"THE IMPERATIVE OF PURPOSE"
A CASE STUDY IN APPLYING THE
GRAPHICAL SEARCH ENGINE IN BIBLEWORKS.¹

Traditionally, grammar books list the imperative in the category of verbs that convey commands, strong wishes and exhortations. Another term for category under which scholars list the imperative is that of "volitive" verbs. The ancient Hebrew language, however, employs the imperative not only to express commands, but also to convey the idea of "purpose." More specifically, to express purpose, Hebrew links the imperative with the coordinating conjunction "and" (Waw), setting this construction in a longer chain of verbs where the "Waw imperative" normally comes in the final part of the construction. As we will argue in this paper, the Hebrew language can start a "purpose" construction by linking the Waw imperative with a cohortative, jussive or an imperfect verb. The reader will note, however, that a Waw-imperative construction does not always and necessarily convey the sense of purpose. Furthermore, certain Waw-imperative constructions may be translated differently by different authors. We will deal with these differences and compare our approach with the approach of other works on this subject. In order to obtain the Waw-imperative construction, we will employ the Graphical Search Engine from the BibleWorks program, which allows for much syntactical depth and flexibility in recovering a construction such as this in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

**Key words:** syntax, purpose, imperative, BibleWorks

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¹ This paper is a revised study that I submitted as part of the requirements for the doctoral program at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Kaufman (2000).
In general, grammarians of the Hebrew language connect the idea of “pure expression of a purpose or result” with the use of construct infinitives - with or without the preposition l – or with lmʿn – and the like.² A second category of constructions which can express purpose in Hebrew is the one involving “the volitive moods,” namely, the cohortative, jussive, and the imperative.³ Jouon classifies these as “indirect or logically subordinate volitiver,” because they must always be preceded by another verb in order that the condition of purpose obtain.

In the first place, the cohortative of purpose may be preceded by an imperative (Gen. 27:4; 24:56), by a jussive (1Sam. 27:5; Is. 5:19), and by a first cohortative (Ex. 3:3). Secondly, and similarly, the jussive of purpose may be preceded an imperative (1 Ki. 21:2; 2Ki. 6:17), a cohortative (no definite examples given), and a first jussive (Jonah 1:11 - with an interrogative; Gen. 42:2; Lev. 26:43). Furthermore, the imperative of purpose will follow a cohortative (1Ki. 1:12) and a jussive (Ps. 128:5; Jer. 35:15).⁴ We will also note the connection of two consecutive imperatives, which seems to be the most frequent use of the imperative as "telic" (Gen. 42:18; 2Ki. 5:14).⁵

In the following paper, it is the third of these constructions (with the volitive verbs), namely, the telic imperative, that we will want to analyze.⁶ To select the data, we have employed the Graphical Search Engine (GSE) in the program BibleWorks, where we selected the form of the imperative verb preceded by the Waw conjunction. As evident in the picture bellow, out of approximately 2651 imperatives, the Hebrew Old Testament contains 704 forms where the Waw conjunction preceeds the imperative. The question we will want to raise is how many of these

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³ Ibid., 380-81. Jouon believes that, since the distinction between the “consecutive” and the “purpose” Waw does not produce any morphological distinctions, one must use the context, the syntax, or in some cases a comparison with Arabic in order to make the difference between purpose and consecution. For the usage of the cohortative in "purpose clauses" see Waltke and O’Connor, Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 576ff. See also Moran, "The Hebrew Language in Its Northwest Semitic Background," The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright, ed. G. E. Wright (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961; reprinted, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1979), 54–72, esp. 64.
⁴ Strangely enough, Jouon does not offer any examples of the jussive followed by a telic imperative occurring in a “prose” setting, which normally should be the most accurate literary context in which such a construction is be observed.
⁶ In using the Bible Windows Software for this project, we extended the search to cover the entire Old Testament. As expected, most of the hits did come from the prose sections. However, when analyzing the poetic sections we discovered several examples where the imperative plus Waw appears to function as a telic imperative.
"Waw-Imperatives" function with the sense of purpose? To answer this question we extended our GSE search to selecting a number of volitive verbs (cohortatives and jussives) that precede the imperative.

