

# Rocine Lesson 11

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעָהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

2 Kings 20:4

# Goals

1. Identify and read the Historical Narrative transition marker וַיְהִי
2. Identify and read ~~irrealis~~ comments constructed with לֹא
3. ~~Begin constructing a discourse profile scheme for Historical Narrative~~
4. Use an understanding of Hebrew clause construction to help identify clause boundaries

# What we already know

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעֵיהֶם לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר-יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

We know how to parse the last verb.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	Function	Root meaning

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We know how to parse the last verb.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	Function	Root meaning
היה	Qal	Qatal	3ms	X-qatal = <i>To be determined</i>	To be, become

# Historical Narrative transition marker

וַיְהִי יַשְׁעֵיהֶם לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

RULE: The word וַיְהִי (usually) has a special function in Biblical Hebrew as a **transition marker**.

# Historical Narrative transition marker

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RULE: The word וַיְהִי (usually) has a special function in Biblical Hebrew as a transition marker.

- Grammatically it is the wayyiqtol form of הָיָה
- Basic meaning “to happen, become, be”
  - Like the verb “to be” in English
  - But often has the added nuance of something happening, not just “being”

# Historical Narrative transition marker

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It is simultaneously a divider and joiner of text

- Divider: marks the onset of
  - a new unit
  - a shift in time (but same unit)
  - result (although this sense does not occur often)
- Joiner:
  - “At the same time it does indeed join the scene or episode it marks to a larger discourse.”

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- The nikkud is irregular
  - learn without analysis, i.e. as a sight word
  - Very common, occurs 700+ times in HB
- Translation: *And (then) it happened*  
or (*usually*) left untranslated
- Function (in analysis chart): **transition marker**



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Looks like a  
Piel but it's  
Qal.

Doubly  
weak:  
*I-Guttural,*  
*III-Heh*

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				Transition Marker (but introducing what?)	

# Historical Narrative transition marker

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The main functions of וַיְהִי:

- New unit
- Shift in time (but same unit)

In the latter case, וַיְהִי introduces a phrase that specifies the new time, which acts like an adverb to the following clause.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	Function	Root meaning
				Transition Marke = shift in time, but same unit	

# Next three words

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעָהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

In the next 3 words we have an X-qatal.

- Identify the X
- Identify the qatal
- How is the X related to the qatal?

# Next three words

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

In the next 3 words we have an X-qatal.

- Identify the X יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ (Isaiah)
- Identify the qatal יֵצֵא
- How is the X related to the qatal? יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ (Isaiah) is the subject of the qatal

# Negated clauses

וְיִהְיֶה יִשְׁעֵיהֶם לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הִיָּה אֵלֵינוּ

- לֹא means “no, not”

# Negated clauses

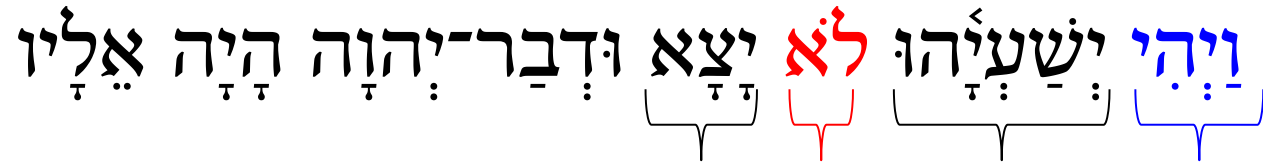
וַיְהִי יִשְׁעִיהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר-יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

- לֹא means “no, not”
- Do not confuse לֹא and לוֹ (“to him” or “his”)—they are pronounced identically, but are different words.



# Negated clauses

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעָהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר-יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו



Translate the elements.

