Chapter 17

Wayyiqtol and *Weqatal*

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* that can occur in the past, present or future (13.3). The Imperfect is used to express an *incomplete action* that can occur in the past, present or future (15.2). In this chapter, you will study a special and complementary use of the Perfect and Imperfect conjugations. These verbs are distinguished from the regular Perfect and Imperfect conjugations by the prefixing of a form of the conjunction Waw to the verbal form. In other words, קָטַל and וְקָטַל are to be considered two separate and distinct verbal forms because of the presence of the conjunction Waw on וְקָטַל. Likewise, יִקְטֹל and וַיִּקְטֹל are two be considered two separate and distinct verbal forms clearly distinguished one from another by the presence of a special form of the conjunction Waw on וַיִּקְטֹל. In general, when the Perfect verbal form is prefixed with the conjunction Waw (וְקָטַל), it may be translated with all the values of the Imperfect. Likewise, when the Imperfect verbal form is prefixed with a special form of the conjunction Waw (וַיִּקְטֹל), it may be translated with all the values of the Perfect. In terms of basic function, these distinctive forms are used primarily to denote sequences of consecutive actions in Hebrew narrative.

Hebrew grammars will refer to Perfect and Imperfect verbs prefixed with a form of the conjunction Waw in a number of different ways. A brief summary of this diverse nomenclature can help to explain some of the more common features of these distinctive verbal forms.

1. *Waw Conversive*. Because the Perfect and Imperfect conjugations appear to switch values when prefixed with a form of the conjunction Waw, the designation "Waw Conversive" is descriptive of the fact that the prefixing of the conjugation appears to "convert" the value of the verbal form – Imperfect to Perfect or Perfect to Imperfect. For example, you know that יִקְטֹל is

translated "he will kill" (future tense) but וַיִּקְטֹל is translated "and he killed" (past tense). Those forms that appear with the Waw Conversive are called "converted" verbal forms, that is, converted Imperfect and converted Perfect. Technically speaking, the presence of the conjunction does not "convert" the verb, but rather marks it's special function. However, the "conversive" and "converted" terminology is helpfully descriptive of what appears to occur in terms of basic translation value.

2. *Waw Consecutive.* Perfect and Imperfect verbal forms prefixed with the conjunction Waw are used primarily in narrative sequences to denote consecutive actions, that is, actions occurring in sequence. For example, "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 these verbal forms are used primarily to describe a sequence of consecutive actions, the terminology "Waw Consecutive" is descriptive of the function that this conjunction has in Hebrew narrative.

3. *Waw Relative.* When prefixed to the Perfect or Imperfect conjugation, the conjunction "relates" the verb to a previous verb. In other words, the function of the "Waw Relative" is to relate verbs one to another, especially in terms of temporal succession (sequentially related actions). Therefore, the terminology "Waw Relative" is descriptive of the function of this conjunction at the level of (macro) sentence syntax.

4. *Wayyiqtol and Weqatal.* These terms are simply the English transliterations of the Qal 3ms paradigm verbal forms based on the root קָטַל (to kill). In other words, *wayyiqtol* is the English transliteration of וַיִּקְטֹל (and he killed) and *weqatal* is the English transliteration of וְקָטַל (and he will kill). This terminology is descriptive of the verbal form construction without reference to either its translation value or its function.

5. *Preterite*. The term "preterite" is a grammatical term describing a verb that refers to a simple action in the past. This is the primary value of the Imperfect conjugation when prefixed with a special form of the conjunction Waw. Because of this, the *wayyiqtol* form is often referred to as the "preterite." The term "preterite" does not, however, refer to the *weqatal* form.

By way of brief summary, therefore, Perfect and Imperfect verbs prefixed with a form of the conjunction Waw constitute distinctive verbal forms with their own special values. In terms of basic translation value, the Perfect verb "converts" to the Imperfect value and the Imperfect "converts" to the Perfect value (Waw Conversive). These verbs are used primarily to describe a sequence of consecutive actions (Waw Consecutive) in which the verb prefixed with the conjunction Waw is related to a previous verb (Waw Relative). These forms are often referred to by the English transliterations *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*. The *wayyiqtol* form is one of the most common verbal forms in the Hebrew bible and denotes a simple action in the past, also called "Preterite." In this chapter, we will refer to those verbs prefixed with a form of the conjunction Waw as *wayyiqtol* for the "Imperfect" and *weqatal* for the "Perfect." However, you will want to adopt the terminology with which your particular instructor is most comfortable.

