

LESSON 19: Instructions (Part 2): Imperative Sequences; An Oddity.

VOCABULARY

יְהוֹשָׁפָט	Jehoshaphat
יְהוּ	Jehu
חֵצֵר	court
גִּלְעָד	Gilead
דֶּלֶת	door
שֶׁמֶן	oil
דְּבַשׁ	honey
מְאֹד	much, very

Verbs

נָחַם	be sorry, regret, have compassion, change one's mind (he changed his mind) ¹¹⁸
חָשַׁב	plan, reckon (he planned)
יָצַק	pour, cast (he poured)
רָץ	run, flee (he ran) [רוץ in lexicons]
שָׁכַב	lie down (he lay down)
שָׁכַח	forget (he forgot)

IMPERATIVES (PART 2): SEQUENCES

The most common way of giving a series of instructions is not what one might expect (i.e., it is not imperative + imperative + imperative). Rather, the usual sequence of instructions--all of which must be translated as imperatives-- is:

imperative¹¹⁹ + converted-to-future + converted-to-future (etc.)

¹¹⁸ נָחַם is classified as a Piel verb. While we have not yet distinguished between Qal and Niphal verbs (see lesson 22), the chief consonantal difference is that for first נ Piel verbs the first נ does not disappear. Thus you will see וינחם (c.f. Jonah 3:10) instead of

¹¹⁹ Or two imperatives in a row followed by converted-to-future + converted-to-future.

The sequence can also include negative instructions, such as:

imperative + converted-to-future + negated future + converted-to-future

These series can span many verses and may have other types of phrases and clauses strewn throughout (including other verbs).

Jeremiah 26 provides a good example of a long imperative sequence, containing positive and negative instructions (instructions are boldfaced). Here the sequence is imperative + converted-to-future + negated future + converted-to-future:

26:2 כה אמר יהוה עמד בחצר בית יהוה ודברת על כל ערי יהודה הבאים להשתחות (definite participle) בית יהוה את כל הדברים אשר צויתוך לדבר אליהם **אל תגרע** (omit) דבר 3 אולי (to worship) ישמעו וישבו איש מדרכו הרעה ונחמתי אל הרעה אשר אנכי חשב לעשות להם (perhaps) מפני רע מעלליהם 4 **ואמרת** אליהם כה אמר יהוה . . . (מעלל=deed, practice)

26:2 Thus says YHWH: “Stand in the court of the house of YHWH and speak to all the cities of Judah who are coming to worship at the house of YHWH all the words which I have commanded you to speak to them--don’t omit a word!

3 Perhaps they will hear and each will turn from his evil way and I will change my mind concerning the calamity which I am planning to do to them because of the evil of their deeds. 4 And say to them, ‘Thus says YHWH. . . .’”

Note that the *converted-to-future* verbs in this sequence *must* be translated as imperatives and *not* as “and you will. . .”.

(See 1 Samuel 6:7-9 for another example.)

¹²⁰The word בית often lacks a ב prefix and yet often must be translated as if it had a ב prefix.

THE ה DIRECTIVE

Adding a ה to the end of a noun (including proper names) can indicate *to* or *toward* a place. It is quite similar to having the preposition אל before a word.

ארץ	ארצה	to the earth
שמים	השמימה	toward the heavens

ויקם יונה לברח ל תרשישה מלפני יהוה	But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of YHWH (Jonah 1:3).
ואלישע שב הגלגלה	And Elisha returned to Gilgal (2 Kgs 4:38)
וירד שמשון תמנתה	And Samson went down to Timnath (Judg 14:1)

As you have already seen in different situations, if the noun already ends with ה, then the original ה turns into a ת:

ויַעַל דָּוִד וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵלְתָּהּ	And David and all Israel went up to Baalah (1 Chr 13:6)
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AN ODDITY

Some verbs, mainly plural ones ending in a *u* vowel (ו), have an extra final ן on the end, usually with masculine plural future verbs. No special translation significance should be attached to this phenomenon.¹²¹ This situation occurs a few times in this lesson's translation exercise.

¹²¹For a contrary view, see Gesenius Hebrew Grammar §58 *i-l*.