

## AN INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW CLAUSES WITH WAW

### I. INTRODUCTION

Hebrew clauses can be formed with or without the Hebrew *wāw*, although the latter is more commonly employed. Certain clauses may be expressed by a simple *wāw*-consecutive chain (especially temporal clauses). Other clauses, however, are more readily identified by the addition of conjunctions and/or special markers (e.g., וַיְהִי and וַיְהִי. Most Hebrew clauses have more than one method of formulation. For example, there are numerous ways to construct a purpose clause or a conditional sentence in Hebrew.

The following sections will provide an introduction to the more commonly used clauses in biblical Hebrew. Let me clarify that this is not meant to be an exhaustive study. Only certain select clauses will be surveyed, and only the more typical cases will be demonstrated.

For a deeper study of Hebrew clauses, the student is referred to:

- 1) *Hebrew Syntax* by R. Williams (pp 80-101)
- 2) *GKC* (pp 471-506)
- 3) Waltke & O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*

### II. THE HEBREW WAW: A BASIC CLAUSE DEVISE

Although many Hebrew clauses are indicated by the presence of some conjunction or other particle (e.g., כִּי or אֲדָמָה), it is quite common that clauses will have a logical or temporal relationship with one another by virtue of the Hebrew *wāw* that initiates them.

#### A. The *wāw*-consecutive Chain (see p. 32)

Clauses prefaced by a simple *wāw*-consecutive may actually have some logical or temporal relationship. When translating, one should avoid the redundancy of using "and." Instead, one may make use of subordinating constructions, such as adverbial clauses and participial modifiers, being careful to preserve the proper logical or temporal sequence of the Hebrew.

Example: Gen 28:8-9

וַיֵּרָא	עֵשָׂו	כִּי	רָעוּת	בְּנֹת	כְּנָעַן
then-he-realized	Esau	how	displeasing-ones	women-of	Canaan
וַיֵּלֶךְ	עֵשָׂו	אֶל-	יִשְׁמָעֵאל	וַיִּקַּח	אֶת-מַחְלָת
so-he-went	Esau	to	Ishmael	and-he-maried	Mahalath ***
				אָבִיו	אִצְחָק
				father-of-him	Isaac
				to-eyes-of	

The *wāw*-consecutives could be translated, "And Esau realized ... and Esau went ...." However, by adding the word "when" to the first clause, the proper logical connection is shown:

*"When Esau realized how displeasing the women of Canaan were to the eyes of his father Isaac, he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath."*

**B. Volitive sequence with *wāw*** [cf. Waltke, § 32.2.2; 34.5.2 and 34.6]

1. Imperative followed by the Perfect with *wāw*-consecutive

In this situation, the perfect verb will have the force of an imperative.

Deut 6:4-5

			Perf Vb			Impv
אֱלֹהֶיךָ	יְהוָה	אַתָּה	וְאַהַבְתָּ	...	יִשְׂרָאֵל	שָׁמַע
God-of-you	Yahweh	***	and-you-must-love	...	Israel	hear!

Trans.: "Hear O Israel . . . and you shall love the LORD your God"



2. Volitive + *wāw* + Impf/Volitive = Purpose or result clause  
[but not an impv]

Gen 27:7

	Coh		Coh			Impv
וְאַבְרָכְכָּה	וְאֹכְלָה	מִטַּעֲמִים	לִי	וְעִשָּׂה		
and-I-may-bless-you	so-I-may-eat	tasty-foods	for-me	and-prepare!		

Trans.: "Prepare me some tasty food that I may eat and bless you."

Note 1: There are situations having this pattern which will not be a purpose/result clause. For example, we could have a chain of cohortatives linked by *wāw* (see Gen 46:31).

Note 2: The pattern *impv* + *wāw* + *impv* may be an imperatival chain.

For example: זָכַר ... וְשָׁמַר  
and-keep! remember!

This could reflect:

- 1) chronological sequence = "remember and then keep"
- 2) logical sequence = "remember to keep"
- 3) simple coordination = "remember and keep"

C. Temporal Clause Indicators with *wāw* [cf. Temporal Clauses]

Note: Some scholars (e.g., Don Glenn) regard these clauses as actually being a type of *circumstantial clause*.  
 Caution: The presence of וְיָהִי or וְהָיָה does not automatically signal a temporal clause (check context).

