

Exodus 33:1-23

(33:1)

עָלֵה – Good time to practice Qal imperative of I guttural and III ה verb.

שָׁבַע = "swear", Niphal "cause to take an oath" under BDB 989a. Any special reason Yhwh takes the Niphal for this root?

אֶתְנַנֶּה – Exactly where we can expect a 3fs “heavy” suffix. With simple prefix or cohortative.

(33:2)

גָּרַשׁ = “drive out, cast out” under BDB 176a. Arm גְּרַשׁ Pael, Itpael (of divorce). Charles Isbell notes that 95% of waw + suffix forms are waw-reversive.

(33:3)

זָוַב = “flow, gush” under BDB 264b. Arm דִּיב דּוּב. Arb *dāba* = “melt, dissolve, flow”.

חָלַב = “milk” under BDB 316a.

דָּבַשׁ = “honey” under BDB 185a.

קָשָׁה = “be hard, severe, fierce”, Hiphil “make difficult, make severe, make hard” under BDB 904a.

עֲרַף = “back of neck, neck” under BDB 791a.

אֶכְלָה – Difficult to parse. This is not אָכַל but כָּלָה Piel prefix 1cs + 2ms suffix = “be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, spent” under BDB 477a. Ouch. What on earth happened to III ה? Worth taking a look at this one.

So Yhwh sets the scene. He will keep his promise. And he will not “go up” with the people he delivered from bondage in Egypt. Because they are stubborn and he might “end” them.

(33:4)

אבל = Hitpael “mourn, grieve” under BDB 5a, 5b.

עָדִי = “ornaments” (with which one is decked) under BDB 723b. Root עדה II = “ornament, deck oneself”.

(33:5)

אתם – Interesting. “You (plural) (are) a people”. Makes sense.

רָגַע = “a moment” under BDB 921a.

הוֹרֵד – Good chance to learn Hiphil imperative 2ms I י verb. Not הוֹרֵד not הוֹרִיד. That is because imperative forms never ended in a short vowel and this makes a difference. Long vowel in originally closed syllable becomes short.

Grammatical note = Independent personal pronoun as the subject of a verbless clause. An independent personal pronoun can be the subject of a clause that does not have a verb. In this role the pronoun usually functions for clarity rather than for emphasis.

- אתם עם־קשה ערף *You are a stiff-necked people.*
neck hard of people *you* Exodus 33:5

See Williams, §108b.

(33:6)

נָצַל = (not Qal) Hiphil “take away, snatch away; rescue, recover; deliver from” under BDB 664b. Here Hitpael so something like “take from oneself”.

Wait. Why is it so important to remove their jewelry? Exodus 32.

(33:7)

אָהַל = “tent” under BDB 13b. Akk *âlu* “settlement, city”. Arb *ʾahl* “fellow-dwellers, family”. Sab אָהַל. Sab and Ph PN אָהַל־אָב. Root אָהַל I = “settle down(?)”.

נָטַח = “stretch out, spread out, extend, incline, bend” under BDB 639b. Arb *n-t-w* “stretch out”.

חַוּץ = “the outside, a street” under BDB 299b.

מִחַנֵּה = “encampment, camp” under BDB 334a.

רָחַק = “be (or) become far, distant”, Hiphil “make (or) exhibit distance, be gone far; remove, put far away” under BDB 934b. Akk especially adjective *rûqu* = “far”. Compare Arb *rahi(y)qu(n)* = “choice wine (from a distance)”. Sab רַחַק. Arm רַחִיק and רַחֵק.

מוֹעֵד = “appointed time, place” under BDB 417a. How can you find what root this is under in BDB? מֵ is probably a noun preformative. That leaves וַעַד. Remember that many 1st י verbs were originally 1st ו so maybe that is where the ו came from.

בָּקַשׁ = Piel “seek” under BDB 134b. Ph בַּקַּשׁ.