With the approach suggested by Juon, we will first classify each occurrence according to the form of the verb that precedes the imperative. Unlike Juon, we will only include the cohortative and jussive as the forms that precede the imperative. Another difference evident in this approach will be the form of the jussives/cohortatives: we will select forms that are introduced by the conjunction Waw. As such, the construction that will obtain under these criteria will include the cohortative or jussive without the Waw followed by the imperative with the Waw. Evidently, the limits imposed by this construction will render far less examples of telic imperatives. Several final observations are now in order.

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7 Most grammars that refer to this construction include examples of an imperfect (jussive, cohortative) introduced by Waw and followed by Waw plus the imperative. Thus see R.J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1988), 35, for 2 Ki. 5:10; E. Kautzsch, Genesius’ Hebrew Grammar, trans. by A.E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 325, for Gen. 12:2; 45:18; Ex. 3:10. For Gen. 12:2; Ex. 3:10 see S.R. Driver, A Treatise On Hebrew Tenses (Oxford: Clarendon, 1892), 69. A.B. Davidson, for Gen. 20:7, Hebrew Syntax (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1894), 91. H. Ewalt, for Job 11:6 (and Gen. 20:7), Lehrbuch Der Hebräischen Sprache, 8th ed. (Gottingen: Verlag Der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1870), 602. Surprisingly, B. Waltke and M. O’Connor’s Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax does not include the telic use of the imperative at all.
First, the examples from poetic literature that we included here will be treated along with the “prose” examples. However, the possibility will be raised that the literary context in which they occur may also affect their function as telic imperatives. Second, we will show that several Bible translations chose not to render some of the Waw-imperatives presented here as "telic." Hence, it is conceivable that in some cases both translations are possible. Finally, a few examples under the “jussive” category may include verbs that are better rendered as imperfects, not jussives (e.g., “they shall,” rather than “let them.”), although morphologically both forms are identical. One must be aware, however, that the main reason we have cited twenty-four verses where the Waw-imperative occurs is to analyze, rather than prove, the possible occurrence of this construction.

I. THE WAW-IMPERATIVE PRECEDED BY THE COHORTATIVE

One of the ways in which Old Testament Hebrew expresses purposes is to link a cohortative with an Waw-imperative verb, thus obtaining a sense of volition followed by purpose.
A. THE COHORTATIVE WITH THE PARTICLE N’

(1) "Look, I have two daughters whom no man knew, let me bring them out to you, so that you may do to them what is good in your eyes" (Gen 19:8)

(2) "Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out so that you may rape them and do to the them what seems good in your eyes" (Jdg 19:24)

(3) "Now come, let me give you counsel, so that you may save your life…” (1Ki 1:12)

B. THE SIMPLE COHORTATIVE

(4) "Behold, I lied down last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight as well, so that you may go and lie with him, that we may keep the seed alive from our father” (Gen 19:34)

(5) "Then Gideon said to them, ‘let me ask something from you, that each man shall give an erring from his booty, (for they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites’ ” (Jdg 8:24)

Out of the five examples cited, Gen. 19:8, 19:34 and Judg. 19:24 use the Hiphil Cohortative in connection with Qal Imperatives. This is not unusual. Judges 8:24 is one of the few constructions in the Old Testament in which the cohortative without Waw is followed by two imperatives (‘so that you may rape them and do to them”). The idea of purpose is clearly stronger in the first

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imperative, but the fact that the second is also an imperative (and not a jussive, in which case one would have the option to translate it as a sequential) makes this a good candidate for the telic imperative as well. Also, one should note that 1 Ki. 1:12 and Judg. 8:24 use Qal cohortatives to express verbal, rather than physical actions.\(^9\)