## 1. Past Tense Narration: וְיָהִי

Gen 38:1

		Imperfect with Waw-consec.	Prep. phrase	Temp. Indic.
אֶחָיו	מֵאֵת	וַיֵּרָד	הַהוּא	בְּעֵת
brothers-of-him	from-with	Judah that-he-went-down	the-that	at-the-time and-he-was

Trans.: "At that time, Judah went down from his brothers"

## 2. Future Tense Narration: וְהָיָה

Isa 22:20

		Perf. Verb with waw-consec.	Prep. phrase	Temp. Indic.
לְאֵלִיָּקִים	לְעַבְדִּי	וְקָרָאתִי	הַהוּא	בַּיּוֹם
to-Eliakim	to-servant-of-me	then-I-will-summon	the-that	in-the-day and-he-will-be

Trans.: "In that day, I will summon my servant Eliakim."

## DISJUNCTIVE CLAUSES

### I. DEFINITION

A disjunctive clause is a clause which breaks the *wāw*-consecutive sequence. Disjunctive clauses will be initiated by *wāw*-disjunctive having the form ׀ (see pp 31-32), but the *wāw* is not part of the *wāw*-consecutive sequence. These clauses are characterized by the fact that the *wāw* appears on some other word or particle other than a finite verb. According to Lambdin, *circumstantial clauses* are one type of disjunctive clause.<sup>1</sup> For purposes of discussion, however, we will take them up separately. Hence, circumstantial clauses (a type of disjunctive clause) will be discussed in the next section, as there are many subcategories of these that need to be clarified.

### II. FORM

In a normal narrative clause, the *wāw* is placed on the verb, and the subject (if explicitly given) will follow. Disjunctive clauses (including circumstantial clauses) will interpose some other word between the *wāw* and the verb position. Usually, this will be the "subject" of the clause. Circumstantial clauses typically do not even have a finite verb following the subject (though in some cases they do).

The usual form for disjunctive clauses other than circumstantial is as follows:

*wāw* + X<sup>1</sup> + finite verb<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Note: Normally, the subject will stand in position X (but not a verb!).

<sup>2</sup>Note: At times, there will be no stated verb; rather the verb may be implied (e.g., the equative verb; see example "B" below).

### III. EXAMPLES:

A. Gen 1:2 "Now the earth was formless and empty."

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ  
and-empty formless she-was now-the-earth

B. Jud 3:16 "Now Eglon was a very fat man."

וְעַגְלוֹן אִישׁ כָּרִיא מְאֹד [verb is understood]  
very fat man now-Eglon

<sup>1</sup>Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971): 263-65.



## IV. FUNCTIONS

## A. Contrastive

Gen 41:54 "There was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was food."

וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּכָל־הָאֲרָצוֹת  
the-lands in-all-of famine and-he-was

וּבְכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הָיָה לֶחֶם  
food he-was Egypt land-of but-in-whole-of

B. **Explanatory or Parenthetical:** supplying parenthetical information relevant to or necessary for the narrative (but not at the beginning or end).

Gen 31:33-34 "So Laban went into the tent of Jacob and into the tent of Leah and into the tent of the two maidservants, but he did not find them. So he came out from the tent of Leah and went into the tent of Rachel. Now Rachel had taken the household gods and had put them in the saddle of the camel and sat on them."

וְרַחֵל לָקְחָה אֶת־הַתְּרָפִים . . .  
the-gods \*\*\* she-took now-Rachel

Note: Sometimes these explanatory disjunctive clauses can, in effect, have the force of a temporal circumstantial clause. If the disjunctive clause refers to *completed action*, a verb in the Perfect is used (see examples #1 and #2).

Example #1:

Perf Vb Subj  
Jud 4:1: וַיִּסְפוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרָע ... וַאֲהוּד מָתָּה  
he-died now-Ehud the-evil to-do Israel sons-of and-they-repeated

We could translate this:

"After Ehud died, the sons of Israel again did evil."

Example #2:

2 Sam 1:1: וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שָׁאוּל  
Saul death-of after and-he-was  
Perf Vb Subj  
וְדָוִד שָׁב מִהַכּוֹת אֶת־הָעֲמֻלִּים  
the-Amalek \*\*\* from-to-defeat he-retained then-David disjunctive!  
וַיָּשָׁב דָּוִד בְּצִקְלָג יָמִים שְׁנָיִם  
two days in-Ziklag David and-he-stayed

"After the death of Saul, when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, David stayed in Ziklag for two days."

Note: If the action described by the disjunctive clause refers to the *initial and continuing* phases of a past situation, a verb in the Imperfect will be used (ex #3). Cf. Waltke, § 31.2c (pp 503-504).

Example #3:

2 Sam 15:37      וַיָּבֹא חוּשִׁי רֵעֵה דָוִד הָעִיר  
                          the-city David friend-of Hushai so-he-arrived  
                          וַאֲבִשָׁלֹם יָבֵא יְרוּשָׁלַם:  
                          Jerusalem he-entered and-Absalom

"And Hushai the friend of David entered the city, while Absalom entered (began entering) Jerusalem."