17.2 **Form of Wayyiqtol**.[1] When an Imperfect verbal form is prefixed with a special form of the conjunction Waw, it will be translated with the values of a Perfect verbal form. A few examples illustrate its form and basic translation.

Qal Imperfect		*Qal Wayyiqtol*	
יִשְׁמֹר	he will observe	וַיִּשְׁמֹר	and he observed
יִזְכֹּר	he will remember	וַיִּזְכֹּר	and he remembered

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[1] The Qal Imperfect verbal form occurs 10,466 times in the Hebrew Bible. The Qal *wayyiqtol* verbal form occurs 11,485 times.

The *wayyiqtol* verbal form is spelled with the conjunction Waw with a Pathach vowel and a Daghesh Forte in the Imperfect preformative.

Wayyiqtol
Verb

וַיִּקְטֹל

The pointing of this form of the conjunction with the Imperfect should remind you of the definite article (הַ ·). Now study the full *wayyiqtol* paradigm and the following important notes.

Wayyiqtol Verbal Paradigm

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 conjunction, the spelling of the *wayyiqtol* verbal form is identical to the Imperfect. Be certain to note how these forms are translated. Each appears to be Imperfect in form but Perfect in translation.

2. Note the spelling of the *wayyiqtol* verb 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 appear with the simple conjunction וְ as in וְיִכְתֹּב (and he will write). The "simple" or "regular" conjunction Waw has neither the form nor function of the conjunction prefixed to *wayyiqtol* verbal forms. In this case, the Imperfect retains its normal translation value. Compare the two paradigms below and note how the spelling of the *wayyiqtol* verbal forms are distinct from the Imperfect prefixed with the simple or regular conjunction Waw.

	Wayyiqtol *Verbal form*	*Qal Imperfect with* *Simple Conjunction*	
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 Wayyiqtol**. It has already been emphasized that *wayyiqtol* verbal forms are used to describe a sequence of consecutive actions. In the context of Hebrew narrative, the *wayyiqtol* verb is normally used for the *past tense narrative sequence*.[2] In other words, when an author wanted to write about a series of actions in the past, he would use the *wayyiqtol* verbal form.

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

1. Frequently, the past tense narrative sequence will begin with a Perfect verb followed by any number of *wayyiqtol* verbs.[3] The Perfect verb that begins the sequence serves to signal the past tense narration. In this past tense narration, each *wayyiqtol* verb is temporally, logically, sequentially and (often) consequentially related to the preceding verb.

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וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן

</div>

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

<div dir="rtl">

וַתַּהַר Qal *wayyiqtol* 3fs הָרָה
וַתֵּלֶד Qal *wayyiqtol* 3fs יָלַד

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<div dir="rtl">

וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִן־הָהָר

</div>

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

<div dir="rtl">

וַיִּקְרָא Qal *wayyiqtol* 3ms קָרָא

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2. Instead of a Perfect verbal form, the past tense narrative sequence may also begin with the temporal modifier וַיְהִי followed by *wayyiqtol*. The form וַיְהִי is the Qal *wayyiqtol* 3ms form of הָיָה (to be).[4] 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.

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וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ

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

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[3] 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).

[4] 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.

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.

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וַיְהִי כְּמוֹת אַחְאָב וַיִּפְשַׁע מֶלֶךְ־מוֹאָב בְּמֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

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

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

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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).

<div dir="rtl">

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 *wayyiqtol* verbs. Occasionally, this string of *wayyiqtol* forms may be interrupted by a regular Perfect in the place of an expected *wayyiqtol* form. 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 *wayyiqtol* 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 *wayyiqtol* verbs. The following example illustrates a past tense narrative sequence that begins with a *wayyiqtol* verb (וַיֶּחֱזַק). The sequence is then interrupted by a negative clause (וְלֹא־שָׁמַע) and thereafter returns to *wayyiqtol* verbs (וַיָּבֹא and וַיִּפֶן).

וַיֶּחֱזַק לֵב־פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
וַיִּפֶן פַּרְעֹה וַיָּבֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ

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 Wayyiqtol Verb**. In most cases, the prefixing of the conjunction does not change the spelling of the *wayyiqtol* 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.[5] 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 conjunction, Biconsonantal and III-**ה** verbs are "shortened" in those Imperfect forms without a sufformative (except the 1cs).[6] In Biconsonantal verbs, the medial vowel letter is lost. In III-**ה** verbs, the final **ה** drops off. Note the following examples (see 17.11):

יָקוּם	he will rise up	➢	[7]וַיָּקָם	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

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

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

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

17.5   **Form of Weqatal**.[8] When a Perfect verbal form is prefixed with the conjunction, it will be translated with the values of an Imperfect verb. A few examples will illustrate its form and basic translation.

