3. -י- joins the verbal stem to consonantal endings.
4. An alternate form of *qal* imperfect looks just like verbs I-נ.
5. *Hofal* may have either *šureq* or *qibbuš* as its prefix vowel.
6. The *preterite* of geminates has shorter vowels than the imperfect (accent is on the PGN prefix).

וְיָסַב

3ms Q Pr

וְיָסַב

3ms H Pr

Some Easily Confused Forms.¹⁹⁴ Certain pairs of weak verbs which have two radicals in common can be difficult to distinguish. These charts compare יָשַׁב/שׁוּב (*return/sit, dwell*) and יָרָא/רָאָה (*see/fear*). Only forms that actually occur are listed (but not all forms of each verb are listed).

Although these charts may be memorized (with difficulty!), it is more helpful to remember that these verbs will not occur in the same contexts, since “return” and “sit” describe very different actions, as do “seeing” and “fearing”.

יָשַׁב / שׁוּב		Q		H		Hp	
		שׁוּב	יָשַׁב	שׁוּב	יָשַׁב	שׁוּב	יָשַׁב
P	3ms	שָׁב	יָשַׁב	הָשִׁיב	הוֹשִׁיב	הוֹשִׁיב	הוֹשִׁיב
F	3ms	יָשׁוּב	יָשַׁב	יָשִׁיב	יּוֹשִׁיב	יּוֹשִׁב	יּוֹשִׁב
Pr	3ms	וַיָּשׁוּב	וַיָּשַׁב	וַיָּשִׁיב	וַיּוֹשִׁיב	וַיּוֹשִׁב	וַיּוֹשִׁב
V	2ms	שׁוּב	שָׁב	הָשֵׁב	הוֹשִׁיב		
NC		שׁוּב	שָׁבַת	הָשִׁיב	הוֹשִׁיב		
NA		שׁוּב	יָשׁוּב	הָשֵׁב			
Ptc	ms	שָׁב	יָשַׁב	מוֹשִׁיב	מוֹשִׁיב	מוֹשֵׁב	מוֹשֵׁב

יָרָא / רָאָה		Q		N		H
		רָאָה	יָרָא	רָאָה	יָרָא	רָאָה
P	3ms	רָאָה	יָרָא	נִרְאָה		הִרְאָה
F	3ms	יָרָאָה	יִירָא	יָרָאָה		יָרָאָה
Pr	3ms	וַיִּרָא	וַיִּירָא	וַיִּרָא	וַיִּירָא	וַיִּירָא
V	2ms	רָאָה	יָרָא	הִרְאָה		
NC		רָאֹת	יָרָא	הִרְאֹת		הִרְאֹת
NA		רָאָה				
Ptc	ms	רָאָה	יָרָא	נִרְאָה	נוֹרָא	מִרְאָה

194. This comparison was suggested by my former colleague Mr. Eric Houseknecht, Th.M.

Appendix E

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Grammar & Syntax

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Annotated biblical texts with notes on morphosyntax. This would be especially helpful for someone trying to regain competency in reading Biblical Hebrew.
- Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. 1998. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
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A traditional approach to syntax, now revised as Gibson (1994).
- Davis, John J. 1995. *Hebrew Language: An Analysis of the Strong Verb*. Quakertown, PA: Stylus Publishing.
A laminated card-guide to the strong verb (only), punched for a three-ring binder.
- Driver, S.R. 1998. *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions*. Oxford: Oxford University, 1892; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
The classic work, presenting a clausal approach to the verbal system, describing the conjugations as primarily aspectual (e.g., perfect ≈ completed action; imperfect ≈ non-complete).
- *Gibson, J.C.L. 1994. *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar ~ Syntax*. 4th ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
A clarification and update of Davidson (1996), largely traditional in approach.
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A traditional grammar, designed to help second-year students to review first-year grammar, but without exercises or indices. Students who have neglected Hebrew for a year or two may find this helpful.
- *Joüon, Paul. 1991. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 2 vols. Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico; 1927; trans. & rev., T. Muraoka. *Subsidia Biblica* 14/1-2. Rome.
An translation and extensive revision of Joüon's grammar of 1927, which closely parallels GKC (below).
- *Kautzsch, E. 1910. Ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. 2nd English ed., trans. & rev. A.E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon.
Despite its age, still the standard in Hebrew morphology, although often out-of-date, especially with regard to cognate information and overall approach to syntax (although many of his basic insights remain valid). Abbreviated as GKC.
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Booklet covering nominal, adjectival, pronominal, verbal, and clausal syntax, as well as the "major" masoretic accents and complete verbal paradigms.

van der Merwe, Christo H.J., Jackie A. Naudé, & Jan H. Kroeze. 2000. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. Biblical Languages: Hebrew, ed., Stanley E. Porter & Richard S. Hess, 3. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.

