Chapter 17

Waw Conversive[1]

17.1   **Introduction**. For the Qal stem, you have now completed the study of the Perfect and Imperfect verbal conjugations. You know that the Perfect conjugation is used to express a *completed action* and is usually translated by the English past, present perfect, past perfect or future perfect tenses. The completed action of the Perfect verb may occur in the past, present or future. The Imperfect is used to express *incomplete action* and is usually translated by the present or future tenses but it may also be used to express repeated or habitual action in the past, present or future. The Imperfect may also be rendered by various modal values (would, could, should, may, might, can, etc.).

In this chapter, you will study a special and complementary use of the Perfect and Imperfect conjugations. When used in the context of biblical narrative (though it also occurs in poetry), an Imperfect verb may be prefixed with a special form of the conjunction ו and translated with all the values of the Perfect. This special form of the conjunction ו is called the *Waw Conversive*. It is called "conversive" because when the Waw Conversive is prefixed to an Imperfect verb, the value of the verb is no longer Imperfect but Perfect. Because the verb is Imperfect in form but Perfect in translation value, it may be called a "converted" Imperfect. Similarly, when a Waw Conversive is prefixed to a Perfect verbal form, it is "converted" to the Imperfect in terms of its translation value and may be called a "converted" Perfect.

It is important to understand that the Waw Conversive and converted verbal forms are used primarily in narrative sequences to denote consecutive actions, that is, actions occurring in sequence. For example,

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[1] The following discussion of Waw Conversive and the narrative sequences hardly betrays the complexity of the topic or the range of scholarly opinion on these issues. The nomenclature that has been utilized in this grammar (Waw Conversive, "converted" verbal forms; see also notes 3 and 10 below) will be regarded by some as archaic and a simplification of historical and linguistic realities. We agree on both counts. Nevertheless, despite its inadequacies, the terminology is descriptive for the beginning student and represents a helpful point of departure for the study of these very important but complex concepts.

"I sat down, and then I opened my book, and then I studied Hebrew" describes a sequence of consecutive actions occurring in the past. Similarly, "I will sit down, and I will open my book, and I will study Hebrew" describes consecutive or sequentially related actions occurring in the future. Because the converted verbal forms are used primarily to describe a sequence of consecutive actions, the alternate terminology Waw Consecutive is also acceptable. In this grammar, we have chosen to use the "conversive" and "converted" terminology throughout. You must not forget, however, that *converted verbal forms are used primarily to denote sequences of consecutive actions,* either in the past, present or future. Below you will study both the form and function of the Waw Conversive and converted verbal forms in a narrative context.

17.2 **Form of Waw Conversive with the Imperfect.**[2] When an Imperfect verbal form is prefixed with Waw Conversive, it will be translated with the values of a Perfect verbal form. A few examples illustrate its form and basic translation.

Qal Imperfect without Waw Conversive	*Qal Imperfect with Waw Conversive*
יִשְׁמֹר he will observe	וַיִּשְׁמֹר and he observed
יִזְכֹּר he will remember	וַיִּזְכֹּר and he remembered

The Waw Conversive with the Imperfect is spelled with the conjunction וֹ with a Pathach vowel and a Daghesh Forte in the Imperfect preformative.

> *Imperfect with
> Waw Conversive*
>
> וַיִּקְטֹל

The pointing of the Waw Conversive with the Imperfect should remind you of the definite article (הַ·). Now study the full Qal Imperfect paradigm of the strong verb with Waw Conversive and the following important notes.

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[2] The Qal Imperfect verbal form occurs 10,466 times in the Hebrew Bible. The converted Imperfect marked with the Waw Conversive occurs 11,485 times.

Imperfect with Waw Conversive

3ms	וַיִּקְטֹל	and he killed
3fs	וַתִּקְטֹל	and she killed
2ms	וַתִּקְטֹל	and you killed
2fs	וַתִּקְטְלִי	and you killed
1cs	וָאֶקְטֹל	and I killed
3mp	וַיִּקְטְלוּ	and they killed
3fp	וַתִּקְטֹלְנָה	and they killed
2mp	וַתִּקְטְלוּ	and you killed
2fp	וַתִּקְטֹלְנָה	and you killed
1cp	וַנִּקְטֹל	and we killed

Notes:

1. Except for the addition of the Waw Conversive, the spelling of the Imperfect verbal forms is unchanged. Be certain to note how these forms are translated. Each is Imperfect in form but Perfect in translation. Because of the Waw Conversive, the Imperfect verbs are translated like Perfect verbs (English past tense).