### C. Concluding Remarks

Jud 16:31 "And his brothers and the whole house of his father went down and got him, and they brought him back and buried him . . . . Thus he judged Israel for twenty years."

. . . וְהוּא שָׁפַט אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה . . .  
                          year twenty Israel \*\*\* he-led now-he

D. **Initial:** indicates the beginning of a new episode.

Gen 3:1 "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the animals . . . ."

וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכָּל חַיָּה  
                          animal-of more-than-all-of crafty he-was now-the-serpent

E. **Negative:** whenever a negative particle (לא) is imposed between the *wāw* and the verb.

Deut 1:26 "But you did not want to go up and rebelled"

וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לָעֹלָה וַתִּמְרֹו  
                          and-you-rebelled to-go-up you-wanted but-not

## CIRCUMSTANTIAL CLAUSES

[see Williams, p 83; GKC, pp 489-91; Waltke, § 39.2.3]

### I. DEFINITION

Circumstantial clauses express some fact subordinate to the main course of the narrative or describe some circumstance appertaining to the action denoted by the main verb. Circumstantial clauses qualify the main action by assigning the concomitant conditions under which the action took place (whether temporal, causal, descriptive, modal, etc.).

### II. THE RELATION OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL TO DISJUNCTIVE CLAUSES

As stated in the previous section, circumstantial clauses are actually a type of disjunctive clause. In both cases, the *wāw* is not placed directly on the verb of the clause.

In a normal narrative clause, the *wāw* is placed on the verb, and the subject (if explicitly given) will follow. Circumstantial and disjunctive clauses are similar in that the subject of the clause immediately follows the *wāw* (rather than a verb).

It is more common that circumstantial clauses will not have a finite verb (though they can, especially with causal situations). The following patterns represent the more typical situations:

Circumstantial Clause:    *wāw* + subject\* + nonfinite verb<sup>1</sup>  
or nonverbal form

Disjunctive Clause:        *wāw* + subject + finite verb

Note 1: In both cases, the *wāw* is *wāw*-disjunctive!

Note 2: The word following the *wāw* is a noun or pronoun, and usually the subject of the clause. But there are cases where it may not be the subject.

### III. RELATIONSHIP TO THE MAIN CLAUSE

\* May have the particle וְ instead of a subject.

Normally, a circumstantial clause will follow the main clause. In certain cases, however, the circumstantial clause will actually precede the main clause. In some cases, the *wāw* may even be absent. Cases where the circumstantial clause may actually precede the main clause include:

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<sup>1</sup>A nonfinite verb in a circumstantial clause is usually a participle, but a noun, an adjective, or a prepositional phrase may also stand in this slot.

- 1) **וַיְהִי** + subject + participle
- 2) **וַיְהִי** + preposition + Infinitive construct
- 3) **וַיְהִי** + preposition + **אֲשֶׁר** + Finite verb

#### IV. USAGE

##### A. Temporal (most common)

Gen 18:1 "The LORD appeared to him, while he was sitting at the entrance of the tent."

	Ptc	Subj				
<b>וַיֵּרָא</b>	<b>אֵלָיו</b>	<b>יְהוָה</b>	...	<b>יֹשֵׁב</b>	<b>פֶּתַח-</b>	<b>הָאֵהֶל</b>
and-he-appeared	to-him	Yahweh	...	sitting	entrance-of	the-tent

Note: See the notes under explanatory/parenthetical disjunctive clauses. This type of disjunctive clause can also express temporal clauses.

##### B. Concomitant Circumstance (common) (i.e., an accompanying or attendant condition)

Gen 24:15 "Rebekah ... came out with her jar on her shoulder."

Prep Phrase	Subj			
<b>עַל-</b>	<b>וְכַבֵּה</b>	<b>יֵצְאָה</b>	<b>רִבְקָה</b>	
shoulder-of-her	on and-jar-of-her	coming	Rebekah	

##### C. Descriptive (resembles a relative clause)

Gen 11:4 "Let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens"

Prep Phrase	Noun				
<b>בַּשָּׁמַיִם</b>	<b>וְרֹאשׁוֹ</b>	<b>וּמִגְדָּל</b>	<b>עִיר</b>	<b>לָנוּ</b>	<b>נִבְנֶה-</b>
in-the-heavens	and-top-of-him	and-tower	city	for-us	let-us-build

NIV: "Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens."