One objection may be raised concerning Gen. 19:34 where, although the Waw-imperative indeed follows the jussive (without a Waw), its translation as a telic imperative may be doubtful. One could still render the two successive imperatives as telics by supplying a Waw to the second one; thus, “let us make him drink wine tonight as well, so that you may go and lie with him.” The other alternative is to translate the imperative as a “sequential.” In this case the imperative would almost describe a second action, or more likely a command, following the exhortation of the jussive, namely, “let us make him drink, and then go and lie with him.” In conclusion, it may be observed that all six imperatives seem to describe actions that have a rather physical dimension; thus, “do to them”, “rape”, “give”, “go” and “save.”

II. THE WAW-IMPERATIVE PRECEEDED BY THE IMPERFECT AND THE JUSSIVE.

Most of the verses that are being analyzed in the next section employ the jussive without the Waw conjunction followed by the telic imperative with the Waw conjunction. However, there are a few instances where the first verb appears to be a simple imperfect, rather than a jussive. In other words, while morphologically the distinction does not exist, and thus either form can be employed, contextually the imperfect appears to be the more natural choice. In our search we have also selected the apocopated form of the jussive, even though we realize that non-apocopated forms can still bear the meaning of a Jussive. We have also set the range-limit of the intervening words between the jussive and the imperative between 1 and 3 words. This way we would no more than one or two possible words of particles to intervene between the two forms without affecting the basic sense of the construction.

\(^9\) Thus “give counsel” and “ask” as opposed to “bring out” and “make drink” in Gen. 19:8; 19:34; Judg. 19:24.
A. THE IMPERFECT FOLLOWED BY WAW-IMPERATIVE

Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bull so that he shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the Lord, to make atonement for the Levites” (Num 8:12).

"Then David said to the Gibeonites, “And how shall I make expiation, so that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?” " (2Sa 21:3)

"Your wickedness will punish you, and your apostasy will reprove you, that you may know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God” ” (Jer 2:19)

"By the way they come to Ashkelon they shall take your remnant and your choice men” (1Sa 12:17)
“Is not the wheat harvest today? I shall call the on the Lord that he will give thunder and rain, so that you will know and see that great is your wickedness, which you did today in the eyes of the Lord, by asking for a king to yourselves” (1Sa 12:17).

Although all four examples employ Qal Imperfect forms in connection with Qal Imperatives, this arrangement may just be a coincidence, not a unusual pattern. More important appears to be the double imperative “know” and “see,” found both Jer. 2:19 and in 1 Sam. 12:17. The syntactical arrangement in 1 Samuel contains a 1cs Imperfect (“I shall call”) used in connection with two imperatives, but the required construction “imperfect without Waw” followed by Waw-imperative appears to be nullified by the the Waw-imperfect form weitten, which preceeds the two imperatives. But even in this case, the translation as a telic imperative of our construction may still obtain. First, because the imperfect may be rendered as a telic imperfect (“And I shall call...so that he may give...and that that you may know and see that...”), in which case the two imperatives still retain their telic function. And secondly, even without the verb weitten the entire sentence can still fit our required pattern: thus, “And I will call the Lord (imperfect without Waw)....so that you may know and see... (Waw-imperatives).” Finally, the poetic example found in Jer. 2:19 may or may not fall under the required features of our construction. On the one hand, as poetry, this passage can be read, “Your wickedness shall...., and your apostasy shall... Know, therefore, and see...” As such, the imperatives do not necessarily have to be read as "indirect imperatives," but they can rather function independently, or with the sense of result (therefore...). On the other hand, this verse can be read as one unit, where the “imperfect-Waw-imperative” construction allows for the telic function of the imperatives; namely, the actions of “punish” and “reprove” occur in order that one may “know” and “see” what it means to forsake God.