# Negated clauses

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעִיהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

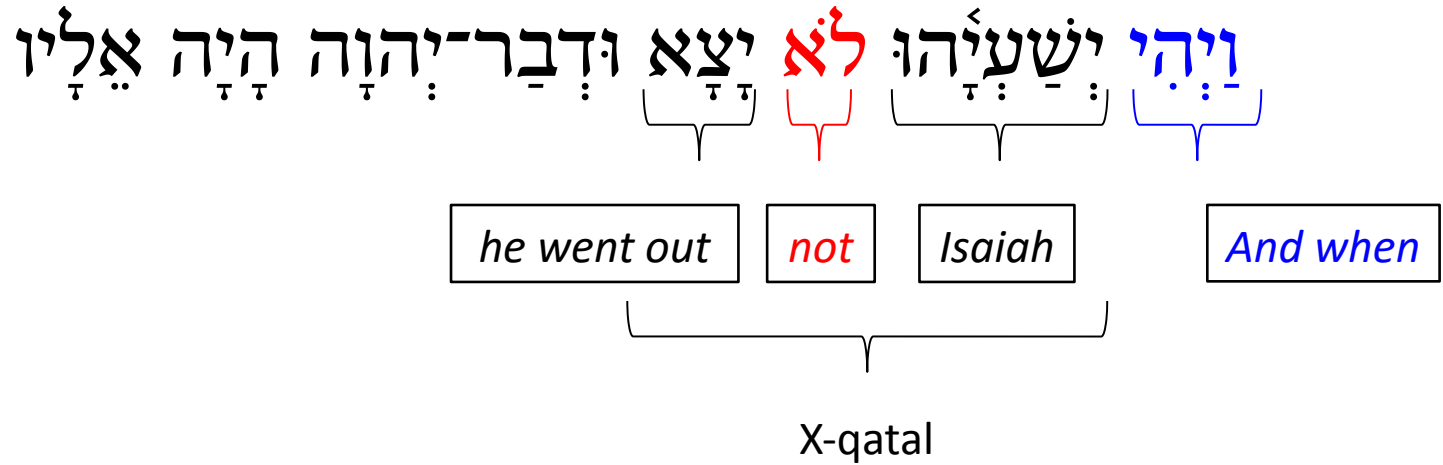
*he went out*

*not*

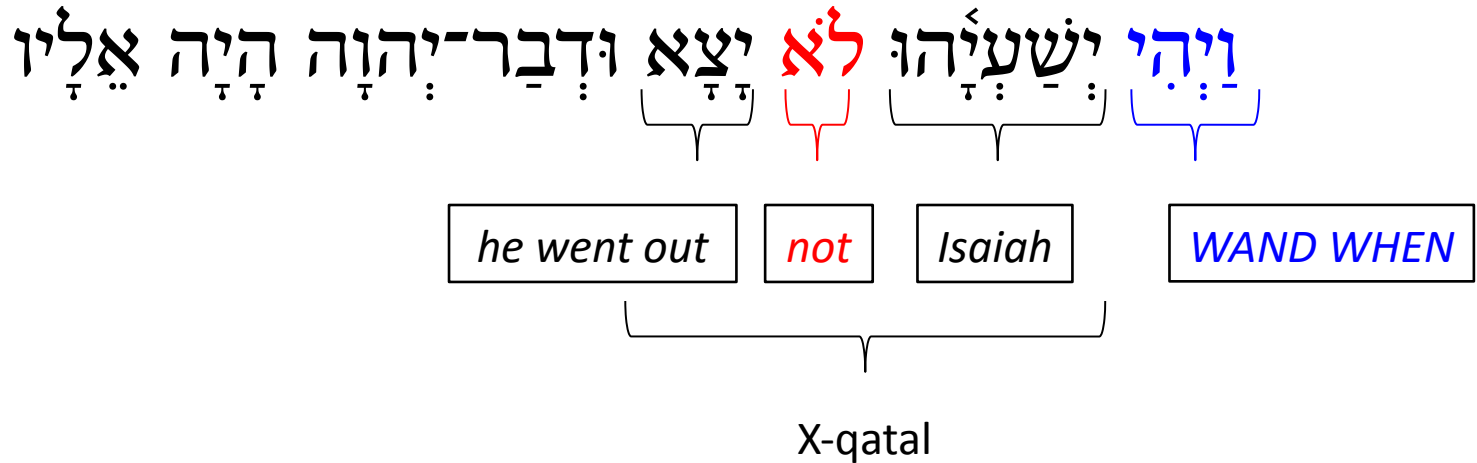
*Isaiah*

*And when*

# Negated clauses



# Negated clauses



Translation of first clause:

- “*And when* Isaiah had not gone out”  
Or, since we are specifying the time, a time at which Isaiah had (not yet) gone out
- “*And when* Isaiah had not yet gone out”
- Or,
- “And before Isaiah had gone out”

# Putting it all together: lesson verse

וַיְהִי יַשְׁעֵיהֶם לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

Root	Stem	Form	Person, Gender, Number	Function	Root meaning

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היה				Transition Marke = shift in time, but same unit	

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היה				Transition Marke = shift in time, but same unit	
יצא					



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Root	Stem	Form	Person, Gender, Number	Function	Root meaning
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יצא	Qal	Qatal	3ms	X-qatal = the “when” of the shift in time	To go out

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היה	Qal	Qatal	3ms	X-qatal = the “what happened” at the shift in time	To be (here: to come)

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Translation:

# Putting it all together: lesson verse

וַיְהִי יַשְׁעֵיהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

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Translation:

When Isaiah had not yet gone out, the Word of YHWH came to him.

# Putting it all together: lesson verse

וַיְהִי יַשְׁעֵיהוּ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

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Translation:

When Isaiah had not yet gone out, the Word of YHWH came to him.

Or ( better)

# Putting it all together: lesson verse

וַיְהִי יִשְׁעָיוֹ לֹא יֵצֵא וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו

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Translation:

When Isaiah had not yet gone out, the Word of YHWH came to him.

Or ( better)

Before Isaiah had gone out, the Word of YHWH came to him.

# Discourse and genre—a review

A bit of review

- What is a discourse?
- What is a genre?



# Discourse and genre—a review

## A bit of review

- Discourse:
  - “a self-contained text, maybe long or maybe short, but the text has its own plan, purpose, and meaning.”

# Discourse and genre—a review

## A bit of review

- Discourse:
  - “a self-contained text, maybe long or maybe short, but the text has its own plan, purpose, and meaning.”
- Genre:
  - “A kind of discourse”
  - E.g.
    - Historical Narrative      Tell a story about the past.
    - Predictive Narrative      Tell a story set in the future.
    - Instructional Discourse    Tell how to do something.
    - Hortatory Discourse      Influence the behavior of someone.
    - Procedural Discourse      Tell how a procedure was done in the past.

# Discourse Terminology

## **Foreground/Background.**

**Foreground** describes the main flow of thought in a text.

**Background** describes any peripheral information that does not move the main flow of thought forward.

*In historical narrative*, the foreground is the main storyline. The foreground can be paused to give background information, such as a flashback, a visual description, etc.

**Discourse Mode.** Whether the discourse is currently in “foreground” or “background.”

(See Patton and Putnam, *Basics of Hebrew Discourse*, pages 43–44.)

# Historical narrative discourse

- In historical narrative, the main verb form for the foreground is undoubtedly the wayyiqtol—but it is not the only one. Other verb forms and constructions can and do move the story forward. A preposed clause can continue the foreground by providing a contrast, *but it can also* initiate the background.
- On the other hand, the wayyiqtol generally moves the storyline forward, *but it can also* initiate the background.
- Looking at particular verbal constructions is *necessary* in understanding Hebrew discourse, but is *not sufficient* in understanding Hebrew.

# Historical narrative discourse

- When working with biblical Hebrew, be aware of whether you are working in the foreground or the background, using all clues at your disposal (verbal constructions, meaning of the Hebrew, your understanding of what is happening, etc). In your study, heed these words from Gary Long:
- “When working with discourse, you must realize that the functions of syntax, linguistic semantics, and pragmatics merge together in written representation. Truly grasping the conveyance of meaning comes by understanding the interrelation of these functions for a particular language” (Gary A. Long, *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed., 177).

# Identifying where clauses begin and end

- This is an art
- Look for the *waws*—that will tell you an awful lot
- Read Rocine's section on this (11.5) but it's best dealt with when looking at the concrete examples in the exercises