##### D. Causal (quite commonly these will take a finite verb)

Gen 24:56 "Do not detain me, since the LORD has made my journey successful"

	Finite Vb.	Subj			
<b>אֶל-</b>	<b>הָצִלֵּיחַ</b>	<b>וַיְהִי</b>	<b>אֵתִי</b>	<b>תִּצְטָרְוּ</b>	<b>נָרְכִי</b>
journey-of-me	he-made-succeed	as-Yahweh	me	you-detain	not

Note: Observe that the circumstantial clause has a finite verb in this case, contrary to what we normally expect.



**E. Concessive**

Gen 18:27 "I have been bold to speak to the Lord, although I am (but) dust and ashes."

וְאֶפֶר	עֹפָר	וְאַנֹכִי	אֲדֹנָי	אֶל-	לְדַבֵּר	הוּאֲלֵתִי
and-ash	dust	though-I	Lord	to	to-speak	I-was-bold

**F. Manner** (or Modal)

Not as common. Possibly Ps 35:8; Ps 27:5; Gen 44:12.

## TEMPORAL CLAUSES

[see Ross, § 56.1; Williams, pp 83-84; GKC, pp 501-503; Waltke, § 31.6.3c, 36.2.2-3, 37.6f, 38.1g, 38.1i, 38.7]

### I. TWO CLAUSES JOINED BY WAW-CONSECUTIVE

Gen 24:19 "After she had finished giving him a drink, she said . . ."

וְהָאָמֶר      לְהַשְׁקִיחַ      וְהִכְלִי

and-she-said   to-give-drink-him   and-she-finished

### II. THE TEMPORAL USE OF THE CONJUNCTION כִּי

Gen 4:12 "When you work the ground, it will not continue to yield its crop"

כִּי   תַעֲבֹד   אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה

the-ground   \*\*\*   you-work   when

לֹא־תִשָּׁרֵץ   תִּתֵּן   חֶסֶד   כְּחֶמֶר

crop-of-her   to-continue   she-will-continue   not

NOTE: כִּי is also used temporally in conjunction with temporal indicators (see below).

### III. TEMPORAL INDICATORS (וְהִיאָה and וְהָיָה)

#### A. Having the force of the "Perfect Tense" (uses וְהָיָה)

[normally = past tense]

#### 1. → וְהָיָה + כ/ב + Infinitive

Gen 39:19 "When his master heard the words of his wife . . . ."

וְהָיָה   כְּשִׁמְעַ   אֲדֹנָיו   אֶת־דִּבְרֵי   אִשְׁתּוֹ

wife-of-him   words-of   \*\*\*   masters-of-him   when-to-hear   and-he-was

Note: Be careful! Sometimes this pattern can be a concessive clause rather than a temporal clause (e.g., Gen 39:10).

## 2. → וַיְהִי + Prep Phrase

[having imperfect with wāw-consecutive in main clause]

Gen 8:6 "At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark."

Main Clause				Prep Phrase		
וַיְהִי	מֵקֵץ	אַרְבָּעִים	יוֹם	וַיִּפְתַּח	נֹחַ	אֶת-חַלּוֹן
and he was	at-end-of	forty	day	and-he-opened	Noah	window-of ***

Note: Usually the word(s) in the prep. phrase are numbers or words implying a measure of time.

## 3. → וַיְהִי + כִּי + Perfect Vb

Gen 6:1 "When man began to increase on the face of the earth . . . ."

וַיְהִי	כִּי	הֵחֵל	הָאָדָם	לָרֹב	עַל-	פְּנֵי	הָאֲדָמָה
and he was	when	he-began	the-man	to-increase	on	face-of	the earth

## 4. → וַיְהִי + כַּאֲשֶׁר + Perfect Vb

Gen 12:11 "Just as he was about to enter into Egypt,"

וַיְהִי	כַּאֲשֶׁר	הָקָרִיב	לְבוֹא	מִצְרָיִמָּה
and he was	just-as	he-was-about	to-enter	into-Egypt

## 5. → וַיְהִי + אַחֲרֵי/אַחַר (see bottom of p 46)

## B. Having the Force of the Imperfect Tense [normally =future]

## 1. → וְהָיָה + כ/כּ + Inf. Const.

Num 15:19 "When you eat the food of the land, you must present a portion to the LORD."

וְהָיָה	בְּאֲכָלְכֶם	מִלֶּחֶם	הָאֲרֶץ
and he will be	when-to-eat-you	from-food-of	the-land

Inf. Con. = ב - אכל - כם  
 Pron. Verb Prep.  
 Suf.

