Chapter Thirteen

Qal Imperative & Pronominal Suffixes of Strong Verbs

Vocabulary

אָחַז	to seize	לָבַשׁ	to put on, clothe
בָּחַר	to choose	נָגַע	to touch, reach
בָּטַח	to trust	נוּס	to flee
בִּין	to understand	סָבַב	to turn around, surround
בָּכָה	to weep	סָפַר	to write, number
דָּרַשׁ	to seek	קָדַשׁ	to be holy
חָפֵץ	to please, delight	רָעָה	to feed, graze, tend flocks
הָרַג	to kill	שָׂמַח	to rejoice
טָמֵא	to be unclean	שָׁלֵם	to be whole, complete
יָצַר	to form, shape, fashion	שָׂרַף	to burn

Qal Imperative

The word imperative comes from the Latin *impĕrāre,* meaning, "to impose, to command." The Hebrew Qal imperative only occurs in the second person singular and plural and expresses a command, wish, or desire.

Imperative Tense Inflection
The imperative conjugation is derived from a shortened form of the imperfect. The shortening drops the performative (consonant and vowel) from the imperfect form. However, according to the rule of the *sheva*: two vocal *shevas* can never stand together at the beginning of a word, the first *sheva* is changed to a *hireq* (see 2fs & 2mp).

Qal Imperative Inflection					
Singular			**Plural**		
2ms		you	2mp	◻◻◻וּ	you
2fs	◻◻◻י	you	2fp	◻◻◻נָה	you

שָׁמַר "he kept"					
	Imperfect			**Imperative**	
2ms	תִּשְׁמֹר		→	שְׁמֹר	(you) keep!
2fs	תִּשְׁמְרִי	שִׁמְרִי	→	שִׁמְרִי	(you) keep!
2mp	תִּשְׁמְרוּ	שִׁמְרוּ	→	שִׁמְרוּ	(you) keep!
2fp	תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה		→	שְׁמֹרְנָה	(you) keep!

Qal Imperative Usage

The Qal imperative inflection expresses a direct command, wish or desire, where immediate action is expected. However, as Dr. Ross clairfies, "the imperative may express advice, counsel, invitation, or request (as in prayers)."[1] When translating the imperative one can include the second person pronoun (you) or leave it off. For example: שְׁמֹר is translated "observe!" or "you observe!" The Qal imperative is the most frequent volitional conjugation in the Hebrew Bible occurring 2,896 times, and 68% of all imperatives![2]

1. *Negation of the Imperative.* Hebrew does not negate an imperative form. Negation occurs in the jussive and cohortive only.
2. *Entreaty.* The imperative is used to express entreaty when attached with the particle of entreaty (נָא) and translated "I pray," or "please." An example is:
   שִׁפְטוּ-נָא בֵּינִי וּבֵין כַּרְמִי   "**Judge, I pray**, between me and my vineyard! (Isaiah 5:3)
3. *Imperatives with הָ suffix.* At times the suffix הָ is attached to the imperative. The use of the attached suffix makes the imperative more emphatic. For example:
   קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שָׁפְטָה הָאָרֶץ   "**Riseup** O God, **judge** the earth!" (Ps. 82:8)

Pronominal Suffixes with Verbs

A pronominal suffix can be placed on verbs. In the case where the pronominal suffix is placed on the verb it serves as the object. The form of the pronominal suffix is as follows:

	Suffix	Alternate	Objective		Suffix	Alternate	Objective

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[1] Allen Ross, *Introducing Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), p. 150
[2] Gary Pratico & Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), p. 206

		Suffix	**Translation**			**Suffix**	**Translation**
1 cs	יָ	נִי	me	1 cp	נוּ		us
2 ms[3]	ךָ		you	2 mp	כֶם		you
2 fs[4]	ךְ		you	2 fp	כֶן		you
3 ms	וֹ	הוּ	him	3 mp	הֶם	ם	them
3 fs	הָ	הָ	her	3 fp	הֶן	ן	them

Spelling changes as a result of the addition of the pronominal suffix

Changes in spelling depends on whether the suffix is placed next to a consonant or a vowel. The following list is a partial list of changes that take place with both the verb and the pronominal suffix. The changes that occur are too numerious for the beginning student. The beginning student should memorize the final form.

		A. To form ending in a vowel	B. To form in the Perf. ending in a consnant	C.[5] To form in the Impf. ending in a consonant	
Sing.	1c	נִי	נִי (in pause נִי)	נִי	me
	2m	ךָ	ךָ (in pause ךָ or ךְ)	ךָ (in pause ךָ or ךְ)	you
	2f	ךְ	ךְ , ךֵ	ךְ	you
	3m	וֹ , הוּ	וֹ , הוּ	הוּ	him
	3f	הָ	הָ	הָ	her
Plur.	1c	נוּ	נוּ	נוּ	us
	2m	כֶם	כֶם	כֶם	you
	2f				
	3m	ם , הֶם	ם (from הֶם), ם	ם (from הֶם)	them
	poet.	מוֹ	מוֹ	מוֹ	them
	3f	ן	ן , ן		them

Pronominal Suffixes added to שָׁמְרוּ "they kept"							
	Suffix	שָׁמְרוּ	Objective Translation		Suffix	שָׁמְרוּ	Objective Translation
1 cs	יָ	שְׁמָרוּנִי	They kept me	1 cp	נוּ	שְׁמָרוּנוּ	They kept us
2 ms	ךָ	שְׁמָרוּךָ	They kept you	2 mp	כֶם	שְׁמָרוּכֶם	They kept you
2 fs	ךְ	שְׁמָרוּךְ	They kept you	2 fp	כֶן	שְׁמָרוּכֶן	They kept you
3 ms	וֹ	שְׁמָרוּהוּ	They kept him	3 mp	הֶם	שְׁמָרוּם	They kept them
3 fs	הָ	שְׁמָרוּהָ	They kept her	3 fp	הֶן	שְׁמָרוּן	They kept them

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[3] Final kaf ך will have its final qamets (ָ) placed inside the letter and looks like ךָ .
[4] Final kaf ך is written with a silent sheva (ְ) when it lacks a vowel and looks like ךְ.
[5] Table adapted from Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar

Practice
I. Memorize the vocabulary.
II. Memorize the Qal Imperative form
III. Translate the following:
1. שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד (Deut. 6:4)
2. לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא־לִי אֱלֹהִים (Ps. 51:12)
3. שָׁפְטֵנִי יְהוָה (Ps. 7:9)
4. יְהוָה זָכְרֵנִי וּפָקְדֵנִי (Jer. 15:15)