

THE WAW CONSECUTIVE IN NARRATIVE SEQUENCE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. In the previous sections, we dealt with waw-consecutive and waw-disjunctive. In this section, we shall take up the waw-consecutive which is more complex.¹ Waw-consecutive is only found on verbs, not nouns (in fact, not even with participles).

B. Review:

ו + non-verb	ו + verb
ו conjunctive	ו conjunctive
ו disjunctive	ו consecutive

C. Types of Sequential Action

Waw-consecutive may be used in two general types of sequence, those which involve narrative sequence and those which involve logical sequence. In both cases, the waw-consecutive is used to express sequential action. This section will focus on the waw-consecutive in narrative sequence.

II. PAST TENSE NARRATION: IMPERFECT + WAW-CONSECUTIVE [wci]

[R, § 18.2; GKC, pp 326-30; Waltke, § 33.1ff]

Note: Ross will call this the "preterite" with waw-consecutive, since he argues that this is not really the *imperfect* tense at all but a separate tense which he labels the *preterite*.² He may have a good point, but this is not the terminology commonly used by others (e.g., *Old Testament Parsing Guide* by Beall). Beall will use the abbreviation "wci."

A. Identity

An "imperfect with waw-consecutive" (Ross = preterite) will almost always be identified by the presence of ו on the front of a verb whose appearance is the same as the imperfect.

¹The use of the waw in the waw-consecutive is sometimes called the "strong" or "energetic" waw.

²Some older grammarians would call this the "waw-conversive," but that is certainly an inaccurate designation.

1. Example: וַיִּקְרָא = "And he called" [√ = קרא]

Note: By form, this appears to be an imperfect verb, but it is not. With the waw-consecutive it is different altogether.

2. Exceptions:

- a. Be alert for 1-c-sg with initial *aleph* (א). The *aleph* cannot double, so the vowel *lengthens* to *qāmeṣ*. But this is still "imperfect with waw-consecutive."

Example: וַאֲכָחַב [√ = כתב]

- b. The daghesh may be omitted if that letter is pointed with a shewa.

Example: Gen 2:2

וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
and-he-finished God the-seventh by-the-day

Note: This is very common with the verb הָיָה (to be).
The Qal Impf 3-m-s with waw-cons. = וַיְהִי

B. The Form of Past Tense Narration

1. Normal Form: A perfect verb followed by an "imperfect with waw-consecutive."

Ex: וַיִּדְרֹשׁ וַיֵּרָא
waw-con. Perf.
and-he-sought the-man he-arose

Point: There usually will be intervening words between the two verbs!

2. Exceptions:

- a. An "imperfect with waw-consec." does not have to be preceded by a perfect verb. Sometimes a narrative will simply open with an "imperfect with waw-consec." without any preceding perfect.

Lev 1:1 וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיִּנָּבֵר יְהוָה אֵלָיו
to-him Yahweh and-he-spoke Moses to and-he-called

- b. Although the "impf with waw-consec" is almost always characterized by וַיְ, it is possible that the waw may drop. This is extremely rare, and seems to be limited to poetic literature. Ex: Ps 8:6-7

- c. It is quite common to see a string of "imperfects with waw consecutive."

2 Kgs 16:9

וַיַּעַל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר אֶל-דָּמָשֶׁק וַיִּחַפְּשֶׁה וַיִּגְלֶה
and-he-deported-her and-he-captured-her Damascus against Assyria king-of and-he-attacked

"And the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and he captured her and deported her."

- d. If the pattern is interrupted (e.g., by לֹא), the sequence is broken and the verb reverts back to the normal perfect.

Perf	waw-disj	Impf with waw-consec	Perf
שָׁבַח	וְלֹא	וַיִּלְכֹּד	וַיֵּלֶךְ
he-rested	but-not	he-captured	he-went

Trans: "He went and captured it, but did not rest."

[see Gen 1:5 for another example]

C. Translation

The *imperfect with waw-consecutive* will normally be translated like the perfect tense. When we do "syntactical classification," you will classify these verbs according to the categories for the perfect.

1. A literal translation is not always demanded between waw consecutives. You may reflect subordinating constructions as long as you preserve the proper logical or temporal sequence.

