

## Chapter 8: The Past Tense (cont.)

### Vocabulary:

he reigned, was king: מָלַךְ	enemy: אוֹיֵב, אֹיֵב
family, clan: מִשְׁפָּחָה	nose, nostril; anger: אֵף
circuit (noun): סְבִיבִים, סְבִיב	nostrils (always dual): אֲפִים
all around; surrounding (adv): סְבִיב	covenant: בְּרִית
he served: עָבַד	flesh: בָּשָׂר
yet, still, again (adv.): עוֹד	new moon; month: חֹדֶשׁ
burnt offering: עֹלָה	his month: חֹדֶשׁוֹ
he answered: עָנָה	he was strong; he became strong: חָזַק
time: עֵת, עֵתִים	sin, sin-offering: חַטָּאת
Pharaoh: פַּרְעֹה	he was alive; he stayed alive: חָיָה
flock, sheep: צֹאן	cut, cut off; make a covenant: כָּרַת
flock, sheep: צֹנֶה	bread: לֶחֶם
He drew near: קָרַב	my bread: לֶחֶמִי
Saul: שָׂאֻל	pasture; wilderness: מִדְבָּר
Solomon: שְׁלֹמֹה	war, battle: מִלְחָמָה

### 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 affirmative is then added to the verbal stem. For example, the 1cs perfect of the root **ש-ו-ב** is formed by dropping the *waw* and adding the affirmative **תי** (**שָׁבְתִי** = **תי** + **ש-ו-ב**). The following table summarizes the perfect inflection for middle weak verbs (**See Example 8.01**)

3cp	2fp	2mp	1cp	3fs	3ms	2fs	2ms	1cs	
שָׁבוּ	שָׁבְתֶן	שָׁבְתֶם	שָׁבְנוּ	שָׁבָה	שָׁב	שָׁבְתְּ	שָׁבְתָּ	שָׁבְתִי	ש-ו-ב
שָׁמוּ	שָׁמְתֶן	שָׁמְתֶם	שָׁמְנוּ	שָׁמָה	שָׁם	שָׁמְתְּ	שָׁמְתָּ	שָׁמְתִי	ש-ו-ם
קָמוּ	קָמְתֶן	קָמְתֶם	קָמְנוּ	קָמָה	קָם	קָמְתְּ	קָמְתָּ	קָמְתִי	ק-ו-ם

*Similarity of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular perfect forms to the singular participle*

The presence of the affirmatives make the perfect easily distinguishable from the participle in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> persons.

mp part. of ש-ו-ב	ms part. of ש-ו-ב	2mp perfect of ש-ו-ב	2ms perfect of ש-ו-ב
שָׁבִים	שָׁב	שָׁבְתֶם	שָׁבְתָ

However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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, שָׁב 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 affirmative *unless* the affirmative 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:

ק-ו-ם	ש-ו-ם	ש-ו-ב	
קָמָה	שָׁמָה	שָׁבָה	3fs perfect
קָמָה	שָׁמָה	שָׁבָה	fs participle

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

*1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person forms*

The final *he* (ה) in verbal roots is typically “lost” in the perfect inflection with the addition of the affirmative. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person, the final *he* (ה) is replaced with a *yod* (י)

and the /a/ class vowel of the second syllable changes to an /i/ class vowel. Thus, one finds

כָּתַבְתִּי (“I wrote”) and בָּנִיתִי (“I built”). The follow table provides examples of these changes:

2fp	2mp	2fs	2ms	1cs	Root
שָׁמַרְתְּךָ	שָׁמַרְתֶּם	שָׁמַרְתְּ	שָׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁמַרְתִּי	ש-מ-ר
בָּנִיתְךָ	בָּנִיתֶם	בָּנִיתְ	בָּנִיתָ	בָּנִיתִי	ב-נ-ה

### *3<sup>rd</sup> person forms*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> person forms of III-ה 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-ה 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 (הַ). 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:

3cp	3fs	3ms	Root
שָׁמַרְךָ	שָׁמַרְתְּ	שָׁמַרְתָּ	ש-מ-ר
בָּנִיתְךָ	בָּנִיתְתְּ	בָּנִיתְתָּ	ב-נ-ה

### *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:

2fp	2mp	2ms	1cs	Root
שְׁמַרְתָּן	שְׁמַרְתֶּם	שְׁמַרְתָּ	שְׁמַרְתִּי	ש-מ-ר
עָלִיתָן	עָלִיתֶם	עָלִיתָ	עָלִיתִי	ע-ל-ה

*Summary of the final weak (III-ה) verbs*

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

3cp	2fp	2mp	1cp	3fs	3ms	2fs	2ms	1cs	Root
בָּנוּ	בָּנִיתָן	בָּנִיתֶם	בָּנִינוּ	בָּנְתָה	בָּנָה	בָּנִיתְּ	בָּנִיתְּ	בָּנִיתִי	ב-נ-ה
עָנוּ	עָנִיתָן	עָנִיתֶם	עָנִינוּ	עָנְתָה	עָנָה	עָנִיתְּ	עָנִיתְּ	עָנִיתִי	ע-נ-ה
עָלוּ	עָלִיתָן	עָלִיתֶם	עָלִינוּ	עָלְתָה	עָלָה	עָלִיתְּ	עָלִיתְּ	עָלִיתִי	ע-ל-ה

