

Hebrew Grammar

Week 14

(Last Updated – Dec. 13, 2016)

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14.1. Qal Imperative

Imperatives are used to give commands in the second person. The Qal Imperative is formed by removing the prefix from the Qal Imperfect and applying the rule of the Shewa where necessary.

Imperative	2msg	קַטֵּל	Kill!
	2fsg	קַטְּלִי	Kill!
	2mp	קַטְּלוּ	Kill!
	2fpl	קַטְּלֵנָה	Kill!

Notice the differences between the corresponding forms of the imperfect.

	Imperative	Imperfect
2msg	קַטֵּל	תִּקְטֹל
2fsg	קַטְּלִי	תִּקְטְלִי
2mpl	קַטְּלוּ	תִּקְטְלוּ
2fpl	קַטְּלֵנָה	תִּקְטְלֵנָה

The vowel under R₁ for the 2fsg and the 2mpl is hireq because the rule of the shewa states that two shewas may not appear side-by-side at the beginning of the word.

Verbs with the theme vowel patakh under R₂ in the imperfect (e.g. קָבַד) will also have patakh as the theme vowel in the imperative.

	Imperative	Imperfect
2msg	קָבַד	תִּקְבֹּד
2fsg	קָבְדִי	תִּקְבְּדִי
2mpl	קָבְדוּ	תִּקְבְּדוּ
2fpl	קָבְדֵנָה	תִּקְבְּדֵנָה

The 2msg has an alternative form with a qamets-he at the end with no difference in meaning.

Imperative 2msg	קָטְלָה	Kill!
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Notice that the vowel under R₁ is a qamets-khatuf, not a qamets.

Imperatives are often accompanied by the particle אֵן. This particle, though traditionally translated “I pray”, “please”, etc., does not need to be translated.

Imperatives in English are not marked for person or number. Thus all four imperatival forms are translated with the same word in English. It should be remembered, however, that even though English does not distinguish between commands given to men, women, individuals, or groups, Hebrew does make these distinctions. These distinctions will not come out in your translations but they will affect your understanding of the text.

Imperatives cannot be negated. See the section below on negative commands.

14.2. Qal Jussive

Jussives are used to express requests, suggestions, permission, or mild commands in the 3rd or 2nd person. Jussives are usually translated using the words “may”, “let”, or “should”.

The Qal Jussive is identical to the Qal Imperfect in the strong verb except for the Hiphil (see paradigm chart). Jussives may be distinguished from imperfects on the basis of context and by the fact that jussives are negated by the word אַל (no, not) rather than לֹא. Note the following forms and translations:

Jussive	3msg	יִקְטֹל	May he kill! Let him kill!
	3fsg	תִּקְטֹל	May she kill! Let her kill!
	2msg	תִּקְטֹל	You may kill. May you kill!
	2fsg	תִּקְטְלִי	You may kill. May you kill!
	3mpl	יִקְטֹלוּ	May they kill! Let them kill!
	3fpl	תִּקְטֹלְנָה	May they kill! Let them kill!
	2mpl	תִּקְטֹלוּ	You may kill. May you kill!
	2fpl	תִּקְטֹלְנָה	You may kill. May you kill!

Jussives directed toward God or any other superior should be translated as requests. Jussives directed toward inferiors should be translated as commands, suggestions, etc. Context will determine precisely how the jussive should be translated.

Jussives are often accompanied by the particle **אָנֹכִי**. Again, this particle does not need to be translated. However, it may serve to help distinguish jussives from imperfects.

14.3. Qal Cohortative

Cohortatives are used to express strong desires or requests in the first-person. Cohortatives are often identical to the first-person forms of the imperfect but are also written frequently with a qamets-he at the end. Cohortatives may be distinguished from imperfects on the basis of context, sometimes by the qamets-he ending, and by the fact that they are negated by the word **אֵל** (no, not) rather than **לֹא**.

Cohortatives are often translated using the words “may” or “let” but, when they simply indicate a strong desire, are often translated simply like an imperfect.

Cohortative	1csg	אֶקְטֹל	אֶקְטֹלָהּ	I will kill! May I kill!
	1cpl	נִקְטֹל	נִקְטֹלָהּ	We will kill! Let us kill!