2. Note the spelling of the Waw Conversive in the 1cs וָאֶקְטֹל (and I killed). Because the א preformative is a guttural, it rejects the Daghesh Forte and the Pathach vowel under the Waw undergoes compensatory lengthening to Qamets.

3. Imperfect verbs may also appear with the simple conjunction וְ as in וְיִכְתֹּב (and he will write). The "simple" or "regular" Waw conjunction has neither the form nor function of the Waw Conversive. In this case, the Imperfect is not "converted" and retains its normal Imperfect value. The spelling of the Waw Conversive on an Imperfect verb is very distinctive and cannot be missed (· וַ). Compare the two paradigms below and note how the spelling of the Waw Conversive on the Imperfect is distinct from that of the simple or regular Waw conjunction on the Imperfect.

	Qal Imperfect with Waw Conversive	Qal Imperfect with Regular Waw	
3ms	וַיִּקְטֹל	וְיִקְטֹל	and he will kill
3fs	וַתִּקְטֹל	וְתִקְטֹל	and she will kill
2ms	וַתִּקְטֹל	וְתִקְטֹל	and you will kill
2fs	וַתִּקְטְלִי	וְתִקְטְלִי	and you will kill
1cs	וָאֶקְטֹל	וְאֶקְטֹל	and I will kill
3mp	וַיִּקְטְלוּ	וְיִקְטְלוּ	and they will kill
3fp	וַתִּקְטֹלְנָה	וְתִקְטֹלְנָה	and they will kill
2mp	וַתִּקְטְלוּ	וְתִקְטְלוּ	and you will kill
2fp	וַתִּקְטֹלְנָה	וְתִקְטֹלְנָה	and you will kill
1cp	וַנִּקְטֹל	וְנִקְטֹל	and we will kill

17.3 **The Use of the Converted Imperfect**. It has already been emphasized that converted verbal forms are used to describe a sequence of consecutive actions. In the context of Hebrew narrative, the converted Imperfect is normally used for the *past tense narrative sequence*.[3] In other words, when an author wanted to write about a series of actions in the past, he would use the Imperfect with Waw Conversive.

    1. Frequently, the past tense narrative sequence will begin with a Perfect verb followed by any number of converted Imperfect verbs.[4] The Perfect verb that begins the sequence serves to signal the past tense narration. In this past tense narration, each converted Imperfect verb is temporally, logically, sequentially and (often) consequentially related to the preceding verb.

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[3] Though the terminology "past tense narrative sequence" is not commonly used, the term is descriptive of how the Imperfect with Waw Conversive functions in this type of biblical narration. The language will be used throughout because it is easily understood by the beginning student.

[4] The past tense narrative sequence, also called the Perfect-Imperfect sequence, is often referred to by grammarians as the *qatal-wayyiqtol* sequence. This name derives from the transliteration of the Hebrew קָטַל וַיִּקְטֹל which represents the "classical" construction of the sequence, beginning with the Perfect (קָטַל) and followed by Imperfects with the Waw Conversive (וַיִּקְטֹל).

וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן

And Adam knew Eve his wife, *and then she*
conceived, and then she bore Cain (Gen 4:1).

וַתַּהַר Qal Imperfect 3fs הָרָה with Waw Conversive

וַתֵּלֶד Qal Imperfect 3fs יָלַד with Waw Conversive

וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִן־הָהָר

And Moses went up to God, *and then* Yahweh
called to him from the mountain (Ex 19:3).

