

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’: לִקְטָל)

waw-conversive impf

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

PG#	Qal wci	Eng. Gloss	PG#	Qal Impf	Eng. Gloss
3ms	וַיִּפְקַד	he appointed	3ms	יִפְקַד	he will appoint
3fs	וַתִּפְקַד	she appointed	3fs	תִּפְקַד	she will appoint
2ms	וַתִּפְקַד	you appointed	2ms	תִּפְקַד	you will appoint
2fs	וַתִּפְקַדְּךָ	you appointed	2fs	תִּפְקַדְּךָ	you will appoint
1cs	וְאֶפְקַדְּךָ	I appointed	1cs	אֶפְקַדְּךָ	I will appoint
3mp	וַיִּפְקַדּוּ	they appointed	3mp	יִפְקַדּוּ	they will appoint
3fp	וַתִּפְקַדּנָה	they appointed	3fp	תִּפְקַדּנָה	they will appoint
2mp	וַתִּפְקַדּוּ	y'all appointed	2mp	תִּפְקַדּוּ	y'all will appoint
2fp	וַתִּפְקַדּנָה	y'all appointed	2fp	תִּפְקַדּנָה	y'all will appoint
1cp	וְנִפְקַדְּךָ	we appointed	1cp	נִפְקַדְּךָ	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!).

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-pattach-DF*.

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

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

שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶתְּם וַיִּזְכַּר בְּרִיתְּךָ:
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 וַיַּלְכֵד אֶתְּהָ 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).

ישְׁמַע יְהוָה אַתֶּם וַיִּזְכֵּר בְּרִיתְכֶּם:

WCP

IMPF

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

ישְׁרַפּוּ אֶת-הָעִיר וַיְלַכְּדוּ 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 קָטַל '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	וְפִקַּד	he will appoint	3ms	פִּקְדָּה	he appointed
3fs	וְפִקְדָּה	she will appoint	3fs	פִּקְדָּה	she appointed
2ms	וְפִקְדָּתָךְ	you will appoint	2ms	פִּקְדָּתָךְ	you appointed
2fs	וְפִקְדָּתָךְ	you will appoint	2fs	פִּקְדָּתָךְ	you appointed
1cs	וְפִקְדָּתִי	I will appoint	1cs	פִּקְדָּתִי	I appointed
3mp	וְפִקְדָּו	they will appoint	3cp	פִּקְדָּה	they appointed
2mp	וְפִקְדָּתָם	y'all will appoint	2mp	פִּקְדָּתָם	y'all appointed
2fp	וְפִקְדָּתָנוּ	y'all will appoint	2fp	פִּקְדָּתָנוּ	y'all appointed
1cp	וְפִקְדָּתָנוּ	we will appoint	1cp	פִּקְדָּתָנוּ	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 “im pf 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/ב/מ, the bilabials), ה becomes ה (as in the paradigm above, since the פ of פקָד 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.

וַיַּקְרֹדָתִי ‘and I appointed’ פקָד Qal pft 1cs + conj. *waw*

וַיַּקְרֹדָתִי ‘and I will appoint’ פקָד Qal wcp 1cs

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

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

1. WCI = **וַיְהִי** = past time

וַיְהִי
_____ .
WCI PP (TEMPORAL) WCI

וַיְהִי בַּבָּקָר וַיִּשְׁמַר....

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

2. WCP = **וְהִיא** = non-past/future time

וְ וְ
WCP PP (TEMPORAL) WCP

וְהִיא בָּבָקָר וְשָׁמַר....

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