

READING 1—Genesis 22:1–19 Abraham is Tested

Lesson 15—Gaining an overview of the discourse

Marking the Boundaries of a Discourse

We will now proceed to do our first full-blown discourse analysis. As a reminder, a discourse is a group of expressions linked together from a beginning to an ending so that they develop an idea in some orderly fashion.

The first step in analyzing a discourse is to determine the outer limits of the discourse you wish to analyze. Discourses are often arranged in a hierarchy in which one large discourse is made of several smaller, embedded discourses. For our first discourse analysis, we need to deal with something small, and relatively self-contained. We can use an English Bible to help us at this point because we can process more text so much more efficiently in English. Genesis 22:1 begins, in the English Standard Version of the Bible, “After these things God tested Abraham . . .” We may use the phrase “after these things” as a marker or signal of the beginning of a small, distinct discourse in the larger narrative discourse of Abraham’s life.

Verse 22:1 also suggests to us that we may limit ourselves at the other end of our discourse by the end of God’s testing of Abraham. Scanning ahead in English, when does it seem that the testing story is fully resolved? Is it in verse 12 when the angel of YHWH stops Abraham and proclaims, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me”? It is true that the test itself is finished at this point of the account. The suspense is largely over.

However, an important part of many stories takes place immediately after the story’s climax, after the tension within a story is released, in the section of the story we refer to as the *resolution*. In verses 16–18, the angel of YHWH speaks to Abraham, informing Abraham of the promises that belong to him as a result of passing the test. In verse 19, Abraham returns to his servants and his home. Verse 19 brings the resolution and hence, the story, to a close.

Verse 20 reads just like Genesis 22:1: וַיְהִי אַחֲרַיִ תְּדַבְּרִים הָאֵלֶּה, And after these things . . . Here we have, once again, a faithful marker of another episode in the story of Abraham’s life, confirming that verse 19 is indeed the end of the “Abraham is Tested” story.

Tracing the foreground

In narrative, the *wayyiqtol* verb is the *chief* verbal form marking the foreground—but not the only one. Other verb forms and verbal sequences can provide part of the foreground. On the other hand, *wayyiqtol*s can serve other functions, even providing *background* to the narrative. Nevertheless, noticing the *wayyiqtol*s in a particular section is a good way to trace the course of the action. Find and translate the forty-six *wayyiqtol* verb forms that make up the foreground of the discourse we are analyzing. By isolating the *wayyiqtol*s in this manner we are sketching the “skeleton” of the story from which all of the details will hang. Notice how many of the *wayyiqtol* forms are וַיֵּאמֶר. This is evidence of what you have been taught

already in the lessons, that much of the detail in biblical Hebrew narrative is carried by dialogue. Of course, you only need to translate identical forms once, but you may want to include them in your work so you can better get an idea of how the “skeleton” of a biblical Hebrew narrative looks. The meaning of roots or stems that you have not learned yet are given to you.

Vs. 3 וַיִּשְׁכֶּם (שָׁכַם in the Hiphil stem = *rise early*) _____

וַיַּחְבֹּשׁ (חָבַשׁ in the Qal stem = *gird, bind*) _____

וַיִּבְקַע (בָּקַע in the Piel stem = *break, cleave*) _____

Vs. 9 וַיִּבְנֶן (בָּנָה in the Qal stem = *build*) _____

וַיַּעֲרֹךְ (עָרַךְ in the Qal stem = *arrange*) _____

וַיַּעֲקֹד (עָקַד in the Qal stem = *bind*) _____

Vs. 13 וַיַּעֲלֶהוּ ((This is the familiar root עָלָה in the so-far unfamiliar Hiphil stem in which the root means *offer up*. This is a 3rd m. *singular wayyiqtol* form. The *heh* dropped from the root as usual, but then a 3 m. s. pronominal suffix הוּ-, which in this case means *it*. was added. The addition of this suffix is why the word appears like a 3rd m. *plural wayyiqtol* that for some reason did not lose its *heh*. Translate the word *And he offered it up*.)

Lesson 16—The narrative begins and an embedded hortatory discourse

Verse 1

In our verse-by-verse analysis, we will proceed, with a few exceptions, in a clause-by-clause manner. We will consider the clause as the basic building block of the discourse.