וַיִּקְרָא Qal Imperfect 3ms קָרָא with Waw Conversive

2. Instead of a Perfect verbal form, the past tense narrative sequence
    may also begin with the temporal modifier וַיְהִי followed by
    Imperfect verbs with Waw Conversive. The form וַיְהִי is the Qal
    Imperfect 3ms form of הָיָה (to be) with Waw Conversive.[5] It is
    called a "temporal modifier" because it marks the beginning of
    a *past tense* narrative sequence. This temporal modifier frequently
    stands at the beginning of the sequence.

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ

And after the death of Abraham
God blessed Isaac his son (Gen 25:11).

The form וַיְהִי may also appear at the beginning of a temporal
clause within the sequence. When beginning a temporal clause,
וַיְהִי is frequently followed by a preposition or conjunction like
כְּ or כַּאֲשֶׁר and the whole construction may be translated as
"and when." Words that designate time are commonly a part of
this type of construction.

וַיְהִי כְּמוֹת אַחְאָב וַיִּפְשַׁע מֶלֶךְ־מוֹאָב בְּמֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

And when Ahab died, the king of Moab
rebelled against the king of Israel (2 Kgs 3:5).

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5   וַיְהִי occurs 1,008 times in the Hebrew Bible. The Daghesh Forte that is expected
    in the Imperfect preformative with the prefixing of the Waw Conversive is absent
    because the verb begins with the syllable יְ.

3. The past tense narrative sequence may begin with either a Perfect verbal form or וַיְהִי followed by any number of converted Imperfect verbs. It is not uncommon, however, for this sequence to begin with the converted Imperfect itself.

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וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
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And he *called* to Moses and Yahweh spoke to him
from the tent of meeting (Lev 1:1).

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וַיִּפְשַׁע מוֹאָב בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַחְאָב
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Moab *rebelled* against Israel after the
death of Ahab (2 Kgs 1:1).

4. You now understand that the past tense narrative sequence is composed of a string of converted Imperfect verbs, each marked with the Waw Conversive. Occasionally, this string of converted forms may be interrupted by a regular Perfect in the place of an expected Imperfect with Waw Conversive. This interruption in the narrative sequence can happen for a number of reasons but it will happen frequently when a negative clause appears in the sequence. The negated verb interrupts the sequence in that the verb is no longer an Imperfect with Waw Conversive but now a regular Perfect following the negative particle. Note that the regular conjunction וְ is often prefixed to this negative particle (וְלֹא). After this interruption, the sequence may return to the string of converted Imperfect verbs. The following example illustrates a past tense narrative sequence that begins with a converted Imperfect (וַיֶּחֱזַק). The sequence is then interrupted by a negative clause (וְלֹא־שָׁמַע) and thereafter returns to converted Imperfect verbs (וַיִּפֶן and וַיָּבֹא).

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וַיֶּחֱזַק לֵב־פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
וַיִּפֶן פַּרְעֹה וַיָּבֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ
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And Pharaoh's heart became hard and he did not listen
to them just as Yahweh had said. And (so) Pharaoh
turned and went to his house (Ex 7:22-23).

17.4   **Changes in the Spelling of the Converted Imperfect Verb**. In most cases, the prefixing of the Waw Conversive does not change the spelling of the Imperfect verb. There are some weak verbs, however, that do experience minor changes. These changes should not give you too much trouble.

1. In I-א verbs of the אָמַר type and certain I-י verbs (including הָלַךְ), the stem vowel changes to Seghol.[6] Note the following examples:

יֹאמַר	he will say	➤	וַיֹּאמֶר	and he said
יֵשֵׁב	he will dwell	➤	וַיֵּשֶׁב	and he dwelt
יֵלֵךְ	he will go	➤	וַיֵּלֶךְ	and he went

2. With the prefixing of the Waw Conversive, Biconsonantal and III-ה verbs are "shortened" in those Imperfect forms without a sufformative (except the 1cs).[7] In Biconsonantal verbs, the medial vowel letter is lost. In III-ה verbs, the final ה drops off. Note the following examples:

יָקוּם	he will rise up	➤	וַיָּקָם[8]	and he rose up
יָשִׂים	he will set	➤	וַיָּשֶׂם	and he set
יִבְנֶה	he will build	➤	וַיִּבֶן	and he built
יִגְלֶה	he will reveal	➤	וַיִּגֶל	and he revealed

17.5   **Form of Waw Conversive with the Perfect**.[9] When a Perfect verbal form is prefixed with Waw Conversive, it will be translated with the values of an Imperfect verb. A few examples will illustrate its form and basic translation.

