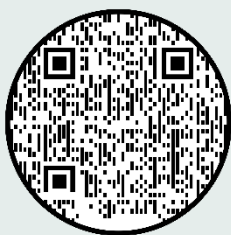
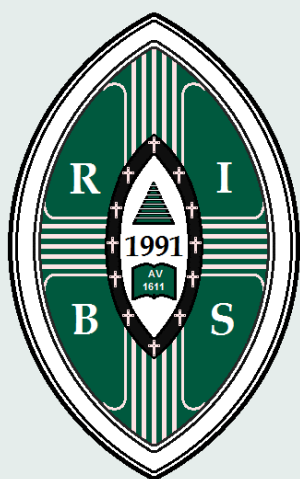


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Class Number

305A1

Class Title

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW
AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Prepared by

N. Sebastian Desent, Ph.D., Th.D., D.D.

Date

May 4, 2022

Credits

2

Level

Graduate Level

This Syllabus is Approved for
Baptist International School of the Scriptures

N. S. Desent, Ph.D., Th.D., D.D.

CLASS 305A1 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

This Syllabus is an *Introduction to Hebrew and the Old Testament*. This class informs the student history of the Hebrew language, the Old Testament, and its manuscripts. This class also teaches the student the basics of the Hebrew language so he can read the words, study the words, and have a good understanding of how the Hebrew language functions. This class, being an *introduction*, is not intended to make the student an expert in the Hebrew language. The class is comprehensive for the scope, and profitable as a first step. We have provided other more advanced follow-up studies for those students who wish to continue their study.

This Syllabus can be used in conjunction with other Class Syllabi, which have Teaching on other subjects.

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CLASS 305A1 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

**CLASS 305A1 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW
AND THE OLD TESTAMENT**

A Syllabus Approved for Baptist International School of the Scriptures – 2 Credits.

N. Sebastian Desent, Ph.D., Th.D., D.D.
Historic Baptist Church

May 4, 2022

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Scripture References

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Matthew 5

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

John 5

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Matthew 24

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark 13

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Luke 21

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Matthew 28:20

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

1 Corinthians 14:37

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

2 Peter 3

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Luke 4

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on

the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

1 Peter 1:25

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

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Introduction

The Old Testament – as with the New Testament – is the inspired and preserved word of God. The New Testament tells us in John 5:39:

John 5:39 – Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Paul wrote to Timothy these words:

2 Timothy 3:15 – And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

In Galatians, Paul instructed the churches in Galatia the following:

Galatians 3:21 – Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

To the Corinthians, Paul said this:

1 Corinthians 10:1 – Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

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9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament – both the law, and the prophets (Luke 4:21; search New Testament for the word *fulfill*).

The above passages show the importance of studying the Old Testament. They also show the importance of finding Christ in every passage.

The Hebrew Scriptures

Jesus showed us that God’s inspired word is in the Hebrew language: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). We can thus summarize the following truths from this verse:

- Jot and tittle are references to the Hebrew alphabet
- Every jot and tittle of the Hebrew Old Testament will be preserved till heaven and earth passes away
- This means Jesus had access to it in his day
- This means we have access to it today

Jesus being raised in Galilee was multi-lingual. Galilee was part of the land of Aram in the early days, so the Aramaic influence is to be expected (Matthew 27:46). Being close to Tyre and Sidon, Jesus also spoke the Syrophoenician language (Mark 7:26-27). Jesus also spoke and read Hebrew (John 7:15; Luke 4:17-18). Speaking to Pilate, we can assume Jesus spoke Latin (John 18:37); and we can assume Jesus spoke Greek (Mark 7:26; John 12:23). Being proficient in languages is following Christ’s example.

As students of the word of God, we benefit from learning Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or other languages; the best we can. Since God preserved for us the inspired word of God perfectly in the King James Bible, we *never* use the original languages (or translations) to correct the King James Version – we use them to better understand the culture, word roots, and definitions. Of course, the best definer of words is the word of God itself.

How To Use this Syllabus

Assuming some students may have little knowledge of Hebrew (and others more knowledge), we understand there will be some difficulty at first reading the Hebrew words and letters. Students new to the language should read the lesson parts he understands and pass over the Hebrew words, trying to get familiar with the letters.

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Lesson 11 starts with the Hebrew alphabet and the sounds. At this point in the study the student will make incremental advances in knowledge of the language.

The Connection of Hebrew to Love Commandment Doctrine

Jesus said: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). As obedient followers of Christ we should live by every word of the Bible. Knowing all we can about these words is a life-long effort, but it is an effort that shows a high regard for God’s word.

Lesson 1: Why Study Scriptural Languages

I. Reasons to Study Hebrew

A. Show Diligence

2 Timothy 2:15 – Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

B. Shows Approved unto God

2 Timothy 2:15 – Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

C. Shows one Magnifies the Word of God

Psalm 138:2 – I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

D. Increases Understanding of the Bible

II. Understanding the Original Languages Shows Why Passages are Written the Way They Are

A. Seven things you will see:

1. Wordplay
2. Name meanings
3. Word origin
4. Alliteration
5. Poetry cantor
6. The effect of original words on other languages
7. A better understanding of the original culture

III. Hebrew is a Structured Language

- A. God is a God of order
- B. God chose Hebrew to first preserve his words.
- C. Learn how the language is structured.
- D. Most root words are three-consonants
- E. Add prefix or suffix to modify the word
- F. Always identify the root word first
- G. Hebrew reads right to left
- H. רשׁאשׁ are letters resh, aleph, and shin.

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- I. These three letters are sounds r – a – sh. Together sounds similar to *rosh*
- J. Study chart below and see other letters added to the Hebrew word to change it.
- K. Hebrew is a structured language – see chart below using the root word *rosh*:

Head; top; summit; chief; first (n).....	רֹאשׁ
Leaders; chiefs (n pl)	רֹאשִׁים
Rosh Hashanah; head of the year (n)	רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה
Rosh Chodesh; head of the month (n)	רֹאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ
Rosh Pinnah; Cornerstone (n)	רֹאשׁ-פִּנָּה
Early time; beginning	רֶאשִׁית
First; primary (adj)	רִאשׁוֹן
Beginning; first; best (n)	רֵאשִׁית
Genesis (book); In the beginning (phr).....	בְּרֵאשִׁית

IV. Knowing Languages is Expected of Preachers

- A. Every good preacher uses voice, words, tone, grammar, syntax, etc., when preaching and teaching.
- B. Every good preacher uses illustrations and compares scripture with scripture.
- C. Proverbs 25:11 – A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.
- D. It is expected that a man whose calling is to proclaim God's word, that he will do it to the best of his ability.
- E. The listeners to his messages should be blessed.
- F. Job 34:3 – For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.
- G. He should know and practice proper grammar, pronunciations, and rhetoric styles.
- H. He should know the meaning of words and their roots.
- I. He should make language a primary study in his life since he will use it always.
- J. Only pride will keep a man from studying to improve his ability – he defends his lack of effort with excuses.
- K. Proverbs 26:16 – The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

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V. **Every Student of the Word of God Must be Familiar with the Languages of the Bible**

- A. Knowing how to study the original languages will thoroughly convince a man of the perfection of the King James Bible.
- B. A man will understand the beauty of God's word
- C. A man will see the patterns and rhetorical styles God uses in his word.

VI. **God Blesses the Study of His Word**

- A. New things are usually difficult at first, but after becoming familiar they are much easier
- B. The study of languages is wonderful and challenging, but also necessary and rewarding.

Lesson 2: The Use of the Hebrew Language in Bible Study

I. Better Understand the Meaning Behind your Bible Translation

- A. Over 75% of the Bible was originally written in Hebrew.
- B. Hermeneutics and exegesis require knowledge of the original words
- C. Better understand the author's emphasis
- D. Better Understand the Meaning Behind the Names of People and Places
- E. Understanding Hebrew helps with both inductive and deductive study.

II. Better Understand Biblical Jewish Culture

- A. Idioms
- B. Hebraisms
- C. Hebrew expressions
- D. Poetic features in the word of God

III. Follow Jesus' Example

- A. Jesus spoke many languages
- B. Jesus read the scriptures in Hebrew
- C. Jesus is our perfect example in all things

IV. Hebrew is One of the Oldest Languages in the World

- A. Hebrew is a picturesque language
- B. Hebrew is a simple language in many respects
- C. Hebrew is a systematic language
- D. Hebrew is still used today
- E. God preserved his word in Hebrew

V. Learning Hebrew Exercises the Mind to Think Differently

- A. Hebrew letters are different than most other languages
- B. Consonants make up the words
- C. Reads right to left
- D. See why people tend to misunderstand words

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VI. **Knowing How to Study Hebrew Words is a Great Study Tool**

- A. Hebrew study is a tool, not the whole method of study – it is one of many tools to study the Bible.
- B. Hebrew should never replace or correct the KJV but be used as a way of testifying to the accuracy and inspiration of the KJV.
- C. A student of the word of God should use many resources for study.

Lesson 3: Background on the Hebrew Language

I. History of the Hebrew Language.

- A. Deuteronomy 26:5 – And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:
- B. Israel's father was a Syrian "ready to perish."
- C. The start of the Jewish people begins with a man by the name of Abraham.
- D. A couple of generations before leads us to Shem.
- E. Genesis 10.22 – The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.
- F. Shem had five sons Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.
 - Elam is the father of the Medians and the Persians.
 - Asshur is the father of the Assyrians.
 - Arphaxad is the Hebrew word for Chaldeans.
 - Lud is the father of the kingdom of Lydia located near modern day Turkey.
 - Aram is the father of the Syrian people.
- G. Abraham is a descendant of Shem through Arphaxad.
- H. He came from Ur of the Chaldees.

II. Start of the Hebrew Language

- A. The language of Abraham which would eventually evolve into Hebrew would be similar to the language of the sons of Shem and their descendants.
- B. This group of languages is called the Semitic Languages
- C. The name Semitic languages is derived from the name of Shem, i.e. Shem languages.
- D. All languages in this group will have similar characteristics.
- E. Most of these languages are written in a form of script known as an abjad.
- F. That is an alphabet that has little to no vowels.
- G. Among these scripts are Ugaritic, Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and South Arabian alphabets.
- H. These alphabets also tend to have similar letters as the languages are also similar.
- I. Semitic languages have another thing in common.
- J. That is non-concatenative morphology.
- K. What that means is their word roots are not themselves syllables or words.
- L. They are instead isolated sets of consonants.
- M. Usually the roots are three consonant roots making it a trilateral root.
- N. From this root words are formed by filling in vowels and sometimes additional consonants.

III. The Uniqueness of Hebrew

- A. Hebrew is a unique language in another respect.
- B. Hebrew is the only language to have been revived after dying out as a written or spoken common language.
- C. There are no other examples of a natural language without any native speakers subsequently acquiring several million.
- D. There is no other examples of a religious language becoming a national language.
- E. In the 6th century BC the Hebrew language went out of style as a normal language.
- F. Due to the Babylonians conquering Judah and amassing a world government at the time, the spoken language of the Jews devolved.
- G. Jews started to speak Aramaic.
- H. This was the spoken language till the Middle Ages.
- I. Hebrew was strictly used as a religious language.
- J. Other languages also came into being as Hebrew hybrids such as Yiddish, Ashkenazi Hebrew, and Sephardic Hebrew.
- K. The revival of Hebrew as a literary language came into being during the Haskalah or Jewish Enlightenment.
- L. The time frame of this would be from the 1770's to 1880's.
- M. Members of this movement decided that only Biblical Hebrew was deserving of fine literature.
- N. The reason for this was two-fold.
- O. First because of Purism, Purism is a principle that dictated that all words used should be of biblical origin.
- P. Secondly because of the flowery language of the Bible.
- Q. This was to get the full picture, the full expression, the meaning of the word.

