Chapter 8: The Past Tense (cont.)

Vocabulary:

- he reigned, was king: יְהֵלָה, יִהְיוּב
- enemy: בָּא, בָּנָה
- family, clan: כַּפַּרְתָּה
- nose, nostril; anger: בָּא
- circuit (noun): נַפְּרֵבָה, נַפְּרָבָה
- nostrils (always dual): נַפְרַב
- all around; surrounding (adv.): נַפְרֵבָה
- he served: נַפְר
- yet, still, again (adv.): נַפָר
- burnt offering: טָלִי
d- he answered: נָפַר
- time: נָפָר, נָפָר
- Pharaoh: פַרְו
- he was alive; he stayed alive: פָּר
- flock, sheep: נָוָז
- cut, cut off; make a covenant: נָו
- flock, sheep: נָו
- He drew near: נָו
- Saul: פַרְו
- Solomon: פַרְו
- war, battle: פַרְו

Introduction:

This chapter continues to introduce the past tense narrative sequence. In this process, further forms of the perfect inflection are introduction 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. 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 ש-ר-ב is formed by dropping the waw and adding the afformative יי (ש-ר-ב = יי). The following table summarizes the perfect inflection for middle weak verbs:

<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>סָבָה</td>
<td>שָפְתָה</td>
<td>שָפְתָה</td>
<td>שָפְתִּי</td>
<td>שְׁפַתְנוּ</td>
<td>שְׁפַתְנוּ</td>
<td>שְׁפַּתְנוּ</td>
<td>שְׁפַּתְנוּ</td>
<td>שְׁפַּתְנוּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
<td>בָּשְׁתִּי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
<td>זָמָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table entries are in Hebrew script and represent the perfect forms of middle weak verbs.
Similarity of the 3rd person singular perfect forms to the singular participle

The perfect is easily distinguishable from the participle in the 1st and 2nd persons because of the afformatives. However, the 3rd person singular perfect forms are very similar to the participle forms. As mentioned above, the 3ms perfect of middle weak verbs is identical to the ms participle. Thus, from an orthographic point of view, ב DEAL 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, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ת-ו-וכ</th>
<th>ש-ו-וכ</th>
<th>ח-ו-וכ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>נשתק</td>
<td>שושק</td>
<td>מידק</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>חותק</td>
<td>שושק</td>
<td>מידק</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The final ה (נ) in verbal roots is typically “lost” in the perfect inflection with the addition of the affirmative. In the 1st and 2nd person, the final ה (נ) is replaced with a מ (י) and the /a/ class vowel of the second syllable changes to an /i/ class vowel. Thus, one finds "I wrote" and "I built".

The 3rd person forms of III-נ roots exhibit a little more variance from the strong roots, but they are still similar to the strong roots. The 3ms forms simply add a long /a/ vowel due to
the final *he* (י). The 3fs forms replace the final *he* (י) with the feminine *taw* (ת) and then add the affirmative (יָּדָה). In the 3cp forms, the final *he* (י) 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בִּנָּה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*. These differences can be summarized in the following table of the perfect for final weak (יִתְּנָה) verbs:

<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>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יִתְּנָה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בִּנָּה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה תָּוָה</td>
<td>בִּנָּה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יְהֵי תָּוָה</td>
<td>יִתְּנָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The perfect inflection for the verbs יִתְּנָה and יִתְּנָה.

Two verbs are I-Gutteral, middle (יִתְּנָה) weak, and final weak (יִתְּנָה) 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 does occur 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 יִתְּנָה ("he lived"). This verb is also common in past tense narrative sequences. Although these verbs of 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 ('yod [y]) in all the different forms of the perfect inflection. They therefore can be learned as if they were I-Guttural and final weak (III-י) verbs that are conjugated just like the roots מ-ל-ו and מ-ז-ו. 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>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>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
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<td>ניח</td>
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<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</td>
<td>ניח</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 Shewa comes into play if the reductions from other construct “rules” result in two successive שׁוֹאָשׁ (שׁוֹאָשׁ).
6. The diphthongs ăwe (אֵ֔ו) ăyi (אֵ֔י) lose the helping vowel and reduce to ô (♀) and ê (♂) 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>בֵית</td>
<td>בֵית</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>death</td>
<td>בֵּית</td>
<td>בֵּית</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>midst</td>
<td>תֹּחַ</td>
<td>תֹּחַ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>eye; spring</td>
<td>שָׁרָע</td>
<td>שָׁרָע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>olive tree</td>
<td>זָרְע</td>
<td>זָרְע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>strength; valor</td>
<td>קֹחֶן</td>
<td>קֹחֶן</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>wine</td>
<td>נַחֲלָה</td>
<td>נַחֲלָה</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>Adv. Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>הנָבֵה יְהוָה אַלֹהִים אֶת-הַעֲלָהָה אֶפְרָיָה מִגְּדָה לָאָשֶׁר</td>
<td>(Gen 2:22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

(וַיִּצְבָּה יְהוָה אַלֹהִים מִנָּה גֹּוָה כֶּלֶּה יִתְנְפוּ אֵלֶּה | (Gen 2:9)
And Yhwh God made sprout from the ground every three 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:

(1) מה אָנָה לְהַדְּרֹדְו אֲדָמָה לְהָעָרְכִּי אַל-אָבָדֵם שֵּֽפְרוֹת (Gen 15:1)

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

(2) רֹאָה אֶל פְּנֵי יְוהֵה אֲבָרָם עַל אֲבוֹת אֲבָרָם אֶלְּדֹרְיָם (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.”

(3) יְוהֵה-חָֽטֵל רְעָה לְאֵל אֲבֹת אַנֶּגָּה נֹֽעָה נֹֽעָה אַלְּדֹרְיָם (Gen 4:2)

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

(4) נָאָה אֶל-םֹּבָרָה אֶל-לוּחָם אֶל-רְכִּי אֶל נְמוֹי שֵֽרֶה יְוהֵה יְֽהָֽוָּה לְאֶל נָוְָֽשִּׁיָּה (Gen 32:28)

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

*Emphasis:*
New Subject (Fronting):
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 young boy, and he sliced the live sheep and took it on his shoulders and said to the lads, "keep yourselves here with the donkey, the boy and I, let us go as far as thus so that we might worship, and then we might return to you.

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