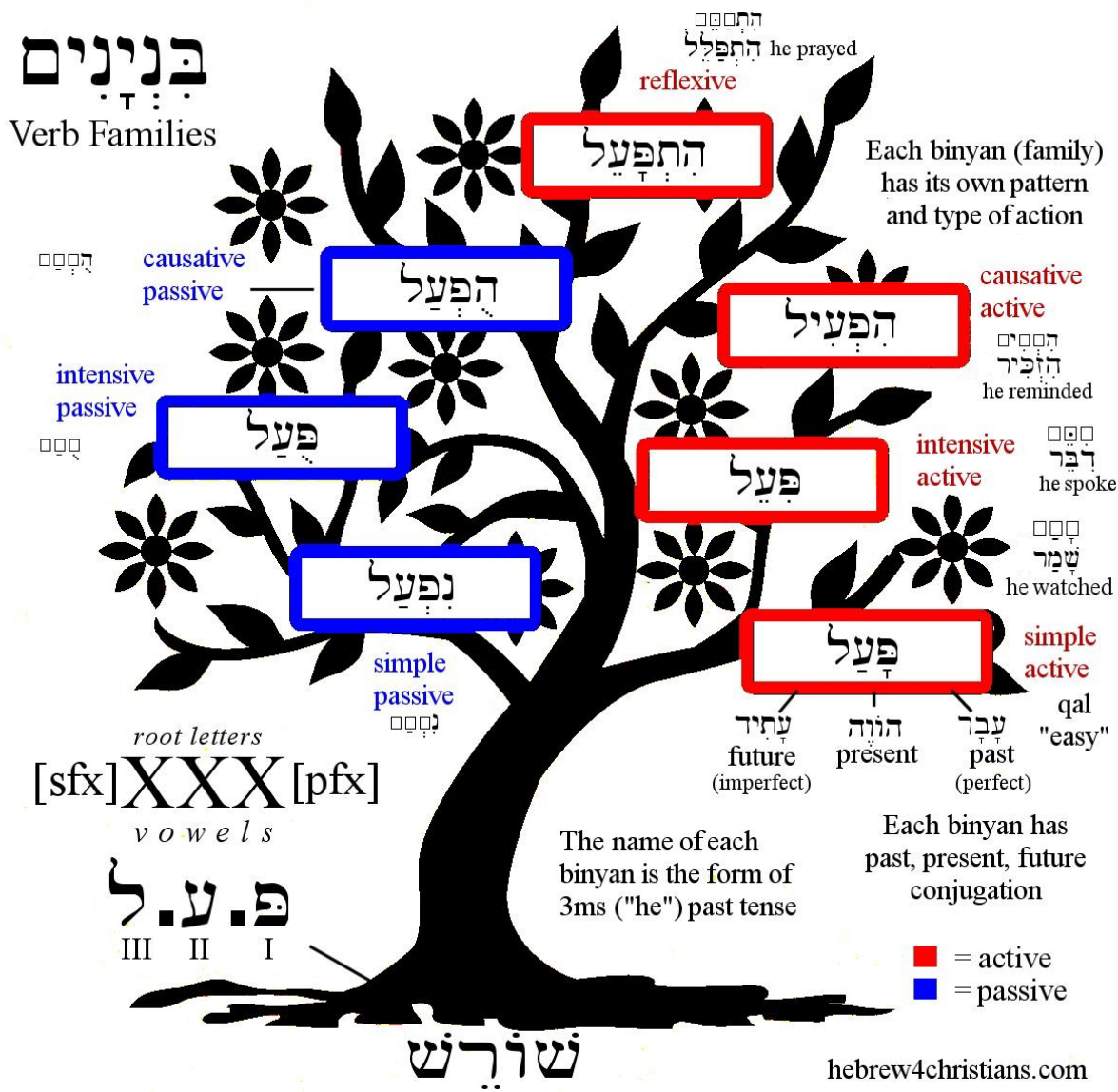




Hebrew Verbal System Overview



1. Each Hebrew verb is based on a three-consonant root (called the *shoresh*). The root encodes the basic meaning or purpose of a given verb. Each consonant of a root is assigned a number (I, II, III). Weak roots have one (or more) guttural letters (i.e., ר, ע, ח, ה, א) which will change the vowel patterns.
2. The verb's *kind* of action is expressed in a particular *binyan* ("structure," "stem," "branch"). There are seven *binyanim* (kinds) each having its own pattern and characteristic *mode of action*. Some binyanim are *active* (subject does action) while others are *passive* (subject receives action). One is *reflexive* (subject does and is affected by the action). In short a binyan is pattern of vowels (with prefixes and/or suffixes) that determines how the verb's mode of action is expressed. The 3ms pattern is the binyan's *name*.
3. Each binyan has a past (perfect), present, and future (imperfect) conjugation as well as imperatives, infinitives, and other verbal constructions. Irregular verb forms are common in Hebrew as well.
4. The most basic form of the verbal root is known as the Pa'al (פעל; based on the 3ms pattern) since it expresses the simple sense of the shoresh ("walk," "stand," "eat," and so on). Because it is the easiest and simplest form, it is called Qal (קל), meaning "light" or "simple." We begin learning these forms first!



Seven Binyanim (kinds of verbs)

Each verb form takes suffixes for person and number with vowel pattern changes for syllables. Roots with guttural letters (or begin with ך or ן) are weak.

Name	form	Qualities	Sample Root: כ.ת.ב
pa'al (פָּעַל)	□□□	simple active; Qal (קל) "easy, light" - no pfx	כָּתַב - "he wrote"
nifal (נִפְעַל)	□□□נ	simple passive; nun (נ) prefix	נִכְתָּב - "it was written"
piel (פְּעַל)	□□□ □□י□	intensive active; (x) or (׳x) pfx; dagesh II; tseret on II	פִּיִּתַב - "he engraved"
pual (פֻּעַל)	□□□ □□ו□	intensive passive; qibbutz (x) [shureq] (ו) dagesh II	פּוֹתָב - "it was engraved"
hifil (הִפְעִיל)	□□□י ₁ □ ₂ □ ₃ □□□□□ ₄	causative active; hey (ה) prefix; pos II (׳x) or (x)	הִכְתִּיב - "he dictated" הִכְתַּבְתָּ - "you dictated"
hufal (הִפְעִיל) (or hofal [הִפְעִיל])	□□□□ ₁ □ ₂ □□□□ ₃ □ ₄	causative passive; ה prefix may take (x), (ו), or chatuf (x)	הוּכְתַב - "was dictated"
hitpael (הִתְפַּעֵל)	□□□□ ₁ □ ₂ □ ₃	intensive reflexive; (הת) prefix; dagesh II	הִתְכַּתֵּב - "wrote himself"