For each clause, you should answer the basic question for discourse analysis: “How does this clause relate to the previous ones?” Since we are working with narrative and a series of *wayyiqtol* verb sequences, the answer will usually (but not always!) be “next event (and then).” Since this is a very common discourse function, we will not generally pay any notice to it in these notes. That doesn’t mean you should not be aware of the steady sequence of events, and be prepared to consider other possible functions if “next event” doesn’t seem correct. For most other non-*wayyiqtol* clauses, we will explicitly define the discourse function.

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי תֵּדָבְרִים הָאֵלֶּה. Many narratives begin with the expression וַיְהִי and some expression of time. What is the “time word” used in this narrative? _____

We have seen the common (both masculine and plural gender), plural demonstrative pronoun אֵלֶּה, meaning *these*, in Lesson 13.5. The word here also means *these*, but it is a demonstrative *adjective* that modifies תֵּדָבְרִים rather than a *pronoun*. In Hebrew, attributive adjectives follow the nouns they modify and must agree with them in gender, number, and definiteness. To agree with תֵּדָבְרִים in definiteness, אֵלֶּה must

have the definite article attached to it.

וַתֵּאֱלֹהִים נֹסָה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם. It is very common for אֱלֹהִים to have the definite article on it in Hebrew, but English translations generally do not translate it. Whether or not it has the definite article, the word refers to the true God.

The root נסה means *test*, and it is only attested in the one stem exhibited here. Noting the vowel under the first root letter and the *dagesh* in the second root letter, what stem is it?

Since the subject precedes the verb, we have a preposed construction. One of the functions of preposed clauses is to designate a “new topic or episode,” continuing the current foreground mode from the previous chapter. The introductory words of the verse indicate that we are entering a new episode in Abraham’s life. The preposed clause summarizes, like a headline, what is to follow. One expects the phrase to be followed by the first *wayyiqtol* of the discourse.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם. Each וַיֹּאמֶר labels the beginning of a new quotation and therefore, the beginning of a new direct speech discourse, some of which are so short we will not stop to specify their type. We see a full-blown example in Genesis 22:1–19 how many small direct speech discourses are embedded within and give detail to the **host discourse**, in this case, a historical narrative.

Since the Hebrew text does not include quotation marks, we must determine where they are on our own. Since the last-named person is *Elohim*, we would expect him to be the subject of וַיֹּאמֶר. The prepositional phrase modifies the verb, and thus אַבְרָהָם is the start of the quotation. It would be *possible* to read this as “And Abraham said to him,” but context makes that reading impossible.

וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי: Here is Abraham’s response, one word made of two parts: הֲנִי (shortened from הֲנִי + הֲנִי), a suffixed pronoun meaning *me*.

The colon-like mark at the end of the verse is called a **sof passuq**. This mark was added by the Masoretes who also added the *nikkud* to the previously unvocalized text long after the original text was written. Every Hebrew Bible verse ends with a *sof passuq*, which means, appropriately enough, *end of verse*. Printed Hebrew Bibles include the *sof passuq*, but temple scrolls do not. The final word preceding the *sof passuq* will always be marked with a *silluq ta’am*.

Verse 2

וַיֹּאמֶר. The next וַיֹּאמֶר indicates another switch in speakers, back to *Elohim*.

קח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְהוֹדָהְ. קח is the masculine singular command form of לקח, and means *Take!*

נָא is a *particle of entreaty* or exhortation meaning *I pray*, or in this case, *now*. We call a command form an *imperative*, and the imperative is one of the chief forms for the foreground of another of the direct speech genres called hortatory discourse. In **hortatory discourse**, the speaker commands or exhorts his audience (see 19.2c).

בְּנֶךָ is a noun plus possessive suffix (13.4). When figuring out the noun, do not forget that the vowels are shortened to their construct form before the suffix is added (also 13.4).