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10 For a different approach note the ESV/RSV ("And you shall know and see..."), NIV ("And you will realize..."), NAS ("Then you will know and see..."). The LXX (kai gnote kai idete...) and the Vulgate (et scietis et videbis...) follow the MT literally by translating the Waw conjunctions preceeding the imperatives.

11 Note the NAS translation and Allen, Jeremiah: a Commentary (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 2008), 38ff., for the sense of "so realize...how...bad is your abandoning Yahweh your God," which takes a more "conclusive" meaning than a "purpose" one for the imperative. The ESV and NIV translate the imperatives with the normal sense of a serious warning.
Another formula that the Old Testament employs to express purpose is to have a jusive proceeding the imperativ verb. As in the previous category (i.e., the imperative preceeded by a cohortative), this formula construes the sense of purpose using two volitive verbs: a jussive and an imperative.

“let a little bit of water be taken so that you will wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree” (Gen 18:4)

“...But every small matter they shall judge by themselves so that you will make it easy for yourself” (Exo 18:22)

“Then the man said to him, ‘they will indeed burn the fat so that you will take for yourself as much as you wish...’ ” (1Sa 2:16)

“So now let your hands be strong so that you you may have a mighty heart, for your master Saul died...” (2Sa 2:7)
“Let your servant return, so that I may die in my town, near the graves of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham, let him go over with my lord the king, so that you may do to him that which seems good in your eyes” (2Sa 19:37[38])

“May the Lord allow that you may find rest, each one in her husband’s home…” (Rut 1:9)

“May the Lord make the woman who is coming in your home like Rachel and Leah, who built up together the House of Israel, so that you may make children in Ephrathah and bestow a name in Bethlehem” (Rut 4:11)

“Oh Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, so that you may give success to your servant today, and give him mercy before this man…” (Neh 1:11)

“And now O Lord, let the word which you have spoken to your servant be established for ever, so that you may do as you have spoken” (1Ch 17:23)

“Then they said to Jeremiah the prophet, ‘Let our supplication come before you so that you may pray to your God for us’ ” (Jer 42:2).

“And call, and I shall answer. Or let me speak, so that you shall reply to me ”(Job 13:22)

“Then they said to Jeremiah the prophet, ‘Let our supplication come before you so that you may pray to your God for us’ ” (Jer 42:2).

“And call, and I shall answer. Or let me speak, so that you shall reply to me ”(Job 13:22)
“Let all their wickedness come before you so that you may deal with them just as you dealt with me...” (Lam 1:22)

UNCERTAIN EXAMPLES

.transactions (Exo 33:13)

“Now, therefore, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me know your way and I shall (or "that I may") know you, that I may find favor in your eyes and that you may see that this nation is your people." (Exo 33:13)

transactions (Neh 7:3)

“Then I said to them, ‘let not the doors of the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the son is hot, and while they are standing guard, let them close them so that you may hold fast and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem’” (Neh 7:3)

We shall first analyze the last two examples. The difficulty with Ex. 33:13 comes in the form of three possible purpose statements following each other: “so that I may know you and find grace in your eyes, and that you may see that this nation is your people.” Since the phrase lmʿn introduces a statement of purpose, to translate the Waw-imperative in a similar sense may render the entire translation awkward. Clearly, they render the two jussives telic, supply a Waw to the second one, and then break the sentence and start a new one with the Waw-imperative: “Consider too that this nation is your people.” The difficulty, I believe, seems to be compounded by "telic" sense of the sentence preceeding our imperative: the Waw-cohortative wʾdʾk, followed by the "purpose" phrase lmʾn with a second cohortative ("that I may find grace in your eyes..."). Since this sentence represents an ideal "telic" construction, for some it goes against the natural flow of the thought to render the next verb (our imperative) as "telic." While not definitive, an alternate-
tive solution would be to render the first jussive sequential, and then translate the next two verbs as indirect statements: “let me know your way and I shall know you, so that I will find grace in your eyes and that you may see that this people is your nation.”