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[6] This type of change is occasioned by the retraction of the accent that occurs with the prefixing of the Waw Conversive to forms without a sufformative (except for the 1cs).

[7] This type of change is also occasioned by retraction of the accent.

[8] Note that the vowel under the ק is Qamets Hatuf and not Qamets.

[9] The Qal Perfect verb occurs 9,680 times in the Hebrew Bible. The Perfect prefixed with וְ (Waw Conversive or regular conjunction וְ) occurs 4,330 times. As you can see, the Qal Imperfect with Waw Conversive, occurring 11,485 times, is much more common than the Perfect with Waw Conversive.

Qal Perfect without Waw Conversive	*Qal Perfect with Waw Conversive*
שָׁמַר he observed	וְשָׁמַר and he will observe
זָכַר he remembered	וְזָכַר and he will remember

Note that the Waw Conversive with the Perfect is spelled differently than the Waw Conversive with the Imperfect.

Perfect with Waw Conversive וְקָטַל	*Imperfect with Waw Conversive* וַיִּקְטֹל

With the Perfect, there is no difference in spelling between the Waw Conversive and the simple or regular conjunction וְ (both are prefixed according to the rules of 5.7). Later in this chapter, we will discuss how to distinguish between the Waw Conversive and the regular conjunction on the Perfect. For now, study both the form and translation value of the Perfect with Waw Conversive.

Perfect with Waw Conversive

3ms	וְקָטַל	and he will kill
3fs	וְקָטְלָה	and she will kill
2ms	וְקָטַלְתָּ	and you will kill
2fs	וְקָטַלְתְּ	and you will kill
1cs	וְקָטַלְתִּי	and I will kill
3cp	וְקָטְלוּ	and they will kill
2mp	וּקְטַלְתֶּם	and you will kill
2fp	וּקְטַלְתֶּן	and you will kill
1cp	וְקָטַלְנוּ	and we will kill

Notes:

1. The spelling of the Perfect verb is not changed by the prefixing of the Waw Conversive.

2. On most forms, the Waw Conversive is spelled with Shewa (וְ). In the 2mp (וּקְטַלְתֶּם) and 2fp (וּקְטַלְתֶּן), the Waw Conversive is spelled וּ because it occurs before a consonant with Vocal Shewa (see 5.7).

3. In the Perfect with Waw Conversive, the accent usually shifts to the final syllable in the 2ms and 1cs forms. For example, קָטַ֫לְתִּי (I killed) is accented on the second syllable but וְקָטַלְתִּ֫י (and I will kill) is usually accented on the final syllable because it is prefixed with the Waw Conversive. This shift in accent does not occur, however, when the Perfect verb is prefixed with the regular conjunction as in וְקָטַ֫לְתִּי (and I killed). The shift in accent can help you to distinguish between the Waw Conversive and the regular conjunction in the 2ms and 1cs forms. This point is illustrated with the beginning of Gen 9:15 which reads: וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי. Given the similarity of spelling between the Waw Conversive and the regular conjunction on a Perfect, is the conjunction that is prefixed to זָכַרְתִּי the Waw Conversive or the regular conjunction? Should this text be translated as "I remembered my covenant" (regular conjunction) or "I will remember my covenant" (Waw Conversive)? Because the Hebrew Bible locates the accent on the final syllable (וְזָכַרְתִּ֫י), the Waw should be identified as the Waw Conversive and translated "I will remember my covenant." Other contextual considerations, studied in the next section, will also help you to distinguish between the Waw Conversive and the regular conjunction on the Perfect.

17.6 **The Use of the Converted Perfect.** Like the converted Imperfect, the converted Perfect is also used in narrative sequences. The difference between the two, however, is that the converted Perfect is normally used for the *future tense narrative sequence*[10] (also habitual-durative)

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[10] Though the terminology "future tense narrative sequence" is not commonly used, the term is descriptive of how the Perfect with Waw Conversive functions in this type of biblical narration. As with the designation "past tense narrative sequence"

rather than the *past tense narrative sequence* of the converted Imperfect.[11] So, for example, Hebrew may use the converted Perfect for prophetic revelations that look to the future. The first two uses detailed below correspond to those of the converted Imperfect above.