IV. Hebrew Used Elsewhere

- A. As you can probably guess some difficulties arose with this viewpoint of using Hebrew for contemporary writing.
- B. First, it is difficult to write about contemporary subjects when using biblical languages.
- C. Secondly, the audience was limited to scholarly males.
- D. Ya'akov Abramovitch (1846 – 1917), know more commonly by the nickname bookseller is a man who had a major part in the evolution of the language. He developed a synthetic language. He took the vocabulary from the biblical Hebrew and added many new words to the language.
- E. This continued the rise in popularity as the language only real Jews would read.
- F. The rise of the Hebrew language as a spoken language came with the rise of Jewish nationalism.
- G. As Jews immigrated to the region that would eventually become their homeland, schools that they would start would teach Hebrew to their students.
- H. Hebrew eventually became the spoken language of that generation, eventually it would become the spoken language of the region, and then when Israel became a nation there was no better option for a national language

V. **Hebrew is a Picturesque Language**

- A. Hebrew can be an added tool because it gives a picture to a word.
- B. An example of this would be in Psalms 32:1-2 and Isaiah 53:5-6.
- C. Psalms 32:1-2 – Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
- D. Here we see in two verses three different words.
 - We see in Psalms 32 transgression, sin, and iniquity. What do these words mean? In English we might consider them homonyms. In Hebrew each of these words gives a different picture.
 - In Psalms David is talking about a man whose transgression is forgiven. The Hebrew word for forgiven is *nasah* which means to lift or carry.
 - An example of this word would be when Cain tells God his punishment is greater than he can bear (Genesis 4:13).
 - It is pretty interesting that when God forgives our sin he lifts it off of us. He literally bore our sin to the cross.
 - But what is God bearing? He is bearing our transgression or *pasha* in Hebrew.
 - That is a deliberate act of rebellion against God.
 - It is a casting off of God's authority and deliberately going outside of his will.
 - It is not a mistake or a sin through ignorance, it is rebellion against God.
 - Blessed is the man who the Lord carries their deliberate rebellion against him.
 - Blessed also is the man whose sin is covered.
 - The word sin in Hebrew is *chataah*.
 - That word means to miss the mark.
 - The word covered is *kasah* that means to hide or conceal.
 - Blessed is the man who when he misses the mark it is concealed.
 - It brings to mind the mercy of God and how when we mess up we can confess it and God forgives us.
 - We can also see the poetry in the verse.
 - Blessed is the man whose transgression is *nasah*, whose sin is *kasah*.
 - Blessed is the man whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.
 - The word impute is *chashab* which means to calculate or account.
 - Blessed is the man who God does not lay to his account iniquity or *avon*.
 - *Avon* is a twisting or perversion of the will of God for selfish ends.
 - When we look at the Hebrew we see a deeper picture of the forgiveness of God.
 - Blessed is the man in whose spirit is no guile.
 - Who is this man?
 - This is the man who twists and perverts God's word for his own benefits, but God does not hold it to his account.
 - The only man in whom is no guile is the one who God has forgiven!
- E. Isaiah 53:5-6 – But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

- All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- He was *chalal* (pierced) for our our pesha (rebellious acts against him).
- He was pierced for the times our wickedness pierced him. He was *daka* (crushed, broken in pieces) for our *avon*.
- (We twisted and broke the will of God for our benefit)
- The chastisement of our peace was upon him.
- With his stripes we are healed.
- His wounds healed us completely.
- All we like sheep have gone astray.
- We have turned everyone to his own way.
- The Lord laid on him the iniquity (*avon*) of us all.
- We all have twisted the will and word of God to go about our own way.
- God laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all.

VI. The Hebrew Aleph-Bet

- A. The beginning of the Hebrew is the aleph-bet.
- B. In English we use the term alphabet for our collection of letters.
- C. This is taken from the Greek letters for A and B.
- D. They are Alpha and Beta.
- E. Alphabet is a transliteration.
- F. AB would be the translation.
- G. In Hebrew their collection of letters is known as the aleph-bet.
- H. Most Bibles contain the aleph-bet in Psalms 119.
- I. The Aleph-bet is as follows.

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Book Print	Name	Block	Cursive	Pronounced	Transliteration
א	Aleph	Ⲁ	ⲁ	silent letter	ʾ (or none)
ב	Bet	ב	ב	b as in boy	b
ב	Vet	ב	ב	no dot: v as in vine	v
ג	Gimmel	ג	ג	g as in girl	g
ד	Dalet	ד	ד	d as in door	d
ה	Hey	ה	ה	h as in hay	h
ו	Vav	ו	ו	v as in vine; “consonantal vowel”	v
ז	Zayin	ז	ז	z as in zebra	z
ח	Chet	ח	ח	ch as in Bach	ch (or h)
ט	Tet	ט	ט	t as in time	t (or t)
י	Yod	י	י	y as in yes; “consonantal vowel”	y
כ	Kaf	כ	כ	k as in kite	k
כ	Khaf	כ	כ	no dot: ch as in bach	kh
ך		ך	ך	sofit form	
ל	Lamed	ל	ל	l as in look	l
מ	Mem	מ	מ	m as in mom	m
ם		ם	ם	sofit form	
נ	Nun	נ	נ	n as in now	n
ן		ן	ן	sofit form	
ס	Samekh	ס	ס	s as in son	s
ע	ʾAyin	ע	ע	silent letter	ʾ (or none)
פ	Pey	פ	פ	p as in park	p
פ	Fey	פ	פ	ph as in phone	ph / f
ף		ף	ף	sofit form	
צ	Tsade	צ	צ	ts as in nuts	ts / tz (or ʒ)
ץ		ץ	ץ	sofit form	
ק	Qof	ק	ק	q as in queen	q (or k)
ר	Resh	ר	ר	r as in rain	r
ש	Shin	ש	ש	sh as in shy	sh (or š)
ש	Sin	ש	ש	s as in sun	s (or š)
ת	Tav	ת	ת	t as in tall	t

- J. You will notice that some of the words have different soundings depending on a dot in the letter. These letters referred to as the *begadkephat* letters (from the artificial memory words *בֶּגַד כְּפָת*), the letters פ, כ, ד, ג, ב, and ת are unique in that each has two distinct phonetic values. Each of these may be found with a dot called a *Daghes Lene* (e.g., בּ) or without the *Daghes Lene* (e.g., ב).

(1) If the *Daghes Lene* is present, the letter is a plosive, like the English B.

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(2) If there is no *Daghesh Lene*, the sound is a fricative or spirant (there is a strong breathing sound, as with the English V sound).

- K. These letters are Bet, Kaf, Pey, and Schin. This dot changes the pronunciation of the letters as explained above.
- L. Also notice some letters have a sofit form. This means the letter looks like this when at the end of the word. These letters are Kaf, Mem, Nun, Pey, and Tsade.
- M. The Hebrew aleph-bet originally had no vowels. The Masoretes, (the ones who were key to preserving the Jewish texts) created a system of small symbols under letters to assist in pronunciation. These are known as vowel points.
- N. Below is a chart of the Hebrew vowel points.

Vowel Sign	Name	Sound	Examples
ָ	kamatz קָמָץ	ah as in father	אָבָא Abba - Father
ַ	patach פָּתַח	a as in car	שַׁבָּת Shabbat
ֶ	seggol סֶגּוֹל	e as in egg	עֵדֶן Gan Eden
ִ / אֵ	tséré צִירֵי	a as in air ai as in rain	בֵּיצָה beitza / egg
וֹ	cholam חוֹלָם	oh as in awe	שָׁלוֹם Shalom
ׁ	kubbutz קֻבּוּץ	oo as in hoot	כֻּבַּד kubad / was honored
ׁ	shuruk שׁוּרוּק	u as in put	סוּס sus / horse
ִ / אֵ	chirik חִירִיק	i as in machine	מִצְוָה mitzvah תַּלְמִיד talmid / student
ךְ	sh'va שׁוּא	STOP SIGN! no sound	יְרוּשָׁלַיִם Jerusalem בְּרֵאשִׁית Breishit
· in letter	dagesh דָּגֶשׁ	changes sound of letter	בּ, כּ, פּ pey, caf, bet בֶּ, כֶּ, פֶּ feh, chaf, vet

VII. Hebrew Roots

- A. A Hebrew root is a group of consonants, that a group of corresponding words have, that mean the same thing. Let us look at an example.
- B. מֶלֶךְ-לֵךְ This is written left to write. The letters are in order mem, lamech, kaf. Transliterated it would be MLK. In Hebrew this is the word melech or king. We can see this in some Bible names such as Abimelech, or Elimelech.
- C. מְלוּכָה This is the Hebrew word for monarchy, it is transliterated as *melucha*. The letters transliterated would be MLKH. Note that the kaf in melech is at the end of the word the kaf in *melucha* is in the middle therefore is not in its sofit form.
- D. לְמַלּוֹךְ This is the Hebrew word that means to rule, it is transliterated as *limloch*. The letters are LML-K The ain is a silent letter used to differentiate the word.
- E. You can see how all of these words contain the root MLK. Some other Hebrew words that are from this root are these:
- *Malcha*: Queen
 - *Mamlachti*: State or nation
 - *Lehamlich*: To crown
- F. When written in Hebrew all of the words above have mem-lamech-kaph in it.
- G. Let us look at another Hebrew root. This one is resh-shin-ain it is written right to left.
- H. רָשָׁע The word transliterated is Rasha its meaning is villain or criminal.

Word	Meaning
הַרְשָׁעָה harsha'a	conviction (court)
מְרוֹשָׁע merusha	evil, wicked, offensive
רָשָׁע resha	malice, evil
לְהַרְשִׁיעַ leharshia	to convict
רִשְׁעָה rish'a	evil, malice

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- I. We will look at one more root for the lesson. The Hebrew root Resh, Aleph, Shin. ר - א - ש –
ר This is the Hebrew word Rosh meaning head.

Word	Meaning
בְּרֵאשִׁית bereshit	the very beginning; creation of the world (biblical)
רִשׁוֹן rishon	first
רִאשִׁי rashi	chief, main, head, primary
רֵאשִׁית reshit	firstly, first

- J. Most Hebrew words can be traced back to a root. When we go over common words in Hebrew you will notice words that are similar in meaning tend to have similar consonants. This is due to the fact they have similar roots.

VIII. Hebrew Affixes

- A. An affix is an additional element placed at the beginning or end of a root, stem, or word, or in the body of a word, to modify its meaning.
- B. Affixes are divided up into three categories:
- C. Those are first: prefixes, these are affixes at the beginning of a word
- D. secondly there are infixes, infixes are found in the middle of the word
- E. lastly there are suffixes which are found at the end of the word
- F. Some common Hebrew prefixes:

The prefix א (Alef) means ‘I’

The original meaning of this letter is ‘source’ which made it ideal for conventional use as a prefix meaning ‘I’ referring to who is the source of what it being spoken.

The prefix ב (Bet) means ‘with’

The letter Bet was originally a pictograph depicting a tent. The logic behind the prefix is how things can be located relative to a tent. This prefix is often also translated as ‘in’, ‘on’ or ‘by.’ However, there is just one prefix used, and for clarity, it is recommended to use the one that covers all four meanings, which is ‘with’, because that was how it was originally understood.

The prefix ה (He) means ‘the’

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The letter He means 'be' as in 'to exist' or 'shall be' as a statement of faith. It is commonly used as a prefix meaning 'the' which is the equivalent of saying 'be' or 'exists as.' Consider the following example. The English phrase 'The tree' has a Hebrew equivalent that literally means 'exists as tree' or more simply 'be tree.'

The prefix ו (Waw) means 'and'

The letter Waw evolved from the pictograph of a tentpeg used to join things together, so it makes sense that it is commonly used as a prefix meaning 'and.'

The prefix י (Yod) means 'he'

The meaning of the letter Yod is to 'bring forth' in a sense of creating or making something. This concept is directly related to how the ancient Hebrews defined males. The Hebrew word for son is בן (BN) and it is related to the word בנה (BNH) which means build. Males were considered the builders which is why the letter that basically meant 'make' was used to represent the idea of 'he.'

The prefix כ (Kaf) means 'as like'

While uncertain, this particular usage of the letter Kaf may be related to the word meaning 'appearance.'

הכרה *HKRH* appearance / expression
'the... vessel... body... be'

The prefix ל (Lamed) means 'to/for'

Both the pictograph and the Biblical Hebrew versions of Lamed depicted an UPSIDE DOWN staff indicating its function of extending one's reach. The idea of extending involves a point from which something is extended and a point to which it is extending. Thus it would be in a specific direction toward (to) or for something.

The prefix מ (Mem) means 'from'

The letter Mem began originally as a pictograph of water. The reason it is used as a prefix meaning from is because in Genesis 1 the first thing that existed when God began creating everything was water. The heaven and dry ground was the result of him dividing the water (in two separate instances) and everything else he crafted from the ground. The idea is that everything originated *from* the first waters.

The prefix נ (Nun) means 'we'

This prefix was most likely derived from the Hebrew word meaning 'we' because sometimes the first letter א is dropped and it is simply spelled נהנו .

The prefix ש (Shin) means 'who'

The letter shin is attached to a verb to turn it into who (or what) does the action. For example, in English we would say that someone was a 'maker' of something, however, in Hebrew the phrase literally says 'who makes.' The reason the letter Shin is used for this purpose is unclear. It is most commonly found in the scriptures that the method of inserting a Yod or Waw as the second letter of the verb is used to turn the word into a person.