Ex: Gen 28:8-9 "When he realized . . . then he went"

2. The temporal indicator וַיֵּן appearing before an "imperf with waw-consec" will usually demand a special translation. In this case, the first waw is translated "and" but the וַיֵּן verb is not translated. Then, the waw of the "waw-consec" is left untranslated (cf. Gen 22:1). This will be covered more thoroughly under "Clauses - The Hebrew Waw."

Ex: Gen 4:3

3. The "imperfect with waw-consec" preceded by an interrogative sentence may utilize the word "that" in translation.

Ex: Isa 51:12

4. On some occasions, the "imperf with waw-consec" will not be translated as a past tense. Notice the following illustrations (cf. *GKC*, p 329).

- a. The "imperf with waw-consec" preceded by a participle may be translated by the present tense.

Ex: 2 Sam 19:2 "Behold, the king is weeping, and he mourns for Absalom."

Ptc

הִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ בֹּכֶה וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל-אַבְשָׁלוֹם
Absalom for and-he-mourns weeping the-king see!

- b. The "imperf with waw-consec" preceded by an imperfect verb may be translated as future tense [rare; remember, this is an example from poetic literature].

Ex: Ps 49:15

D. Parsing:

Example: וַיִּרְשׁ = Qal Impf 3-m-sg of רָשָׁה with waw-consec.

E. Reminders

1. If the verb having the imperfect form is prefixed with ׀, this is not an "imperfect with waw-consecutive."
2. If this verb is preceded by another imperfect verb, the waw is waw-conjunctive.
3. If this verb is preceded by a volitive (impv, jussive, or cohort), then the waw is probably a waw-consecutive introducing a purpose or result clause (more on this under clauses).

III. FUTURE TENSE NARRATION: PERFECT + WAW-CONSECUTIVE [wcp]

[R, § 18.3; *GKC*, pp 330-39; Waltke, § 32.1ff]

A. Explanation

A verb that is *Perfect* by form may have the force of an imperfect.

B. Identity

In this case, the waw has no special identity. The pointing may vary, and this will look like a simple conjunction.

C. Form of Future Tense Narration

1. Normal: An *imperfect* verb will be followed by a *perfect* verb with waw-consecutive.

2. Example:

		Perf + waw-cons		imperf.
אֶת־כֶּסֶף	לוֹ	וְנָתַן	אֵתוֹ	יִמְצָא
the-money ***	to-him	and-he-will-give	him	he-will-find

Trans: "He will find him and give him the money."

Note: By form, וְנָתַן could just as well be a "perfect" with waw-conjunctive. But the context clarifies that it is not, since it is preceded by the imperfect verb.

D. Exceptions

There will be times when the preceding imperfect verb is missing. But the context may still justify that this be understood as a waw-consecutive. This will be true if a "future-time" context can be established.

1. This is often true with the case of the future time indicator וְהָיָה [cf. "Clauses - The Hebrew Waw"]

Ex: Exodus 22:26

וְהָיָה	כִּי־	יִצְעַק	אֵלַי	וְשָׁמַעְתִּי . . .
and-he-will-be	when	he-cries	to-me	then-I-will-hear

"When he cries to Me, I will hear . . ."

2. Preceded by a non-verbal clause

Ex #1: → Ptc + ו + Perf Vb →

אֲנִי	נָתַן	לָךְ	אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף	וְלָקַחְתָּ	אֵתוֹ
I	giving	to-you	the-money ***	and-you-will-take	him

"I shall give you the money and you will take it"

Ex #2: Nominal Clause + ו + Perf Vb

הוּא	אִישׁ	טוֹב	וַעֲשֶׂה	חֶסֶד	עִמָּכֶם
he	man	good	and-he-did	kindness	with-you

"He is a good man, and will deal properly with you."

3. Very rarely, the perfect with waw-consecutive may be preceded by a perfect verb. The example is from poetic literature. In the context, some temporal/logical sequence is implied.

Ex: Ps 22:6

E. Translation

The "perfect with waw-consecutive" will be translated as an *imperfect verb*. When we do syntactical classification, you will classify according to the categories of the imperfect.

F. Parsing

Perfect with waw-consecutive (not simply a "perfect").
[Note: Beall will indicate these by "wcp."]

Ex: וַיֵּתֶן

Qal Perf 3-m-sg of יָתַן with waw-consecutive

G. Notes

There are cases when we will see a chain of "perfect with waw-consecutives" following an imperfect verb.

Ex: Gen 15:13 → Impf + וַ-Perf. + וַ-Perf. →