Cohortatives are often accompanied by the particle **אָנֹכִי**, the particle of entreaty. This particle, though traditionally translated “I pray”, “please”, etc., does not need to be translated.

14.4. Negative Commands

As was stated earlier, the imperative cannot be negated. Negative commands may be expressed in one of two ways:

לֹא	+	Imperfect	=	General Negative Command	e.g. laws
אַל	+	Jussive	=	Immediate Negative Command	e.g. specific situation

The word אַל used to negate a jussive is often accompanied by the particle of entreaty attached directly to it: אַל־נָא.

14.5. Volitive Sequences

Imperatives, Jussives, and Cohortatives are often referred to as volitives because their meaning is associated with the will or volition. When an imperative is followed by a perfect plus a waw conjunctive in the same sentence, the perfect takes on the same nuance as the imperative. The only difference is that the perfect is treated as a command that is to be carried out after the first imperative. When an imperative, a jussive, or a cohortative is followed by another volitive plus a waw conjunctive in the same sentence, the second volitive is used to express purpose or result.

Imperative	+	waw-consecutive	+	Perfect	→	Perfect is translated as a command ¹
Volitive	+	waw-conjunctive	+	Jussive, cohortative, or imperfect	→	The waw may indicate purpose (“so that”) or result (“so that, such that”)

14.6. Infinitive Construct and Infinitive Absolute in the Various Binyanim

The infinitive construct and the infinitive absolute in the various binyanim do not need to be memorized as carefully as the other forms. The infinitive construct is identical to the msg imperative. The infinitive absolute usually looks the same as the infinitive construct (though not in the Qal) except for the fact that the theme vowel is *holem* for the Niphal, Piel, Pual, and Hithpael and *tsere* for the Hiphil and Hophal.

	Qal	Qal	Qal	Niphal	Piel	Pual	Hithpael	Hiphil	Hophal
Inf. Con.	קָטַל	-----	-----	הִקְטִיל	קָטַל	קָטַל	הִתְקַטֵּל	הִקְטִיל	הִקְטִיל
Inf. Abs.	קָטוּל	-----	-----	הִקְטִיל/וּ	קָטוּל	קָטַל	הִתְקַטֵּל	הִקְטִיל	הִקְטִיל

14.7. The Participle in the Various Binyanim

The Qal has both an active and a passive participle. The other Binyanim only have one form so they are usually referred to simply as “the participle” without indicating whether or not it is active or passive. The forms below have been identified as active or passive but this is only because the Qal is included. Here are the forms:

¹ A perfect used in this way is used for a command that logically comes after the command given in the preceding imperative.

		Qal	Niphal	Piel	Pual	Hithpael	Hiphil	Hophal
Act. Ptc.	msg	קָטַל	-----	מְקַטֵּל	-----	מִתְקַטֵּל	מִקְטִיל	-----
	fsg	קָטְלָת	-----	מְקַטְּלָה	-----	מִתְקַטְּלָה	מִקְטִילָה	-----
	mpl	קָטְלִים	-----	מְקַטְּלִים	-----	מִתְקַטְּלִים	מִקְטִילִים	-----
	fpl	קָטְלוֹת	-----	מְקַטְּלוֹת	-----	מִתְקַטְּלוֹת	מִקְטִילוֹת	-----
Pass. Ptc.	msg	קָטוּל	נִקְטָל	-----	מְקֻטָּל	-----	-----	מְקֻטָּל
	fsg	קָטוּלָה	נִקְטָלָה	-----	מְקֻטָּלָה	-----	-----	מְקֻטָּלָה

Things to Note for the Niphal:

- Prefix נ forming a closed syllable with R₁.
- Theme vowel is *qamets*.
- Normal adjective endings.

Things to Note for the Piel:

- Prefix מְ with a vocal *shewa*.
- R₂ is doubled.
- Theme vowel is the *tsere*.
- Normal adjective endings.

Things to Note for the Pual

- Prefix מְ with a vocal *shewa*.
- Vowel under R₁ is *qibbuts*.
- R₂ is doubled.
- Theme vowel is *qamets*.
- Normal adjective endings.