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The prefix ת (Taw) means 'shall / she'

The meaning of the letter Taw is 'together' and its use to mean 'shall' is actually spot on. This fact can be seen if you substitute the word 'together' for the word 'shall' in a sentence. By doing so, the ancient logic becomes apparent, though, the result is poor English. (Of course, the biblical writers weren't writing in English.) For example, the sentence 'You shall learn' can be written 'You together learn.' And the sentence 'You shall not wait' can be stated as 'You not together wait.'

The use of this prefix to mean 'she' may have been a later concept because both the prefix and suffix indicating a female also indicate something else. (All the other ones have just one meaning.)

G. Suffixes

The suffix ה (He) turns a word into a noun and also sometimes means 'of her'

The letter He means 'be' as in 'to exist' (literally: 'be as') or 'shall be' as a statement of faith. The presence of this letter at the end of a verb turns the word into a noun because, for example, the verb 'break open' with the letter He added to the end reads: 'break open... be as' and describes a valley or open plain.

The use of this suffix to mean 'of her' may have been a later concept because both the prefix and suffix indicating a female also indicate something else. (All the other ones have just one meaning.)

The suffix ו (Waw) means 'of him'

This letter was likely chosen for two reasons. First, the letter means 'add to' and, as mentioned above, males were considered the builders. Second, it is relative to the word meaning 'he' and since the first letter ה was already commonly used for another purpose, the next letter in the word was Waw.

The suffix י (Yod) means 'of me'

This is most likely derived from the word meaning 'I / me.'

אני ANY I

The suffix נו (Nun-Waw) means 'of us'

Like the prefix Nun listed above (meaning 'we'), this suffix is derived from the same Hebrew word that means 'we':

The suffix נו (Waw-Nun) means 'of it'

The meaning of these letters are 'add to... ahead' as well as 'add to... emerging.' The latter interpretation is likely how this suffix combo came to mean 'of it.' In the book of Genesis, the letter Nun sometimes means 'emerging' and refers to actual fruit or the inanimate product of something. Thus it is an apt letter to represent something that is neither male nor female.

The suffix הם (He-Mem) means 'of them' (masc.)

This usage is likely related to the word describing great noise, which is a key indicator that more than one person is present.

הגה HMH sound / chaos / tumult

The suffix **הן** (He-Nun) means ‘of them’ (fem.)

The meaning of these letters are ‘shall be... ahead’ and its usage may be related to the ancient perception of gender purposes. While males were considered builders, females were considered the source of continuance.

The suffix **ים** (Yod-Mem) indicates a **plural** (masc.)

The meaning of these letters, ‘bring forth... physical’, indicates the presence of more than one thing as there would need to be the bringer as well as what is brought forth.

The suffix **ות** (Waw-Taw) indicates a **plural** (fem.)

The meaning of these letters, ‘add... together’, obviously indicates more than one.

The suffix **כם** (Kaf-Mem) means ‘of you’ (plural).

The reason these letters mean ‘of you’ is a mystery. The first two occurrences of this word in the scriptures is in Genesis 1:29 as part of the word **לכם** where God says ‘...I give to **you** all herbage...’ It occurs twice more in Genesis 3:5 and after that not again until Genesis 9. It may be that the interpretation of ‘you’ was derived from the first passage because that made sense in the context. It also makes sense in the context that the word meant what its letters indicate ‘for... hand... physical’ which corresponds to the common Biblical phrase of something being ‘delivered into one’s hand.’

Genesis 1:29

ויאמר אלהים הנה נתתי לכם את כל עשב זרע זרע אשר על פני כל הארץ ואת כל העץ אשר בו פרי עץ זרע זרע לכם יהיה לאכלה

The suffix **ך** (Kaf) means ‘of you’ (singular).

Because this suffix doesn’t occur until Genesis Chapter 2:17 in the Story about Adam and Eve, it was likely derived from the word **כם** that is found in Chapter 1. There are a number of indicators in the Hebrew text that the Creation Story was written well before the rest of the scriptures.

In the Bible you will find that in names of people there is prefixes and suffixes as well. This is due to a shortened form of a word being inserted on to another word. Here are some examples:

- Absalom: Made up of two words Abba and Shalom. The meaning is father of peace.
- Elimelech: Made up of two words Elohim and Melech. The meaning is God is my king.
- Hananiah: Made up of two words Hanan and Jehovah. The meaning is Grace of Jehovah.
- Nethaneel: Made up of two words Nathan and Elohim. The meaning is Gift of God.
- Joshua: Made up of two words Jehovah and Shua. The meaning is Jehovah and Salvation.

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The next lessons will be a brief overview of the most common words in the bible and their definitions. It would be beneficial to print an alphabet chart and vowel chart from the previous lesson and sound out the words.

IX. Verbs

A. Below is a list of verbs with their definition and the number of times they are used in the Bible.

- אמר (אמר) **to say** = 5317
- היה **to be** = 3576
- עשה (עשה) **to do, make** = 2632
- בוא **to come** = 2579
- נתן **to give, put, set** = 2014
- הלך **to walk, go** = 1554
- ראה **to see** = 1310
- שמע **to hear** = 1165
- דבר (דבר) **to speak** = 1135
- ישב **to sit, dwell** = 1087
- יצא **to go out** = 1075
- שוב **to return** = 1075
- לקח **to take** = 966
- ידע **to know** = 952
- עלה **to go up** = 894
- שלח **to send** = 847
- מות **to die** = 845
- אכל **to eat** = 814
- קרא (קרא) **to call** = 736
- נשא **to lift, carry, take** = 658
- קום **to arise, stand** = 627
- שים **to put, set** = 588
- עבר (עבר) **to pass over, through, or by** = 554
- עמד **to stand** = 524
- נכה **to smite** = 501
- צוה **to command** = 496
- ילד **to bear, beget** = 495
- שמר **to keep, watch, preserve** = 469
- מצא **to find** = 457
- נפל **to fall** = 435
- ירד **to go down** = 382
- בנה **to build** = 377
- נגד **to tell, declare** = 371
- מלך (מלך) **to be king, reign** = 350
- ברך (ברך) **to bless** = 327

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- ירא (ירא) **to fear** = 318
- ענה (ענה) **to answer** = 317
- פקד **to number, appoint, punish, visit** = 304
- סור **to turn aside** = 298
- חזק **to be strong** = 290
- כרת **to cut off** = 289
- עבד **to work, serve** = 289
- חיה **to live** = 287
- קרב **to come near, offer** = 280
- מלא **to fill** = 250
- חטא **to miss, sin** = 239
- ירש **to possess, inherit, dispossess** = 232
- בקש **to seek** = 225
- זכר **to remember** = 225
- כתב **to write** = 225
- כון **to be firm, establish, prepare** = 219
- אהב **to love** = 217
- שתה **to drink** = 217
- נטה **to stretch out** = 216
- יסף **to add, do again** = 215
- עזב (1 עזב) **to forsake, leave** = 214
- נצל **to take away deliver** = 213
- שכב **to lie down** = 213
- כלה **to be complete, finished** = 208
- שפט **to judge** = 204
- אסף **to gather** = 200

X. Nouns

- כלל (כל) **all** = 5415
- בן (בן) **son** = 4942
- אל (אל) **God** = 2602
- מלך (מלך) **king** = 2530
- ארץ (ארץ) **land, earth** = 2505
- יום (יום) **day** = 2303
- איש (איש) **man** = 2187
- פנה (פנה) **before, face** = 2128
- בית (בית) **house** = 2046
- עמם (עמם) **people** = 1867
- יד (יד) **hand** = 1627
- דבר (דבר) **word, speech** = 1454
- אב (אב) **father** = 1210
- עיר (עיר) **city** = 1094
- עין (עין) **eye, spring, Ain** = 896

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- שנה (year) = 879
- נג (name) = 864
- עבד (servant, slave) = 803
- אשה (woman, wife) = 781
- אדון (lord) = 774
- נפש (soul) = 757
- כהן (priest) = 750
- דרך (way) = 712
- אח (brother) = 629
- לב (heart, Leb) = 601
- ראש (head) = 600
- בת (daughter) = 588
- מים (water) = 583
- גוי (nation) = 560
- הר (mountain) = 559
- אדם (man) = 545
- קול (voice) = 505
- פה (mouth) = 498
- צבא (host, army, war, service) = 486
- קדש (holy) = 470
- עולם (forever, everlasting) = 439
- משפט (judgment, Mishpat) = 424
- שר (prince, chief, Sar) = 421
- שמים (heavens) = 421
- תוך (midst) = 420
- חרב (sword) = 413
- כסף (silver, money) = 403
- זבח (altar) = 403
- קום (place) = 401
- ים (sea) = 396
- זהב (gold, Zahab) = 389
- אש (fire) = 377
- נאם (utterance) = 376
- שער (gate) = 373
- רוח (spirit, breath, wind) = 363
- דם (blood) = 361
- אהל (tent) = 348
- עץ (tree) = 330
- כלי (utensil, weapon) = 325
- שדה (field) = 321
- לחם (war) = 319
- נביא (prophet) = 317
- רעע (evil) = 311
- משפחה (family) = 304

- sin, sin offering = 298 (חטא) חטאת
- bread, food, Lehem = 298 (לחם) לחם
- time = 296 (נג) נג (עת)
- burnt offering = 288 (עלה) עלה
- enemy = 284 (איב) איב
- covenant, Berith = 284 (ברית) ברה
- month = 283 (חדש) חדש
- nose, anger = 277 (אנף) אנף
- flock, sheep = 274 (נג) נג (צאן)
- stone = 272 (אבן) אבן
- flesh = 270 (בשר) בשר
- wilderness = 270 (מדבר) מדבר
- life = 268 (חיה) חיה
- heart, mind = 252 (לבב) לבב
- tribe, staff = 252 (נטה) נטה
- foot = 251 (רגל) רגל
- cubit = 250 (אמה) אמה
- lovingkindness = 249 (חסד) חסד
- strength, wealth, army = 245 (חיל) חיל
- border = 241 (גבול) גבול
- boy, youth = 240 (נער) נער
- peace, welfare, completeness = 237 (שלום) שלום
- God = 236 (אל) אל
- work = 235 (עשה) עשה
- iniquity = 233 (עון) עון
- seed = 229 (זרע) זרע
- night = 227 (לילה) לילה
- midst, among = 227 (קרב) קרב
- appointed time or place = 223 (יעד) יעד
- law = 223 (תורה) תורה
- ground, earth, land = 222 (אדמה) אדמה
- possession = 222 (נחלה) נחלה
- mother = 220 (אם) אם
- garment = 216 (בגד) בגד
- camp = 215 (חנה) חנה
- morning = 213 (בקר) בקר
- angel = 213 (מלאך) מלאך
- offering = 211 (מנחה) מנחה
- ark = 202 (ארון) ארון

XI. Adjectives

- this (m) = 1783 (זה) זה
- one (m) = 976 (אחד) אחד

- שְׁנַיִם (two) = 769
- אֵלֶּה (these) = 746
- שְׁלֹשׁ (three) = 606
- מֵאָה (hundred) = 583
- גָּדוֹל (great) = 526
- חֲמִשָּׁה (five) = 508
- אֶלֶף (thousand) = 494
- עֶשֶׂר (ten) = 492
- שִׁבְעָה (seven) = 491
- אַרְבַּע (four, Arba) = 456
- רַבִּי (great, many) = 409
- טוֹב (pleasant, good) = 373
- רָעָה (bad, evil) = 357
- עֶשֶׂר (ten, -teen) = 337
- שֵׁשׁ (six) = 274
- רָשָׁע (wicked) = 264
- צַדִּיק (righteous) = 206
- רִאשׁוֹן (first, former) = 182
- זָקֵן (elder, old) = 179
- אֲחֵר (other) = 166
- גִּבּוֹר (mighty) = 160
- שְׁמֹנֶה (eight) = 147
- חָכָם (wise) = 138
- חַיָּה (living) = 119
- יָשָׁר (straight, right) = 119
- קָדוֹשׁ (holy) = 117
- מְעַט (little, few) = 101

XII. Particles

- וְ (and) = 50524
- הֵּה (the, Ha) = 23968
- לְ (to, Le) = 20435
- בְּ (in, at, with) = 15632
- אֶת־ (direct object) = 10970
- מִן (from) = 7586
- עָלֶי- (upon, over, above) = 5778
- אֶל (to, toward) = 5518
- אֲשֶׁר (which) = 5503
- לֹא (not, Lo) = 5188
- כִּי־ (that, because, when) = 4487
- כְּ (as, like) = 2909
- עַד־ (until, as far as) = 1263
- אִם (if) = 1070

