

Lesson 15

וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-לָבֶן מַה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עַבְדָּתִי
 עָמְדָה וְלָמָּה רַמְיָתָנִי
 Genesis 29:25

Goals:

What we already know

15.1. Move section 15.1 to precede immediately the last line (“Translate . . .”) of 15.2. Strike out the existing 15.1.

SUBSTITUTE the following paragraph:

What is the form of וַיֹּאמֶר and וַיְהִי? _____. We have seen both verbs before in our lesson verses. You should immediately recognize וַיֹּאמֶר. However, we cannot immediately translate וַיְהִי, since this verb may be either a “standard” *wayyiqtol*, translated as *he* (or *it*) *was* (or *became*)—or it might be a discourse marker. We will have to determine the meaning of the word that follows וַיְהִי before we can make a decision.

Preposition with the nikkud of the definite article

15.2. ADD between the Rule paragraph and “Fill out . . .” (moved from 15.1):

Now that we have identified the word after וַיְהִי as an adverb of time, we can identify וַיְהִי as a discourse marker. Because this construction starts a new episode, there is no need to find any other context for these verbs (see lesson 11).

ADD section moved from from 15.1 to just before “Fill out . . .”

Verb charts for qatal

15.3a.

15.3b. Make following corrections in the Qal *qatal* table:

ADD asterisk after קָטְלוּ and קָטְלָהּ

עָשִׂיתָן = > עָשִׂיתֶם עָשִׂיתָן = > עָשִׂיתָן

ADD the following note below the Qal *qatal* table:

*Although hard to see in the printed text (since it is almost covered up by the vertical stroke of the *qoph*), the *meteg* is *indeed* under the first letter of the 3rd f. s. and 1st c. p. forms of קָטְלָהּ.

ADD the following note immediately before the Piel *qatal* table:

Note: The *meteg* is invariably added in verb charts, but is not always used in the Masoretic text. The Masoretes assumed that the reader could identify a qal *qatal* verb in context and pronounce it correctly, whether or not it had a *meteg*.

Make the following corrections in the Piel *qatal* table:

(second) קָטַל = > קָטַל קָטַלְתָּ = > קָטַלְתָּ צָנַח = > צָנַח (et al.)

15.3c.

15.3d. ADD at end of first paragraph:

(We will add the function in the next section):

ADD at end of second paragraph:

(There is, however, *another* root that appears in the Bible with exactly the same consonants: רָמַח, meaning *shoot* or *throw*, this verb occurs only in the *qal*.)

Questions, questions

15.4a. ADD after first sentence (“ . . . question”):

Note that there is no need to relate the question to any preceding clause or phrase. We have seen examples of discourse functions that do *not* relate to preceding clauses. Our lesson verse itself is an example. When a new event begins at a designated time, there is usually no need to designate that the event is “after” another event.

Strike out the last sentence: “No wonder . . . :ways!”

15.4b. ADD at the beginning of the section:

Hebrew uses question words (or a question particle) to ask questions. The use of Interrogatives is very similar to English: the interrogatives come at the beginning of a question.

Strike out from “In our lesson verse, . . . ” to the end of the section. SUBSTITUTE the following paragraphs:

This phrase is a complete sentence in Hebrew, so we might expect to stop with *this*. However, we have two more words in the phrase: עָשִׂיתָ לִי. We might expect an אֲשֶׁר in front of the verb to indicate a relative clause clarifying what *this* is: *What is this that you have done to me*—but the relative pronoun doesn’t appear in the Hebrew. English can also work perfectly well without a *that* in the clause. so we will simply translate it as it stands:

Translation of מַה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִי: *What is this you have done to me?*

15.4c. Strike out from “Most English versions lips” to the end of the section. SUBSTITUTE the following paragraphs:

The question word מַה is followed by a *qatal* verb, which will be translated as a past-

tense verb in English. (As stated in 15.3d, ׀ – is an object suffix meaning *me*.)

Translation of ׀לְמָה רַפִּי־תֵנִי: (And) *why did you deceive me?*

We will investigate in 15.4e the *and* at the beginning of this last question, after we have translated all the questions.

15.4d. Change עֲבַדְתִּי to עֲבַדְתִּי (change in location of accent).