Qal Perfect		*Qal Weqatal*	
שָׁמַר	he observed	וְשָׁמַר	and he will observe
זָכַר	he remembered	וְזָכַר	and he will remember

Note that the conjunction with *weqatal* is spelled differently than the conjunction with *wayyiqtol*.

Conjunction with Weqatal	*Conjunction with Wayyiqtol*
וְקָטַל	וַיִּקְטֹל

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

Weqatal Verbal Paradigm

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 *weqatal* (Perfect) verb is not changed by the prefixing of the conjunction.

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

3. In the *weqatal* verbal forms, the accent usually shifts to the final syllable in the 2ms and 1cs forms. For example, קָטַֽלְתִּי (I killed) is accented on the second syllable but וְקָטַלְתִּי (and I will kill) is usually accented on the final syllable. This shift in accent does not occur, however, when the Perfect verb is prefixed with the regular conjunction as in וְקָטַֽלְתִּי (and I killed). The shift in accent can help you to distinguish between *weqatal* verbs and the regular conjunction with the Perfect 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 conjunction on *weqatal* and the regular conjunction on a Perfect, is the conjunction that is prefixed to זָכַרְתִּי the *weqatal* conjunction or the regular (simple) conjunction? Should this text be translated as "I remembered my covenant" (regular conjunction) or "I will remember my covenant" (*weqatal*)? Because the Hebrew Bible locates the accent on the final syllable (וְזָכַרְתִּֽי), the verb should be identified as *weqatal* and translated "I will remember my covenant." Other contextual considerations, studied in the next section, will also help you to distinguish between *weqatal* and the Perfect with the regular conjunction.

17.6 **The Use of the Weqatal**. Like *wayyiqtol*, *weqatal* is also used in narrative sequences. The difference between the two, however, is that *weqatal* is normally used for the *future tense narrative sequence*[9] (also habitual-durative) rather than the *past tense narrative sequence* of *wayyiqtol*.[10] So,

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

[9] Though the terminology "future tense narrative sequence" is not commonly used, the term is descriptive of how *weqatal* functions in this type of biblical narration. As with the designation "past tense narrative sequence" above, this language will

for example, Hebrew may use *weqatal* for prophetic revelations that look to the future. The first two uses detailed below correspond to those of *wayyiqtol* above.

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

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלַאכְתֶּךָ

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

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָי וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם

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 *weqatal* 3ms הָיָה) may mark the beginning of a future tense narrative sequence.[11]

וְהָיָה כִּי־יִקְרָא לָכֶם פַּרְעֹה וְאָמַר מַה־מַּעֲשֵׂיכֶם

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

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְשָׁבַרְתִּי אֶת־קֶשֶׁת יִשְׂרָאֵל

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

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also be used throughout the discussion because it is easily understood by the beginning student.

[10] 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 יְקֹטֹל וְקָטַל which represents the "classical" construction of this sequence, beginning with an Imperfect (יְקֹטֹל) and followed by *weqatal* (וְקָטַל).

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

3. *Weqatal* will frequently follow an Imperative verb. In such cases, the *weqatal* 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 שָּׁם 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 Weqatal**. 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 *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* verbal forms is just like the parsing of regular Perfect or Imperfect verbs except for the change in name that represents the presence of the conjunction Waw.

וַיִּשְׁמֹר	Qal *wayyiqtol* 3ms	שָׁמַר
וְזָכַר	Qal *weqatal* 3ms	זָכַר

17.9   Summary.

1. Perfect and Imperfect verbal forms prefixed with a form of the conjunction Waw are used primarily to denote a sequence of consecutive actions, either in the past, present or future.

2. *Wayyiqtol* verbs are translated with the values of the Perfect. The conjunction on the *wayyiqtol* verb consists of וֹ with a Pathach vowel and a Daghesh Forte in the preformative (וַיִּקְטֹל).

3. *Wayyiqtol* is normally used for the past tense narrative sequence. This narrative sequence may begin with a Perfect verb followed by any number of *wayyiqtol* verbs. It may also begin with וַיְהִי or *wayyiqtol* itself.