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- (הִנֵּה) **behold** = 1061
- (עִם) **with** = 1048
- (אִתּוֹ) **with** = 898
- אֵל **the** = 894
- (שָׁם) **there** = 835
- (אֵין) **nothing, is not** = 783
- (גַּם) **also** = 769
- (וְ) **and** = 751
- (הֲ) **(interrogative)** = 748
- (כֵּן) **so, thus** = 743
- (אֵל) **no, not** = 729
- (אַחֵר) **after** = 707
- (כֹּה) **thus, here** = 577
- (תַּחַת) **under, instead of** = 511
- (עוֹד) **again, still, longer** = 491
- (עַתָּה) **now** = 435
- (בֵּין) **between** = 409
- (נֹא) **please, now** = 405
- (לִ) **to** = 386
- (דִּי) **who, which** = 347
- (סָבִיב) **all around, Missabib** = 338
- (אוֹ) **or** = 321
- (מְאֹד) **very** = 298
- (לְמַעַן) **because of, in order to, for the sake of** = 272

XIII. Pronouns

- (הוא) **he, it** = 1398
- (אֲנִי) **I, myself** = 874
- (מָה) **what?** = 754
- (אַתָּה) **you (m. sing.)** = 752
- (הֵם) **they (m.)** = 563
- (הִיא) **she, it** = 491
- (מִי) **who?** = 424
- (אֲנִי) **I** = 359
- (אַתֶּם) **you (m. plur.)** = 283

XIV. Hebrew Numerals

Arabic numerals	Hebrew numerals	Cardinal (ex. one, two, three)	
		Masculine	Feminine
0	-	(efes) אָפֶס	

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1	א	אֶחָד (echad)	אֶחָת (achat)
2	ב	שְׁנַיִם (shnayim)	שְׁתַּיִם (shtayim)
3	ג	שְׁלוֹשָׁה (shloshe)	שְׁלוֹשׁ (shalosh)
4	ד	אַרְבָּעָה (arba'a)	אַרְבַּע (arba')
5	ה	חֲמִשָּׁה (chamisha)	חֲמֵשׁ (chamesh)
6	ו	שִׁשָּׁה (shisha)	שֵׁשׁ (shesh)
7	ז	שִׁבְעָה (shiv'a)	שִׁבְעָה (sheva')
8	ח	שְׁמוֹנָה (shmona)	שְׁמוֹנֶה (shmone)
9	ט	תִּשְׁעָה (tish'a)	תִּשְׁעָה (tesha')
10	י	עֶשְׂרֵה ('assara)	עֶשֶׂר ('eser)
11	יא	אֶחָד-עָשָׂר (achad-'asar)	אֶחָת-עָשְׂרֵה (achat-'esre)
12	יב	שְׁנַיִם-עָשָׂר (shneyim-'asar)	שְׁתַּיִם-עָשְׂרֵה (shteyim-'esre)
13	יג	שְׁלוֹשָׁה-עָשָׂר (shloshe-'asar)	שְׁלוֹשׁ-עָשְׂרֵה (shlosh-'esre)
14	יד	אַרְבָּעָה-עָשָׂר (arba'a-'asar)	אַרְבַּע-עָשְׂרֵה (arba'-'esre)
15	י"ה or ט"ו	חֲמִשָּׁה-עָשָׂר (chamisha-'asar)	חֲמֵשׁ-עָשְׂרֵה (chamesh-'esre)
16	י"ו or ט"ז	שִׁשָּׁה-עָשָׂר (shisha-'asar)	שֵׁשׁ-עָשְׂרֵה (shesh-'esre)
17	יז	שִׁבְעָה-עָשָׂר (shiv'a-'asar)	שִׁבְעָה-עָשְׂרֵה (shva'-'esre)
18	יח	שְׁמוֹנָה-עָשָׂר (shmona-'asar)	שְׁמוֹנֶה-עָשְׂרֵה (shmone-'esre)
19	יט	תִּשְׁעָה-עָשָׂר (tish'a-'asar)	תִּשְׁעָה-עָשְׂרֵה (tesha'-'esre)
20	כ or ך	עֶשְׂרִים ('esrim)	
30	ל	שְׁלוֹשִׁים (shloshim)	
40	מ or ם	אַרְבָּעִים (arba'im)	
50	נ or ן	חֲמִשִּׁים (chamishim)	
60	ס	שִׁשִּׁים (shishim)	
70	ע	שִׁבְעִים (shiv'im)	
80	פ or ף	שְׁמוֹנִים (shmonim)	
90	צ or ץ	תִּשְׁעִים (tish'im)	
100	ק	מֵאָה (mea)	
200	ר	מֵאֵתַים (matayim)	
300	ש	שְׁלוֹשׁ מֵאוֹת (shlosh meot)	
400	ת	אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת (arba' meot)	
500	ך	חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת (chamesh meot)	
600	ם	שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת (shesh meot)	
700	ן	שִׁבְעָה מֵאוֹת (shva meot)	
800	ף	שְׁמוֹנֶה מֵאוֹת (shmone meot)	
900	ץ	תִּשְׁעָה מֵאוֹת (tsha' meot)	
1000	א'	אַלֶּף (elef)	
2000	ב'	אַלְפַּיִם (alpaim)	
5000	ה'	חֲמִשָּׁת אֲלָפִים (chameshet alafim)	
10 000	א"י	רִבּוֹא (ribbo) or רִבְבָּה (revava) or עֶשְׂרֵת אֲלָפִים (aseret alafim)	

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100 000	א'ק	מֵאָה אֶלֶף (mea elef)
1 000 000	א''	מִלִּיּוֹן (miliyon)
1 000 000 000	א'''	מִלִּיָּאָרֶד (miliyard)
1 000 000 000 000	א''''	טְרִילְיוֹן (trilyon)

Lesson 4: Transliteration verses Translation – Certain Examples

I. Translation & Transliteration

- A. Translation is different from interpretation.
- B. Interpretation is taking someone's words and communicating their meaning in another language. Translation is taking a text or written words and communicating their meaning.
- C. Transliteration is bringing the word over into the new language, creating a new word.
- D. There are two ways of thought to judge a translation.
- E. The first is fidelity – does the new text accurately represent the old text?
- F. Let us give an example:

Psalms 119.1 says Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

אֲשֶׁרֵי תְּמִימֵי-דֶרֶךְ -- הַהֹלְכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה.

The Hebrew is above this line.

But what would happen if we used a faulty translation?

If we typed the line into Google Translate and asked for a translation into Hebrew, we would get this:

‘ אשרי הבלתי מוסכלים בדרך, ההולכים בחוק ה

What happens is Google Translate mistranslates some words.

When we translate the translation back to English we get this.

Blessed are the initiated on the way who walk in the law of the Lord.

If a translator is not committed to fidelity this may happen.

This is an extreme example you might say of a mistranslation.

Could errors like this happen with a person?

Let us look at an example:

Lamentations 3.26 (KJV) It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

Lamentations 3.26 (NIV) it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

One of these translations wanted to be faithful to the original text. Is it the KJV or the NIV?

It cannot be both. What did Jeremiah write in the Hebrew?

Lamentations 3:24-26 (NIV) I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Lamentations 3:24-26 (KJV) The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that

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seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

First let us look at the context. Both of the versions follow the same line of thought. The NIV says Jeremiah will wait for God. God is good to those who hope in him. It is good to wait for God. The KJV says Jeremiah will hope in God, God is good to those who wait for him. A man should both hope and quietly wait for God.

Before we get into the Hebrew what makes more sense in the English for the listener. Most people would say the KJV. When you look at the Hebrew there is three words that we would want to look at.

The first hope in verse 24, the first wait in verse 25, and the hope and quietly wait in verse 26.

The Hebrew word in verse 24 for hope in the KJV is *yachal*. The definition means to wait for or hope for. The Hebrew word for wait in verse 25 is *qavah* or earnestly wait in English. The last hope in verse 26 is also *yachal*. Quietly wait in Hebrew is *dumam* which means silently.

In Hebrew if *yachal* solely meant to wait the NIV should not have included hope in the portion of scripture it should just be wait consistently. But it does not! In the word *yachal* there is also a sense that what you're waiting for will be good that is why you hope for it. The KJV translates *yachal* as hope correctly, then *qavah* as wait, when it gets to the second *yachal* there is a double meaning there that won't translate word for word into English.

Keep in mind the poetry of the book, each of these verses are building onto the last. So it is more than just hoping in God.

If a man hopes God will deliver them it is great. He can go about trying to solve the problem all while hoping God will rescue him.

The verses are trying to get across the point that one should hope for God and wait for him to save.

Here is what is important though. If a translator does not understand the language, the poetry, and the form of the verse, they could be tempted to just translate it verbatim and miss the point of what the Hebrew is trying to get across. Just like google they could make an error in translating.

- G. The second method of judging a translation is its felicity or transparency.
- H. Does the translation read as if it was written in the native tongue originally?
- I. Would a native speaker of the tongue recognize it as a translation due to grammatical or word usage errors?

II. Transliteration

- A. A tool or a method of translation that the translators of the scripture have used is transliteration.
- B. Transliteration is taking a word in a script of a language and transferring the spelling of the word into a different script.
- C. Here we see words that the English language borrowed from the Hebrew.
- D. Remember the Hebrew is written right to left in this list.

- abacus: from אבק *abaq* ‘dust’
- agora: (currency) from אגורה *agorah* ‘small coin’
- behemoth: from בהמות *behemoth* ‘beasts’
- cabal: from קבלה *qabbalah* ‘received’
- cherub: from כרוב *kerubh* ‘celestial hierarchy angel’
- chutzpah: from חֲצָפָה *hūspah* ‘supreme self-confidence’
- cider: from שכר *shekhar* ‘strong drink’
- edenic: from עדן *eden* ‘delight’
- golem: from גולם *golem* ‘shapeless mass’
- hallelujah: from הללויה *halleluyah* ‘praise the LORD’
- jubilee: from יובל *yobhel* ‘ram’s horn’
- kibosh: from כבש *kabash* ‘tread down’
- kosher: from כשר *ksr* ‘be appropriate’
- leviathan: from ליתן *liwyathan* ‘sea monster’
- maven: from מבין *mebhin* one who ‘is experienced’
- mazeltov: from מזל טוב *mazzal tob* ‘good luck’
- menorah: from מנורה *menorah* ‘candlestick’
- messiah: from משיח *mashiah* ‘anointed’
- pharaoh: from פרעה *par’oh* ‘ruler of ancient Egypt’,
- pharisee: from פרש *parash* ‘separate’
- rabbi: from רב *rabh* ‘master’
- sabbatical: from שבת *shabbat* ‘day of rest’
- satanic: from שטן *satan* ‘adversary’
- schwa: from שוא *schewa* ‘unstressed mid-central vowel’
- seraph: from שרף *saraph* ‘celestial being’
- torah: from תורה *tora* ‘law’, ‘instruction’

- E. Here we see three different things in relation to a word.
- F. We will use the word hallelujah for an example.
- G. First, we see the English word hallelujah.
- H. The definition means *praise the Lord*.
- I. Then we see the word written in Hebrew.
- J. The letters are He, Lamed, Lamed, Vau, Jod, and He.
- K. The letters transliterated into English would be HLLV YH.
- L. The word transliterated would be halleluyah.
- M. From that word we would get our English word hallelujah.
- N. Why would transliteration be necessary in translating a text?

VII. Using Strong's Work and Other Lexicon's

- A. In studying the scriptures you will become familiar with a tool called a lexicon. The definition of a lexicon is this: **LEX'ICON**, *noun* [Gr. a dictionary, from to speak.]
- B. A dictionary; a vocabulary or book containing an alphabetical arrangement of the words in a language, with the definition of each, or an explanation of its meaning.
- C. A very common lexicon is Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary. This is a work where Strong numbered every root in Hebrew and Greek that was in the Bible. He then compiled a recording of all the places each root was used and the English translation of the root. In the back of the concordance is a dictionary of all the Greek and Hebrew roots.
- D. An important thing to remember when studying a lexicon is that a lexicon is a series of definitions written by a man. At the best they are an English rendition of what a word in another language might mean based on a fallible man's knowledge. At the worst they are biased attempts to promote heresy.
- E. Below are some quotes by leading Greek scholars about lexicons.
- F. A.T. Robertson, author of *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, declares very directly what his lexicon is based on:

*"I should say that the text of **Westcott and Hort** is followed in all essentials... I think with pleasure of the preacher or teacher who, under the inspiration of this Grammar, may turn afresh to his Greek New Testament and there find things new and old, the vital message all electric with power for the new age."*

- G. William Johnson, one of the main contributors to the digital lexical library *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, described Greek lexicographers and their work:

*"But then one turns to Greek. We have not walked into a slum exactly, but the buildings are more closely spaced, the porch banisters often rickety, the lawns not so well kept. Approaching the dictionary, a Hellenist [student of Greek culture] must remain cautious and light on the feet. **Often enough, none of the translation equivalents is exact for a given context; sometimes the definition is simply wrong; glosses [i.e. personal interpretations without evidence] are rather frequently wrong; information on syntax, typical expressions, orthographica, or dialectical forms is hit-or-miss; and the overview one gets of the word can be fundamentally flawed, since, lexicographical practice aside, the passages considered by the lexicographer were too few and too skewed***

- H. What are these Greek scholars saying? The first man Mr. Robertson says that his lexicon's source is the text of Westcott and Hort. What does that mean? It means his work was based off of a corrupt text done by unbelievers.