An “intermediate” grammar, somewhat based on discourse principles of language; much more useful than Horsnell (1998).

*Waltke, Bruce K., & M. O'Connor. 1995. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990; 5th printing with corrections.

Massively detailed application of traditional analytical methods to syntax; the chapters that introduce each section are helpful.

Watts, James Washington. 1964. *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

*Williams, R.J. 1976. *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967; 2nd ed.

Essentially bound class notes, listing traditionally-derived functions for nouns, adjectives, etc., with copious examples, but little or no discussion or explanation.

Discourse & Text Linguistics

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Lexica

Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, & C.A. Briggs. 1907. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Still the standard Hebrew-English lexicon, despite its age (it predates, e.g., the discovery of Ugaritic), arranged by “root”.

Clines, David J.A., ed. 1993-2002. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 5 vols. [incomplete] Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.

A new type of concordance, DCH—ordered alphabetically—offers complete collocations for every word (e.g., under a particular verb, every occurrence of every subject modified by, and every object governed by, that verb, as well as every preposition with which it occurs). Incomplete & discontinued.

Davidson, Benjamin. 1970. *The Analytical Hebrew & Chaldee Lexicon*. London: Bagster & Sons, 1850; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

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Feyerabend, Karl. 1965. *Langenscheidt's Pocket Hebrew Dictionary to the Old Testament*. 5th ed. New York: Barnes & Noble.

Offers one- or two-word gloss for each word, arranged by “root” (cf. BDB); glosses generally reflect KJV or RV/ASV.

Holladay, William L. 1971. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Based upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler & Walter Baumgartner*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

The first edition of Koehler-Baumgartner, minus the German and etymological/comparative data, and a minimal listing of lemmas for each word. Ordered alphabetically. Easy to use, and for that reason popular, but quickly outgrown by diligent students.

Koehler, Ludwig, & Walter Baumgartner. 2001. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Ed., Walter Baumgartner & Johann Jakob Stamm. Study ed. 2 vols. Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill.

The best modern lexicon of Biblical Hebrew, with entries arranged alphabetically (i.e., not by “root”), with an extensive bibliography. One- or two-word glosses (which can be difficult to find in longer articles).

Vocabulary

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The basis of the statistics used in this grammar, this shows how grammatical forms (e.g., participles) and “frequent” words are distributed among the books and genres of the Hebrew Bible, correlates the three major concordances (Even-Shoshan, Mandelkern, Lisowsky), and lists all verbs according to their distribution among the roots (e.g., all verbs that occur in two stems, by those stems, and how many times in each stem).
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- Beall, Todd S., William A. Banks, & Colin Smith. 1990. *Old Testament Parsing Guide*. Chicago: Moody.
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Verse-by-verse list of all words indexed in BDB, with gloss (BDB’s primary listing) and location (page and quadrant number).
- Landes, George M. 1961. *A Student’s Vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew Listed According to Frequency and Cognate*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
A list of Hebrew words and glosses that occur ten times or more, arranged for self-study in order of descending frequency; the cognate listings are helpful.
- Mitchell Larry A. 1984. *A Student’s Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew & Aramaic*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
Essentially an update of Landes (1961) that lists Hebrew words used ten times or more with a gloss in order of descending frequency; includes the vocabulary of Biblical Aramaic. Indexed.
- Owens, John Joseph. 1990. *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker.
Verse-by-verse morphology of every word in the text of BHS, along with the corresponding page number in BDB, and a suggested gloss (based on RSV).
- Watts, James Washington. 1967. *Lists of Words Occurring Frequently in the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids/Leiden: Eerdmans (1960) / E.J. Brill.

Concordances

Although electronic [computer-based] databases have begun to replace concordances, it is still wise to have one or more of the following as a check on the electronic information, since the various programs can yield different results.

