Chapter 8: The Past Tense (cont.)

Vocabulary:

he reigned, was king: כָלָה enemy: לִבְנוֹן
family, clan: דָּגֶג nose, nostril; anger: יָרָה
circuit (noun): כִּבְרֶב nostrils (always dual): הפִּים
circuit (noun): כִּבְרֶב covenant:
all around; surrounding (adv): כִּבְרֶב flesh:
he served: טֵבָר new moon; month:
yet, still, again (adv.): נָדָר his month:
burnt offering: לָעָה he was strong; he became strong:
he answered: פְסִל time: עֲשָׂה sin, sin-offering:
Pharaoh: פָּרָה he was alive; he stayed alive:
flock, sheep: נַפְלָה cut, cut off; make a covenant:
flock, sheep: נַפְלָה bread:
He drew near: בָּרַב my bread:
Saul: שאול pasture; wilderness:
Solomon: שלום war, battle:

Introduction:

This chapter continues to introduce the past tense narrative sequence. In this process, further forms of the perfect inflection are introduced and the syntax associated with past tense narratives is discussed. Finally, there is a review of two more construct chain rules. The essential features in this chapter include the following:
1. The orthography of perfect inflection for middle weak verbs
2. The orthography of the perfect inflection for final weak verbs
3. Construct chain rules #5 and #6
4. Syntax associated with past narrative sequence including word order, fronting, and adversative syntax.

**One: Middle weak verbs in the perfect inflection:**

The orthography of middle weak verbs in the perfect

Just as was the case with the participle, verbal roots that have a middle yod or waw “lose” the middle root letter in the perfect inflection. Such verbs form the perfect in a manner similar to the participle—in fact the orthography of the 3ms perfect and the ms participle are identical (the student must distinguish these forms by context). As was the case with the participle, the middle root letter is “lost” and replaced with a long /a/ vowel. The afformative is then added to the verbal stem. For example, the 1cs perfect of the root ב-ו is formed by dropping the waw and adding the afformative י (י = יב =י + ב). The following table summarizes the perfect inflection for middle weak verbs (See Example 8.01)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3cp</th>
<th>2fp</th>
<th>2mp</th>
<th>1cp</th>
<th>3fs</th>
<th>3ms</th>
<th>2fs</th>
<th>2ms</th>
<th>1cs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
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<td>יביה</td>
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<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
<td>יביה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Similarity of the 3rd person singular perfect forms to the singular participle**

The presence of the aformatives make the perfect easily distinguishable from the participle in the 1st and 2nd persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mp part. of 3mp perfect of</th>
<th>ms part. of</th>
<th>2mp perfect of</th>
<th>2ms perfect of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בֵּית</td>
<td>בֵּית</td>
<td>בֵּית</td>
<td>בֵּית</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the 3rd person singular perfect forms are very similar to the participle forms. As seen in the chart above, the 3ms perfect of middle weak verbs is identical to the ms participle.

Thus, from an orthographic point of view, בֵּית may either be a perfect or participle depending on the context. The feminine singular forms can only be distinguished by the stress (or accent). As is the case with other perfect forms, the stress or accent in the perfect inflection is found on the syllable preceding the afformative unless the afformative is a closed syllable (see chart above).

Therefore, the 3fs perfect has the accent on the first syllable, while the fs participle has the accent on the final syllable as the following chart illustrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3fs perfect</th>
<th>fs participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בֵּית</td>
<td>בֵּית</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Two: Final weak verbs (III-ז) in the perfect inflection:**

**1st and 2nd person forms**

The final ה (ז) in verbal roots is typically “lost” in the perfect inflection with the addition of the afformative. In the 1st and 2nd person, the final ה (ז) is replaced with a yod (י)
and the /a/ class vowel of the second syllable changes to an /i/ class vowel. Thus, one finds "I wrote" (יִתְן נִגְלָה) and "I built" (יַעֲבֹד). The following table provides examples of these changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2fp</th>
<th>2mp</th>
<th>2fs</th>
<th>2ms</th>
<th>1cs</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ש-מ-ר</td>
<td>ש-מ-ר</td>
<td>ש-מ-ר</td>
<td>ש-מ-ר</td>
<td>מ-ר</td>
<td>י-ת-ן נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3rd person forms

The 3rd person forms of III-ר roots exhibit a little more variance from the strong roots, but they are still similar to the strong roots. The 3ms perfect of a III-ר root is formed by simply adding a long /a/ vowel due to the final he (ה). The 3fs forms replace the final he (ה) with the feminine taw (ת) and then add the affirmative (ה). In the 3cp forms, the final he (ה) is lost due to syncope and the affirmative is added to the first two root letters. The following table illustrates these changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3cp</th>
<th>3fs</th>
<th>3ms</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
<td>נ-ג-ל-ה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instances with gutturals in the first two root letters

Finally, the student should note that if the first or second consonant of the root is a guttural (just as in the case of the preceding chapter), then a composite sheva replaces a simple sheva. The following Table provides examples:
Summary of the final weak (III-77) verbs

All of the differences and features described above can be summarized in the following table of the perfect for final weak (III-77) verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2fp</th>
<th>2mp</th>
<th>2ms</th>
<th>1cs</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יש-ה-ר</td>
<td>יש-ה-ר</td>
<td>יש-ה-ר</td>
<td>יש-ה-ר</td>
<td>יש-ה-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>שלח</td>
<td>שלח</td>
<td>שלח</td>
<td>שלח</td>
<td>שלח</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The perfect inflection for the verbs יִהְיֶה and יָהֲדוּ.

Two verbs are I-Gutteral, middle (II-נ/נ) weak, and final weak (III-נ) all at the same time. One of these verbs is the perfect inflection of the verb “to be.” As discussed above, Hebrew does not have a participle form of the verb “to be.” However, the verb occurs in both the perfect and imperfect inflections, and it is very common in the perfect and preterite for past tense narratives sequences. The other verb that is both middle and final weak is יָהֲדוּ (“he lived”). This verb is also common in past tense narrative sequences. Although these verbs are common, the student should concentrate on recognizing these verbs for the time being rather than being able to reproduce every detail of the different conjugations.
Fortunately for the beginning student, even though both of these verbs are middle weak, they each retain the middle consonant (a yod [”]) in all the different forms of the perfect inflection. They therefore can be learned as if they were I-Guttural and final weak (III-ה) verbs that are conjugated just like the roots ה-ה-ה and ה-ה-ה. The only exception is that the composite sheva is an /e/ class vowel instead of an /a/ class vowel.

The following chart summarizes these two verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3cp</th>
<th>2fp</th>
<th>2mp</th>
<th>1cp</th>
<th>3fs</th>
<th>3ms</th>
<th>2fs</th>
<th>2ms</th>
<th>1cs</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
<td>י-ה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
<td>ת-ה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three: Construct Chain Rules #5 and #6:

The construct chain “rules” are very important for past tense narrative sequences because construct nouns are often found in these sequences. It is thus important to review rules #1–4 (see Chapter 5) as well as to concentrate on the application of rules #5 and #6. Subsequent chapters and exercises will emphasize the remaining four rules. Rules #5 and #6 are as follows:

5. The Rule of ṣēwā comes into play if the reductions from other construct “rules” result in two successive ṣēwās (י).
The dipthongs āwe (אויו) and āyi (אויי) lose the helping vowel and reduce to ō (א) and ê (א) respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule used</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Construct form</th>
<th>Absolute form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>באה</td>
<td>באה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>death</td>
<td>מות</td>
<td>מות</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>midst</td>
<td>ס Mayıs</td>
<td>ס Mayıs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>eye; spring</td>
<td>נמי</td>
<td>נמי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>olive tree</td>
<td>זית</td>
<td>זית</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>strength; valor</td>
<td>נך</td>
<td>נך</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>wine</td>
<td>זן</td>
<td>זן</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Four: Syntax associated with past narrative sequence**