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- I. The second man Mr. Johnson says that in approaching a lexicon a student must remain cautious. This is due the fact that often the translation equivalents are not exact and frequently wrong.
- J. In Thayer's 1889 Edition of the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament we see this in the preface. *"In the present work... the readings (whether in the text or the margin) of the editions of Tregelles and of **Westcott and Hort** have also been carefully noted."*
- K. Here we see a lexicon including commentaries from Westcott and Hort as well. When reading a lexicon that is using a corrupt source, or that includes corrupt commentaries, it is almost equivalent to reading the corrupt text itself.
- L. While a corrupt text may be useful for education it is not to be trusted. Always remember lexicons were written by men. Know the source of the lexicon and the history of the author before placing a value on it.
- M. Frederick Danker, who published two major Greek lexicons in his lifetime, said:

"Of immediate concern is the circumstance that one may through such typography succeed in merely suggesting to polytheists that 'our God is better than your god,' while avoiding the basic semantic assignment, that lexicography is more of an art than a craft trotting out traditional glosses."

- N. In the words of this lexicographer, lexicography is an art not a craft. What lexicons tend to do is put out one man's definition that sounds good over an accurate and less flowery definition. Below is a good article on context by Christopher Johnson.
- O. This does not mean we cannot use dictionaries to define words in our culture. Dictionaries do help us to have a standard language by which we can communicate on a daily basis, but dictionaries do *NOT* define context.

I'll give an example of what I mean with the following sentence: "Then, my battery died."

- P. There is a lot about this short sentence that we take for granted in our daily lives. Normally, we hear someone say this, and we go through a long process of elimination about interpretations and definitions that happens in such a split-second instance in our brains, we don't even realize we're doing it most of the time.

Let's take a look at a couple of definitions from a standard dictionary:

died (v):

- 1. to cease to live
- 2. to cease to exist

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3. to lose force, strength, or active qualities:
4. to cease to function; stop
5. to be no longer subject; become indifferent
6. to pass or fade gradually
7. to lose spiritual life

(See “died,” Random House Dictionary, 2015, [www.dictionary.com]; See also Collins English Dictionary, 10th Edition, William Collins Sons & Co, 2009)

battery (n):

1. a galvanic battery, voltaic battery. a combination of two or more cells electrically connected to work together to produce electric energy
2. any large group or series of related things:
3. two or more pieces of artillery used for combined action
4. a group or series of similar articles, machines, parts, etc.
5. in baseball, the pitcher and catcher considered as a unit
6. on a naval warship, a group of guns having the same caliber or used for the same purpose
7. a series of tests yielding a single total score, used for measuring aptitude, intelligence, personality, etc.

(See ‘battery’, Random House Dictionary, 2015, [www.dictionary.com]; See also Collins English Dictionary, 10th Edition, William Collins Sons & Co, 2009)

- Q. We have seven definitions of the noun in this sentence, and seven definitions for the verb, so how do we know which one conveys the meaning the author intended? Most Christians do not seem to understand that just knowing definitions is only *HALF* of the process of defining words, and in order to know which definitions to use, we need context.

So now let’s read the context along with the above sentence: “After the ball game, the team got food poisoning from the catered meal. Then, my battery died.”

- R. In this context, it’s talking about a baseball game, which means the noun “battery” is referring to the catcher and pitcher who were previously alive, which means the verb “died” refers to two men who ceased to live.

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- S. Now let's try a different context: "After I got out of my car, I left the lights on. Then, my battery died."
- T. In this context, it's talking about a vehicle that has a battery with electric cells in it, and so the noun "battery" is referring to a car battery that does not have life, which means the verb "died" refers to losing function.
- U. Can you see now how the context completely changes a word, and how we use that context to interpret definitions and meaning? We do this every day of our lives, but for some strange reason, Christians seem to abandon this simple method of interpretation when it comes to the Bible, and it's important to understand that concordances and lexicons do not include context for interpretation, and even if they include commentaries, they are based on manuscripts from corrupt pagan philosophers.

In our article "Is Repentance Part of Salvation?" we demonstrate how most ministries out there teach false doctrine on repentance because they don't understand its meaning, and the primary reason they have been so deceived is because they have turned to lexicons and concordances for meaning, rather than turning to the Word of God. So when I look up "repent" in Strong's Concordance (which is what most churches, ministries, and preachers do), it says:

"Short Definition: I change my mind

Definition: (lit: I change one care or interest for another), I change my mind (generally for the better), repent, regret."

(See 'metamelomai' or 'repent', *Strong's Concordance*, #3338, retrieved July 28, 2015, [biblehub.com/greek/3338.htm])

So most Christians, because they respect persons, take Strong's Concordance as a law and authority over the word "repent," and they falsely believe that repent always means "change of mind" despite the context. Though repent *DOES* mean "change of mind" in *SOME* contexts, **it DOES NOT ALWAYS mean "change of mind."**

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
- 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

Here, we have "repent" used in reference to "godly sorrow." Earlier in this article, I referred to Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary because he built that dictionary on the foundation of the context of the King James Bible (which is why you will see it referenced in so many of my articles), and even though Noah Webster is not 100% accurate (i.e. his dictionary is not the final authority in all matters of faith and practice), it is extremely accurate on the list of definitions the King James

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Bible uses, and he even referred to Scripture where he pulled definitions from many areas; or in other words, he based his definitions on the preserved Word of God, not on Greek grammar dictionaries and pagan philosophers.

For example, this is Noah Webster's list of the definitions of "repent," and the Scripture references are original in his dictionary:

repent (v):

1. to feel pain, sorrow or regret for something done or spoken
2. to express sorrow for something past
3. to change the mind (Exd 13:17)
4. applied to the Supreme Being, to change the course of providential dealings (Gen 6:7, Psa 106:45)
5. in theology, to sorrow or be pained for sin, as a violation of God's holy law (Luke 13:3, Acts 3:19)

(See 'repent', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved July 27, 2015 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

This dictionary is defining words by the context of different sections of the KJB, not by pagan philosophers. Although standard dictionaries may define words based on the majority of a culture, or based on what a grammar dictionary told them, that is *NOT* how Christians should treat the Word of God, but they do it all the time, as we can see from the following leavened website:

"Repentance is defined in Merriam-Webster's online dictionary as 'to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life.' Repentance is a choice that believers make to regret the sins that we have made and to turn away from them."

Derek Hill, "What Does The Bible Say About Repentance? A Christian Study," What Christians Want to Know, retrieved July 27, 2015, [whatchristianswanttoknow.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-repentance-a-christian-study]

This man has used a majority opinion dictionary for the interpretation of the Word of God, rather than relying on the Lord God's interpretation. Matt Slick of CARM does the same thing in his leavened 501c3 organization:

"Repentance is properly understood to mean a change of mind... In the New Testament there is one main Greek word that is translated into the English 'repentance': metanoeo, and from that word we also get 'repentant' and

'repentance.' [His reference is to Strong's Concordance at the bottom.]"

Here's one more:

"Many people when asked what it means to repent will tell you that it means to 'be sorry for your sins.' Even though this meaning may make sense to you... it is not the correct meaning of the word... I have included the associated Strong's Exhaustive Concordance cross-reference number so you can easily find them yourself."

C.F. Castleberry, "Repent," *Consider This: A Scriptural Challenge to All Christians*, retrieved July 27, 2015, [considerthis.net/Files/Textfile/repent.htm]

There are thousands of such websites just on the topic of repentance, let alone the hundreds of other topics in which the Christians use a concordance or lexicon as their foundation. (I've received many such emails.) Sadly, when I point these things out, I typically get unpleasant responses and railing accusations.

This is repeated by countless websites, church buildings, and preachers around the world because they have turned to their first education as a foundation, rather than the Word of God. The average American finds this kind of "the-Greek-says" teaching to be impressive to the point they heavily respect their person, and those who do these teachings know they get that respect, and that they receive a following that will bring them profit.

Lexicons are a tool to be used but that tool must always be subservient to the Bible. Also it must be realized that the tool can contain errors and should never be used as a solitary source for information.

Lesson 5: The Masoretic Text

Masoretic text

Jewish Bible

By The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Masoretic text, (from Hebrew *masoreth*, “tradition”), traditional Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible, meticulously assembled and codified, and supplied with diacritical marks to enable correct pronunciation. This monumental work was begun around the 6th century AD and completed in the 10th by scholars at Talmudic academies in Babylonia and Palestine, in an effort to reproduce, as far as possible, the original text of the Hebrew Old Testament. Their intention was not to interpret the meaning of the Scriptures but to transmit to future generations the authentic Word of God. To this end they gathered manuscripts and whatever oral traditions were available to them.

The Masoretic text that resulted from their work shows that every word and every letter was checked with care. In Hebrew or Aramaic, they called attention to strange spellings and unusual grammar and noted discrepancies in various texts. Since texts traditionally omitted vowels in writing, the Masoretes introduced vowel signs to guarantee correct pronunciation. Among the various systems of vocalization that were invented, the one fashioned in the city of Tiberias, Galilee, eventually gained ascendancy. In addition, signs for stress and pause were added to the text to facilitate public reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue.

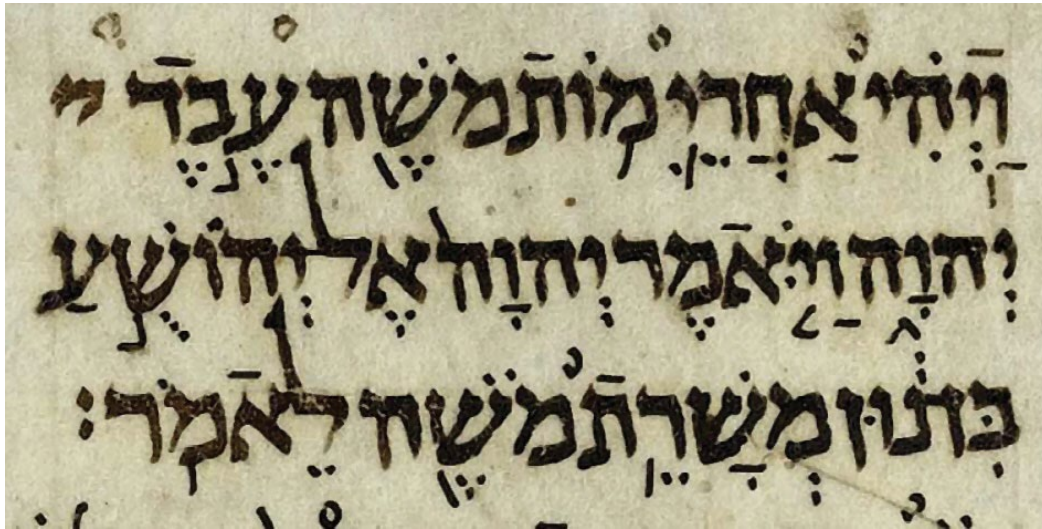
When the final codification of each section was complete, the Masoretes not only counted and noted down the total number of verses, words, and letters in the text but further indicated which verse, which word, and which letter marked the center of the text. In this way any future emendation could be detected. The rigorous care given the Masoretic text in its preparation is credited for the remarkable consistency found in Old Testament Hebrew texts since that time. The Masoretic work enjoyed an absolute monopoly for 600 years, and experts have been astonished at the fidelity of the earliest printed version (late 15th century) to the earliest surviving codices (late 9th century). The Masoretic text is universally accepted as the authentic Hebrew Bible.