Grammatical note = Aspect

3.2.2 Imperfect (Yiqtol Form / Prefix Conjugation)

The imperfect has an even less precise time value than the perfect. In general, the imperfect views actions, events, or states from the inside, meaning the situation is underway or in process. The speaker or writer views the situation as still continuing, in the process of accomplishment, just taking place, or imminent. The imperfect may assume an indicative mood so that the speaker or writer makes an objective statement, which, however, makes no reference to the beginning or end of the situation. As with the perfect aspect, context must determine whether the situation is past, present, or future. At other times, the imperfect may assume a subjunctive or hypothetical mood, describing a dependent situation that is only contingent or possible. Thus the speaker or writer uses the imperfect when viewing an action as nonspecific, habitual, or probable.

This great variety of uses for the imperfect, together with its close association to the modals (see Section 3.3), can be explained partially by developments in the history of the Hebrew language near the end of the second millennium B.C.E. On the basis of comparative Semitic evidence, it appears the prefixed forms in Biblical Hebrew were preceded in older Hebrew by four distinct forms: an indicative imperfect (present-future) *yaqtulu*, a subjunctive

yaqtula, a jussive *yaqtul*, and a preterite *yaqtul*. When Hebrew words lost their final vowels (approximately 1100 B.C.E.), these forms became largely indistinguishable. This may explain why the Bible's use of the imperfect conjugation includes a preterite use and several "contingent" uses) vestiges of the subjunctive in Proto-Hebrew). In addition, the volitive modals (see Section 3.3) suggest *yaqtulu* and the jussive *yaqtul* had merged completely by the time Biblical Hebrew was written.

The following semantic categories are helpful in further classifying verbs in the imperfect.

(b) Customary – denotes an action occurring regularly or customarily. The action may be in the past, in which case the customary imperfect is *iterative*, emphasizing the repeated nature of the action: וּמֹשֶׁה יָקַח אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וּנְטָה־לוֹ מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה “Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp” (Exodus 33:7). See Arnold and Choi, Sections 3.2.2, 69-70, and 3.2.2, b, 71.

Grammatical note = Nonfinites

3.4.2 Infinitive Absolute

The infinitive absolute is also both “atemporal” and “apersonal”, meaning that only the context determines the time/aspect features of the action, as well as the subject of the action. This results from the fact that the infinitive absolute, like the infinitive construct, is also uninflected. By contrast, unlike the infinitive construct, the infinitive absolute does not take prepositions or pronominal suffixes. Even though the two Hebrew infinitives appear similar in form, they had different origins and histories.

The following semantic categories are helpful in classifying the infinitive absolute.

(a) Manner – describes the way in which an action or situation is performed or the attendant circumstances of the action. This is an infinitive absolute of a different root than the finite verb (and hence not the *emphatic* infinitive absolute). It typically follows the finite verb and modifies it adverbially: וּנְטָה־לוֹ מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה הִרְחַק מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה “and he [Moses] pitched it [the tent of meeting] outside the camp, a good distance [literally: ar off] from the camp (Exodus 33:7). See Arnold and Choi, Sections 3.4.2, 86, and 3.4.2, c, 89.

(33:8)

נצב = Niphal “take one’s stand, stand” under BDB 662a. Ph (Pun) נצב and other forms “monument”. Nab Palm נצב “set up”. Zinj נצב “statue”. Palm מצבא “image”. Akk (perhaps) *naṣābu* (Amarna). Arm נצב. Arb *naṣaba* “set up, erect”. Sab נצב “cippus”.

פֶּתַח = “opening, doorway, entrance” under BDB 835b.

נבט = Hiphil “look, regard, pay attention to” under BDB 613b. Arb *nabaṭa* “well, issue forth (of water)”. Akk *nabātu* “shine”. Sab נבט “protector” PN נבטאל “God has seen, considered”.

(33:9)

עמוד = “pillar, column” under BDB 765a. Root עמד = “take one’s stand, stand”.

עָנָן = “cloud-mass, cloud” under BDB 777b. Root ענן = (perhaps) “cover; appear, present oneself; intervene as an obstacle”.