יְהוֹדָהְ uses the adjective יָחִיד, meaning *only*, as a noun, as in *only one*. An adjective used as a noun is called a *substantive*. Like בְּנֶךָ, a vowel in the word has shortened due to the addition of the suffix. In יָחִיד it is the *patakh* that has shortened to a *she-wa*. Notice that *your only one* does not name a second direct object but renames it. The lack of a *waw* helps us make this distinction.

אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ. Here we have an אֲשֶׁר clause, an expansion on Isaac (*whom . . .*).

The root אהב, which means *love*, does not take the usual translation recommended in 4.3h using the English helping verb *had*. It would give the sense that Abraham was no longer loving his son. Roots like אהב that refer to emotional and mental activity usually require present-tense translations. Remember, the meanings of the biblical Hebrew verb forms are not locked-on for time the way our English verb forms are.

אֶת־יִצְחָק. This phrase should technically have been above as a third DDO following the command קח־נָא. But it is here because of the conspicuous interruption that אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ makes in the series of DDO's. Rhythmically, אֶת־יִצְחָק seems to come as a surprise unveiling of the third key participant in the account because it follows the dependent clause which would typically have ended the thought.

וְלָךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַפְּרִיָה. Here is the second command from *Elohim* in the continuing hortatory discourse. לָךְ is the masculine singular command form made from the root הלך. Notice how it lost its first root letter the same way as קח did. לָךְ could be translated "for yourself," but is better left untranslated (see Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed., revised and expanded by John C. Beckman [University of Toronto Press, 2007], 107, §272). הַפְּרִיָה is the name of a place used as the *absolute* or last element in a construct chain (7.2c).

וְהֵעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶתֶר הַהָרִים. This is the third clause in the string of com-

mands that make up this hortatory discourse. The imperative form **וְהֵעֲלֵהוּ** is made of three parts:

The m. s. Hiphil stem imperative form of the root עלה	הֵעֲלֵה
The 3rd m. s. object suffix (him): הוּ -. The root's final <i>heh</i> is dropped before the suffix <i>heh</i> is added.	הֵעֲלֵהוּ
Then, of course, the <i>waw</i> .	וְהֵעֲלֵהוּ

The Hiphil stem gives a causative sense to a root, so when **עלה** in Qal means *go up*, in Hiphil, it means *cause to go up* (in smoke) or *to sacrifice*. With its suffixed pronoun and prefixed *waw* our word means *And sacrifice him*.

עֹלָה is another word from the root **עלה**. It is a noun meaning *sacrifice*. **אֶחָד** is the masculine word for *one*. **אֶחָד** together with **הַהַרְרִים** makes a construct chain. To find the noun in **הַהַרְרִים** take off the definite article and m. p. ending, **ים** . - .

אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ: If this construction were a dependent clause with a qatal form as we saw earlier in this verse, what would be the vowel under the *aleph*? _____ (4.3g) Rather it is a dependent clause with a *yiqtol* verb form which is used (in connection with the **אֲשֶׁר**) to expand on one of the mountains in reference to present or future time; it can be either *that I will show* or *that I show*.

The *yiqtol* is made with prefixed subject pronouns (some of which also need complements suffixed to the root). In **אֹמַר** the root is **אמר** and the prefixed pronoun is **א** so one of the *alephs* had to go, and without a trace left behind. **אמר** is one of the most common roots in the Hebrew Bible, and it has a few tricky forms. The only difference in the following are the vowels:

אָמַר	<i>Qal qatal</i> 3rd m. s.
אֹמֵר	<i>Qal participle</i> m. s.
אֲמַר	<i>Qal imperative</i> m. s.
אֹמֵר	<i>Qal yiqtol</i> 1st c. s.

It is worth memorizing these four forms.

וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם. וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם means *place*.

אֲשֶׁר-אָמַר-לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: An אֲשֶׁר clause, functioning as an expansion on place. Remember that this construction refers (usually) to the relative past (4.3b). In other words, when we use the mainline as a reference point in time—here, it is Abraham’s getting up and going—we know that *Elohim had spoken to him* at an earlier point in time.

Verse 4

בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי. Remember from above the significance of the *nikkud* with the preposition בְּ. This significance is confirmed by the definite article on the attributive adjective הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, which means *third*.