- Even-Shoshan, Abraham, ed. 1989. *A New Concordance of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker.
Modern concordance of the entire vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew, arranged alphabetically and analyzed (you can look up, e.g., every occurrence of the 2ms H P + *waw* of a particular verb); glosses, book titles, chapter numerals in [Modern] Hebrew.
- Lisowsky, Gerhard. 1981. *Konkordanz zum hebräischen Alten Testaments*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1958.
A hand-written concordance of the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs of Biblical Hebrew, arranged alphabetically.
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Analytical (cf. Even-Shoshan, above) concordance of the vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew, arranged by “root”. Glosses in Latin; multiple “editions” and “publications”, some abridged. Beware!
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A basic and learner-friendly introduction to textual criticism. The most helpful part may be the final chapter, in which he discusses every textual note in BHS for the book of Ruth.

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- Greenberg, Moshe. 1977. "The Use of the Ancient Versions for Interpreting the Hebrew Text" *Congress Volume*, pp. 131-48. *Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 29. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
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The first three chapters comprise the most helpful introduction to the subject available in English; Chapter Four lists the notes of *mp* alphabetically, and translates and explains examples for each listing. Yeivin (1980) also does this (and in more detail), but Kelley's material is much more clear and easier to use.
- Klein, Michael L. 1974. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: From the Septuagint to Qumran*. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Old Testament Series. Philadelphia: Fortress.
Another basic guide, without as much information or detail as Brotzman, focussing far more on the value and use of LX.
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Explains a particular type of reference in the Torah of BHS, e.g., the footnote referred to by the superscript "21" on the first note on Gn 37.22. The note reads "Mp sub loco", which means "see Mp at the [appropriate] location", referring to a projected supplement to BHS that was never produced.
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- Wonneberger, Reinhard. 1984. *Understanding BHS. A Manual for the Users of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, trans. Dwight R. Daniels. *Subsidia Biblica*, 8. Rome: Biblical Institute Press.
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Würthwein, Ernst. 1995. *The Text of the Old Testament*. Trans. Erroll F. Rhodes. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

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Yeivin, Israel. 1980. *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*. Trans. & ed., E.J. Revell. *Masoretic Studies*, ed., Harry M. Orlinsky, 5. Scholars Press.

Covers the same ground as pp. 33-156 of Kelley, *et al.* (1998), but adds extensive discussions of the Masoretic accents.

History of Hebrew; Modern Hebrew

Bennett, Patrick R. 1998. *Comparative Semitic Linguistics: A Manual*. Winonah Lake: Eisenbrauns.

A serious workbook of exercises designed to illustrate the relationships between the various Semitic languages and dialects. It seems to assume that you know something about comparative linguistics.

Bergsträsser, Gotthelf. 1995. *Introduction to the Semitic Languages: Text Specimens and Grammatical Sketches*. Trans. Peter T. Daniels. 2nd ed. Winonah Lake: Eisenbrauns.

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Chomsky, William. 1957. *Hebrew: The Eternal Language*. Philadelphia: JPS.

Healey, John F. 1990. *The Early Alphabet*. Reading the Past. Berkeley/London: University of California/British Museum.

Muraoka, Takamitsu. 1982. *Modern Hebrew for Biblical Scholars. An Annotated Chrestomathy with an Outline Grammar and a Glossary*. JSOT Manuals, 2. Sheffield: JSOT.

Sketches basic differences between Biblical Hebrew and Modern Israeli, followed by three sets of articles (grouped by field—language, Biblical studies, and archaeology), in which the first is fully pointed (with an English translation included in the appendices), the second less so, and the rest unpointed. All reading selections have some morphosyntactical notes.

Sáenz-Badillos, Angel. 1996. *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Trans. John Elwode. New York: Cambridge University.

The best history of Hebrew in print—beginning with a discussion of Hebrew's emergence among the Semitic languages and extending to the twentieth century.

Sivan, Reuven, & Edward A. Levenston. 1975. *The New Bantam-Megiddo Hebrew & English Dictionary*. New York: Bantam.

A pocket dictionary of Modern Hebrew, based on *The Megiddo Modern Dictionary* (same authors), one of the standard dictionaries of Modern Hebrew. A brief "preface" sketches verbal and nominal morphology, and lists the numerals. The "dictionary" indicates each word's gender and offers a one- or two-word gloss.

A New Grammar of Biblical Hebrew features a master teacher's skills coming from a lifetime commitment to the Hebrew Bible. Students facing the challenge of learning Biblical Hebrew need to gain an understanding of the way the language works within its discourse structures. Putnam provides those students with a grammar that is both traditional (as in his explanation of Hebrew's two conjugational verb forms) and non-traditional (the grammar's linguistic orientation and careful attention to clausal syntax). This volume represents a pragmatic pedagogy that will produce proficiency in the acquisition of Biblical Hebrew and preparation for an ongoing exegetical examination of the biblical text.

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