Things to Note for the Hithpael

- Prefix מִתְ.
- R₂ is doubled.
- Theme vowel is the *tsere*.
- Normal adjective endings.
- When R₁ is a sibilant, it switches places with the ת of the prefix.
- When R₁ is a ׃, it switches places with the ת of the prefix and the ת of the prefix becomes a ף.

Things to Note for the Hiphil

- Prefix ה with the vowel *patakh*.
- Theme vowel is *hireq-yod*.
- Normal adjective endings.

Things to Note for the Hophal

- Prefix ה with the vowel *qamets-khatuf* forming a closed syllable with R₁.
- Theme vowel is *qamets*.
- Normal adjective endings.

14.8. Perfect + *Waw-Consecutive*

The perfect may also occur with a *waw-consecutive*. However, when the *waw-consecutive* is used with a perfect, it simply looks like a regular *waw*. There is no *patakh* and no doubling of the first radical occurs. *Waw-consecutives* on perfect verbs must be recognized on the basis of context. They may also be recognized by the fact that the primary accent shifts to the final syllable of the word.

When a perfect has a *waw-consecutive*, it generally has the same nuance as the previous verbs in the sentence. So if the previous verb indicates future time, then the perfect should be translated as a future. As we just saw, if the previous verb is giving a command, the perfect should also be translated as giving a command.

Gen. 28:20-21 אִם-יְהִיֶּה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי...וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לְאֱלֹהִים

“If God will be with me, then YHWH will become my God.”

The 3msg perfect form of the verb הָיָה may be used as a future-time indicator, indicating that what follows will happen in the future.

Future-time indicator: וְהָיָה

Like the past-time indicator, the future time indicator does not need to be translated and should carefully be distinguished from הָיָה when it is functioning as a regular verb.

Isa. 2:1 וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים

“And after those days...”

14.9. Introduction to Cases

On the basis of comparisons made with other Semitic languages and on the basis of phenomena within the language itself, it is clear that earlier forms of Hebrew used to mark the

relationship of nouns to other words by the use of case endings.² Although case endings are not preserved in Biblical Hebrew, the *syntactic function* of these cases *are* preserved and a knowledge of these *functions* is indispensable for translating and understanding even the simplest Hebrew prose.

The Semitic Case System contains three cases: the **nominative**, the **genitive**, and the **accusative**. Ugaritic, a language closely related to Hebrew, declines nouns as follows:

	<u>msg.</u>	<u>fsg.</u>	<u>md.</u>	<u>fd.</u>	<u>mpl.</u>	<u>fpl.</u>
n.	malku	malkatu	malkāmi	malkatāmi	malakūma	malkātu
g.	malki	malkati	malkêmi	malkatêmi	malakīma	malkāti
a.	malka	malkata	malkêmi	malkatêmi	malkīma	malkāti

Notice that each of these forms end with a short vowel. In many of these forms the final short vowel is the only way to tell whether or not the word is nominative, genitive, or accusative. At some point in the history of the Hebrew language, short vowels at the end of words disappeared.³ This meant that it became impossible to distinguish one case from the other purely on the basis of form. The functions represented by these cases are often identifiable by other means (word order, prepositions, construct state, definite direct object marker, etc.) but many times these functions exist with unmarked forms, especially in the case of the accusative.⁴

14.9. The Nominative Case

a) Subject of verbal or verbless clause

Isaiah 49:1 - Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born *the LORD* called me....

Habakkuk 2:20 – But *the LORD* is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

b) Predicate Nominative (with the verb “to be” or in verbless clauses)

Isaiah 49:3 – He said to me, “You are *my servant*, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.”

*Remember that the verb “to be” does not exist in the present tense in Hebrew but is implied in verbless clauses.

c) Vocative

Isaiah 49:1 – Listen to me, *you islands*; hear this, *you distant nations*.

² For examples of the remnants of case endings in Biblical Hebrew see Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 127-128.

³ This is particularly relevant for distinguishing the imperfect from the preterite. The imperfect originally had a final short vowel and became indistinguishable from the preterite in most cases.

