

PARTICIPLES

[see Waltke, § 37.1 - 37.7]

- NOTE: This discussion will be confined to the active participle, which functions in one of three ways:
- 1) Verbal - as the predicate of a clause
 - 2) Adjectival - modifying a noun or pronoun
 - 3) Substantival - as a noun

The participle normally presents the subject in the continuous uninterrupted exercise of an activity or the continuous exhibition of the action or condition denoted by the verb. This emphasis, however, does not always hold true (especially with regard to the substantival use of the participle and the relative use).

A. VERBAL USE [Waltke, § 37.6]

When it functions as a predicate, the active participle emphasizes durative, linear action (i.e., as action which is prolonged and uninterrupted). Occasionally the participle is used for actions which are in reality repeated or plural rather than durative. The participle is atemporal (not time-bound), dependent upon the context for its tense (whether past, present, or future).

1. **Past Time** - expresses durative, linear uninterrupted action in the past (sometimes repeated action as in 1 Kgs 3:2). In English, we could express this as a "past progressive" with a verb such as "was _____-ing" (e.g., *was playing*).

Gen 19:1 "And the two messengers entered Sodom in the evening while Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom."

סֹדֹם	בְּשַׁעַר-	יֹשֵׁב	וְלוֹט	...		[√ יֹשֵׁב = sit]
Sodom	in-gateway-of	sitting	and-Lot			
		Ptc-Vb	Subject			

2. **Present Time** - describes the subject in the continuous uninterrupted exercise of an activity (see Eccl. 1:4 for repeated action). In English, we could express this as a present progressive verb, such as "is _____-ing."

Gen 4:10 "The voice of your brother's blood is crying unto me."

אֵלַי	צֹעֲקִים	אָחִיךָ	דָּמֵי	קוֹל	...	[√ צֹעֵק = cry out]
to-me	ones-crying	brother-of-you	bloods-of	voice-of		
	Ptc-Vb		Subject			

3. **Future Time** - The participle may stress the continuous manifestation of the action in the future.

Gen 7:4 "For in seven days I will be sending rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights."

...	הָאָרֶץ	עַל-	מִמְטִיר	אֲנִי	...	[√ מֵטֵר = send rain]
	the-earth	on	sending-rain	I		
			Ptc-Vb	Subject		

4. **Futur Instans** - represents actions as occurring in the present which can in fact occur only after some interval. This use brings out the certainty of the event and stresses that it is imminent (or at least near at hand). In English, we could use a phrase such as "am about to"

Gen 6:17 "Behold I am bringing (am about to bring) the flood."

		Ptc-Vb		Subject	
	הַמַּבּוּל	מְבִיא	הַנִּי	וְאֲנִי	[√ בוא = bring (Hi)]
the-flood-of	***	bringing	now-I	and-I	

B. ADJECTIVAL USE [Waltke, § 37.4]

Participles can also modify other nouns or pronouns. When this occurs, the emphasis is no longer on the time or aspect (e.g., continuous durative activity) but rather on the character or quality of the noun modified. The adjectival use occurs with both active and passive participles (for the latter, see Deut 4:34, Gen 47:14, and Isa 17:2 as an example of each category).

1. **Attributive Adjectival Ptc.**

Deut 4:24 "Yahweh your God is a consuming fire."

Ptc-Adj	Noun				
אֹכֵלָה	אֵשׁ	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	יְהוָה		[√ אכל = eat, devour]
consuming	fire	God-of-you	Yahweh		

2. **Relative Use**

A participle with the article is often equivalent to an English relative clause [in some cases, there will be no article, e.g., Isa 42:5].

Gen 35:3 "To the God who answered me in the day of my distress."

			Ptc			
צָרָתִי	בְּיוֹם	אֲתִי	הָעֹנֶה	לְאֵל	...	[√ ענה = answer]
distress-of-me	in-day-of	me	the-one-answering	to-God		

3. **Predicate Adjectival Ptc.**

Deut 3:21 "Your eyes are the ones which saw all that he did."

				Ptc		
עָשָׂה	אֲשֶׁר	כָּל־	אֵת	הָרְאוּת	עֵינֶיךָ	[√ ראה = see]
he-did	that	all	***	the-ones-seeing	eyes-of-you	

C. SUBSTANTIVAL USE [Waltke, § 37.2]

Like any adjective, the participle may function as a noun. [One situation not covered here is the case when the participle may specify the state or condition of the subject or object of the verb. See page 31a under category “accusative of state”].

1. **Designating a class** - classes of persons, creatures, or things having distinct characteristics.

Amos 5:13 *"Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time."*

Verb		Ptc-Subst.	
יָדַם	הָיָא	בְּעַת	הַמְשָׁכִיל
he-keeps-quiet	the-this	in-the-time	the-man-being-prudent

[√ שָׁכַל = be prudent]

Note: The participle does not necessarily have to have the article (see, for example, Gen 3:5 - "knowers of good and evil" [יָדְעֵי טוֹב וְרָע]).

Note: This kind of participle can also be translated as a *relative clause*.

Deut 7:9 *"who keeps His covenant and love with those who love Him . . ."*

Prep & Ptc					
לְ	אֲהָבָיו	וְהַחֲסֵד	הַבְּרִית	שֹׁמֵר	[√ אָהַב = love]
to-ones-loving-him	and-the-love	the-covenant	keeping		

2. **Indefinite Subject** - supply "whoever"

Gen 9:6 *"Whoever sheds man's blood . . ."*

	Ptc		
הָאָדָם	יָם	שָׁפַךְ	[√ שָׁפַךְ = shed, pour]
the-man	blood-of	one-shedding	

Note: The "indefinite subject" can also occur on a participle with the article (e.g., Gen 26:11).

3. **Occupation** שֹׁפֵט = judge רֹעֵה = shepherd

Ruth 1:1 *"In the days when the judges were judging . . ."*

	Ptc			
הַשֹּׁפְטִים	שָׁפֵט	בְּיָמַי	וַיְהִי	
the-ones-judging	to-judge	in-days-of	and-he-was	

4. **Nominal Use** - the designation of a certain person under his character or one of his attributes (similar to "class" but with focus on an individual rather than a class or group). Note: this case occurs when there is no noun used in conjunction with the participle.

Example: *"the man who answered me"* ("man" is not a separate word but supplied from the participle)

Ezek 2:2 *". . . and I heard the one who was speaking to me."*

אֵלַי:	מְדַבֵּר	אֵת	וַאֲשַׁמְעֵ
to-me	one-speaking	***	and-I-heard