Hebrew Bible

Jewish sacred writings

By The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Hebrew Bible, also called Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament, or Tanakh, collection of writings that was first compiled and preserved as the sacred books of the Jewish people. It also constitutes a large portion of the Christian Bible, known as the Old Testament. Except for a few passages in Aramaic, appearing mainly in the apocalyptic Book of Daniel, these scriptures were written originally in Hebrew during the period from 1200 to 100 BCE. The Hebrew Bible probably reached its current form about the 2nd century CE.



Portion of the Aleppo Codex, a manuscript of the Hebrew Bible written in the Hebrew language in the 10th century CE; in the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Books of the Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew canon contains 24 books, one for each of the scrolls on which these works were written in ancient times. The Hebrew Bible is organized into three main sections: the Torah, or “Teaching,” also called the Pentateuch or the “Five Books of Moses”; the *Nevi'im*, or Prophets; and the *Ketuvim*, or Writings. It is often referred to as the *Tanakh*, a word combining the first letter from the names of each of the three main divisions. Each of the three main groupings of texts is further subdivided. The Torah contains narratives combined with rules and instructions in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The books of the *Nevi'im* are categorized among either the Former Prophets – which contain anecdotes about major Hebrew persons and include Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings – or the Latter Prophets – which exhort Israel to return to God and are named (because they are either attributed to or contain stories about them) for Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and (together in one book known as “The Book of the Twelve”) the 12 Minor Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). The last of the three divisions, the *Ketuvim*, contains poetry (devotional and erotic), theology, and drama in Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs (attributed to King Solomon), Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

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Torah scroll
Reading the Torah with a Torah pointer or yad.

The Hebrew Bible as adopted by Christianity features more than 24 books for several reasons. First, Christians divided some of the original Hebrew texts into two or more parts: Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles into two parts each; Ezra-Nehemiah into two separate books; and the Minor Prophets into 12 separate books. Further, the Bibles used in the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and some Protestant churches were derived initially from the Septuagint, the Greek-language translation of the Hebrew Bible produced in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. This included some books deemed noncanonical by Orthodox Judaism and most Protestant churches (see also Apocrypha), slightly longer versions of Daniel and Esther, and one additional psalm. Moreover, the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church, one of the Oriental Orthodox churches, also includes within its Old Testament two works considered by other Christian churches to be pseudepigraphical (both noncanonical and dubiously attributed to a biblical figure): the apocalyptic First Book of Enoch and the Book of Jubilees.

Lesson 6: The Septuagint and Vaticanus

I. The Septuagint and Vaticanus are the Same

- A. The Septuagint (LXX) is the Old Testament written in Greek
- B. Codex Vaticanus (B) is the Catholic Bible containing Old and New Testament (with Apocrypha) in Greek.
- C. The Greek portion of the Old Testament comprises the Septuagint.

II. From the Museum of the Bible

- A. The Septuagint
From the Museum of the Bible
Washington, D.C.

The Septuagint
A Torah for Greek-speaking Jews

The title “Septuagint” means 70. According to tradition, Egypt’s King Ptolemy II (285-246 BC) requested a copy of the Torah for his library in Alexandria. It is said that 70 (or 72) Jewish elders translated the Torah into Greek in exactly 70 days.

The legend speaks only of the five books of the Torah. But Jewish communities soon translated many other sacred writings into Greek as well. These early translations served the growing number of Jews around the Mediterranean who understood Greek better than Hebrew.

III. Various Comments in Respect to the Septuagint, Etc.

- A. Image below from the work of Robert A. Kraft (University of Pennsylvania) showing the eight BC manuscripts of extant Greek translations of the Old Testament. The reader will note these are from four of the five books of Moses.

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2nd bce			
Dt 11.4	4QLXXDeut = 4Q122 ("leather" roll) [E. Ulrich, Studies J.W. Wevers (1984), p.71-82 = Disc. Jud. Desert 09 122]	2bce	[#819] LDAB 3458 [K. Treu, Archiv 31 (1985), p.59 no.55b]
Dt 23-28	PRyl 458 (roll)(sp, high dot) [C.H.Roberts, Bull. J.Rylands Library 20 (1936), pp.219-245]	2bce	[#957] vh057 t039 LDAB 3459
2nd/1st bce			
Ex 28	7QLXXEx (roll) [check dating; LDAB 000 (confused?)]	2/1bce	[#805] vh038 LDAB 3456 AlandAT18
Lev 26	4QLXXLev\A ("leather" roll)(blanks) [check dating; LDAB 000]	2/1bce	[#801] vh049 LDAB 3454
EpJer/Bar6	7QLXX EpJer (roll)	2/1bce	[#804] vh312 LDAB 3460 AlandAT144
1st bce			
Gen 3-38	PFouad 266a (roll)(sp, blanks) [Zaki Aly - L. Koenen, Three rolls of the Early Septuagint, 1980]	1bce	[#942] vh056a LDAB 3450 AlandAT3 [K. Treu, Archiv 28 (1982), p.91 no.5a]
Lev 2-5	4QLXXLev\B Jerusalem, Rockefeller Museum (roll)(sp, blanks, paragr, IAW)	1bce	[#802] vh046 LDAB 3452 AlandAT22
Dt 17-33	PFouad 266b (roll)(sp, blanks, paragr, Heb tetragr, stichometric in 32) [Zaki Aly - L. Koenen, Three rolls of the Early Septuagint, 1980]	1bce	[#848] vh056b t037A LDAB 3451 Aland01 = AT27 [K. Treu, Archiv 28 (1982), p.91]
late 1st bce			
Dt 10-33	PFouad 266c (roll)(sp) [Zaki Aly - L. Koenen, Three rolls of the Early Septuagint, 1980]	1+bce	[#847] vh056c LDAB 3453 Aland01; [K. Treu, Archiv 28 (1982), p.91 no.55a]
	4Q127 (Greek paraphrase of Exod?)	1+bce	
	4Q126 (unidentified Greek, skins)	1+bce	

- B. There is no "Old Testament" in Greek that existed before Christ. Only the manuscripts listed above are extant portions in Greek dated before Christ.
- C. The Septuagint (Vaticanus) is dated 4th century after Christ.
- D. The whole fable of Ptolemy and the seventy Jewish elders has been proved false and impossible.
- E. Since God commanded all Jews to copy the word of God (Deuteronomy 6:9), it is no surprise some bits of manuscripts in many languages may have existed before Christ. This does not prove they are accurate or trustworthy.
- F. Jesus and the apostles did not quote the Septuagint.
- G. The New Testament was written in Greek, therefore the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament would read differently than the Hebrew.

IV. Differences Between MT and LXX

- A. In this lesson we will look at differences between the translations of the Septuagint and the Masoretic text. We will use, "The English version of the Septuagint text, *Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton*" For the translation of the Septuagint into English and the KJV as the translation of the Hebrew into the English.

The KJV will be on the left and the Septuagint on the right. We will go through some differences in the book of Proverbs.

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Proverbs 21:18, “The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.”

Proverbs 21:18, “and a transgressor is the abomination of a righteous man.”

What does the verse mean in the KJV? The wicked are there to eventually benefit the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. When it comes down to it a Proverb of the Hebrews is that a wicked man is the payment for the life of a righteous man. It is a statement that in this world it is better to be righteous.

The Septuagint changes the meaning of the proverb to mean that a righteous man thinks transgressors are abominable.

Proverbs 21:15, “It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.”

Proverbs 21:15, “It is the joy of the righteous to do judgment: but a **holy man** is abominable with evil-doers.”

Here we see another added line from the Septuagint saying a holy man is abominable with evil doers. What does that mean? Abominable means very hateful or detestable. A holy man is very hateful with evil-doers. I could gather that it means when one is with evil doers you find holiness detestable. Does it mean a holy man is worthy to be hated when he is with evil-doers?

Proverbs 21:12, “The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.”

Proverbs 21:12, “A righteous man **understands** the hearts of the ungodly: and **despises** the ungodly for their wickedness.”

The meaning of the KJV is clear. A righteous man considers the house of the wicked. He sees that the way of wickedness leads to God’s judgement and is warned. The Septuagint again changes the meaning of the proverb. A righteous man understands wicked hearts and despises the ungodly for their wickedness.

Proverbs 21:30, “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the **LORD**.”

Proverbs 21:30, “There is no wisdom, there is no courage, there is no counsel against the **ungodly**.”

So we see the King James states that there is nothing a man can do against the Lord. The Proverb changes to against the ungodly in the Septuagint.

Proverbs 28:22, “He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”

Proverbs 28:22, “An envious man makes haste to be rich, and knows not that the **merciful man** will have the **mastery over him**.”

Here we see another Proverb with its meaning changed. The KJV states that those who haste to be rich will become poor. The Septuagint states that the man will be the recipient of mercy.

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Proverbs 28:25 , “He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat .”	Proverbs 28:25 , “An unbelieving man judges rashly : but he that trusts in the Lord will act carefully .”
Proverbs 28:11 , “ The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out. ”	Proverbs 28:11 , “ A rich man is wise in his own conceit; but an intelligent poor man will condemn him. ”

There is a difference between knowledge and understanding. One verse says that a man with understanding will understand the reasons behind a rich man’s actions. The Septuagint says an intelligent poor man will condemn a rich man.

- B. The crux of the matter is this: there are no Hebrew manuscripts behind the Septuagint. The Hebrew manuscripts that are known are these:
 - 1. Masada Scrolls 60 BC – 30 AD: These scrolls are almost exactly the same in a consonantal script (script using only consonants) as the MT.
 - 2. Murabba’at and Nahal Hever and other sites: 25AD – 130AD: There are 25 fragments of scrolls that agree almost exactly with the MT 800 years later.
 - 3. The Dead Sea Scrolls: Set of fragments of different portions of the Bible hid in a cave. The majority of these fragments agree with the MT. Below are some notable differences.

V. Differences Between MT and DSS

- A. Psalms 145:
- B. Psalms 145 is an acrostic Hebrew psalm. The first line begins with an aleph the second with a bet and so on. When the aleph-bet gets to the letter nun there is no verse for that letter. In the Dead Sea scrolls and the Septuagint there is a verse there that begins with the letter nun. One of these translations are correct which one could it be?
- C. The argument for the verse being originally part of the chapter is quite simple. There is a verse in the Dead Sea scrolls that begin with a nun therefore that verse should be included because a copyist must have omitted it.
- D. The argument against the verse being included is a little more complex. In the 3rd Century AD 200 – 299 AD there is a piece on this subject written by a Babylonian Rabbi about this missing verse. It states the Jewish tradition behind the missing verse. David had originally wrote a verse that was about how Israel had fallen. (“Fallen is the Maiden of Israel, she shall arise nevermore”) This did not go along with the uplifting nature of the song so David omitted it.

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- E. He then added a positive spin on the word fall.
- F. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.
- G. That verse begins with a Samech but the Nun is included in there.
- H. It added extra emphasis and focus to the verse so that folks would know that God helps the fallen.
- I. Some key things to point out are these. If it was a copyist's error, it would be extremely glaring.
- J. Scribes in that day devoted their life to writing the Word of God.
- K. To have an obvious omission like that would be an abomination to the other scribes.
- L. Secondly if it was a copyist error it would have to have been done pretty early on in order for folks back in 200 BC to know about it.
- M. Thirdly the argument for it to be included does not stand because that argument can be used against it. If a copyist could have omitted the verse, could not a copyist also have added the verse to improve the flow of the words? Lastly there are other Psalms where the writer does not follow the alphabet completely.
- N. Psalms 25 misses three letters Beth, Vau, and Koph. Psalms 34 is another one as well. That psalm excludes the letter Vau.
- O. There are some key facts to point out about the verse in the DSS first it uses the name of God that is Elohim. All nine other times God's name is Yahweh in the psalm. Also another fact is not having a nun makes the Koph verse (11) become the central verse which is the theme of the psalm. Lastly according to Jewish tradition the nun alludes to the falling of Israel (Amos 6.2) and that its emittance is symbolic.
- P. Psalms 151:

This is a Psalm that is a kind of biography of David. In the title of the Psalm in the Septuagint it states that the Psalm is outside of the number of the original Psalms but is ascribed to David. The translators of the Septuagint made a point to point out that the Psalm was not original but they wanted to include it with the 150. This to me is an argument in favor of the Masoretic text. If the translators of the Septuagint knew it to not be an original Psalm why was it included in only the Dead Sea scrolls.
- Q. Other miscellaneous differences.
- R. There are other small differences as well between the MT and the DSS. Some of these include a shortening of Goliath to 6 ½ feet and an added 100 years to the genealogies in Genesis to harmonize it with a Babylonian account of the flood. Though these differences

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are significant a key thing to remember is the scrolls were localized. There is no other evidence for these changes in any other Hebrew scroll at any time. Most likely the Dead Sea scrolls were a less accurate translation of the time that the scribes added some things too to make it harmonize more with public opinion of the day.

