

Ross Lesson 18: Past and Non-Past Sequences LECTURE NOTES

1. Past-time Narrative “Tense”: WCI (Ross 18.1 & 18.2)

A. Many languages have a special literary “tense” form that is used strictly for narrating past-time events (for ex., French has the *passé simple*). Hebrew likewise has a form that is used as the “backbone” of narrative to push forward the sequence of narrated events in a story-line. Explanations of this form have led to its being labelled in a variety of ways:

wci = waw-consecutive imperfect

pret + wc = preterite plus waw-consecutive

wayyiqtol (basing the name on the old paradigm verb קָטַל ‘to kill’: וַיִּקְטֹּל)

waw-conversive impf

B. Forms of the WCI (compared to the Qal Imperfect):

| PG# | Qal wci | Eng. Gloss | PG# | Qal Impf | Eng. Gloss |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----|---------------|--------------------|
| 3ms | וַיִּפְקֹד | he appointed | 3ms | יִפְקֹד | he will appoint |
| 3fs | וַתִּפְקֹד | she appointed | 3fs | תִּפְקֹד | she will appoint |
| 2ms | וַתִּפְקֹד | you appointed | 2ms | תִּפְקֹד | you will appoint |
| 2fs | וַתִּפְקְדִי | you appointed | 2fs | תִּפְקְדִי | you will appoint |
| 1cs | וָאֶפְקֹד | I appointed | 1cs | אֶפְקֹד | I will appoint |
| 3mp | וַיִּפְקְדוּ | they appointed | 3mp | יִפְקְדוּ | they will appoint |
| 3fp | וַתִּפְקְדְּנָה | they appointed | 3fp | תִּפְקְדְּנָה | they will appoint |
| 2mp | וַתִּפְקְדוּ | y'all appointed | 2mp | תִּפְקְדוּ | y'all will appoint |
| 2fp | וַתִּפְקְדְּנָה | y'all appointed | 2fp | תִּפְקְדְּנָה | y'all will appoint |
| 1cp | וְנִפְקֹד | we appointed | 1cp | נִפְקֹד | we will appoint |

C. Distinctive features of the WCI form:

1. Built off of the prefix conjugation pattern (so you see all the NUTTY prefixes! נתיא).

Note: This prefix conjugation appears to be an old Hebrew preterite tense (used for past time) that *happens to be identical in form to the imperfect*. Later you'll see the few places where the wci and the impf forms actually differ. For now, expect them to be the same.

2. *Special* Prefixed WAW before the NUTTY prefixes: *waw-patach-DF*.

Note: The normal pointing of the conjunction *waw* is with the VS: ן. So the vowel *patach* (י) should look unusual! The DF goes inside the NUTTY prefix consonant; however, since the 1cs ׀ is a Gutt, it rejects the DF, and the preceding *patach* compensatorily lengthens to *qamets*.

3. Always, always, always translate with past-tense time value!

שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֹתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר בְּרִיתוֹ:
WCI PFT

YHWH heard them, and *He remembered* his covenant.

4. If the sequence of events in WCI forms is broken (by either an aside, background information, or a statement of what did not happen), then the new clause will begin with conjunction *waw* attached to a non-verb, and when the story-line event sequence is resumed, the WCI form is used again.

הָלַךְ וַיִּלְכֹּד אֹתָהּ וְלֹא שָׁבַת וַיִּשְׁמַע:
WCI PFT WCI PFT

He went, and he captured it, *and he did not rest*, and he listened.

2. Non-Past/Future Sequences: WCP (Ross 18.3)

A. In genres other than historical, past-time narrative, the writer/speaker may want to express a series of events that are future in timeframe, such as in predictive prophetic texts, or instructional material: “You will go to the city, and you will find a mule, and you will purchase it. . . .” To express this series in Hebrew, the simple Perfect conjugation form is used with a simple, conjunction *waw* prefixed with normal pointing (VS). Usually the Imperfect form is used to initiate the non-past sequence, and the series of events is continued via WCP forms (*waw-consecutive perfect*).

יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֹתָם וְזָכַר בְּרִיתוֹ:
WCP IMPF

YHWH will hear them, and *He will remember* his covenant.

יִשְׂרְפוּ אֶת־הָעִיר וְלָכְדוּ אֶת־הָעָם:
WCP IMPF

They will burn the city and *will capture* the people.

Note that as with the WCI forms above, there are a variety of ways that grammarians label this form functioning in this way:

wcp = waw-consecutive perfect

perfect + wc = perfect plus waw-consecutive

weqatal (using the old paradigm verb 'to kill': וְקָטַל)

waw-conversive pft

B. Forms of the WCP (compared to the Qal Perfect):

| PG# | Qal wcp | Eng. Gloss | PG# | Qal Pft | Eng. Gloss |
|-----|--------------|--------------------|-----|-------------|-----------------|
| 3ms | וּפָקַד | he will appoint | 3ms | פָּקַד | he appointed |
| 3fs | וּפָקְדָהּ | she will appoint | 3fs | פָּקְדָהּ | she appointed |
| 2ms | וּפָקַדְתָּ | you will appoint | 2ms | פָּקַדְתָּ | you appointed |
| 2fs | וּפָקַדְתְּ | you will appoint | 2fs | פָּקַדְתְּ | you appointed |
| 1cs | וּפָקַדְתִּי | I will appoint | 1cs | פָּקַדְתִּי | I appointed |
| 3mp | וּפָקְדוּ | they will appoint | 3cp | פָּקְדוּ | they appointed |
| 2mp | וּפָקַדְתֶּם | y'all will appoint | 2mp | פָּקַדְתֶּם | y'all appointed |
| 2fp | וּפָקַדְתֶּן | y'all will appoint | 2fp | פָּקַדְתֶּן | y'all appointed |
| 1cp | וּפָקְדְנוּ | we will appoint | 1cp | פָּקְדְנוּ | we appointed |

C. Distinctive features of the WCP form:

1. Built off of the suffix conjugation pattern (the perfect conjugation); there are NO NUTTY prefixes! The *waw* is prefixed to R-1 of the verb, not to an “impf prefix.”

2. The *waw* does not have a *patach-DF*; it looks like a *normal, simple conjunction waw*.

Note: The conjunction *waw* is normally pointed with VS (remember, *waw comes standard with VS*). However, when *waw* is prefixed before a consonant with a VS under it, or prefixed to a “bump” letter (פ/מ/ב, the bilabials), ו becomes ו (as in the paradigm above, since the פ of פָּקַד is a “bump” letter).

3. Sometimes the stress will move back toward the final syllable on some of the perfect consonantal personal endings (when normally the stress lies on the theme vowel); when this happens, you can be certain that the form is a WCP form instead of a simple PFT with a normal conjunction *waw*. If the stress stays where it normally goes in the perfect conjugation, then it is ambiguous, and you must consider the context.

וּפָקַדְתִּי ‘and I appointed’ פָּקַד Qal pft 1cs + conj. *waw*

וּפָקַדְתִּי ‘and I will appoint’ פָּקַד Qal wcp 1cs

4. Translation value of the WCP will mirror the beginning IMPF. See Deut 6:4–5 in Ross, p. 139.

3. הָיָה ‘to be’ + WCI/WCP (Ross 18.4)

1. WCI = הָיָה = past time

| | |
|----------|-------------------|
| _____ וְ | _____ הָיָה |
| WCI | PP (TEMPORAL) WCI |

וְהָיָה בִּבְקָר וַיִּשְׁמַר....

(And) In the morning, he kept....

2. WCP = וְהָיָה = non-past/future time

_____ וְהָיָה
 WCP PP (TEMPORAL) WCP

וְהָיָה בִּבְקֹר וְשָׁמַר....

(And) In the morning, he will keep....