*The perfect inflection for the verbs הָיָה and הָיָה.*

Two verbs are I-Guttural, middle (II-ה/ו) weak, and final weak (III-ה) 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 הָיָה (“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* [י]) 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 ע-נ-ה and ע-ל-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:

3cp	2fp	2mp	1cp	3fs	3ms	2fs	2ms	1cs	Root
הָיוּ	הָיִיתָן	הָיִיתֶם	הָיִינוּ	הָיְתָה	הָיָה	הָיִיתְּ	הָיִיתְּ	הָיִיתִי	ה-י-ה
הָיוּ	הָיִיתָן	הָיִיתֶם	הָיִינוּ	הָיְתָה	הָיָה	הָיִיתְּ	הָיִיתְּ	הָיִיתִי	ח-י-ה

### 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 *šewā* comes into play if the reductions from other construct “rules” result in two successive *šewās* (ְ ).

Rule used	Translation	Construct form	Absolute form
1, 3, 5	words	דְּבָרַי	דְּבָרִים
3 and 5	hosts	צְבָאוֹת	צְבָאוֹת
3 and 5	rains	מְטָרוֹת	מְטָרוֹת

1, 3, 5	elders	זְקֵנִי	זְקֵנִים
3 and 5	shoulders	כְּתָפָת	כְּתָפֹת
3 and 5	hills	גְּבֻעוֹת	גְּבֻעוֹת
3 and 5	cloaks	שְׂמָלוֹת	שְׂמָלוֹת
3 and 5	blessings	בְּרָכוֹת	בְּרָכוֹת

6. The diphthongs *awe* (אָוֵ) and *ayi* (אֵי) lose the helping vowel and reduce to *o* (וֹ) and *e* (ֵ) respectively.

Rule used	Translation	Construct form	Absolute form
6	house	בֵּית	בַּיִת
6	death	מוֹת	מָוֶת
6	midst	תּוֹךְ	תְּוֹךְ
6	eye; spring	עֵין	עַיִן
6	olive tree	זֵית	זַיִת
6	strength; valor	חַיִל	חַיִל
6	wine	יַיִן	יַיִן

#### 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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:*

Verb	Subject	Direct Object	Indirect Object	Add. Elements
וַיַּבֶּן	יְהוָה	אֶת־הַצֵּלָע	אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח	מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה

And Yhwh God fashioned the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman

#### *Direct object and indirect object reversed*

It is common to switch the Direct Object and Indirect Object

וַיַּצְמַח	יְהוָה	אֶלֶּהֵם	מִן־הָאֲדָמָה	כָּל־עֵץ נְחֻמָּד לְמַרְאֵה
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And Yhwh God made sprout from the ground every tree (that was) pleasant of appearance

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<sup>1</sup> 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:

אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם בְּמַחְזָה (Gen 15:1)

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

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אֶת־דְּבָרֵיהֶם (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.”

וַיְהִי־הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה (Gen 4:2)

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

וַאֲרָא אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יִצְחָק וְאֶל־יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי וְשִׁמְיִי יְהוָה לֹא נִוְדַעְתִּי לָהֶם:

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):

1. וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה<sup>1</sup> אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו  
אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִי :

2. וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא<sup>2</sup> אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ<sup>3</sup> אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ<sup>4</sup>  
אֶל־אֶרֶץ מִזְרַח־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַעֲלֵהוּ<sup>5</sup> שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אַחֲרֵי הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִים :  
3. וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֶּקֶר וַיַּחְבֹּשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו אִתּוֹ

And Abraham rose early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey, and he took two of his lads with him  
וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּבְקַע<sup>7</sup> עֵצִי עֹלָה וַיִּקָּם<sup>8</sup> וַיֵּלֶךְ<sup>9</sup> אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים  
4. בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי<sup>10</sup> וַיִּשָּׂא<sup>11</sup> אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֹק<sup>12</sup>

5. וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נְעָרָיו שְׁבוּ־לְכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמֹר  
And Abraham said to the lads, “keep yourselves here with the donkey,

וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּעֱרַר גִּלְכָּה עַד־כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁוֹבָה אֵלֵיכֶם

While the boy and I, let us go as far as thus so that we might worship, and then we might return to you

6. וַיִּקַּח<sup>13</sup> אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצֵי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשֶׂם<sup>14</sup> עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ  
וַיִּקַּח<sup>13</sup> בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֶת<sup>15</sup> וַיֵּלֶכוּ<sup>9</sup> שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו<sup>16</sup>  
7. וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִי בְנִי  
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וְאֵיזָה הַשֶּׁה<sup>17</sup> לְעֹלָה

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

9. וַיָּבֵאוּ<sup>18</sup> אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבֶן<sup>19</sup> שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ  
וַיַּעֲרֹךְ<sup>20</sup> אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד<sup>21</sup> אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם<sup>14</sup> אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לְעֵצִים

1. he tested
2. please take
3. your only one
4. לֶךְ־לְךָ = go (yourself)
5. Moriah
6. offer him up
7. and he cut
8. from the root ו-ק

9. from the root ו-ל
10. third
11. and he lifted
12. from afar
13. from the root ו-ק
14. from the root ו-ש
15. the knife

16. together
17. the lamb
18. from the root ו-ב
19. from the root ו-נ
20. and he arranged
21. and he bound