Lesson 7: History of the Jewish Scriptures

I. The History of the Bible

- A. The 66 books of the Bible were written over 1,500 years by more than 40 authors and present a picture of God's epic rescue plan for humanity.
- B. The last book of the first part, known as the Old Testament, was written in the fourth century before Christ.
- C. The second part of the Bible – the New Testament – recording the life and commandments of Christ, and the early work of the apostles, was finished around 96 AD.
- D. The collection of the 66 books of the Bible we have today was canonized (recognized as inspired) in the fourth century AD.
- E. It was more than a thousand years before whole bibles were available to ordinary men.

II. The History of the Old Testament

- A. The first five books of the Old Testament are the foundations of the Jewish faith and central to Christianity. The main author was Moses, a significant leader of the Jewish people who brought them out of slavery in Egypt. He wrote down the laws given to the Jewish people by God – including the Ten Commandments.
- B. A later book of the Old Testament, Joshua, refers to 'the Book of the Law of Moses.'
- C. Other writings gathered together the oral stories passed down for centuries, which make up the first few chapters of the Bible.
- D. Some of the books of the Old Testament took many years to come together because they documented events over centuries.
- E. The Old Testament not only includes historical accounts but poetry, songs, wise sayings and the writings of prophets.
- F. The authors wrote in ink on specially-prepared animal skins which were rolled up into scrolls.
- G. Because these deteriorated over time, writers (scribes) made exact copies and destroyed the old ones.
- H. It is thought that the Jewish leader Ezra collected the various writings together after the Jewish people returned from exile in Babylon.
- I. The content of the Old Testament was agreed in 290 BC about 40 years after the last book was written, although there is evidence that the order of the books has changed a little.

III. Divisions of the Jewish Bible

Three Divisions of Tanakh



The B'rit Chadashah

The New Testament is called the *B'rit Chadashah* in Hebrew, meaning "New Covenant" (the word *B'rit* means "covenant" and *Chadashah* means "new"). Like the Tanakh, it can be divided into three main parts: Gospels/Acts (corresponding to Torah), Letters (corresponding to Ketuvim), and Revelation (corresponding to Nevi'im):

1. <i>Gospels</i> בְּשׁוּרַת הַנְּאֻלָּה		<div> <div>Matthew</div> <div>מַתִּי</div> </div> <div> <div>Mark</div> <div>מָרְקוֹס</div> </div> <div> <div>Luke</div> <div>לֹּוּקָס</div> </div> <div> <div>John</div> <div>יוֹחָנָן</div> </div> <div> <div>Acts</div> <div>מַעֲשֵׂי הַשְּׁלִיחִים</div> </div>	
2. <i>Letters</i> אַגְרוֹת		<div> <div>Romans</div> <div>אַל־הַרֹמָאִים</div> </div> <div> <div>1 Corinthians</div> <div>הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה</div> </div> <div> <div>2 Corinthians</div> <div>הַשֵּׁנִים</div> </div> <div> <div>Galatians</div> <div>אַל־הַגָּלָטִיָּים</div> </div> <div> <div>Ephesians</div> <div>אַל־הָאֶפֶסְיָאִים</div> </div> <div> <div>Philippians</div> <div>אַל־הַפִּילִיפִּיָּים</div> </div> <div> <div>Colossians</div> <div>אַל־הַקֹּלוֹסִיָּים</div> </div> <div> <div>1 Thessalonians</div> <div>הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה</div> </div> <div> <div>2 Thessalonians</div> <div>הַשֵּׁנִים</div> </div> <div> <div>1 Timothy</div> <div>הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה</div> </div> <div> <div>2 Timothy</div> <div>הַשֵּׁנִים</div> </div> <div> <div>Titus</div> <div>אַל־טִיטוֹס</div> </div> <div> <div>Philemon</div> <div>אַל־פִּילִמוֹן</div> </div>	
		<div> <div>Hebrews</div> <div>אַל־הָעִבְרִיָּים</div> </div> <div> <div>James</div> <div>אַגְרֹת יַעֲקֹב</div> </div> <div> <div>1 Peter</div> <div>הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה</div> </div> <div> <div>2 Peter</div> <div>הַשֵּׁנִים</div> </div> <div> <div>1 John</div> <div>הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה</div> </div> <div> <div>2 John</div> <div>הַשֵּׁנִים</div> </div> <div> <div>3 John</div> <div>הַשֵּׁנִים</div> </div> <div> <div>Jude</div> <div>אַגְרֹת יְהוּדָה</div> </div>	
3. <i>Revelation</i> הַתְּגִלּוֹת			

IV. Authors of the Old Testament Books

Authors of the Bible	
Book	Author
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Moses
Joshua Judges Ruth 1 & 2 Samuel 1 & 2 Kings	Unknown
1 & 2 Chronicles Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Nehemiah
Esther Job	Unknown
Psalms	Various David: 73 Asaph: 12 Sons of Korah: 11 Solomon: 2 Moses: 1 Ethan: 1 Heman: 1 (with Korah) Unknown: 50

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Proverbs	Various Solomon: 29 Agur: 1 Lemuel: 1
Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	Solomon
Isaiah	Isaiah
Jeremiah Lamentations	Jeremiah
Ezekiel	Ezekiel
Daniel	Daniel
Hosea	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obadiah
Jonah	Jonah
Micah	Micah
Nahum	Nahum
Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Zephaniah
Haggai	Haggai
Zechariah	Zechariah
Malachi	Malachi

Lesson 8: The Confusion of the Rabbi's Regarding the Talmud

I. The Talmud

- A. The Talmud is the central part of Rabbinical Judaism.
- B. To the unbiased observer it is a collection of rabbinical teachings on various subjects.
- C. To the Jews it holds a different standard.
- D. If you were to ask a Rabbi what the difference between the Talmud and the Torah, the explanation would be similar to that below.
- E. The first thing to know is that the Torah consists of two parts: The Written Torah, and the Oral Torah.
- F. Written Torah
 - Totals 24 books, including the Five Books of Moses and the prophetic writings – e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Psalms, Proverbs, etc.
- G. Oral Torah
 - Its name derives from the fact that it was not allowed to be formally written down but had to be taught orally.
 - It contains the explanations of the Written Torah.
 - One cannot be understood without the other.
 - In 190 AD, persecution and exile of the Jewish people threatened the proper transmission of the Oral Torah.
 - Therefore, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi compiled written notes on the Oral Torah called the “Mishnah” (Hebrew for “teaching”).
 - Rabbi Yehudah arranged the Mishnah into six sections: Laws of Agriculture, Festivals, Damages, Marriage, Purity, and Offerings.
 - Rabbi Yehudah wrote the Mishnah in code form, so that students would still require the explanation of a rabbi – since this information was meant to remain oral.
 - In 500 AD, the Jewish people again suffered an uprooting of their communities, and two Babylonian rabbis – Rav Ashi and Ravina – compiled a 60-volume record of rabbinic discussions on the Mishnah, called the “Gemara.”
 - Together, the Mishnah and Gemara comprise what is commonly called the “Talmud.”
- H. The Oral Torah also includes the Midrash, an explanation of the Written Torah, comprising both ethical and legal components.
- I. Much of this material is also contained in the Talmud.
- J. The Oral Torah also includes the works of Kabbalah, a tradition of mystical secrets of the metaphysical universe received by Moses at Mount Sinai.

II. Examples of Talmudic Non-scriptural Teachings

- A. We will briefly look at some portions of the Talmud.
- B. Keep in mind this is the works of men.
- C. It is not equal to the word of God.
- D. Romans 6:23 – **For the wages of sin is death;** but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- The Bible teaches that sin leads to death.
- Also people who die without knowing Jesus are in hell (Luke 16).
- Jesus is the only way to heaven (John 14:6).

- E. The Talmud teaches something different. Tractate Eruvin Chapter 4:

Three persons will never come to Gehenna: He who suffers from extreme poverty, he who suffers with a diseased stomach and one who is oppressed by the government, and others add also the man who is afflicted with a bad wife. [Why was the latter not mentioned in the first place? Because if one has a bad wife he should divorce her. Those however who declare that one who has a bad wife will not see Gehenna refer to those, who cannot afford to make a settlement upon their wives, or to those, who have children and cannot divorce their wives. For what purpose did the Rabbis tell us this? In order, that a man, who is subject to these misfortunes, should accept them with resignation.]

Here is the Talmudic teaching about the Pharaoh in Exodus Moed Katan 18a: Having mentioned Avitul the scribe, the Gemara records other statements of his: And Avitul the scribe said in the name of Rav Pappa: The Pharaoh who lived in the days of Moses was a cubit tall, his beard was a cubit long, and his penis [*paramashtako*] was a cubit and a span, i.e., a cubit and the distance between the thumb and the little finger, in length, in order to fulfill what is stated: “And He sets up over it the lowest of men” ([Daniel 4:17](#)), which teaches that Pharaoh was extremely short and lowly

Daniel 4.17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

What does the Talmud say about those who disobey Rabbis? Eruvin 21b: This teaches that whoever mocks [*malig*] the words of the Sages will be sentenced to boiling excrement, which results from the weariness of the flesh of man.

The Talmud as a whole does what Jesus said the Pharisees did back when he was on earth.

It makes the commandments of God of none affect through there tradition.

Lesson 9: Number of Hebrew Words used in OT

I. Number of Hebrew Words Used in OT

- A. Strong's Dictionary identifies 8,674 words in the Hebrew Bible.
- B. Of these, 2,415 are proper names (such as Moses, David and Isaiah), leaving us with 6,259 Hebrew words.
- C. Does this mean that only 6,259 words were used to write the entire Hebrew Bible? Well, not exactly. When it comes to verbs, Strong's Dictionary only identifies the *qal* (simple) form of the verb, but each verb can have multiple forms of the verb. A good example is the verb רָאָה (*ra'ah*, Strong's #7200), which means "to see," but different forms of the verb will "change" the meaning of the verb. The *niphal* (passive) form of the verb means "to be seen," which we would translate as "appear." The *hiphil* (active causative) form of the verb means "to cause to see," which we would translate as "show." The *huphal* (passive causative) form of the verb means "to cause to be seen," which we would translate as "be shown."
- D. Of the 6,259 different Hebrew words in the Hebrew Bible, 1,647 of them are verbs, and taking an average of four different forms for each verb (some have less and others have more) we have 6,588 different Hebrew verbs.
- E. Hebrew nouns can also have different meanings if they are written with a prefix or suffix. For instance, the word מֶלֶךְ (*melekh*, Strong's #4428) means "king," but if it is written with the prefix לְ (*L*), forming the word לְמֶלֶךְ (*l'melekh*), it can mean "to the king," "for the king," or "belonging to the king" (context will determine which translation is appropriate). Another example is the Hebrew word דָּם (*dam*, Strong's #1818), which means "blood," but when it is written in the plural form דָּמִים / *damiym*) it can mean "bloodshed."
- F. A noun can also have a different meaning when it is written in combination with another word. The Hebrew noun דַּעַת (*da'at*, Strong's #1847) means "knowledge," but when this word follows the word בְּלִי (*b'liy*, Strong's #1097), which means "without," this word combination means "without knowledge," but we would translate it as "ignorance."
- G. Other nouns can have different meanings depending on the context. Job 41:2 uses the word אָף (*aph*, Strong's #639) and means "nose," but in Genesis 30:2 this very same word is used to mean "anger" (from the flaring of the nostrils when angry). In addition, when the word אָף (*aph*) is written in the plural form it means "nostrils."
- H. Of the 6,259 different Hebrew words in the Hebrew Bible, 3,827 of them are nouns, and if we assume four meanings for each noun, we have a total of 15,308 nouns. This brings us to a total of 21,896 verbs and nouns.
- I. The remaining 785 words identified in Strong's Dictionary are pronouns, interrogatives, prepositions, etc. Each of these words may have a multiple of meanings depending on their

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context. For instance, the Hebrew word אשר (*asher*, Strong's #834) can mean “which” or “because,” depending on how it is used in a sentence.