Strike out the last two paragraphs (starting “Once again . . .”), and SUBSTITUTE the following paragraphs:

If we were making a question with the past-tense verb of *serve*, we would get *Did I serve?* However, note that we particle for *not* is a part of the clause. That gives us *Did I not serve . . . ?*

Translation of ׀לֹא בְרַחֵל עֲבַדְתִּי עִמָּךְ: *Did I not serve with you for Rachel?*

ADD a new section, 15.4e:

15.4e. Now that we have the translation of the three questions, we can go back and provide a more nuanced understanding than simply “question.” The three questions have an internal progression that is hard to miss. Calling the three questions *a*, *b*, and *c*, we can provide this summary of the three questions:

- a. Question concerning what Laban did to Jacob
- b. Question concerning hat Jacob did for Laban
- c. Question about the reason for (a)

As you can readily see, questions a and c are related, with the question in the middle, question b, having a different focus. We should also note that questions a and b are not questions expecting an answer. They are rhetorical questions. Both Jacob and Laban know the answer to each of them. Jacob is not expecting an answer from Laban. The *real* question is *why?* (question c).

Now let us go back to the question of the *waw* at the beginning of the last question. It does not seem natural to consider this simply a sequence of three questions, “question one, question two, and (finally) question three.” The final question is *not* simply the third in a sequence of three equally important questions. It is the only question that counts, and appears to be a question based upon the preceding two (rhetorical) questions.

The *waw* is undoubtedly the most used morpheme in biblical Hebrew, so we should not expect to find a precise definition for its use in our verse in a lexicon. However, the following definition from CHALOT comes very close, if not exactly on the nose: “26. introducing deductions & qns. (oral style).” Applying that to our final question, we get, *So then, why . . . ?* A slightly more formal translation is *Why then . . . ?* According to Biblegateway.com, twenty English translations translate the verse this way.

With this analysis, we can also return to our verb analysis charts, and indicate that the

first two questions are “rhetorical questions,” while the third one is “the *real* question”—which you can include in your verb analysis chart if you desire.

Here is the rule for this discourse function:

Discourse Function Rule: When a Hebrew clause begins with an interrogative word or an interrogative *he*, give the discourse function as “question.” There is no need to record the relationship to other clauses, as is normally done for the discourse function. If desired, one can identify the question more narrowly, as, for example, “rhetorical question.”

Pausal forms

15.5a–15.5c. Renumber and move the sections as follows:

15.5c -> 15.5a 15.5a -> 15.5b 15.5b-> 15.5c.

15.5a (was 15.5c). Strike out the sentence beginning “However, most of . . .” through the end of the paragraph. SUBSTITUTE the following paragraph:

Because these marks provide an indication of how the Masoretes understood the biblical text, we will take note of them when they will help us in our own understanding of the Bible. Although these marks are commonly called *accents* in English, not all of them mark the accented syllable. Four of these “accents” are prepositive (that is, they are always on the extreme right-hand side of the word), and four are postpositive (that is, they are always on the extreme left-hand side of the word). Since these positions are fixed, the marks only indicate the accent by happenstance. Accordingly, a better term for the marks is *cantillation marks* (which they are and remain, whether or not one is chanting the Scriptures) or the neutral Hebrew term *te’amim* (singular, *tá’am*).

ADD the following paragraph:

With this lesson you will begin readings from the Bible, taking the text directly from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*. It seems appropriate, therefore, to take the assignment verses (as well as the lesson verse itself) from *BHS*. Accordingly, from this point forward, the Hebrew text of the assignments that are biblical verses will be given directly from *BHS*. (The illustrative exercises that are not biblical texts will be given as heretofore, with a marking of any accented syllable that is not the ultimate syllable.)

15.5b (was 15.5a). Strike out the sentence beginning “There are typically . . .” and INSERT the following:

The word **וְיָבִיחַ** has this pronunciation because it is in *pause*. Any word that is marked with a disjunctive *tá’am* can be in pause. Although, typically, only the disjunctive *te’amim* of levels one and two mark words in *pause*, even levels three and four can mark words in pause. This does not mean that *every* disjunctive *tá’am* marks a pause, but it can.

15.5c (was 15.5b). Strike out the entire paragraph, and substitute the following::

The first two *te’amim* to learn to recognize are the two level one disjunctives, the main

disjunctives dividing the verse into two parts. The mid-verse mark is called an *atnakh* and looks like a carat [^] placed beneath the letters and beside the vowels. The end-of-verse *tá'am* is the *silluq*, a short vertical line [|] under the accented syllable of the last word of the verse. Note that this looks exactly like a *meteg*, but is different, and is only found on the last word of a verse. The end-of-verse mark (*not* a *tá'am*!) is called a *sof-passuq*, which literally means *end of verse*. It is the colon-like mark [:] , that will only be written on lesson verses or translation exercises in this book when an entire verse is written without any editing of the text for teaching purposes. Note that the preceding sentence does not describe our lesson verse; it should not be followed by a *sof-passuq*.