

## Chapter Eleven

### Qal Perfect Strong Verbs

#### Vocabulary

אָד	only, surely	חֹזַק	to be strong
אַל	no, not	יָדַע	to know
אִם	if, then	כָּבֵד	to be heavy
בּוֹא	to go in	כָּתַב	to write
בָּנָה	to build	לֹא	no, not
בֵּרַךְ	to bless	לָקַח	to take
גָּנַב	to steal	מָלֵא	to be full, fulfill
זָכַר	to remember	עָמַד	to stand
זָקֵן	to be old	שָׁבַת	Sabbath, rest
חָיָה	to live	שָׁבַת	to cease, rest

#### Qal Perfect

The Qal perfect is the simplest verb form and is the form listed in the lexicon.<sup>1</sup> The word Qal (קָלֵל) means “he (it) was light” i.e., “not heavy” and designates the simple active verb stem.<sup>2</sup>

The Qal perfect 3<sup>rd</sup> masc. sg., normally contains three consonants with two vowels. The first syllable is open and always has Qamets as its vowel. The accent falls on the second syllable and is closed except when ending with א or ה. When closed, it has Patach as its vowel. When open, the syllable is lengthened to Qamets.

Qal Perfect			
Closed Syllable		Open Syllable	
אָכַל	He ate	הָיָה	He was
אָמַר	He said	הָשָׂא	He lifted up
יָשַׁב	He sat	עָשָׂה	He did, made

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Qal Perfect 3 masculine singular is the lexical form.

<sup>2</sup> Page Kelley, p. 80

## Qal Perfect Inflection

The Qal Perfect inflection for strong verbs has the following suffix forms:

Qal Perfect Suffixes					
Singular			Plural		
3ms	none	he	3cp	וְ	they
3fs	הָ	she			
2ms	תְּ	you	2mp	תֶּם	you
2fs	תְּ	you	2fp	תֵּן	you
1cs <sup>3</sup>	תִּי	I	1cp	נוּ	we

To form the Qal perfect word, first identify the root (it is the Qal perfect, 3ms), then add the pronominal suffix ending. The various inflections for the verb שָׁמַר “he kept” is given below.

שָׁמַר “to keep”					
3ms	שָׁמַר	he kept	3cp	שָׁמְרוּ	they kept
3fs	שָׁמְרָה	she kept			
2ms	שָׁמַרְתָּ	you kept	2mp	שָׁמַרְתֶּם	you kept
2fs	שָׁמַרְתְּ	you kept	2fp	שָׁמַרְתֵּן	you kept
1cs	שָׁמַרְתִּי	I kept	1cp	שָׁמַרְנוּ	we kept

The same perfect suffixes are used for all stems of all verbs, both strong and weak. Memorize these inflections will go a long way to mastering Hebrew verbs.

## Qal Perfect Usage

The Qal perfect inflection expresses the kind of action as completed or a state of being. There are various ways the Hebrew perfect may be translated. Context must be examined to determine the kind of action or the state of being represented by the verb.

1. *Simple past tense.* The perfect can be translated as simple action completed in past time. For example בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים “In the beginning God *created*.” (Gen. 1:1)
2. *Past perfect.* The perfect can be translated as action completed prior to a point of reference in past time known as the English past perfect “he had ...”. An example is פָּקַד אֶת-שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר “And the LORD *visited* Sarah as *he had said*.” (Gen. 21:1)
3. *Present tense.* The perfect can be translated as a present tense when the verb is one of perception, attitude, disposition, or a mental or physical state of being. For example, לֹא יָדְעוּ “And the way of peace *they do not know*.” (Isa. 59:8)

<sup>3</sup> “c” indicates “common,” meaning both masculine & feminine

4. *Future tense*. The perfect can be translated as a future when prefixed with the vav conjunction. For example **וַשְׁכַּבְתִּי עִם-אֲבוֹתַי** “And *I will lie down* with my ancestors.” (Gen. 47:30)
5. *Prophetic perfect*. In prophecy one finds when the Lord speaks about things He will do in the future, He speaks in the perfect tense. An example is, **וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵין זַרְעֶךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ לְדוֹרָתָם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם** “**I will establish** My covenant between Me and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant.” (Gen. 17:7a)

