Chapter Fourteen

Qal Infinitive Strong Verbs

Vocabulary

אָבַד	to perish	כָּלָה	to complete, finish
אָסַף	to gather	מָאַס	to reject, despise
בָּרַח	to flee	מָכַר	to sell
חָדַל	to cease	נָטָה	to stretch out, extend
חָטָא	to sin	פַּר	young bull (m)
יָלַד	to beget	רֹב	multitude
יָסַף	to add	רוּם	to be high, exalted
יָרַד	to go down	רָפָא	to heal
יָרַשׁ	to possess, subdue	שָׂנֵא	to hate
כּוּן	to be fixed, firm, establish	שָׁתָה	to drink

Qal Infinitive

Infinitives are "infinite" in the sense that they express the basic idea of the verbial root without the limitations of person, number, and gender. Indeed, infinitives do not possess person, gender or number. Perfect, imperfect, and imperative verbs on the other hand, are limited to a specific person, gender, and number. For this reason they are known as "finite" verbs.[1]

Hebrew has two infinitive forms: the infinitive construct and the infinitive absolute. Infinitives are verbal nouns and as such they may function verbally as for example בּוֹא has the basic verbal meaning "to go." Likewise, as a noun, the infinitive may function as a gerund as for example, "going." In the gerundial usage, the infinitive absolute sometimes is modified with prepositional prefixes and pronominial suffixes.

Qal Infinitive Form

The Qal infinitive form is simple in that only one form needs to be memorized. The infinitive is not inflected for person, gender or number. The complication comes in that the Qal infinitive construct has the same form as the Qal imperative 2ms. Context must be used to translate.

Qal Infinitive Strong Verb

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[1] Kelly, p. 179

	Qal Perfect	Infinitive pointing		Qal Infinitive	
Construct	שָׁמַר	◌ְ◌ֹ◌	→	שְׁמֹר	**"to keep"**
Absolute		◌ָ◌וֹ◌	→	שָׁמוֹר	

Qal Infinitive Construct

The infinitive construct can function is the following ways.

1. *Normal infinitive*. The infinitive construct can function much like the English infinitive. For example,

   לֹא־טוֹב הֱיוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ "It is not good for man **to be** alone." (Gen. 2:18)

2. *With a prepositional prefix*. The infinitive construct is often used with an attached prepositional prefix. The most frequent preposition is לְ , though, בְּ , and כְּ are also common.

   a. *Lemed prefix* . When the infinitive construct is prefixed with לְ the meaning is to introduce a purpose, result, or temporal clause. This is by far the most frequently used form. An example is

   וְעֵת לִדְרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה "And it is time **to seek** the LORD" (Hos. 10:12)

   b. *Bet prefix*. When the infinitive construct is prefixed with בְּ the meaning is to introduce a temporal (when an action took place), causal (why an action took place) clause. An example is

   וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בִּירִיחוֹ "**while/when** Joshua **was** in Jericho" (Josh. 5:13)

   c. *Kef prefix*. When the infinitive construct is prefixed with כְּ the meaning is to introduce a temporal clause and translated with "when, as, just as." An example is

   וְהָיָה כִּשְׁכַב אֲדֹנִי־הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו "**when** my lord the king **lies down** with his ancestors" (1 Kings 1:21)

   d. *Prefixed with מִן*. The infinitive construct is prefixed with the preposition מִן after verbs of withholding, restraining, or refusing to grant privilege. It may also be used to express a comparative, or simply mean "from." An example is

   גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנִי מִנְּשֹׂא "My punishment [is] **too** great **to bear**." (Gen. 4:13).

3. *With a pronominal suffix*. When the infinitive construct is used with a pronominal suffix, the suffix is either the subject (קָטְלוֹ "his killing") or the object (קָטְלוֹ "kill him") of the infinitive.

   a. *As a subject*. For example,

   בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת־צִיּוֹן "**when we remember** Zion" (Ps. 137:1)

   b. *As an object*. For example

   מֶלֶךְ לְשָׁפְטֵנוּ כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם "a king **to rule us**, like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5)

4. *With a negative*. The infinitive construct is not negated using לֹא or אַל. To negate the infinitive construct, Hebrew uses בִּלְתִּי "not, in order not," or לְבִלְתִּי "so as not, in order not." An example is

   הִפְגִּעוּ בַמֶּלֶךְ לְבִלְתִּי שְׂרֹף אֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה "implore the king **not to burn** the scroll" (Jer. 36:25)

Qal Infinitive Absolute

Infinitive absolutes are never augmented with a prepositional prefix or pronominal suffix. As such, the infinitive absolute primarily functions adverbally (though other usages may be identified).

1. *Gerund*. The infinitive absolute can be used as an "-ing" word. For example, אָכֹל בָּשָׂר וְשָׁתוֹת יַיִן "**eating** meat and **drinking** wine" (Isa. 22:13)

2. *Emphatic*. The infinitive absolute can be used to emphasize the verbal meaning when placed *before* the verb, thus stressing and intensifying the verb. For example, זָכֹר תִּזְכֹּר אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ "**You shall** *surely* **remember** what the LORD your God did." (Deut. 7:19)

3. *Emphatic of duration*. The infinitive absolute can be used to emphasize the duration or continuation of the verbal meaning when placed *after* the verb. For example, שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמוֹעַ וְאַל־תָּבִינוּ וּרְאוּ רָאוֹ וְאַל־תֵּדָעוּ "**Keep on hearing**, but do not understand; **keep on seeing**, but do not perceive." (Isa. 6:9).

4. *Imperative*. The infinitive absolute can be used to express a command. For example, זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Ex. 20:8)

Practice
    I. Memorize the vocabulary.
    II. Translate the following:
       1. אִם־מָשׁוֹל תִּמְשֹׁל בָּנוּ (Gen. 37:8)
       2. וְאָזְנַיִם לִשְׁמֹעַ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְלֹא־נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֵב לָדַעַת וְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת (Deut. 29:3 [29:4])
       3. רָאוֹת רַבּוֹת וְלֹא תִשְׁמֹר פָּקוֹחַ אָזְנַיִם וְלֹא יִשְׁמָע (Isa. 42:20)
       4. כִּי בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת (Gen. 2:17)