## 2. → וְהָיָה + Prep. Phrase

[having Perfect with wāw-consecutive in main clause]

Mic 5:9 "On that day ... I will destroy your horses"

Perf. with waw consec.		Prep Phrase	
וְהָיָה	בַּיּוֹם-הַהוּא	אֲנִי	וְהִכַּחֲתִי
and he will be	the-that in-the-day	then-I-will-destroy	horses-of-you

## 3. → וְהָיָה + כִּי + Imperfect Verb

Gen 46:33 "When Pharaoh calls for you ... then you should answer ...."

Impf.  
וְהָיָה כִּי־יִקְרָא לָכֶם פַּרְעֹה . . . וְאַמְרָתֶם  
then-you-answer ... Pharaoh for-you he-calls when and-he-will-be

## 4. → וְהָיָה + כַּאֲשֶׁר + Imperfect Verb

Gen 27:40 "When you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from of your neck."

## IV. INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT WITH PREPOSITIONAL PREFIX

Gen 41:46 "Now Joseph was thirty years old when he served before Pharaoh ...."

וְיוֹסֵף בֶּן־שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בָּעָמְדוֹ לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה  
Pharaoh before when-to-serve-him year thirty son-of now-Joseph

NOTE: Other prepositions may govern the infinitive besides ב. See Gen 12:14 for כ; Gen 14:17 for אַחֲרֵי; 2 Sam 3:35 for לִפְנֵי; and Gen 27:45 for עַד.

## V. CIRCUMSTANTIAL CLAUSE USED TEMPORALLY

Gen 18:1 "The LORD appeared to him, while he was sitting at the entrance of the tent."

Ptc Subj  
וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה . . . וְהָיָה יוֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֵהָל  
the-tent entrance-of sitting and-he . . . Yahweh to-him and-he-appeared

## VI. A SIMPLE PREPOSITION FOLLOWED BY A NOUN CLAUSE

Gen 25:6 "Abraham gave gifts ... and sent them away from his son Isaac while he was still alive."

נָתַן אַבְרָהָם מִתְּנִת  
gifts Abraham he-gave

Noun Clause  
וַיִּשְׁלַח מֵעַל יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בְּעוֹרְנוֹ חַי  
alive while-he son-of-him Isaac away-from and-he-sent-them

NOTE: In this case, the preposition ב introduced the temporal clause. Other prepositions could be used, e.g., כ, כִּמּוֹ, כַּאֲשֶׁר, אַחֲרֵי, and עַד. Also, words like טָרָם, בְּטָרָם, and מִדִּי can introduce temporal clauses.



## PURPOSE CLAUSES (FINAL or TELIC CLAUSES)

[see Williams, pp 86-87; GKC, pp 503-504; and Waltke, § 36.2.2-3, 38.1g, 38.1i, and 38.3]

### I. BY USE OF THE INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT WITH ל

1 Kgs 18:42 "So Ahab went off to eat and to drink."

Inf Con	Inf Con		
וְלִשְׁתּוֹת	לֶאֱכֹל	אֶחָאָב	וַיֵּעַלָּה
and-to-drink	to-eat	Ahab	so-he-went-off

### II. A WAW SEQUENCE INVOLVING A VOLITIVE<sup>1</sup>

Clarification:

Imperative Jussive Cohortative
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+ wāw +

Imperfect Jussive Cohortative
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Gen 27:4 "Bring (it) to me that I may eat."

Cohort.		Impv
וְאֵלֶיךָ	לִי	וְהִבֵּאתָ
so-I-may-eat	to-me	and-bring!

### III. AN IMPERATIVE PRECEDED BY WAW (rare)

For possible examples, see Isa 45:22 and 2 Sam 21:3.

### IV. INTRODUCED BY לְמַעַן

#### A. An imperfect following לְמַעַן

Gen 12:13 "Say that you are my sister, that it might go well for me."

לִי	יִיטֵב	לְמַעַן	אָתָּה	אֲחֹתִי	נָא	אָמְרִי
for-me	he-will-be-well	so-that	you	sister-of-me	now!	say!

Note: The relative אשר may or may not stand between the verb and לְמַעַן (e.g., see Jer 42:6).

<sup>1</sup>Sometimes the sequence may involve a wāw plus a volitive, which is preceded by either a wish, a negative statement, or a question. For an example of a purpose clause having a question + wāw + imperative, see 2 Sam 21:3.

### B. The Infinitive Construct following לַמַּעַן

Gen 37:22 "Reuben said to them, "Do not shed blood! Throw him into this cistern ..., " in order to rescue him from their hand.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם רְאוּבֵן אֶל-תִּשְׁפְּכוּ-דָם  
and-he-said to-them Reuben not you-shed blood

תְּשַׁלְּכֵהוּ אִתּוֹ אֶל-הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה . . .  
throw! him into the-cistern the-this

... לַמַּעַן הַצִּיל אֹתוֹ מִיָּדָם  
in-order to-rescue him from-hand-of-them

Note: For participle following לַמַּעַן, see Ex 10:1.