This phrase is not a clause. It does not have a verb, nor is it an equating of a predicate and a subject as we see in the Hebrew verbless clause. In this respect, it is somewhat of a “hanging fragment.” We might expect a וַיְהִי preceding it, to mark a change in time. Nevertheless, it acts as an adverb. We might translate it *On the third day*., followed by the translation of the following *wayyiqtol* clause.

וַיֵּשָׂא אֶבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו. What do the *hireq* under the prefix pronoun and the *dagesh forte* in the *shin* indicate is the missing root letter? _____ (9.2b). You should know the root.

You should know the root of עֵינָיו; the meaning of the suffix is covered above in the discussion of נֶעְרָיו

וַיֵּרָא אֶת-הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֵק. The word מֵרָחֵק is made of two parts, the preposition and the adjective מֵרָחֵק, meaning *afar*.

Lesson 18—Another embedded hortatory discourse and predictive narrative

Verse 5

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶבְרָהָם אֶל-נְעָרָיו. Here comes another direct speech discourse. What will it be—predictive narrative, instructional discourse, or perhaps more hortatory discourse?

... וַיֹּאמֶר. How do we determine where the clause ends? With a conjunctive *ta’am* (*qadmah*) on “and he said,” followed by a disjunctive *ta’am* (*geresh*) on “Abraham,” it might appear that what Abraham said should immediately follow. However, the next phrase has another disjunctive *ta’am* (*revi’a*), which is a *higher* level disjunctive than *geresh*. That means that the break that follows “to the servants” is a *stronger* break than the break immediately after “Abraham.” So the phrase “to the servants” should

be read *with* the first two words, and what Abraham said must follow “to the servants” instead of directly after “Abraham.” This analysis agrees with the semantics of the phrase.

שְׁבוּ-לְכֶם פֹּה עַם-הַחֲמוֹר. More hortatory discourse it is! שְׁבוּ is the m. p. imperative made from the root **יָשַׁב**. Notice, for the third time in our reading, how an imperative has lost its first root letter. Loss of the first root letter is not a rule for imperatives, but it is quite common. We will begin learning about imperatives in earnest in Lesson 19.

פֹּה means *here*. Hopefully, you remember חֲמוֹר from verse 3.

וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּעֱר גִּלְכָּה עַד-כֹּה. The verb גִּלְכָּה should look to you very much like the 1 c. p. *yiqtol* of אֵלֶיךָ, only with an additional *heh* on the end—because this is exactly what it is. This form of the *yiqtol* is partners with the imperative and one other verb form as the chief verbs form in the foreground of hortatory discourse. It is called the **cohortative**, and it is translated *Let us . .* in the plural and *Let me . .* in the singular (see 24.2c).

With the fronting of the words וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּעֱר in the clause, used by Abraham to shift the focus to himself and his son from the two servants, we can translate *As for me and the boy, let us go . . .*

. . . bit wait a minute! Does it make sense for Abraham in one breath to give a command to his servants to “stay here,” and in the next breath to ask for their permission to “let me and the boy go over there”? Or might he be giving encouragement to himself and his son by saying, “Let us go over there”? Neither possibility makes any sense. The word גִּלְכָּה is properly seen as being cohortative in form, *but not in meaning*. Abraham has moved from hortatory discourse to predictive narrative. In this case, the verb itself does not give us the final answer; an understanding of the semantics of the statement is absolutely necessary. Translate the cohortative form as a regular *yiqtol* referring to the future.

עַד-כֹּה means literally *until there* (imagine Abraham pointing) or *yonder*.

וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוּהָ. Notice, after removing the *waw*, the *nun* at the beginning of the word and the *heh* at the end look like the cohortative we just saw. This word is indeed another cohortative—grammatically. It is again a word that is cohortative in form, *but not in meaning*. Translate as a regular *yiqtol* referring to the future.

This is a disputed root in a disputed stem which we will discuss further later in the course. It is the only word in the Hebrew Bible which exhibits the four letters שְׁתַּחֲוּהָ in sequence, and it is best to be able to identify the sequence on sight. The verb means

prostrate oneself, worship.

וְנָשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם: The third in the series of cohortatives—in form, but not in meaning. Abraham intends that both he *and his son* will return. In other words, he believes in the power of *Elohim* to raise his son from the dead!

Verse 6

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצֵי הָעֵלֶה. The *wayyiqtol* resumes the foreground of the narrative.

Notice now that **עֵצֵי הָעֵלֶה** has become a “prop” in the account; it has become definite (6.3) as opposed to verse 3’s indefinite version.

וַיִּשֶׁם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ. What does the vowel under the prefixed subject pronoun indicate here? _____ (10.3a). There has been a lot of debate over the years about how old Isaac was. How young could Isaac have been and still be able to carry the wood from one mountain top to another?

וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלָתַי. **אֵשׁ** means *fire*, and **מַאֲכָלָתַי** means *knife*. We are aided in identifying **מַאֲכָלָתַי** as a feminine noun because most nouns ending in *tav* are feminine. It is constructed, as are many nouns, by the addition of a *mem* before a root, in this case, the root **אכל**, which means *eat*.

וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: We saw **שְׁנֵי** in verse 3. The suffix **־הֶם** means *them* (m. p.). **יַחְדָּו** is an adverb meaning *together*. There is a conspicuous similarity between this word and the **יַחְדָּו** in verse two.

Lesson 19—A stretch of dialogue

Verse 7

וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו. Since there was no dialogue in verse six, we need to mention the speaker explicitly as we begin this verse.

וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי. This is clearly not the “next step” in the narrative. It is, instead, an expansion of the last clause, adding to what was already stated (that Isaac was speaking to Abraham) exactly what Isaac said.

וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי בְנִי. We see a bit of custom here. Abraham responds to his son’s inquiry the same way he had earlier responded to God’s. The use of *my* with *father* by Isaac and with *son* by Abraham may sound a bit formal to us, but it probably did not sound so to them. Even in today’s Israel, Hebrews use the pronominal suffix **־י** with family-relationship words very affectionately.

וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִהּ הָאֵשׁ וְהַעֲצִים. Here Isaac demonstrates to us that he had participated in this type of worship before. He knew the props and probably the protocol. With the word הֲנִהּ Isaac asks his father to look.

וַאֲיֵה תִשָּׂה לְעֹלָה: The first word means *And where ...* We have here a verbless clause that needs an *is*. A שֶׁה is a *lamb*. There is a constant tension in this account between what can be seen and what cannot be seen. For instance, they see the fire and the wood but they do not see the lamb for the offering. We readers see that God is testing Abraham, but Abraham can only lift up his eyes and see the dreaded mountaintop.

Verse 8

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם.

אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לּוֹ תִשָּׂה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי. Here we have our first X-yiqtol construction of the reading. Its obvious function is to answer Isaac's question, although in an oblique way. In this case, the preposed clause does bring a focus on the first word of the clause: *Elohim*.

Translation of יִרְאֶה might be either English present or future. In answer to Isaac's question Abraham uses the grammatical construction which puts the focus on *Elohim*. Abraham here assures his son that God does see even though they cannot. (You might want to consult a lexicon for רָאָה; if *see* doesn't quite seem to fit the context, perhaps a different translation of the verb will fit better.)

לוֹ is an ambiguous reference. Does it mean *it* as a reference to the acquisition of a lamb or does it mean *for Him(self)* as a reference to *Elohim*?

The word בְּנִי is a vocative (19.3), a word in direct speech that names the addressee.

Thus ends the somewhat lengthy (by Hebrew Bible standards) dialogue. Aside from the string of וַיֹּאמֶר's, there is a sequence of direct speeches, alternating between speakers. A narrative will usually shift from its foreground to an embedded speech by one of the speech formulae (for example, וַיֹּאמֶר or לֵאמֹר). The direct speech uses verb forms other than the *wayyiqtol* of the narrative. When the speech ends, the narrative resumes with a *wayyiqtol* (in our case, delineating each change in speakers). The embedded speech is treated as its own discrete, self-contained discourse (for example, hortatory discourse or predictive narrative).

וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: The narrative resumes with a *wayyiqtol*, the "next step" after Abraham's last speech. Here, our doubts about the successful continuation of the expedi-

tion are erased by the conspicuous repetition of the clause from verse 6. In biblical Hebrew, direct speeches are often rather short (as these were), but they can be longer, spanning multiple verses before a quotation comes to an end.

Lesson 20—Uninterrupted Narrative Foreground

Verse 9

וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם. Continuation of the foreground.

אֲשֶׁר אָמַר-לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים. A new אֲשֶׁר clause expands on “the place” of the preceding clause.

וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אֲבְרָהָם אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּי. The vowel under the prefixed subject pronoun tells you what letter is missing from the root? _____ (8.3). בנה means *build*.

The word מִזְבֵּיחַ is another noun like מִאֲכָלֶת made from a root with a preformative *mem* that turns the root into a noun. In this case the root is זבח meaning *slaughter*, and the noun means *altar*.

וַיַּעֲרֶךְ אֶת-הָעֵצִים. The root ערך in the *Qal* stem means *arrange*.

וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ. The root עקד in the *Qal* stem means *bind*. Note how the *nikkud* is exactly the same as the 1st guttural verb that precedes it.

וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ מִמַּעַל לָעֵצִים: Is it ironic that first Abraham placed the wood on Isaac, and then placed Isaac on the wood?

Remember from verse 3 to contrast אֹתוֹ and אֶתוֹ. מִמַּעַל לָעֵצִים means *above the wood*.

Verse 10

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבְרָהָם אֶת-יָדוֹ. The narrative is moving forward very quickly now as we approach the climax.

וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הַמַּאֲכָלֶת לְשַׁחַט אֶת-בְּנוֹ: What verb form is לְשַׁחַט? _____ (16.4a).

The root שחט means *kill*, but the root is worth a closer look. Check it in your Hebrew-English dictionary. There are several, more general words for *kill* than this one. Notice how an infinitive can have its own DDO.

Verse 11

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהֵי מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם. What is the function of this *wayyiqtol*? Is this simply the “next step,” *and then*? Or do we need something other than the general “and then” to reflect the connection between this verb and the preceding

verbs? Perhaps you remember מִלְאָד from Lesson 7.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָהָם | אֲבָרָהָם. As is often the case in biblical Hebrew, וַיֹּאמֶר works in conjunction with another verb of speech. In this case, וַיִּקְרָא notes only how the speech was said. Then וַיֹּאמֶר expands on the first verb, providing the quotation. We might reflect the connection in English by translating *He called . . . , saying*.

וַיֹּאמֶר הֲגַנִּי: This is the many-times repeated response of Abraham in this account. His own ability to see may be limited all through the account, but he is willing, himself, to be seen.

Lesson 21—The third embedded hortatory discourse

Verse 12

וַיֹּאמֶר

אֶל-תְּשֻׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל-תַּנְעֹר. We just learned the use of אֶל in Lesson 21.

וְאֶל-תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה. Notice how the root עָשָׂה has lost its final *heh*. This is typical of the *yiqtol* form of 3rd *heh* verbs in hortatory discourse.

מְאוּמָה means *anything, something*.

כִּי | עָתָה יִדְעֵתִי. The כִּי clause (*for* or *because*) here gives the cause of the previous command. Do not confuse עָתָה with אָתָּה. As for the time of the English verb you use in translation, do you remember from verse 2 what to do with *qatal*s of roots that pertain to mental and emotional activity?

כִּי-יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה. A different use of כִּי: the כִּי here functions as an expansion (*that*), used as a complement to a verb of seeing or knowing. The word יִרָא is an adjective from the root יָרָא meaning *fear*. It is used in construct here with אֱלֹהִים, a sure giveaway that it is being used substantively (as a noun). Does the clause have S-P or P-S word order? (2.7c). It is the word order we would expect for the angel's description of Abraham. It is like saying, *One who fears God (and not something else) are you*.

וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת-בְּנֵךְ אֶת-יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי: Here a preposed clause has the function as the first כִּי to give the reason for the prohibitive command. The root חָשַׁךְ means *withhold*. מִמֶּנִּי is the preposition מִן in a lengthened form with the pronominal suffix -נִי, meaning *me*.

