

Meaning of the Vav consecutive

Heb. tenses are actually quite different from Eng. tenses, as also are Gk. tenses. One cannot therefore equate the Heb. perf. or imperf. precisely with any particular Eng. tense. The mode of looking at the action is somewhat different. Thus the perf. ordinarily indicates a situation which is the result of an event that has previously occurred. However the time when this situation is found may be past, present, or future, so the Heb. perf. may be rendered in Eng. by past, pres., fut., or even by the pluperf.

Similarly the imperf. represents an action not as completed, but as occurring. Consequently the imperf. may represent the occurrence of an action in past, pres., or fut. Standing alone it is most apt to indicate future, although there are many cases where it has ^{an} ~~any~~ incipient or frequentive idea and is best rendered in Eng. by the past or the present.

When an imperf. is preceded by Vav with the pointing of the article, it is today generally called a Vav ^{consecutive} ~~consecutive~~. The most common use of a Vav consecutive is to indicate one of a series of actions which chronologically follow in the order in which they are given. Thus usually the imperf. with Vav ~~conseq.~~ indicates an action which comes later in time than the previously ^{mentioned} ~~mentioned~~ action, whether that action be past, pres., or fut. There are however, a number of cases where the imperf. with Vav consec., instead of describing an action that follows the previous action, indicates something of lesser importance that may be concomitant with or even previous to the previous action. In the later case the usage actually corresponds to our Eng. pluperf. even though that is not a normal equivalent for Vav consec. with imperf.