⌘ Biblical Hebrew Grammar for Beginners

Participles

Participles are verb forms that share properties with nominals ([nouns](#) and other words that function as nouns), especially with adjectives.   Each one of the Hebrew verb patterns has a set of participles with four forms: a masculine singular, a feminine singular, a masculine plural, and a feminine plural (see: [Gender](#) and [Number](#)). Some examples are:

Masculine singular	Feminine singular	Masculine plural	Feminine plural	meaning
זָקֵן	זְקֵנָה	זְקֵנִים	זְקֵנוֹת	Growing old, be old, an elder
שׁוֹפֵט	שׁוֹפֶטֶת	שׁוֹפְטִים	שׁוֹפְטוֹת	Judging, a judge
מְבַקֵּשׁ	מְבַקֶּשֶׁת	מְבַקְשִׁים	מְבַקְשׁוֹת	Seeking, a seeker
תּוֹעֶה	תּוֹעָה	תּוֹעִים	תּוֹעוֹת	Wandering, a wanderer

The participle has many functions. Among others, it may indicate continuous action and describe a person by function or action.

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם ; וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם. (Genesis 1:2)

Now the earth was nothingness and chaos, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

וְהוּא מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם וְהִנֵּה אִישׁ הַבֵּנַיִם עוֹלֶה גָּלְיָת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי שְׁמוֹ מִגַּת מִמַּעַרְכוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיְדַבֵּר כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה ; וַיִּשְׁמַע דָּוִד. (I Samuel 17:23)

As he was talking with them, the champion came up, Goliath by name, from Gath, from the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke these words; and David heard.

וּדְבוֹרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה אֵשֶׁת לַפִּידוֹת ; הִיא שֹׁפְטָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּעֵת הַהִיא. וְהִיא יוֹשֶׁבֶת תַּחַת-תֹּמֶר דְּבוֹרָה בֵּין הָרָמָה וּבֵין בֵּית-אֵל בְּהַר אֶפְרָיִם ; וַיַּעֲלוּ אֵלֶיהָ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמִּשְׁפָּט. (Judges 4:4-5)

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, judged Israel at that time. She used to sit under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came to her for judgment.

לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה-אָמַר הָאִישׁ בְּלֶכְתּוֹ לִדְרוֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים לְכוּ וְנֵלְכָה עַד-הָרֹאֶה ; כִּי לַנָּבִיא הַיּוֹם יִקָּרֵא לְפָנִים הָרֹאֶה. (I Samuel 9:9)

Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he would say: "Come, let us go to the seer," for the prophet of today used to be called the seer.

The feminine singular participle is marked by the endings הָ, תָ, or תֶ. Participles associated with the verb patterns Pi'el, Pu'el, Hif'il, Hof'al, and Hitpa'el are marked with the prefix מ.

[The Participle: Exercise](#)