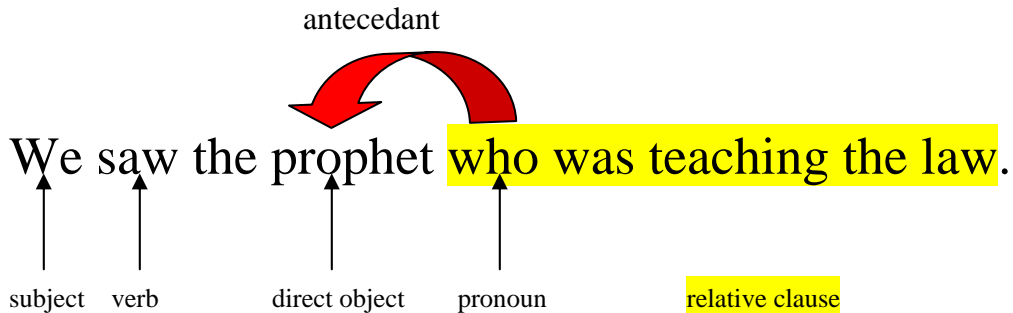


## The Hebrew Relative Pronoun אֲשֶׁר

In English, a relative pronoun (*who, that, which*) connects a modifying clause to an antecedent. This clause is called a *relative clause* since it “relates” the clause to the antecedent and modifies it adjectivally. For example:



In the sentence above, the pronoun “who” relates the following clause (highlighted) to its antecedent, “the prophet.” The clause itself functions as an adjective, since it modifies the word “prophet.” The noun “prophet” is further qualified to be the one who was teaching the law by the clause.

The relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר occurs over 4,800 times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible).

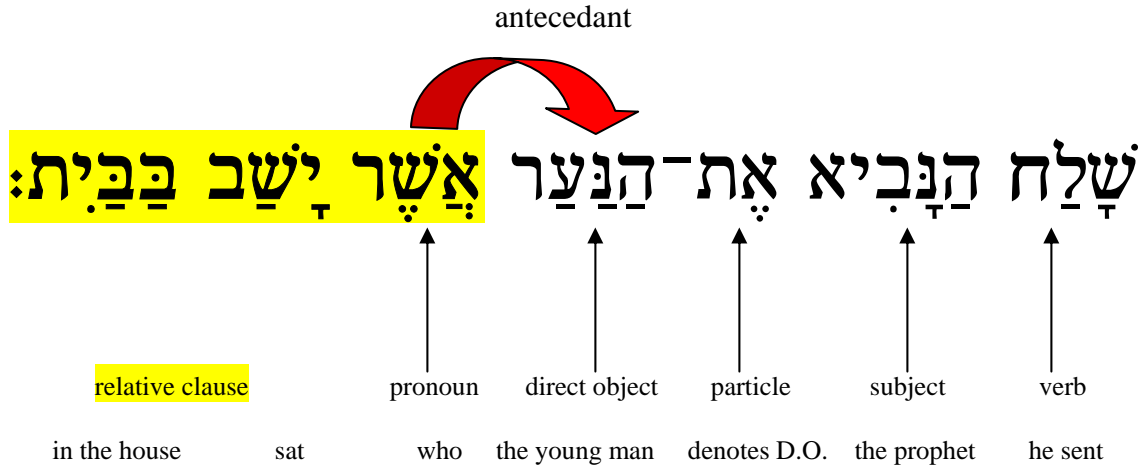
It functions in a similar way as in the English language.

The form of אֲשֶׁר takes no inflections. In other words, it takes no different spellings for gender or number. It normally appears directly following the antecedent.

אֲשֶׁר

- No inflections
- normally appears directly following the antecedent

Example



Translation: The prophet sent the young man who sat in the house.

In the example above, the relative pronoun **אֲשֶׁר** relates the following clause to its antecedent, “the young man.” The clause itself functions as an adjective, since it modifies the noun **הַנְּעָר**. The noun “young man” is further qualified to be the one who sat in the house by the clause.

## Particle אֶת (אֶת־)

The above section on relative pronoun brings a lesson on particle אֶת.

As you read the Hebrew Bible, you will find the small word or particle אֶת numerous times. It is the most frequently used word in the Hebrew Bible. This particle is used to indicate the direct object of a clause, and is not translated.

In order to find the direct object of a clause, one needs to ask the question WHAT? to the verb.

For instance, “He studies at the university down the street from the main parkway, Hebrew.”

Now, the question one needs to ask is “What does he study?” The answer is “Hebrew.” The word “Hebrew” in this case, is the direct object of the verb “studies.”

In Hebrew, definite direct object is preceded by the particle אֶת, which makes it very easy for readers to identify the direct object.

רָאָה נָבִיא אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה:  
direct object    particle    subject    verb

Translation: A prophet remembered the law.

The word אֶת before הַתּוֹרָה is not translated; it only marks the direct object.

Here the question is “What did a prophet remember?” The answer is “the law,” which is the direct object