## V. INTRODUCED BY בְּעֵבוֹר

### A. An Imperfect Verb following בְּעֵבוֹר

Gen 27:4 "Bring (it) to me that I may eat, in order that my soul may bless you."

וְהָבִיֵּאתָ לִי וְאָכַלְתָּ בְּעֵבוֹר תְּבָרְכֶךָ וְנִפְשִׁי  
to-me and-bring so-I-may-eat so-that she-may-bless-you self-of-me

Note: The relative אֲשֶׁר may or may not stand between the verb and בְּעֵבוֹר (e.g., see Gen 27:10).

### B. An Infinitive Construct following בְּעֵבוֹר

2 Sam 10:4 "Has not David sent his servants to you in order to explore the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?"

Inf. Con.  
הֲלוֹא בְּעֵבוֹר הִקְדֹּר אֶת-הָעִיר וְלַרְגְּלָהּ וְלְהַפְכָּהּ  
to-explore in-order the-city \*\*\* and-to-spy-out-her and-to-overthrow-her not?

שָׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת-עֲבָדָיו אֵלָיךְ  
David he-sent \*\*\* men-of-him to-you

## VI. אֲשֶׁר FOLLOWED BY AN IMPERFECT VERB

Deut 4:40 "And you shall keep his decrees and commandments . . . that it might go well for you"

Impf  
וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת-חֻקֵּי וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתָיו . . . אֲשֶׁר יֵיטֵב לָךְ  
and-you-keep \*\*\* decrees-of-him and commands-of-him that with-you he-may-go-well

## VII. NEGATIVE PURPOSE

## A. לְבִלְתִּי followed by the Imperfect

Ex 20:20 "... that the fear of Him might be with you in order that you not sin."

וּבְעֵבוֹר תִּהְיֶה יִרְאַתּוֹ עַל-פְּנֵיכֶם לְבִלְתִּי תַחֲטְאוּ  
you-will-sin so-not faces-of-you before fear-of-him she-will-be and-so-that

## B. לְבִלְתִּי followed by the Infinitive Construct

Gen 4:15 "The LORD put on Cain a mark in order that anyone finding him would not kill him."

וַיִּשֶׂם יְהוָה לְקַן אֹחַ לְבִלְתִּי הַפֹּת-אֹחַ כָּל-מֹצְאוֹ  
finding-him every-of him to-kill not mark on-Cain Yahweh then-he-put

## C. לֹא followed by the Imperfect

Num 17:5 (16:40 Eng)

"as a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron should come near to burn incense before the LORD;"

זִכְרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִקְרַב אִישׁ זָר  
stranger man he-should-come not \*\*\* so-that Israel for-sons-of reminder

אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן הוּא לְהַקְטִיר קֹטֶרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה  
Yahweh before incense to-burn he Aaron from-descendant-of not who

## D. אֲשֶׁר followed by לֹא and the imperfect

Gen 11:7 "let us go down and there confuse their language so that they will not understand the language of one another."

וְנִבְּלָה שָׁם וְשָׁפְתָם גִּרְתָּהּ  
language-of-them there and-let-us-confuse let-us-go-down

אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שִׁפְתוֹ רֵעֵהוּ:  
fellow-of-him language-of one they-will-understand not so

cf. Gen 24:3

## E. כִּן followed by the Imperfect

Gen 3:3 "you must not eat from it or touch it lest you die."

לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בוֹ כִּן-תָּמּוּתוּן:  
you-will-die or on-him you-must-touch and-not from-him you-must-eat not

## CAUSAL CLAUSES

[see Ross, § 58.1; Williams, p 89; GKC, p 492; and Waltke, § 36.2.2, 37.6b, 38.1g, 38.1i, and 38.4]

## I. INTRODUCED BY THE CONJUNCTION כִּי (very common)

Gen 6:13 "the end of all flesh has come before Me, because the earth is filled with violence."

קֵץ כָּל-בָּשָׂר בָּא לִפְנֵי כִי-מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס  
 violence the-earth she-is-filled for before-me coming person every-of end-of

## II. AS A CIRCUMSTANTIAL CLAUSE

Ex 23:9 "You shall not oppress an alien, for you yourselves know the feeling [lit., soul] of the alien."

וְגַר לֹא תִלְחֹץ וְאַתָּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת-נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר  
 the-alien feeling-of \*\*\* you-know for-you you-oppress not and-alien

Note: Normally, a circumstantial clause involves a waw + subject + nonfinite verb. Having a finite verb is an exception to the norm.

