

Observations on Tenses in Psalms

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Note that in most instances, in the following examples, the general context of meaning, together with the preceding or succeeding SC_{past} (sometimes also PC_{pretWC}¹) in the same verse make identification of verb as PC_{pret_sim} probable.

Table D

PC_{pret_sim} and SC in the Same Verse Referring to the Past

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	<i>PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference</i> (Reconstructed <u>JEH</u> Style Spelling; * <u>EBHP</u> / ¹ ; n.b. EBHP PC _{pret} and <u>PC_{jus}</u> were identical.)	<i>English Translation(s)</i> ²	<i>Masoretic Text</i> ³
A) Preterite and Jussive Distinguished from <u>PC_{imp}</u> in *<u>EBHP</u>/ by the Placement of Stress			
7.16	<p><u>SC_{past}</u> - past - כרה - ka'râ</p> <p><u>PC_{pretWC}</u> - past -</p> <p>ויחפרהו - way'yihp<u>u</u>'rihu(:). Identical form in PC_{jus} and PC_{imp}.</p> <p><u>PC_{pret_sim}</u> - past - יפעל - 'yip^cal (:yip'^cal PC_{imp})</p>	<p>He has dug a pit and hollowed it out,</p> <p>And has fallen into the hole which he made.</p>	<p>בֹּרַךְ וַיִּחְפְּרֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל בְּשִׁחַת יִפְעֹל</p>
18:9	<p><u>SC_{past}</u> - past</p> <p>- עלָה - 'a'lâ</p> <p>- בערו - ba'^carū</p> <p><u>PC_{pret_sim}</u> - past - תאכל - 'tôkîl (:tô'kîl</p>	<p>Smoke went up out of His nostrils,</p> <p>And fire from His mouth devoured;</p>	<p>עָלָה עֵשֶׁן בְּאַפּוֹ וְאֵשׁ־מִפִּי תֹאכַל גְּחָלִים בְּעָרוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ</p>

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	<i>PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference</i> (Reconstructed JEH Style Spelling; * EBHP/ *; n.b. EBHP PC _{pret} and PC _{jus} were identical.)	<i>English Translation(s)</i> ²	<i>Masoretic Text</i> ⁶
	PC _{imp})	Coals were kindled by it.	
39:4	SC _{past} - past - חמ - 'hamm - דברתי - dib'bartī PC_{pret_sim} - past - תבער - 'tib ^c ar (:tib ^c ar PC _{imp})	my heart became hot within me. While I mused, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue	חם־לבי בקרבי בהגיגי תבער־אש דברתי בלשוני
40:10	SC _{past} - past - בשרתי - biś'sarī PC_{pret_sim} - past - אכלא - 'ikla' (:ik'la' PC _{imp}) SC_{state} - present - ידעת - ya'da ^c ī	I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD.	בשרתי צדק בקהל רב הגה פתי לא אכלא יתה אפה ידעת
44:3	SC _{past} - past - הורשת - haw'rašta(:) PC _{pretWC} - past (Identical forms in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .) - ותטעמ - wattiṭṭa'ʿim. - ותשלחמ - wattašallī'ḥim PC_{pret_sim} - past - תרע - 'tarj ^{cc} (:ta'rj ^{cc} PC _{imp})	You with Your own hand drove out the nations; Then You planted them; You afflicted the peoples, Then You spread them abroad.	אפה ידך גוים הורשת ותטעם תרע לאמים ותשלחם
44:12	תמכר	You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them.	תמכר־עמך בלא־הון ולא־רבית במחיריהם
47:5	יבחר	He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. Selah	יבחר־לנו את־נחלתנו את גאון יעקב אשר־אהב סלה
68:10	Table A PC _{pret_sim} - past - תנפ -	Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you	גשם נדבות תניף אלהים נחלתך ונולאה אתה כוננתה:

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	'tanip (:ta'ni:p PC _{imp}) SC _{past} - past וּנְלֵאָה - wānil'ā כּוֹנַן - kōnan'ta:(h)	restored your heritage when it languished;	
73: 3	אָרָאָה	For I was envious of the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked.	פִּי־קִנְיָתִי בַּהוֹלְלִים שְׁלוֹם רְשָׁעִים אָרָאָה
73:18	Table A PC _{pret_sim} - past - תְּשִׁית - 'tašit (:ta'šit: PC _{imp}) SC _{past} - past - הפּלֹתָם - hippal'tam. Stress not distinctive in this form.	Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.	אָךְ בַּחֲלֻקוֹת תְּשִׁית לָמוֹ הַפְּלֹתָם לְמִשׁוֹאוֹת:
78:50	יִפְלֹס	He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, but gave their lives over to the plague.	יִפְלֹס נְתִיב לְאַפּוֹ לֹא־חָשַׁף מִמּוֹת נַפְשָׁם וַחֲיָתָם לְדָבַר הַסָּגִיר
81:6	אִשְׁמַע	He established it for a testimony in Joseph When he went throughout the land of Egypt. I heard a language that I did not know:	עֲדוֹת בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוּ בְּצֵאתוֹ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁפְתַי לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי אִשְׁמַע
89:44	Table A PC _{pret_sim} - past - תִּשָּׁב - 'tašib (:ta'šib: PC _{imp}) SC _{past} - past - הִקְמַתָּהּ - hiqimo:'tō(h).	Moreover, you have turned back the edge of his sword, and you have not supported him in battle.	אֶף־תִּשָּׁב צוֹר חֲרָבוֹ וְלֹא הִקְמַתָּהּ בַּמִּלְחָמָה:
93:1	Context makes clear that תִּכּוֹן תִּבֵּל is	The LORD is king, he is	יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ גֵּאוֹת לִבְשׁ לִבְשׁ יְהוָה עַז הַתְּאֵזֵר

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	probably PC _{pret_sim} while בל־תמוט is certainly PC_{imp_prfut}	robed in majesty; the LORD is robed, he is girded with strength. He has established the world; it shall never be moved	אַרְתָּחוּן תִּבֵּל בַּל־תִּמּוֹט
99:7	Table A PC _{pret_sim} - past - יִדְבַר - ya'dabbir (:yaḏab'bir PC _{imp}) SC _{past} - past - שמרו - ša'marū נתנו - na'tan	He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; they kept his decrees, and the statutes that he gave them.	בְּעִמּוּד עָנַן יִדְבַר אֲלֵיהֶם שָׁמְרוּ עֲדוֹתָיו וְחֻק נִתְּנוּ־לָמוֹ:
116:3	אמצא	The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.	אֶפְפוּנֵי קְבֻל־מָוֶת וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוֹל מִצְאוּנֵי צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצָא
116:6	יהושיע	The LORD protects the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.	שָׁמַר פְּתָאִים יְהוָה דְּלוֹתַי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ:
116:10	אדבר	I kept my faith, even when I said , "I am greatly afflicted";	הָאִמַּנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי מְאֹד:
<i>B) Preterite, PC_{jus} and PC_{imp}. Identical in */EBHP/</i>			
8:7	Table A PC _{pret_sim} - past - תמשלהו - tamši:'lihu(:). SC _{past} - past	You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,	תִּמְשִׁלֶּהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ כָּל שֵׁתָה תַּחַת־רַגְלֵיהֶם:

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	שתה - 'šatta(:).		
11:3	יהרסון	If the foundations have been destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (my trans.)	כִּי הַשָּׁתוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מִהֲפָעַל
18:5	SC_{past} - past שתה - 'apa'pūnī. PC _{pret_sim} - past - יבעתני - yaba ^{ccij} 'tūnī.	The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me;	אֶפְפוּנֵי הַבַּיִת וְנִחְלֵי בְּלִיעַל יִבְעֲתוּנֵי
18:8	יִרְגְּזוּ	Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry.	וַתִּגְעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ וּמוֹסְדֵי הָרִים יִרְגְּזוּ וַיִּתְגַּעְשׂוּ כִּי־תָרָה לוֹ
18:18	יצילני	He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me; for they were too mighty for me.	יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבֵי עָז וּמִשָּׂאֵי כִּי־אֶמְצֹ מִמֶּנִּי
18:41	אצמיתם	You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed.	וְאֹיְבֵי נִתְתָּה לִי עֲרַף וּמִשָּׂאֵי אֶצְמִיתֵם
18:44	תפלטני מריבי עם תשימני לראש גוים עם לא־ידעתי יעבדוני	You delivered me from strife with the peoples; you made me head of the nations; people whom I had not known served me.	תִּפְלֹטֵנִי מִרִּיבֵי עַם תְּשִׁימֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם עַם לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדוּנִי
24:2	יכוננה	for he has founded it on the	כִּי־הוּא עָל־יָמִים יְסֻדָּהּ וְעַל־נְהָרוֹת יִכּוֹנְנָהּ

