

X. HEBREW SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND CLAUSES

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A. INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Sentencing is something we take for granted in the Seminary but the ways in which English is learned today should disabuse us of this luxury. While we cannot cover all the varieties of Hebrew sentences in one lesson, this lesson is intended to make us aware of some parts of sentence construction in the hope that we will appreciate the syntax and grammar more readily in time to come.

B. SENTENCE ORDER

1. A note of caution:

Languages are made by speakers and not grammarians. The latter seek to see certain patterns in linguistic materials and describe them in patterned terms (paradigms). The weakness is a tendency to read into an ancient language some of the present eccentricities. This is a dangerous course and we attempt not to do it in this work. But with this cautionary note in mind, we are able to offer some suggestions on the structure of sentences.

2. The general order:

If, indeed, there is such a thing, it looks like this: (Note that in Hebrew we read from right to left)

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| etc. | 3. Object
(modifiers) | 2. Subject
(modifiers) | 1. Verb
(modifiers, etc.) |
|------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|

Therefore it seems fairly safe to assume that inversion or rearrangement of this order is done to emphasize something or to make a special point of an issue. Naturally if the sentence is not complete, i.e.