In the case of Nehemiah 7:3 the BHS editors suggest a possible corruption of the text due to dittography. Following this, instead of reading $\text{whzw wh\text{'}myd}$, thus a plural imperative followed by an infinitive absolute, one should amend the text to read $\text{w\text{'}hz w\text{'}myd}$, (i.e., two successive infinitive absolutes). As it stands the text is nevertheless difficult. NRSV, for example, reads: “while the gatekeepers are still standing, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from...” The difficulty with this translation comes from attributing different subjects to two infinitives following each other, which in turn leads to creating a new sentence altogether with the second infinitive. To solve this dilemma, J. Blenkishop views the gatekeepers as the subject of both the jussive and the two infinitives; thus, “they are to shut and bar the gates; and dispose the inhabitants of Jerusalem in watches...” This reading may be more acceptable, considering that the infinitive absolute can function as the equivalent of an imperative in cases like the “commands given by God or a military commander.” However, since the Waw-imperative here follows the jussive $\text{ygypw}$, and thus conforms to the normal telic construction, the option of translating the imperative as telic is still possible. In this case, the text will read, “and while they are standing guard, let them close the gates (jussive), so that they may bar [them] (telic imperative) and appoint guards (infinitive absolute with the force of an imperative).”

telic dimension of the last sentence, by changing the 2nd person imperative with a first person subjunctive. The change makes it plausible that the LXX translator read the Hebrew "and see" as telic, since he made sure that all last three verbs were first person subjunctive, "telic," verbs: "that I may see you", followed by the subjunctive with the participle "that I be finding grace..."), and the subjunctive "and that I may know that..." For the role of the "classic" subjunctive in purpose clauses see Smyth, Greek Grammar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920, 1956), 493ff.

The logic of this emendation is that, in the process of copying the text, the writer appears to have written the $\text{Waw}$ twice, under the influence of the second word which begins with a $\text{Waw}$ (the emendation is supported by textual variants).

This seems to be the preference of the ESV, NAS, NIV, and the NKJV.


**JUSSIVE PLUS WAW-IMPERATIVE: ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION**

Out of the twenty-four constructions surveyed here, five come from poetic and prophetic genre. So given the unique (and not fully understood) features of Classical Hebrew poetry, one must be aware that interpretations are possible with respect to these constructions which may not support the telic function of the imperative. For example, Lamentations 1:22 reads:

(Lam 1:22)

“Let all their wickedness come before you so that you may deal with them just as you dealt with me...” (Lam 1:22)

Theoretically the construction “Jussive - Waw-Imperative” fits the syntax of this verse, and so the imperative can be translated as telic. However, most English translations interpret the imperative not as telic, but as sequential or resultative. A second example which illustrates a similar difficulty comes from Jeremiah 42:2, 3.

(Jer 42:2)

(Jer 42:3)

“Then they said to Jeremiah the prophet, ‘Let our supplication come before you so that you may pray to your God for us and for all this remnant....(vs.3) so that the Lord your God will reveal to us the way we are to go and the the matter we must do’ ”

Most English translations render the Waw-imperative as a sequential which simply continues the action of the jussive, and in turn use the second jussive of verse 3 as a statement of purpose: “Let our supplication come before you (jussive) and pray to your God (Waw-imperative)....so that the Lord will reveal to us (jussive)....” While the fact that most translations render the imperative this way does not prove that other options are not possible, it seems more likely than not that here the imperative should not be telic, but sequential. However, the possibility still remains that one

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18 Thus, the RSV reads, “Let their evil doing come before thee (jussive); and deal with them(Waw-imperative) as thou has dealt with me.” The New Jerusalem, NRSV, REB, and the NAB translations divide the sentence in two parts, the first one coming before, and the second beginning with, the imperative.
could render the imperative telic, since all requirements for the telic construction to obtain are present. Nevertheless, there is one poetic passage, Psalm 128:5-6, which has been often cited by grammarians in support to the telic imperative. The text reads:

(Psa 128:5)

“May the Lord bless you from Zion, that you may see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life, and see your children’s children...” (Psa 128:5)

In general, grammarians have recognized the telic function of the imperative from Psalm 128:5. On the other hand, for the most part, the English translations render the imperative in ways other than telic. Rather, in rendering all three sentences jussive, they pause after the first sentence, and then begin a new (possible independent) sentence. One of the few versions that translate the two consecutive imperatives as telic is the New American Bible, which reads, “May the Lord bless you from Zion, all the days of your life, That you may secure Jerusalem’s joy and live to see your children’s children...” Again, these examples show that especially in poetry, the telic imperative may not conform to some of the expected rules of prose syntax.

The rest of the examples cited (a total of 13, out of which 4 come from poetic/prophetic literature) seem to conform better to the construction under discussion here. By far the most common stem in which the imperatives occur is the Qal. Out of thirteen total examples, nine occur in Qal, three in Hiphil, and one each in Niphal, Piel, and Hithpael. The syntactical combination Qal Jussive followed by Qal Imperative is the most common as well.

Regarding the individual verbs, the most commonly used family in the class of the imperative are the Qal stems. They occur in combination with the Qal (twice) and Piel jussive, where the com-

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20 Thus, the ESV: “The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!” The NAS: “The LORD bless you from Zion, And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life...” The ASV: "Jehovah bless thee out of Zion: And see thou the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.”

21 It is noteworthy that the New American Bible, the Revised Edition (2011), modified the first version and gave the imperative a "jussive" like rendering: "May you see Jerusalem's prosperity."

22 Thus there are four examples of Qal Jussive - Qal Imperative constructions, two of Qal Jussive - Hiphil Imperative, and one each of Qal Jussive - Hithpael Imperative, Hophal Jussive - Qal/Niphal Imperative, Piel Jussive - Qal Imperative, Piel Jussive - Hiphil Imperative.
mon formula is: “Let them...so that you may do...” In fact, this formula occurs in six out of the twenty-four verses surveyed in this paper. Another interesting feature is the "double imperative" construction, which occurs in eight out of the twenty-four examples. For example, Genesis 18:4 reads, “let a little bit of water be taken so that you will wash your feet (first Waw-imperative) and rest yourselves (second Waw-imperative) under the tree.” Furthermore, the combination “so that you may know and see” occurs twice in the context of prophetic condemnation, the first one in 1Sam. 12:17 (“so that you may know and see that your wickedness is great”) and the second in Jeremiah 2:19 (“that you may know and see that it is evil...to forsake the Lord.”).

CONCLUSION

As stated in the beginning, one of the ways in which Hebrew expresses purpose is by means of the Waw-imperative. The more “certain” examples where this construction occurs are found in prose literature (twenty out of twenty-four examples), while among the few poetic verses, Psalm 128:5-6 has been traditionally recognized as the better candidate. Needless to say, the simple fact that the Waw-imperative is preceded by a jussive (without Waw) is insufficient to prove that one is always dealing with a telic construction. In fact more often than not, English translations of the Old Testament render the telic imperative as a simple, sequential imperative (or as a jussive, when other jussives are present in the same verse), especially in poetic and prophetic literature.

Our review of English Bible translations has shown that they usually adopt fairly similar translations of the Waw-imperatives preceded by volitive verbs. Of all of the Waw-imperatives that we listed in our study, the English Bible translations chose to render rather few as telic imperatives. In the words of Muraoka, “the distinction between ‘purpose’ and ‘consecution’ cannot always be sharply drawn.”23 We do believe that, in most cases, the telic statement makes as much sense as do the sequential or volitive statements, while in several of the cases the telic seems to be the more natural choice.
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