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		seas, and established it on the rivers.	
30:12	ותאזרני	You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,	הִפַּכְתָּ מִסִּפְדִי לְמַחֹל לִי פִתְחַתְּ שִׁקִּי וּתְאָזַרְנִי שִׂמְחָה
32:5	אודיעך	Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah	חָטָאתִי אֹדִיעֶךָ וְעֹנִי לֹא־כִסִּיתִי אֶמְרָתִי אֹדְהָ עָלַי פֶּשְׁעֵי לִי־הִנֵּה וְאַתָּה נָשֵׂאתָ עֹן חָטָאתִי סֵלָה
38:5	יכבדו	For my iniquities have gone/are going over my head; they weigh like a burden too heavy for me. (my trans.)	כִּי עֹנֹתַי עָבְרוּ רֹאשִׁי כָּמֶשָׂא כָבֵד יִכְבְּדוּ מִמֶּנִּי
44:10	תשיבנו	You made us turn back from the foe, and our enemies have gotten spoil.	תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ אַחֲזֹר מִיַּצָּר וּמִשְׁנֹאֵינוּ שָׁסוּ לָמוֹ
44:11	תתננו	You have made us like sheep for slaughter, and have scattered us among the nations.	תְּתַנְּנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֲכָל וּבְגוֹיִם יִרְיֹתֵנוּ
44:12	תתננו	You have made us like sheep for slaughter, and have scattered us among the	תְּתַנְּנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֲכָל וּבְגוֹיִם יִרְיֹתֵנוּ

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		nations.	
44:13	תשימנו	You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us.	תְּשִׂימֵנוּ הַרְפָּה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לְעַג וְקֹלֶס לְסָבִיבוֹתֵינוּ
44:14	תשימנו	You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples.	תְּשִׂימֵנוּ מְשֶׁל בְּגוֹיִם מְנוֹד־רֹאשׁ בְּל־אָמִים
66:6	SC_{past} – past - הפכ - ha'pak PC_{pret_sim} - past נשמחה - yi ^c būrū, יעברו - niš'maḥa(:). Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There we rejoiced in him,	הַפֵּךְ יָם לְיַבֶּשֶׁה בְּנַהַר יַעֲבֹרוּ בְּרַגְלָם ם נִשְׂמְחָה־בוֹ:
74:14	Table A SC_{past} - past - רצצת - ri'ṣaṣta(:) PC_{pret_sim} - תתננו - titti'nannu(:). Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.	אַתָּה רָצַצְתָּ רֵאשֵׁי לוֹיִתָּן תַּתְּנָנוּ מֵאֵכֶל לְעַם לְצִיִּים:
77:17	Table A SC_{past} - past - ראכ - ra'ūka(:). PC_{pret_sim} יחלו - ya'hilū; ירגזו - yir'gāzū. Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled .	רָאוּךָ מַיִם אֱלֹהִים רָאוּךָ מַיִם יַחֲלוּ אָף יִרְגְּזוּ תַהֲמוֹת:
77:18	Table A SC_{past} - past - זרמו - zō'rīmū; נתנו - na'tanū PC_{pret_sim} - יתהלכו - yithal'lakū. Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered ; your arrows flashed on every side.	זָרְמוּ מַיִם עֲבוֹת קוֹל נָתְנוּ שְׁחָקִים אֶף־חֲצֹצִיף יִתְהַלְכוּ:

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77:18	יתהלכו	The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered; your arrows flashed on every side.	זָרְמוּ מִיָּם עֲבוֹת קוֹל נִתְּנוּ שִׁחָקִים אֲרֵי־חֲצָצִידָה יִתְּהַלְּכוּ
78:20	ישטפו	Even though he struck the rock so that water gushed out and torrents overflowed, can he also give bread, or provide meat for his people?"	הֲוּן הַפֶּה־צוּר וַיִּזְוְבוּ מִיָּם וַיִּתְּקִימוּ יִשְׁטְפוּ הַגַּם־לֶחֶם יוּכַל תֵּת אִם־יִכִּין שְׂאֵר לְעַמּוֹ
78:64	Table A SC _{past} - past - נפלו - na'palū. PC _{pret_sim} - תבכינה - tib'kayna(:). Stre Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation.	כָּהֲנָיו בַּחֶרֶב נָפְלוּ וְאִלְמָנָתָיו לֹא תִבְכְּיָנָה:
81: 7	Table A SC _{past} - past - הסרתני - ḥisi'ro:tī PC _{pret_sim} - תעברנה - ti'burna(:). Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	"I relieved your shoulder of the burden; your hands were freed from the basket.	הַסִּירוֹתַי מִסַּבֵּל שְׁכָמוֹ כַּפְּיוֹ מִדּוֹד תַּעֲבִרְנָה:
102:15	Table A SC _{state} - present - רצו - ra'sū PC _{imp_prfut} - present - יחננו - yaḥu'ninū. Same in PC _{pret} and PC _{jus} .	Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones And feel pity for her dust.	כִּי־רָצוּ עַבְדֶּיךָ אֶת־אֲבִנֶיהָ וְאֶת־עֲפָרָהּ יַחֲנּוּ:
116:3	Table A SC _{past} - past - אפפני - 'apa'pūnī; מצאני - maṣa'ūnī. PC _{pret_sim} - אמצא - "imša' (:im'ša' PC _{imp})	The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.	אֶפְפוּנֵי חַבְלֵי־מוֹת וּמַצְרֵי שְׂאוֹל מַצְאוּנֵי צָרָה וַיִּגּוֹן אֶמְצָא:

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116:6	Table A Table H SC _{past} - past - דלתי - dal'lo:tī. PC _{pret_sim} - יהושע - ya'hawšic (:yāhaw'si:c PC _{imp})	The LORD protects the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.	שמר פתאים יהוה דלותי ולי יהושיע:
116:10	Table A SC _{past} - past - האמנתי - hi"mantī. PC _{pret_sim} - אדבר - 'a'dabbir (:ʿadab'bir PC _{imp}) SC _{state} - present - ענתי - ʿa'nitī.	I kept my faith, even when I said , "I am greatly afflicted";	האמנתי כי אדבר אני ענתי מאד:
118:10	אמלם	All nations surround/surrounded me; verily, in the name of the LORD I will surely/ have indeed cut them off. (<i>my translation</i>)	כל־גוים סבבוני בשם יהוה כי אמלם:
118:10	Table A Other possibilities are - SC _{state} - present OR SC _{past} - past סבבוני - saba'būnī סבני - sab'būnī	All nations surround/surrounded me; verily, in the name of the LORD I will surely/ have indeed cut them off. (<i>my translation</i>)	כל־גוים סבבוני בשם יהוה כי אמלם:
118:11	PC _{imp_prfut} - future OR PC _{pret_sim} - past אמלם - ʿami:'la(:)m	They surround/surrounded me on every side; in the name of the LORD I will surely/ have cut them off! (<i>my translation</i>)	סבבוני גם־סבבוני בשם יהוה כי אמלם:
118:12	Table A	They surround/surrounded	סבבני כדבורים דעכו פאש קוצים

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	<i>PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference</i> (Reconstructed JEH Style Spelling; * /EBHP/ *; n.b. EBHP PC _{pret} and PC_{jus} were identical.)	<i>English Translation(s)²</i>	<i>Masoretic Text⁶</i>
	Other possibilities are - SC _{state} - present OR SC _{past} - past סבני - sab'būnī דעבו - du ^c akū PC _{imp_prfut} - future OR PC _{pret_sim} - past אמלם - 'ami:'la(:)m	me like bees; they were/will be stamped out like a fire of thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut/will cut them off!	בָּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִלֵּם:
119:67	אענה	Before I was humbled I went astray, but now I keep your word.	טָרַם אֲעֲנֶה אֲנִי שָׁגַג וְעַתָּה אֲמַרְתֶּךָ וְשָׁמַרְתִּי
138: 3	תרהבני	On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.	בַּיּוֹם קָרָאתִי וַתַּעֲנֵנִי וַתְּרַבֵּנִי בְנוֹפְשֵׁי עוֹז
139:13	Table A SC _{past} - past קנת - qa'nīta(:) PC _{pret_sim} - past תסכני - tašuk'kinī. Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.	כִּי־אָתָּה קָנִיתָ כְּלִי־תִי תִסְכְּנִי בְבֶטֶן אִמִּי:
139:16	Table A SC _{past} - past ראו - ra'ū יצרו - yu'šarū ⁴ PC _{pret_sim} - past יכתבו - yikka'tibū. Same in PC _{jus} and PC _{imp} .	Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed .	גִּלְמֵי רְאֹו עֵינֶיךָ וְעַל־סִפְרֶךָ כָּל־יְכַתְּבוּ יָמִים יֵצְרוּ [וְלֹא כ] (וְלֹו ק) אֶתְּךָ בְּהֵם:

¹ IN EBHP and LBHP THE JUSSIVE (PC_{jus}), COHORTATIVE (PC_{coh}), IMPERFECT (PC_{imp}) AND PRETERITE (PC_{pret_sim}/PC_{pretWC}) are, in some forms, distinguished by the placement of syllabic stress when not carrying object suffixes. See -

- http://www.adath-shalom.ca/history_of_hebrew3a.htm#indic_jus AND

- http://www.adath-shalom.ca/history_of_hebrew3a.htm#Prefix_Conjugation

² For convenience, I have used NASB or NRSV as the basis of my translation modifying the wording and layout as appropriate.

³ From The Westminster Leningrad Codex <http://www.tanach.us/> .

⁴ This is passive of *qal*. Re. passive of *qal* see Williams1970, p.46; Blau 2010 § 4.3.5.1.2.4.3.5.1.2.