### Vocalization Changes

There are several changes that take place when adding the perfect suffixes. Starting from the Qal perfect third masculine singular form the rules for adding the perfect suffixes are as follows:

1. *Two categories of suffixes*. There are two categories, those that begin with a vowel and those that begin with a consonant.
  - a. If the suffix is vocalic (a vowel, i.e., the suffixes הַ or יֵ) and is preceded by an unchangeably long vowel (Qamets He (הַ), Tsere Yod (יֵ), Seghol Yod (יִ), Hireq Yod (יְ), Holem Waw (וֹ), Shureq (וִ)), the nearest preceding vowel is reduced to a vocal sheva. If a long vowel stands immediately before the vocal sheva, the long vowel must be marked with a secondary accent called a metag. Dr. Kelley summarizes this process, “when the vocalic suffix הַ is added to שָׁמַר , ‘he kept,’ the resultant form is שָׁמְרָה . Since ר has been pulled away from the preceding syllable to begin a new syllable, the preceding syllable has changed from a closed syllable (מַר) to an open syllable (מֶ). Since the accent is on the new syllable (רָה), the vowel in the nearest preceding open syllable (מֶ) must volatilize (מֶ becomes מְ). And since the vowel immediately preceding the vocal sheva is long, it must receive a meteg. The resultant form for Qal perfect, third feminine singular is שָׁמְרָה , ‘she kept.’ By the same process the resultant form for Qal perfect, third common plural is שָׁמְרוּ , ‘they kept.’”<sup>4</sup>
  - b. Suffixes that begin with a consonant must have a silent sheva placed under the third consonant. The silent shava functions as a syllable divider. For example, when the consonantal suffix תָּ (2 ms) is added to שָׁמַר , it becomes שָׁמְרָתָּ.
2. *Verbs ending with ת*. When the verbal root ending is ת and the suffix also begins with a ת, the consonant ת is doubled using the Daghesh Forte (תֵּ). For example **כָּרַת** changes to **כָּרַתְתָּ** “you cut” (2ms).
3. *Verbs ending with נ*. When the verbal root ending is נ and the suffix also begins with a נ, the consonant ending with נ is doubled using the Daghesh Forte (נֵּ). For example, **שָׁכַן** changes to **שָׁכַנּוּ** “we dwell” (1cp). Drs. Pratico & Van Pelt also point out another important doubling when the verbal root ending is a nun (נ), and the sufformatives begin with ת (i.e., נַת, ת is doubled (תֵּ). For example, the 1cs form of the verb **נָתַן** “to give” is **נָתַתִּי**. “The final of the verbal root has assimilated into the of the sufformative and its presence is represented by the Daghesh Forte.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Page Kelley, p. 84

<sup>5</sup> Gary Pratico, Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), p. 142

## Practice

I. Memorize the vocabulary.

II. Parse the following perfect verbs (e.g. Qal Perf. 1cs)

1. הִיָּתָה
2. יָדַעְתִּי
3. זָכַרְתִּי
4. מָלְאָה
5. יָדַעְנוּ
6. זָכַרְתִּי
7. כָּתַבְתֶּם
8. עִמְדָתִי
9. שָׁבְתוּ

III. Translate the following:

1. (Deut. 8:6) וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִלְכֹת (go) בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְיִרְאָה (fear) אֹתוֹ
2. (Gen. 34:28) וְאֶת־אִשְׁרָךְ בְּשֹׁדֵךְ לִקְחוּ
3. (Zech. 8:23) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּיָמֵים הַהֵמָּה אֲשֶׁר יִחְזִיקוּ (be strong)
4. (Ps. 78:10) לֹא שָׁמְרוּ בְרִית אֱלֹהִים וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ מָאֲנוּ (they refused) לִלְכֹת (to go)
5. (Gen. 4:1) וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר (she conceived) וַתֵּלֶד (I bear) אֶת־קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי (I buy) אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה

