

BBH Workbook p. 70 #11

(2 Chr 29:9)

וְהִנֵּה נִפְלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּחָרֵב
וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנוֹתֵינוּ וְנָשֵׁינוּ בְּשִׁבִי עַל־זֹאת

וְהִנֵּה

וְהִנֵּה , “now behold,” consists of

- the conjunction Waw
- the particle הִנֵּה, which is often translated “behold”

TRANSLATION

Because the interjection “behold” has generally fallen into disuse in English, some prefer to translate הִנֵּה in other ways, e.g., “look” or “see.” In certain instances הִנֵּה is best left untranslated.

Because of the precedent set by older English Bibles (such as the KJV), translating הִנֵּה “behold” may not strike one’s audience as peculiar even though the interjection is not in common use at the present time.

TRANSLATION

וְ, often translated “and,” can sometimes be translated with the English conjunctions “now” and “but.” For example,

וְרָדָה בָּרַח וַיִּמָּלֵט
Now David fled and escaped.
(1 Sam 19:18)

וְהָאֲנָשִׁים יִנְחָשׁוּ
Now the men took this as an omen.
(1 Kgs 20:33)

וַיִּנְחַם מֶצֶא חֵן
בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה
But Noah found favor
in the eyes of the Lord.
(Gen 6:8)

Which translation is best can usually be determined through an analysis of syntax and context.

Note that the conjunction “now” is to be distinguished from the adverb “now,” which means “at the present time.” For example,

וַעֲתָה כְּרַתוּ-לָנוּ
בְּרִית
And **now**, make (lit. cut) with us
a covenant.
(Josh 9:6)

נָפְלוּ, “(they) fell,” is the Qal Perfect 3mp of נָפַל.

TRANSLATION

The “they” of “(they) sent” is in parentheses because we will need to include it in our translation only if the Hebrew sentence we are dealing with does not explicitly state the subject of נָפְלוּ.

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, “our fathers (or, forefathers),” consists of

- אֲבוֹת, the (irregular) plural of אָב, “father”
- the 1cp pronominal suffix יֵנוּ

MORPHOLOGY

When the 1cs pronominal suffix יֵנוּ is added to the two-syllable word אֲבוֹת, the result is the four-syllable word אֲבוֹתֵינוּ (the accent of which is on the penultima). The Qamets in the first syllable (now an open propretonic syllable) reduces to Hateph Pathach.

אֲ|בוֹת → אֶ|בוֹתֵינוּ

בְּחֶרֶב, “by the sword,” consists of three elements:

- the preposition בְּ
- the definite article
- the noun חֶרֶב, “sword”

TRANSLATION

The בְּ of בְּחֶרֶב introduces the manner or means by which “our fathers” fell: they fell “by (means of) the sword”

MORPHOLOGY

The morphology of בְּחֶרֶב may be analyzed in three steps:

- (1) The word חֶרֶב occurs at a major break in 2 Chr 29:9, marked in printed Bibles by an accent called *athnach*: חֶרֶב. An *athnach* indicates that (in the estimation of the Masoretes) a slight break is to occur at this point in the reading of the text, and thus words in this position are said to be “pausal” or “in pause.”

Pausal forms sometimes undergo vowel changes; in the present instance, the Seghol in the first syllable of חֶרֶב has changed to Qamets:

חֶרֶב → חָרֵב

- (2) When the definite article is added to a word beginning with הָ, it is spelled הֶ (note that the Daghesh Forte of the article is rejected by the following ה). Thus,

חָרֵב + definite article → הַחָרֵב

- (3) When the preposition בְּ is added to הַחָרֵב, the Bet of the preposition replaces the He of the article:

הַחָרֵב + בְּ → בְּחָרֵב

Summary: וְהָיָה נִפְלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּחָרֵב

And behold, our fathers (or, forefathers) fell by the sword.

וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנוֹתֵינוּ וּנְשֵׁינוּ

This list contains three forms, each beginning with the conjunction Waw and ending with the 1cp pronominal suffix וֹנֵינוּ, "our."

MORPHOLOGY

וּבְנֵינוּ and וּבְנוֹתֵינוּ begin with the bilabial Bet; when the conjunction Waw is prefixed to these forms, it is therefore

spelled Shureq. Because the Bets are now preceded by a vowel, they lose their Daghes Lene:

$\text{וּבְנֵינוּ} + \text{וְ} \rightarrow \text{וּבְנֵינוּ}$
 $\text{וּבְנוֹתֵינוּ} + \text{וְ} \rightarrow \text{וּבְנוֹתֵינוּ}$

וּבְנֵינוּ , “and our sons,” consists of three elements:

- the conjunction Waw
- בְּנֵים , the (irregular) plural of בֵּן , “son”
- the 1cp pronominal suffix ֵינוּ

MORPHOLOGY

ֵינוּ replaces the plural ending ֵים when it is added to בְּנֵים .

וּבְנוֹתֵינוּ , “and our daughters,” consists of three elements:

- the conjunction Waw
- בְּנוֹת , the (irregular) plural of בַּת , “daughter”
- the 1cp pronominal suffix ֵינוּ

MORPHOLOGY

ֵינוּ is added directly to the plural form בְּנוֹת . With the addition of ֵינוּ , בְּ (which was previously an open pretonic syllable) becomes an open propretonic syllable. The vowel in this syllable therefore reduces to Shewa.

וְנָשֵׁינוּ, “and our wives,” consists of three elements:

- the conjunction Waw
- נָשִׁים, the (irregular) plural of אִשָּׁה, “woman, wife”
- the 1cp pronominal suffix יָנוּ

TRANSLATION

Hebrew often separates the items of a list by means of the conjunction Waw. English, on the other hand, usually separates the items of a list by means of commas as well as the conjunction “and.” Thus,

וּבְנֵינוּ וּבָנוּתֵינוּ וְנָשֵׁינוּ

is equivalent to

and our sons, our daughters, and our wives

בְּשָׁבִי

בְּשָׁבִי, “in captivity,” consists of three elements:

- the preposition בְּ
- the definite article (the Pathach and Daghes Forte of which remain; the He has been replaced by the Bet of the preceding preposition)
- the noun שָׁבִי, “captivity”

על-זאת

על-זאת, "because of this," consists of

- the preposition על, "on (account of), because of, concerning"
- the demonstrative pronoun זאת, "this"

Excursus: Syntax

2 Chr 29:9 consists of two clauses, one verbal, one verbless:

CLAUSE 1 (VERBAL)

וְהִנֵּה נִפְלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּחָרֶב

*And behold, our fathers **have fallen** by the sword*

CLAUSE 2 (VERBLESS)

וּבָנֵינוּ וּבָנוֹתֵינוּ וְנָשֵׁינוּ
בְּשִׁבְי עַל-זֹאת

*And our sons, our daughters, and our wives (are)
in captivity because of this*

Verbless clauses are much more common in Hebrew than in English. When translating Clause 2 above (which in Hebrew is verbless), we must make it verbal by supplying a form of the verb *be*, namely *are*.

Final Translation

And behold (or, See now), our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity because of this.