Notice in this clause the third use of a יָחַד-word, made all the more conspicuous because it is not a particularly common word in the Hebrew Bible.

Verse 13

וַיִּשָׂא אֲבָרְהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו. Notice the parallelism with verse 4.

וַיִּרְא. The parallelism continues.

וַהֲנִיה-אֵיל אַחַר נֶאֱחָז בַּסֶּבֶךְ בְּקֶרְנוֹ. This is an X-qatal construction.

The X: אֵיל אַחַר means *a ram behind*. *Behind* what? Probably Abraham, but we do not know.

The qatal: נֶאֱחָז The *nun* on the beginning of the root could be a prefixed subject pronoun of a *yiqtol* form, but that does not make sense in the context and the *nikkud* is incorrect. It is the preformative that identifies the Niphal stem. אַחָז in the Niphal stem means *be seized*. Translate *It was a ram behind (him) that was seized*.

בַּסֶּבֶךְ: סֶבֶךְ means *thicket*.

בְּקֶרְנוֹ means *horn*. The preposition בְּ this time indicates, as it often does in Hebrew, *the means*, and we translate it *by*. For an explanation of the suffix, see verse two's נְעָרָיו.

Of great interest here is the use of the word הֲנִיה. Although the word has been used many times in this account, this is the first time in the account that the word is used in the regular narration, that is, *not within direct speech*. In such a case, a biblical narrator signals the switch within the narrative from the detached perspective of a third-person narrator to the perspective of one of the participants within the narrative. With הֲנִיה, the narrator signals us to see as Abraham saw. The most effective translation of this clause is therefore English present tense. Thematically, we can say that when he sees the ram, Abraham's eyes have finally opened to what we knew all along, that God was testing him.

These observations give us a way to indicate the function of this clause in the narrative: to say what Abraham saw. (Notice that this is not in our list in the summary chart. The list there is not exhaustive; sometimes one must create a new function. "Addition" might work here, but it doesn't seem quite fitting.)

וַיִּלֶּךְ אֲבָרְהָם.

וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הָאֵיל.

וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַּחַת בְּנוֹ: The first word is clearly a *wayyiqtol*. It is constructed exactly like the imperative of the same root in verse 2, including the pronominal suffix וְהוּא-, except for the *waw-patakh-dagesh forte* unit added and a *yod* in the place of the prefor-

mative *heh*. Like the imperative in verse 2, this *wayyiqtol* form is the Hiphil stem.

תַּחַת means *in place of*.

Verse 14

וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִרְהֶם שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא. In this clause הַהוּא means *that*. The words הוּא, הִיא, הֵם, and הֵן—like זֶה, זֹאת, and אֵלֶּה—can be used as demonstrative adjectives (18.2b). When used in this way they will follow the noun they modify and agree with the noun in number, gender, and definiteness. Here is a complete review:

The Demonstratives:

English Gender	this	these	that	those
masculine	זֶה	אֵלֶּה	הוּא	הֵם
feminine	זֹאת	אֵלֶּה	הִיא	הֵן

יְהוָה | יִרְאֶה. Most Hebrew names are sentences. This is a particularly good example. Notice, throughout the episode, how the letter sequence **ירא** appears in different contexts, drawing together the meanings *see* and *fear*. This kind of root-play is common in biblical Hebrew and is called *paronomasia*. You may want to look ahead now to the explanation of *Leitwort* in Lesson 33.3.

אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם. This אֲשֶׁר clause functions as a consequence (“therefore”) of the preceding clause. The verb is a *yiqtol* form in the *Niphal* stem. Translate *which is said today*.

בְּתֵר יִהְיֶה יִרְאֶה. We treat this as a mini direct speech discourse. The clause is a good example of how the Hebrew Bible can still be a mystery. There are several possible meanings.