(33:10)

Hebraicists used to identify this as Hitpael(?!?) שָׁחָה but now the consensus is this is the Hishtaphel conjugation (cause oneself to do something which occurs only with the root חוה It is still listed as שָׁחָה = Hitpael “bow down, prostrate oneself” under BDB 1005a. Pause to review the infinitive construct of 3rd ה verbs ends in חֹת so *hištaḥāwō(w)t*. In the Hitpael if the 1st root is a sibilant the חֹת infix swaps places so one can see why Hebraists used to think this was a Hitpael or Hitpael.

(33:11)

רֵעַ II = “friend, companion, fellow” under BDB 945b. Root רעה II = “associate with”.

שרת = Piel “minister, serve” under BDB 1058a.

מיש מוש I = “depart, remove”, Hiphil “remove, take away” under BDB 559a. Arb *māsa* (y) = “walk with elegant, proud, self-conceited gait”.

(33:12)

הָעֵל – Ouch. Good practice Hiphil imperative 2ms of III הָ verb. Not even תעלה?

Pay attention to the argument Moses offers. “Look, you said... and you said... and you also said...” Moses holds Yhwh to his own words.

חַן I = "favour, grace" under BDB 336a. Root חנן I = “shew favour, be gracious”.

¹בָּשָׁם

(33:13)

Awkward phrasing here but basically understandable.

²הוֹדַעְנִי ... אֶת־דַּרְכְּךָ

(33:14)

³וַיֹּאמֶר

נוּחַ = “rest, settle down and remain” under BDB 628a. Here Hiphil. Difficult to parse. Note the form and connecting vowel before suffix.

Pay attention now. Does Yhwh say he will go with Moses and the people? Yes his “presence/face/countenance” will go. Maybe that is the same thing. Maybe it is not.

⁴פְּנֵי יִלְכֶנּוּ

(33:15)

Wait. God says his presence will go... and Moses says “if your presence does not go... do not bring us up from here”.

¹ “Septuagint παρα παντας” so “by all”.

² “Septuagint εμφανισον μοι σεαυτον compare 18^{a-a}; Vulgate *ostende mihi faciem tuam*”.

³ “Septuagint^{Fcmin} adds αυτω κυριος, Syriac adds *mrj' lmwš'*”. Phew!

⁴ “Septuagint αυτος προπορευσομαι σου, Syriac *qdmj zl* = לִפְנֵי לְךָ”.

⁵פניך הלכים

⁶תעלנו

(33:16)

אָפּוּ or אַפּוּ = (enclitic particle) “here, then” under BDB 66a. Used in connection with interrogatory pronouns or adverbs.

פלה = Hiphil “make separate, set apart” under BDB 811b. Pay attention. This is suffix 3ms + 1cp suffix. “It will distinguish us”.

Why use אדמה here instead of ארץ?

Grammatical note = A cause can be expressed with an infinitive construct that is preceded by יען, by על, by ב, or by מן. See Williams §535. The example in this verse is described as “possible”.

(33:17)

Again pay close attention. God is persuaded. Why? Why does God agree to this?

⁷בשם

(33:18)

הראני – Again pay attention to the form Hiphil imperative + 1cs suffix.

כבדך – Pausal forms are revealing. Rather than simply כבדך.

⁸הראני ... את־כבדך

⁵ “Septuagint αὐτος σου πορευη (Septuagint^{Mss} adds μεθ’ημων compare Syriac and 16)”.

⁶ “Septuagint has singular suffix”. Hunh. So “do not take me” (= Moses?).

⁷ “As verse 12^a”.

⁸ “Septuagint εμφανισον μοι σεαυτον compare 13^{a-a}”. We consistently see text critical issues revolving around the “face/presence” of God. Which makes sense since it is one of the more difficult parts of the text for us to interpret.

(33:19)

עבר = “pass over, through, by, pass on” under BDB 716b. Akk *eberu*. Arb (*abara*. Sab עבר = Hb עָבַר).