⁴ The actual history of how Hebrew lost its case endings is probably not as tidy as this summary suggests but this summary is useful in understanding the data that is currently available, both from Hebrew and cognate languages.

d) Casus Pendens (Pendant Nominative or nominative absolute)

Casus pendens is when a noun or noun phrase is placed at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis and to identify it as the topic of the sentence *but it is not the grammatical subject of the sentence*. It may be translated by the phrase, “As for....”

Genesis 3:12 – The man said, “*The woman* you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.

Another way to translate this verse, bringing out the fact that this is a casus pendens, is as follows:

Genesis 17:15 – God also said to Abraham, “*As for Sarai, your wife*, you are no longer to call her Sarai, her name will be Sarah.

14.10. Vocabulary**Nouns**

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Card Number</u>
1.	כֹּהֵן	כֹּהֲנִים	priest, high priest (with definite article)	66
2.	חֶרֶב	חַרְבוֹת	sword, tools	120
3.	כֶּסֶף	-----	silver	123
4.	מִזְבֵּחַ	מִזְבְּחוֹת	altar (where sacrifices are made)	124
5.	מָקוֹם	מְקוֹמוֹת	place	125
6.	יָם	יַמִּים	sea, Mediterranean, west, west-ward	126
7.	זָהָב	-----	gold	127
8.	רוּחַ	רוּחוֹת	(f/m) breath, wind, spirit, disposition	129

Adverbs

	<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Card</u>
1.	אֵל	no, not	71
2.	בְּלִי	not	356

Personal Nouns

	<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Card</u>
1.	אַרָּם	Aram	-
2.	אַשּׁוּר	Assyria	-
3.	בָּבֶל	Babylon	-

14.8. Homework

Translate the following sentences. Be able to parse every verb and to analyze each noun and adjective. Please translate the passages from the Bible from your Hebrew Bible – only use the space provided below for rough work and your final answers.

1) וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר כָּתֹב אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה וְלִמְדָתָ אֹתָם
לְעָם:

Helps:

סֵפֶר – book

2) וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־שְׂמוּאֵל לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא תִשְׂרֹף אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם
בְּאֵשׁ כִּי פְקֹד אֶפְקֹד אֶת־הַשְּׂרָפִים אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם בְּאֵשׁ:

3) בְּקִבְרְכֶם אָבִי אֶל־נָא תִקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם קִבֵּר אֹתוֹ בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

(4) אֶזְכְּרָה אֶת־חֶסֶד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם:

Helps:

חֶסֶד – “loyal-love” “loving-kindness” “loyalty”

לְעוֹלָם – “forever”

(5) וַיִּלְחַמוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדָוִד לְבֵלְתֵי מֶלֶכוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם:

6. 1 Kings 13:1

וְהִנֵּה אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים בָּא מִיְהוּדָה בְּדָבַר יְהוָה אֶל־בֵּית־אֵל וַיִּרְבְּעֵם עֹמֵד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
לְהַקְטִיר:

Helps:

הִנֵּה – “Behold!” “Look!” “Just then”

בָּא – Qal Perfect 3msg from בוא (to come, to go)

בֵּית־אֵל – Bethel

עֹמֵד – from עמד (to stand)

לְהַקְטִיר – From קטר (Hiph. to offer sacrifices)

7. 1 Kings 13:2

וַיִּקְרָא עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּדָבַר יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר מִזְבֵּחַ מִזְבֵּחַ כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה־בֶן נוֹלָד
לְבֵית־דָּוִד יֵאשְׁיָהוּ שְׁמוֹ וְזָבַח עֲלֵיךָ אֶת־כֹּהֲנֵי הַבַּמֹּת הַמְקַטְרִים עֲלֵיךָ וְעַצְמוֹת אָדָם
יִשְׂרְפוּ עֲלֵיךָ:

Helps:

וַיִּקְרָא – Qal Preterite 3msg + waw consecutive from קרא (to call out, cry out)

הִנֵּה – “Behold!” “Look!” “Just then”

נֹלֵד – Niphal Participle msg from ילד (to bear, beget), “will be born”

יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ – “Josiah”

וְזָבַח – From זבח (to sacrifice)

עֲצָמוֹת – from עצם (bone)