## III. PREPOSITION PLUS INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

## A. Prep. מִן plus Inf. Const. (more common)

Deut 7:7 "Not because you were more numerous than all peoples has the LORD set (His) affection on you ...."

לֹא מִרְבִּבְכֶם מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים  
 the-peoples than-all-of because-to-be-numerous-you not

חֵשֶׁק יָהוָה בָּכֶם  
 on-you Yahweh he-set-affection

## B. Other Prepositions plus Inf. Const.

Similarly to #1, the preposition ב (1 Kg 18:18), עַל (2 Kg 19:28), or עַל (Amos 2:6) can stand before an infinitive construct expressing "because."



## IV. CLAUSES INTRODUCED BY CERTAIN PREPOSITIONS

Note: The preposition may stand alone, but often is followed by **כִּי** or **אֲשֶׁר**.

A. **יַעַן**

1. **יַעַן** alone

Num 20:12 "Because you did not trust in Me ...  
you will not bring this assembly into  
the land."

**יַעַן** **לֹא** **הֵאֱמַנְתָּם** **בִּי**  
in-me you-trusted not because

**לֹא** **תָבִיאוּ** **אֶת־הַקָּהָל** **הַזֶּה** **אֶל־הָאָרֶץ**  
the-land into the-this the-assembly \*\*\* you-will-bring not

2. **יַעַן כִּי** For example, see Isa 3:16, Num 11:20  
[we also have **יַעַן כִּי** in Gen 22:16]

3. **יַעַן אֲשֶׁר** For example, see Gen 22:16

B. **עַל**

1. **עַל** alone For example, see Ps 119:136

2. **עַל כִּי** For example, see Jud 3:12

3. **עַל אֲשֶׁר** For example, see 2 Sam 3:30

"Now Joab and his brother Abishai murdered  
Abner, because he killed Asahel their brother."

**וַיּוֹאֵב** **וְאֶבְיָשַׁי** **אָחִיו** **הָרָגוּ** **לְאַבְנֵר**  
to-Abner they-murdered brother-of-him and-Abishai now-Joab

**עַל** **אֲשֶׁר** **הָמִית** **אֶת־עֲשָׂהאֵל** **אֶחָיהֶם**  
brother-of-them Asahel \*\*\* he-killed that because

C. **עַקֵּב**

1. **עַקֵּב** alone For example, see Num 14:24

2. **עַקֵּב כִּי** For example, see 2 Sam 12:10

3. **עַקֵּב אֲשֶׁר** For example, see Gen 22:18

- D. בְּאֲשֶׁר For example, see Gen 39:23
- E. כְּאֲשֶׁר For example, see 2 Kgs 17:26
- F. מֵאֲשֶׁר For example, see Isa 43:4
- G. תַּחַת
1. תַּחַת כִּי For example, see Prov 1:29
  2. תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר For example, see Num 25:13; Jer 29:19
- H. מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר For example, see Jer 44:23
- I. ב

Deut 1:27 "because the LORD hated us, He has brought us from the land of Egypt"

בְּשִׁנְאָה יְהוָה אֶתָּנוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 in-hate-of us he-brought-us from-land-of Egypt

- V. **Less commonly, BY THE PARTICLE אֲשֶׁר ALONE** (1 Kgs 3:19; Josh 4:23; 1 Sam 15:15?)

Joel 3:4-5 (H 4:4-5)

"I will return your deed on your head, for you took My silver and My gold . . ."

אָשִׁיב גַּמְלָתְכֶם בְּרֹאשְׁכֶם: אֲשֶׁר-כֶּסֶף וְזָהָבִי לָקַחְתֶּם  
 I-will-return on-head-of-you deed-of-you for silver-of-me and-gold-of-me you-took

## CONDITIONAL CLAUSES AND SENTENCES

[see Ross, § 59.2; GKC, pp 493-98; Williams, pp 85-86; Seow, pp 259-260; Lambdin, pp 276-79; and Waltke<sup>1</sup>, esp. pp 636-38]

### INTRODUCTION

A conditional sentence normally has two parts: the *protasis* and the *apodosis*.

Protasis - The condition ("if . . .")

Apodosis - The conclusion or result  
(normally introduced by ׀ and occasionally by ׀א)

### I. POSSIBLE PATTERNS FOR THE APODOSIS

A. *wāw*-consecutive + Perfect [most common form]

Jud 4:8 "If you go with me, then I will go ...."