הֲנַן = Arm הָנַן. Arb *hanna* “yearn towards, long for, be merciful, compassionate, favourable, inclined towards”. Sab הן in PN. Ph הֲנַן in הן “favour”. Akk *annu* “grace, favour”. Note the final geminate form which is often difficult to parse.

רחם = (denominative) Piel “have compassion” under BDB 933b.

אני ... על-פניך⁹

בשם¹⁰

Not quite sure what to make of this sweeping claim. God shows compassion and mercy to whomever he wants...?

Grammatical note = *Subordinate Clauses*

5.2.13 *Relative Clause*

This standards subordinate to a main clause and attributes a quality, state, or verbal idea to the main clause. It describes an antecedent (or referent), which normally comes immediately before the clause. Biblical Hebrew has both *restrictive* and *nonrestrictive* relative clauses. The former (also known as a *limiting* relative clause) functions to make a distinction between more than one member of a group or class. The restrictive relative clause thus identifies a referent by distinguishing it from other possibilities or ambiguities that may be associated with it. The less commonly occurring nonrestrictive relative clause (also known as a *nonlimiting* relative clause) simply marks a general attribute of the antecedent without setting it off against other members of its “class”. Thus the nonrestrictive relative clause provides additional information about the referent without distinguishing it from another set of related referents. Biblical Hebrew uses no specific syntactical or lexical means of marking which type of relative clause is intended – restrictive or nonrestrictive. The interpret must rely on context to discern the general sense of the relative clause.

⁹ “Septuagint εγω παρελευσομαι προτερος σου τη δοξη μου”.

¹⁰ “Septuagint επι τω ονοματι μου”.

(c) *Paranomasia* – The repetition of a word both in the main clause and the relative clause can be used to express a sense of indeterminateness: וְחַנְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֶחֶן וּרְחַמְתִּי וְחַנְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֶרְחַם “and I will favor *the one* I favor [literally: *that* (one) I favor], and I will pity *the one* I pity [literally: *that* (one) I pity” (Exodus 33:19). See Arnold and Choi, Sections 5.2.13, 197-198, and 5.2.13, c, 199.

(33:20)

יכל = “be able, have power” under BDB 407a. Note the Qal U vowel pattern. ??? or is this a I *וּ somehow reasserting itself – which seems unlikely?

היה = Piel “preserve alive, let live” under BDB 310b, 311b.

Okay so Moses can see the goodness of God but cannot see God’s face... because no human can see the face of God and live.

(33:21)

נצב = Niphal “take one’s stand, stand” under BDB 662a. Ph (Pun) נצב and other forms “monument”. Nab Palm נצב “set up”. Zinj נצב “statue”. Palm מצבא “image”. Akk (perhaps) *naṣābu* (Amarna). Arm נַצַּב. Arb *naṣaba* “set up, erect”. Sab נצב “cippus”.

צור = “rock, cliff” under BDB 849b.

Grammatical note = *Prepositions*

4.1.4 אֶת־ / אֵת

(b) *Spatial* – denotes a sense of nearness or proximity: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הִנֵּה מְקוֹם אֵתִי “Yhwh said, See, there is a place *beside* me” (Exodus 33:21). See Arnold and Choi, Sections 4.1.4, 115, and 4.1.4, b, 116.

(33:22)

נִקְרָה = “rock, crevice” under BDB 669a. Very rare. Root נקר = “bore, pick, dig”.

שָׁכַף I = “cover, lay over (so as to screen)” under BDB 967b. Hapax. || סכף.

כף = "hollow, or flat of the hand, palm, sole of foot, pan" under BDB 496a. Arm. Akk *kappu* "hand, pan". Arb *kaffu(n)* "palm, hand".

(33:23)

והסרתי – Good practice parsing Hiphil suffix 1cs hollow verb.

אָחֹר = "the hinder side, back part" (in singular usually in adverbial phrases) under BDB 30b. Arb *ʔuhuru(n)*.

לא יראו – Hard to remember sometimes that "face" is plural.