1. Normally, the future tense narrative sequence begins with an Imperfect verb followed by any number of converted Perfect verbs. The Imperfect verb that begins this narrative sequence signals the future tense narration.

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלַאכְתֶּֽךָ

Six days you will labor *and (you will) do*
all your work (Deut 5:13).

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָי וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶֽם

So you will remember *and (you will) do* all my commandments
and (you will) be holy to your God (Num 15:40).

2. Recall from your study above that the temporal modifier וַיְהִי can mark the beginning of a past tense narrative sequence. Likewise, the temporal modifier וְהָיָה (Qal Perfect 3ms הָיָה with Waw Conversive) may mark the beginning of a future tense narrative sequence.[12]

וְהָיָה כִּי־יִקְרָא לָכֶם פַּרְעֹה וְאָמַר מַה־מַּעֲשֵׂיכֶֽם

When Pharaoh calls (to) you *and says*,
"What is your occupation?" (Gen 46:33).

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְשָׁבַרְתִּי אֶת־קֶשֶׁת יִשְׂרָאֵֽל

And in that day *I will break* the
bow of Israel (Hos 1:5).

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above, this language will also be used throughout the discussion because it is easily understood by the beginning student.

[11] On analogy with *qatal-wayyiqtol* (Perfect-Imperfect), the Imperfect-Perfect sequence is often referred to as the *yiqtol-wᵉqatal* sequence. This designation derives from the transliteration of the Hebrew יְקַטֹל וְקָטַל which represents the "classical" construction of this sequence, beginning with an Imperfect (יְקַטֹל) and followed by Perfects with Waw Conversive (וְקָטַל).

[12] וְהָיָה occurs 681 times in the Hebrew Bible.

3. The converted Perfect will frequently follow an Imperative verb. In such cases, the converted Perfect verb will carry the full force of the initial Imperative verb. Even though you have not yet studied the Imperative verb form, the following examples should be clear.

עֲמֹד בְּשַׁעַר בֵּית יְהוָה וְקָרָאתָ שָׁם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה
וְאָמַרְתָּ שִׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה

Stand (Imperative) in the gate of Yahweh's house *and*
(you will) proclaim there this word *and (you will) say*,
"Hear the word of Yahweh" (Jer 7:2).

שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אוֹתָם

Hear (Imperative) the words of this covenant
and (you will) do them (Jer 11:6).

17.7 **Translating the Temporal Modifiers and the Waw Conversive**. Because of their frequency in certain contexts, the temporal modifiers וַיְהִי and וְהָיָה are best not translated in most occurrences, though you can still translate the conjunction as "and." Some will suggest, however, that וַיְהִי be translated "and it came to pass that" and that וְהָיָה be translated "and it will be that." Given the frequency with which these temporal modifiers will sometimes appear in a narrative sequence, however, it is often best to avoid these translations in the interest of good English style.

17.8 **Parsing**. The parsing of converted verbal forms is just like the parsing of regular Perfect or Imperfect verbs except that you must identify the presence of the Waw Conversive as the following examples illustrate.

וַיִּשְׁמֹר Qal Imperfect 3ms   שָׁמַר with Waw Conversive

וְזָכַר Qal Perfect 3ms   זָכַר with Waw Conversive

17.9 Summary.

1. Converted verbal forms are used primarily to denote a sequence of consecutive actions, either in the past, present or future.

2. When an Imperfect verb is prefixed with the Waw Conversive, it will be translated with the values of the Perfect. The Waw Conversive on the Imperfect consists of the conjunction וְ with a Pathach vowel beneath the conjunction and a Daghesh Forte in the Imperfect preformative (וַיִּקְטֹל).

3. The converted Imperfect is normally used for the past tense narrative sequence. This narrative sequence may begin with a Perfect verb followed by any number of converted Imperfects. It may also begin with וַיְהִי or a converted Imperfect.