1. The verb with a *sere* under the *yod* is the *Niphal* stem and means *It (or he) is (or shall be) seen*.
 - a. *In a mountain, it is YHWH who is (or shall be) seen.*
 - b. with the mountain and YHWH as a construct chain: *It is in the mountain of YHWH that it shall be seen.*
2. The *nikkud* with verb may be a misinterpretation by the Masoretes who inserted

the *nikkud* into the consonantal text around 1000 CE. Remove one dot from beneath the *yod*, and we would have *In a mountain, it is YHWH who sees (or will see)*.

Which explanation do you find most likely? In any case, this chapter is a good example of how the Biblical Hebrew writer will explore the range of meanings for one root in one account. (And this does not take into account the other possible translations of ראה).

Verse 15

וַיִּקְרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָהָם שְׁנִית מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם: שְׁנִית means *a second time, again*.

Lesson 22—An embedded predictive narrative

Verse 16

וַיֹּאמֶר. See the explanation in v. 11.

בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם-יְהוָה. The preposition בְּ once again indicates means, so it can be translated *by*, with its suffix, in this case, *by Myself*.

נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי is a *qatal* form. The preformative נ identifies the stem as *Niphal*, and you should know what the suffixed subject pronoun means. The root שבע in the *Niphal* stem means *swear an oath*. The *qatal* form by default shows perfective aspect and past tense. Therefore, translate the verb as *I have sworn*. (We will learn how to translate verbs in the *Niphal* stem later in the course, and find out that this is not a typical translation for the *Niphal* stem.)

נְאֻם marks an utterance of YHWH. We can translate it *says YHWH*. This word is often a signal that a +projection discourse is to follow, very often predictive narrative. Since YHWH Himself is swearing in this clause, the likelihood of a predictive narrative discourse is even greater.

כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה. The introductory כִּי can mean *for* or *because*. The combination יַעַן אֲשֶׁר means *because*. Together we can simply translate all three as *because*. The three words introduce a dependent clause. The function is clearly to state the cause or reason for something. Ordinarily, we expect that “something” to be from the previous clause. But does that make sense for this clause? It could perhaps be preparing for the first clause or clauses in the next verse. Does that connection seem more reasonable, giving the causes for the actions in verse 17?

עָשִׂיתָ. In translating this word the usual past time translation does not work. Here, instead of the helping word *had*, which is usually recommended and would give us a *past perfect* translation, the helping word *have* would be more appropriate, giving us the English *present perfect* construction. The English *present perfect* refers to something which was done in the past and still affects the present. That certainly describes the situation for Abraham.

וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֵה אֶת־יְחִידְךָ : Another repetition of this clause from above further emphasizes Abraham's passing of the test. The most reasonable discourse function of this clause is expansion. Although our summary chart indicates expansion as a possible function for a preposed clause when it is asyndetic, that would not preclude this from being the case with a syndetic clause. This clause clearly expands on "this thing" of the previous clause by spelling out what it was.

Verse 17

כִּי־בָרַךְ אֲבָרְכֶךָ. Notice the same root בָּרַךְ meaning in the *Piel* *bless* is used twice here. The first time it is in a form we have not learned yet called the **infinitive absolute** and the second time as a *Piel* 1st c. s. *yiqtol*. The double use of the root using the infinitive absolute and a regularly conjugated form is a way of emphasizing the verity of the statement. We often translate with a *surely, truly* or *indeed*.

וְהִרְבָּה אֲרֵבָה אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָחֹל. Again, a root, this time רָבַה in the *Hiphil* stem meaning *multiply*, is used twice, first in the infinitive absolute form and then in the regularly conjugated *yiqtol* form. Be careful not to over-generalize and think that every occurrence of a repeated root is another example of this construction. We will learn to identify infinitive absolutes in Lesson 34.2.

This is now the second in a series of *yiqtol* forms. *Ordinarily, it is the weqatal form that takes the foreground of a predictive narrative like this one.* However, the writer here is using the infinitive absolute + *yiqtol* instead. He cannot use the infinitive absolutes with the *weqatal* verb form because the infinitive absolute bumps the conjugated verb out of the first position in the clause, the only place a *weqatal* can be found. Even the emphasizing power of the infinitive absolutes is therefore increased because they are a break from the ordinary conventions of predictive narrative. *Breaks with convention are themselves part of a larger convention that says that such breaks create emphasis.*