4. Some weak verb classes experience minor spelling changes in the *wayyiqtol* verbal form. 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 *wayyiqtol* verbs are "shortened" in those forms without a sufformative (except the 1cs).

5. When a Perfect verb is prefixed with the conjunction Waw and identified as a *weqatal* verb, it will be translated with the values of the Imperfect. The conjunction on the *weqatal* form is spelled just like the simple or regular conjunction (וְקָטַל). In order to distinguish between *weqatal* and the simple 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. *Weqatal* 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 *weqatal* verbs. It may also begin with the temporal modifier וְהָיָה.

7. At first, you should probably translate every *wayyiqtol* or *weqatal* verb 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 *wayyiqtol* 3ms of רָאָה) 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 *wayyiqtol* 3ms of רָאָה) a ram caught in the thicket (22:13).

As a result of this divine provision, Abraham names the place יְהוָֹה 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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17.11 Advanced Information: The Origin of the Wayyiqtol and Weqatal Verbal Forms. It might seem strange that a single verbal form can be translated with two, basically opposite values depending upon the presence or absence of a form of the conjunction Waw. For example, וְיִקְטֹל may be translated "and he will kill" (future tense value) but וַיִּקְטֹל is translated "and he killed" (past tense value). At first, it was thought that the presence of the special form of the conjunction (וַ·) "converted" the tense value of the verbal form. Based upon this understanding, the "conversive" and "converted" terminology developed.

Later, however, it was discovered that these two, apparently identical verbal forms were originally two distinct verbal forms. Prior to the period of standard biblical Hebrew, there existed two, originally distinct

prefix verbal conjugations. During this time, one conjugation was "longer" than the other in its basic form. The longer form is designated *yaqtulu* and is equivalent to the Imperfect (imperfective) conjugation studied in chapters 15 and 16. The "shorter" prefix conjugation is designated *yaqtul*. As you can see from their transliterated values (*yaqtulu* and *yaqtul*), the "short" form is shorter because it is lacks the final u-class vowel. The short prefix conjugation is equivalent to the *wayyiqtol* (preterite) conjugation studied in this chapter.

So what happened? How did two previously distinct prefix verbal forms coalesce into one, basically identical form in biblical Hebrew? The answer is relatively simple. During the development of the language, and prior to standard biblical Hebrew, final short vowels were eventually dropped from the pronunciation of Hebrew words. When this occurred, the final short u-class vowel on *yaqtulu* (imperfective) dropped off, resulting in the form *yaqtul* and so the two, originally distinct prefix verbal forms became identical. In order to avoid confusion, the language developed certain strategies for distinguishing between the identical forms. The primary strategy employed to distinguish between the two forms was the prefixing of a special form of the conjunction Waw (‧וַ) to the originally short *yaqtul* (preterite) form. This form became the *wayyiqtol* verb of biblical Hebrew. In certain weak verb classes, the original distinction between the long (*yaqtulu*) and short (*yaqtul*) forms is still identifiable. The following examples demonstrate the difference between the "longer" Imperfect and the "shorter" *wayyiqtol* verbal forms.

Long Imperfect		*Short Wayyiqtol*	
יָקוּם he will rise up	➤	וַיָּ֫קָם	and he rose up
יִבְנֶה he will build	➤	וַיִּ֫בֶן	and he built

In addition to the *wayyiqtol* verbal forms, prefix verbal forms negated by אַל (no, not), those preceded by the adverbs אָז (then, formerly, since) or טֶרֶם (not yet, before), and verbs in the Jussive conjugation are also considered to be related to the originally short *yaqtul* (preterite) conjugation.

The origin of the *weqatal* verbal form is still relatively uncertain. Some suggest, however, that its use in the apodosis ("then" clause) of conditional sentences may provide a starting point. It is thought that

since the apodosis generally denotes potential situations in the future, the "future tense" orientation of *weqatal* verbal forms appears to be developmentally related to this use of the Perfect conjugation.

By the time of standard biblical Hebrew, the language had developed two related but distinct sets of prefix and suffix conjugations. In biblical Hebrew, these conjugations are distinct both in form and function. In terms of form, one set is prefixed with a (special) form of the conjugation Waw and the other is not. In terms of function, one set is used primarily to denote sequences of consecutive actions and the other is not. These relationships are illustrated in the flowing chart.

	Perfective	*Imperfective*
Non-Sequential	קָטַל	יִקְטֹל
Sequential	וַיִּקְטֹל	וְקָטַל