Syntax refers to the ordering or systematizing of parts or elements. In grammatical terms, syntax refers to the arrangement of the different parts of a sentence (nouns, conjunctions, verbs, adverbs, etc.). The study of this arrangement permits the student of Biblical Hebrew to better understand the meaning that is conveyed in a Biblical Hebrew sentences. While the following sections introduce some basic rules of Biblical Hebrew syntax, the student must remember that...
grammar is descriptive and not prescriptive. That is, the following rules are one attempt to systematize and order the actual Hebrew texts that are found in the Hebrew Bible—they describe the typical order found in most Hebrew sentences. However, they should not be taken to be prescriptive. The student will encounter exceptions to almost all of these “rules.”

Because of this situation, it is important to begin reading large selections of Hebrew from the earliest stage in the learning process so that a “feel” for Biblical Hebrew may be obtained. Thus, the approach used in this textbook is to emphasize the most common and most important syntactical elements found in Biblical Hebrew and leave the discussion of the exceptions to a later stage.

**Typical Word Order in Biblical Hebrew Past Tense Narratives**

The first element in a Hebrew sentence is typically the verb followed by the subject. The object and adverbial elements typically come next.

**Typical Pattern:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
<th>Indirect Object</th>
<th>Add. Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>נִבְנֶה יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים אֶת הָזָרֹן אֲשֶׁר לֵךְ נִתְנָה לְאָדָם</td>
<td>(Gen 2:22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Yhwh God fashioned the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Direct object and indirect object reversed**

It is common to switch the Direct Object and Indirect Object

| נַשּׁׂאָה יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים כָּל הַזֹּאֵב כָּל הַעֲשָׂרָה לְאָדָם | (Gen 2:9) |
| And Yhwh God made sprout from the ground every tree (that was) pleasant of appearance |

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1 One of the reasons for so many exceptions to general rules is the fact that Biblical Hebrew is a diachronic language. That is, the text of the Hebrew Bible was written over at least 500 years, so there are many changes in the grammatical norms.
Circumstance often comes first before the verb:

It is also common for circumstance (adverb of phrase that describes the time or context of the narrative) to come first in the sentence or clause before the verb:

( Gen 15:1)

After these things, the word of the LORD was to Abram in a vision

( Gen 24:52)

When the servant of Abraham heard their words…

Disruptive syntax: noun comes first for emphasis or contrast

Biblical Hebrew often (but see below) emphasizes a conjunction with the use of disjunctive syntax. The most common way that this is done is to place the subject immediately after the conjunction (the waw). The waw is then translated as “but,” “now,” “then,” or similar. The following are examples some examples of disruptive syntax involving the conjunction waw:

Contrast:

The disruptive word order may be used to show a contrast between two clauses. In these instances, the conjunction is usually translated as “but” “while,” or “however.”

( Gen 4:2)

Abel was a shepherd of sheep, while Cain as a worker of the ground

I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not reveal my name Yhwh to them.

Emphasis:
New Subject (Fronting):

New item: Introduce the use of the perfect inflection following asher in a past-tense clause
Translation Exercise from Chapter 8 (Gen 22):

And Abraham rose early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey, and he took two of his lads with him and the boy, and the lamb for a burnt offering. 1-2

And Abraham said to the lads, “keep yourselves here with the donkey, While the boy and I, let us go as far as thus so that we might worship, and then we might return to you. 3-4

Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. 5-8

1. he tested 9. from the root ה-ל-ל
2. please take 10. third
3. your only one 11. and he lifted
4. = go (yourself) 12. from afar
5. Moriah 13. from the root ה-ל-ל
6. offer him up 14. from the root ה-ל-ל
7. and he cut 15. the knife
8. from the root ה-ל-ל
9. of the root ה-ל-ל
10. third
11. and he lifted
12. from afar
13. from the root ה-ל-ל
14. from the root ה-ל-ל
15. the knife
16. together
17. the lamb
18. from the root ה-ל-ל
19. from the root ה-ל-ל
20. and he arranged
21. and he bound