Apodosis Perf Vb	Protasis Imperf Vb
וְהֵלַכְתִּי	אִם-תֵּלֶכְךָ עִמָּי
then-I-will-go	with-me you-go if

B. *wāw*<sup>†</sup> + non-verb<sup>‡</sup> + Imperfect

Note <sup>†</sup> - The *wāw* is optional; sometimes absent.

Note <sup>‡</sup> - The "non-verb" will often be a negative particle (לא).

2 Kgs 4:29 "if you meet anyone, do not greet (bless) him"

Apodosis Impf Vb	Protasis Impf Vb
לֹא תִבְרַכְנוּ	כִּי תִמְצָא אִישׁ
you-greet-him not	anyone you-meet if

Note: Observe that the *wāw* does not appear on the apodosis in this case.

<sup>1</sup>Waltke: 29.6f, 31.4e, 31.6.1, 32.1.2, 32.2a, 32.2.1, 32.2.3, 32.2.4a, 32.2.5c, 33.3.1e, 34.5, 34.5.2, 35.3.1g, 37.6f, 38.1g, 38.1i, 38.2, 39.3.4d, 39.3.4f, and 40.2.2a.

C.  $wāw^{\dagger}$  + non-verbal form

Note <sup>†</sup> - The  $wāw$  is optional; sometimes absent.

Ps 139:8 "If I ascend to Heaven, You are there"

אם־אֶסַק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אַתָּה  
I-go-up if heavens there you

## D. Imperative

Gen 50:4 "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak in the hearing of Pharaoh"

אם־נָא מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ  
now! if I-found favor in-eyes-of-you

דְּבַרְךָ־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי פַרְעֹה  
now! speak! Pharaoh in-ears-of

## II. REAL CONDITIONS

Note: The protasis is either fulfilled or capable of fulfillment. Either "tense" can occur in the protasis. Sometimes you have a Perfect in the protasis and an Imperfect in the apodosis. Othertimes, the reverse occurs.

The protasis may be introduced by simple juxtaposition of verbs or by an explicit particle (e.g., אם or כִּי).

## A. Simple Juxtaposition

1. Two  $wāw$ -consecutive Perfects (׀ on Perfect)

Note: This is the most common form among the juxtaposition types.

## 2. Two Imperfects

3. Two Imperatives joined by  $wāw$  (somewhat rare)

## 4. Participial subject of the Imperfect (legal formulations)

## B. Introduced by a Particle

## 1. הִנֵּה

## 2. הֵן



3. **אם** or **כי** [the protasis can express different time]
- a. Perf. tense in protasis - past time
  - b. Impf. tense in protasis - past frequentative time
  - c. Impf. tense in protasis - future time (common)
  - d. Perf. tense in protasis - may refer to future event
  - e. Ptc. in protasis - imminent future (*futur instans*) or present
  - f. Impf. tense in protasis - present frequentative time (present progressive)
4. **אשר** (rarely) [see Deut 12:27 for an example]

### III. UNREAL CONDITIONS

Note: The protasis is either hypothetical, unfulfilled or considered incapable of fulfillment. Protasis is always introduced by a particle.

1. **לו** (usually) - the *positive*
- a. Perf. in the protasis - past time
- Num 14:2 "... the whole assembly said to them, if only we had died in the land of Egypt"

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם כָּל-הָעֵדָה  
 and-they-said to-them whole-of the-assembly

לֹא-מָתוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 if-only we-died in-land-of Egypt

- b. Ptc. in the protasis - present or future time
- c. **לו** + Imperfect - future (hypothetical; rare)

Gen 50:15 "what if Joseph should hold a grudge against us?"

לֹא יִשְׁטַמְנוּ יוֹסֵף  
 what-if he-holds-grudge-against-us Joseph

2. לֹא or לוֹא - the negative hypothetical particle

- a. Perf. in the protasis - past time

Gen 31:42 "if the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac was not with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty handed"

לוֹאִי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וַיִּפְתָּר יִצְחָק הָיָה לִי  
with-me he-was Isaac and-Fear-of Abraham God-of father-of-me God-of if-not

כִּי עַתָּה רִיקָם שְׁלַחְתָּנִי  
you-would-have-sent-me empty-handed now surely

- b. Ptc. in the protasis - present or future time (rare)

3. אֵלֶּי (in late times)

4. כִּי or אִם (very rare; cf. Job 16:6)

Ps 139:8 "If I go up to Heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold You [are there]."

Apodosis	Protasis		Apodosis	Protasis	
	Coh			Impf	
הִנֵּךְ,	שְׁאוֹל	וְאִצְעִיעָה	אַתָּה	שָׁם	אֶסָּק שָׁמַיִם
see-you!	Sheol	if-I-make-bed	you	there	heavens I-go-up if