4. Some weak verb classes experience minor spelling changes with the prefixing of the Waw Conversive. In I-א verbs of the אָמַר type and certain I-י verbs (including הָלַךְ), the stem vowel changes to Seghol. Biconsonantal and III-ה converted verbs are "shortened" in those forms without a sufformative (except the 1cs).

5. When a Perfect verb is prefixed with the Waw Conversive, it will be translated with the values of the Imperfect. The Waw Conversive with the Perfect is spelled just like the simple or regular conjunction (וְקָטַל). In order to distinguish between the Waw Conversive and the regular conjunction on the Perfect, you will need to rely upon certain issues of context (17.6). Additionally, a shift in accent in the Perfect 2ms and 1cs forms may provide you with the correct identification.

6. The converted Perfect is commonly used for the future tense narrative sequence (also habitual-durative). This narrative sequence may begin with an Imperfect verb followed by any number of converted Perfects. It may also begin with the temporal modifier וְהָיָה.

7. At first, you should probably translate every Waw Conversive and temporal modifier in order to reinforce their identification in translation. Later on, however, it is preferable not to translate every one of these forms.

17.10 Vocabulary.

Verbs

אָהַב	to love (216)
אָסַף	to gather, take in (200)
כָּלָה	to cease, come to an end, finish, complete (207)
שָׁפַט	to judge, enter into controversy (204)
אָבַד	to perish (185)
גָּלָה	to reveal, uncover (187)
רוּם	to be(come) high, exalted (197)
טָהֵר	to be clean, be pure (94)
בָּעַר	to consume, burn (94)

Nouns

אֱמֶת	truth, trustworthiness (127); feminine
כִּסֵּא	seat, throne (135)
מִסְפָּר	number (134)
עֶשֶׂר	(group of) ten, decade (259)
שֶׁמֶשׁ	sun (158)

17.11 Believing is Seeing. When Abraham is called in Gen 12, he is expected to trust God to take him "to a land *I will show you*" (אַרְאֶךָּ, Hiphil Imperfect 1cs of רָאָה with 2ms pronominal suffix). This is a radical call, to leave everything familiar without any knowledge of where he was going. His only source of confidence could be the promise of God "to show him." In a second episode of testing (Gen 22), Abraham is called to sacrifice his beloved son in "the land of Moriah" or הַמֹּרִיָּה (a name likely playing on the same root, רָאָה). Abraham set out promptly and on the third day he lifted up his eyes and *saw* (וַיַּרְא Qal Imperfect 3ms of רָאָה with Waw Conversive) the place to which God was leading him (22:4). In 22:8, when Isaac asks his father where the offering is, the answer is simply: "God will *reveal* it" אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה־לֹּו (Qal Imperfect 3ms of רָאָה). As Abraham was about to slay his son, the angel's voice stopped him. The patriarch lifted up his eyes (again) and *saw* (וַיַּרְא Qal Imperfect 3ms of רָאָה with Waw Conversive) a ram caught in the thicket (22:13).

As a result of this divine provision, Abraham names the place יְהוָה יִרְאֶה (The Lord *will see*). In 22:13, the verb is again a Qal Imperfect of רָאָה. To this day, we are told in 22:14, the name is retained because, "on the mount of the Lord it shall be revealed" (יֵרָאֶה Niphal Imperfect 3ms of רָאָה).

Most of us know the name from this story as "Jehovah Jireh" which translates "The Lord [my] Provider." The root רָאָה certainly carries the nuance of providing in this context. But it is helpful to bear in mind its primary meaning, that of sight: The Lord "revealed" the sacrifice to Abraham.

In the Old Testament, faith is sometimes described as a form of sight. In 2 Chr 26:5, the faithful king Uzziah was commended for, literally, "learning how *to see* God" (רְאֹת Qal Infinitive Construct from רָאָה). One of the most common designations for an Old Testament prophet is רֹאֶה, a *seer*. A prophet was a person who could see divine things, and could see earthly things from God's perspective. Abraham would one day be honored in Hebrews 11 for a faith defined as the "conviction of things *not yet seen*."

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