- J. If we assume two different meanings for each of these 785 words we have 1,570 more words, which brings us to a Biblical Hebrew vocabulary of 23,466 words in the Hebrew Bible, a fairly impressive number of words. To put this number in perspective, the average English-speaking person uses about 25,000 different words in their vocabulary and all the works of William Shakespeare include only 25,000 words.
- K. The thing that is most impressive is that all of these different meaning trace down to 6,259 simple forms of words.
- L. The Old Testament contains 419,687 total words. If you learned the 50 most frequent verbs, and nouns, the 40 most frequent particles, and the twenty most frequent adjectives, that would be a total of 160 totally different Hebrew words. Those words are used cumulatively 288,646 times in the Old Testament. That would be almost 70% of the scriptures in 160 words. 160 words is less than the vocabulary of a three-year-old.
- M. Here are some interesting comparisons with languages of today.
- N. The Oxford English Dictionary has approximately 600,000 words: Average person uses around 20,000 – 25,000 unique words in their vocabulary.
- O. The “*Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*” has approximately 150,000 Spanish words. Average Spanish speaker uses 10,000 – 15,000 words.
- P. The “*Larousse*” has approximately 130,000 French words.

Lesson 10: The Benefits of Using Translations

I. There are Many Translation of the Bible in Many Languages



II. Most Translation are Not Trustworthy

- A. Poor translation
- B. Biased translations
- C. Corrupt underlying texts
- D. Few are good translations of Masoretic Text and Textus Receptus

III. Good Translations Must be Identified

- A. Compare all translations used with reliable texts
- B. Reject corrupt translations
- C. The King James Version is the Perfect Standard
- D. The Masoretic Text (MT) and Textus Receptus (T/R) are perfectly translated in the KJV.
- E. Other reliable language translations are profitable to study also.
- F. Some fairly good translations:

IV. The Profitability of Studying Other Good Translations

- A. See how words are translated
- B. See consistencies among the translations
- C. Identify poor texts quickly
- D. Expand the student's understanding of words
- E. Help in expanding language ability

Lesson 11: The Hebrew Alphabet (Aleph-Bet)

I. The Hebrew Alphabet

- A. Psalm 119 has all 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
 B. Students are to be familiar with the Hebrew alphabet, learning the names of letters and approximate sounds.

Letter	Name	Sound
א	ʾaleph (awlef)	a stoppage of air
ב	bet (bayt)	b or v
ג	gimel (geemel)	g
ד	dalet (dawlet)	d
ה	heʾ (hay)	h
ו	vav (vawv)	v
ז	zayin (za-yin)	z
ח	ḥet (chayt)	ch as in “loch”
ט	ṭet (tayt)	t
י	yod (yod)	y
כ	kaph (kahf)	k or ch as in “loch”
ל	lamed (lahmed)	l
מ	mem (maym)	m
נ	nun (noon)	n
ס	samech (sawmech)	s
ע	ʿayin (a-yin)	a stoppage of air
פ	peh (pay)	p or ph
צ	tsade (tsawday)	ts as in “cats”
ק	qoph (qowf)	q as in “plaque”
ר	resh (raysh)	r
ש	sin (seen)	s
שׁ	shin (sheen)	sh
ת	tav (tahv)	t

II. Handwriting the Hebrew Alphabet

- A. Student to learn to write the Hebrew alphabet using guide below.
- B. Letters and words are written from right to left.



III. Large Chart of Alphabet

The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters, all of which are considered consonants. Hebrew indicates vowels with about 15 diacritical marks, but they are not often used, except in very specific situations.



IV. Interesting Facts About the Hebrew Language

1. There's no way to say "to be."

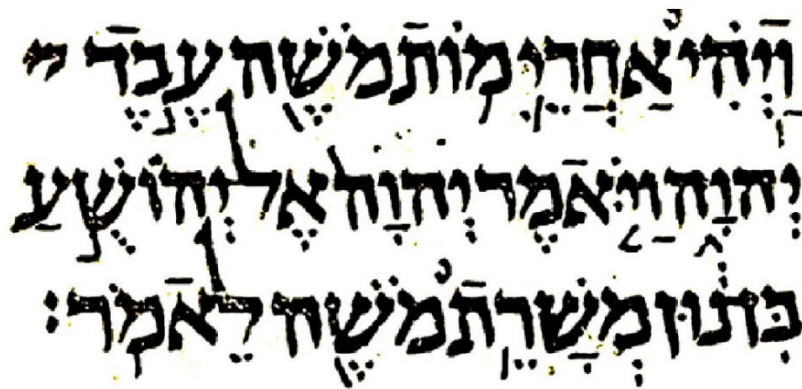
The Hebrew language does not have a verb that translates to "to be"; rather, in sentences that would use "to be" in English, there is no verb at all. For instance, אני פה ("I am here") consists of just two words: אני (I) and פה (here).

2. Men and women use different verbs.

Verbs take distinct forms depending on whether the subject of the sentence is male or female. A man, for example, might say, אני לא מבין ("ani lo mevin," or "I don't understand), whereas a woman would say אני לא מבינה ("ani lo mevina"), which means the same thing.

3. The Hebrew alphabet has no vowels.

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and all of them are consonants. Therefore, in standard written Hebrew, the vowels are implicit. However, in children's books and texts designed for learners, vowels are added to words in the form of small dots that appear above and below each consonant, as in the picture below.



The Hebrew alphabet is an *abjad*, a writing system that lets the reader supply the appropriate vowel. Hebrew has vowels but they mostly are not marked – the reader must know how each word is pronounced.

4. Hebrew went through a dormant period of over 1500 years.

Around 200 AD, Hebrew died out as an everyday spoken language, even though it had existed for many centuries before. It remained dormant for over 1500 years until it was revived in the 19th century. During this dormant period, Hebrew still existed in its written form, and was used in Jewish liturgy and rabbinic texts.

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5. Modern Hebrew is regulated by an official academy.

Many languages, such as Spanish and French, are regulated by official academies, which provide guidelines for grammar and control which words are added to the dictionary. Hebrew is regulated by *the Academy of the Hebrew Language*, which was established by the Israeli government in 1953.

6. There's no way of saying "I would like."

Politeness is a top concern for many foreign-language learners. If you want to ask for something in Hebrew, however, there's no way to say that you "would like" something. Instead, you have to be direct, and say that you want something (using the verb רוצה, "rotsch").

7. Hebrew letters can change depending on their location in a word.

Five Hebrew letters — א, ב, ג, ד, and ה — have two forms. They appear as written previously when they occur in the beginning or middle of a word. However, the same letters are written as ו, ז, ח, ט, and י when they come at the end of a word.

8. Hebrew is written from right to left.

Unlike most languages, which are written from left to right, Hebrew is written from right to left.

Nobody is sure why, but a popular theory is that writing from right to left was easier for engravers when they were chiseling words onto stone tablets. These engravers would hold the hammer in their stronger hand (typically their right hand), making it easier to write from right to left.

Although the Hebrew words are written right to left, modern Hebrew numbers are written left to right. The numbers used are exactly as in English, Arabic Numerals.

9. Pure Hebrew words are always based on a three-letter root word (sometimes four), but many non-Hebrew words have entered the language especially in the last 100 years. For example, the word for car is *mechonit* but people also call it an auto.

While the word bible is from the Greek, many Hebrew words from it have entered the English language. For example: hallelujah (praise God), amen, mammon (money), Satan and even abracadabra.

10. Hebrew is very close to Arabic – they are both Semitic languages. Although they have different scripts, they have parallel grammar systems and often similar words; for example, *shalom* in Hebrew is *salam* in Arabic (meaning both peace and hello).

Today, many words in Arabic are used by Hebrew speakers as slang words. For example, *sababa* (great) and *mabsut* (satisfied).

V. **Diacritical Marks are Used to Identify Vowel Sounds**

Hebrew diacritics

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Niqqud in Hebrew is the way to indicate vowels, which are omitted in modern orthography, using a set of ancillary glyphs. Since the vowels can be understood from surrounding, context can help readers read the correct pronunciations of several letters of the Hebrew alphabet (the rafe sign and other rare glyphs are also listed as part of the *niqqud* system but are not in common use); *geresh* and *gershayim*, two diacritics that are not considered a part of *niqqud*, each of which has several functions (e.g. to denote Hebrew numerals); and cantillation, “accents” which are used exclusively to indicate how Biblical passages should be chanted and may possess a punctuating function.

Several diacritical systems were developed in the Early Middle Ages. The most widespread system, and the only one still used to a significant degree today, was created by the Masoretes of Tiberias in the second half of the first millennium in the Land of Israel (see Masoretic Text, Tiberian Hebrew). The *Niqqud* signs and cantillation marks developed by the Masoretes are small compared to consonants, so they could be added to the consonantal texts without re-transcribing them.



Gen. 1:9 And God said, “Let the waters be collected.”

Letters in black, pointing in red, cantillation in blue

Hebrew orthography includes three types of diacritics

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Lesson 12: Hebrew versus English

A RESPONSE TO CERTAIN ASSERTIONS MADE BY DR. WILLIAM D. BARRICK IN RESPECT TO TRANSLATIONS

N. Sebastian Desent, Ph.D., Th.D., D.D.; Pastor, Historic Baptist Church

November 22, 2021

Editor's Note: I happened across this Hebrew Class Study prepared by Dr. William D. Barrick. I sincerely believe this man is educated and a good teacher of the Hebrew language. However, because his position is that "no translation is inerrant" and "every interpretation must be rooted and grounded in the Hebrew text. Ultimately, reading the text in translation is not a viable substitute"; I have used his position and my rebuttal as my introduction to our Hebrew class. I do not want my students to think Dr. Barrick is correct in his assumptions.

When we read papers written by educated men, we must all think before "drinking the Kool-Aid," especially when it comes to men writing on the subject of the Bible, or the study thereof. As one man said: "When you are a hammer, everything is a nail," so we can expect a professor of Hebrew to exalt the study of the language to a position greater than intended by God.

Just as the fundamental Islamicists would say that unless you read the Koran in the original tongue you do not know the true words, so there are others who teach that unless you have the original languages of the Bible you cannot truly know the word of God.

Holding this position does three things: 1. It positions those who do not know the language as incompetent to study the word of God. 2. It exalts those who do know the languages as "leaders of the blind." And 3, it makes God's word impotent, because it is intended for all people.

Going deep into word studies is *not* God's method of Bible study (2 Timothy 2:14-18), but rather, the *dividing rightly* of his word (v. 15). A student learns more by comparing "spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13) than he will by studying lexicons and grammars and commentaries. Furthermore, men who do such word and grammar studies tend to correct the word of God more than they believe it and practice it. No one ever won a soul to Jesus using a lexicon, and no one ever lived a sanctified life by his grammar studies.

Then we learn from reading the Bible that God himself thinks very highly of his word being translated. Note these passages:

Isaiah 55:8-11:

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

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10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Romans 16:25-27

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

Revelation 10:11

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Zephaniah 3:8-9:

8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

Acts.2:1-8

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Then, as we do a review of the word *translate* in scripture, we find these passages:

2 Samuel 3:10 – To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

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Colossians 1:13 – Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Hebrews 11:5 – By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

In each of the three instances we see how a *translation* ended up **better than the original**. I know at this time Hebrew and Greek scholars are losing their sanctification and thinking all sorts of things, the first being the word “translate” as used in these passages is not the best word to use. That argument is well-used when debating truth. As for me, I go by the old Black-backed 66 Book called the KJV; which was translated by men a multitude more knowledgeable than anyone alive today. The KJV is the best lexicon for proper translation of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into English. You can rest your soul on this fact.

Note, first, that it was David’s kingdom that received the promise in 2 Samuel 7:13-14; 22:51; 1 Kings 2:33; Matthew 1:1; etc. David’s kingdom replaced Saul’s and David is the lineage from which Christ came. Thank God for this *translation*! It is far better than the original kingdom of Saul.

Note, second, that when we are saved, we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. This, too, is a better translation. Who desires to live in darkness when they can live in the light? And these “dark” and near-dead languages with which God’s word originated are better understood when brought into the light of translations, who are we to argue with Ephesians 5:14: “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

Then note, third, that Enoch was translated that he should not see death. Enoch was in a much better condition after his translation. We admit likewise that translating the scriptures into many languages is much better for the people of the world than expecting these people to learn dead languages (I speak of ancient Hebrew and *Koine* Greek, not the modern versions).

Furthermore, we ask why would God preserve his words in fragments and in near-dead languages of Hebrew and *Koine* Greek, and then command man that he should live by every word (Matthew 4:4)?

Must every man learn to read Hebrew and *Koine* Greek in order to live by every word of God?

And since we believe the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, we would need more than just the *Old* Testament Hebrew to have the word of God. We also need the *New* Testament. Therefore, whatever principles a person puts forth regarding the need to learn Hebrew would equally apply to the Greek of the New Testament. Accordingly, who would say that people who do not know these languages cannot really understand the word of God?

There are approximately 7.794 billion people in the world as of 2020. We are probably around 8 billion by 2023. Over 30% of the world can read a King James Bible.

In contrast, only 9 million people (0.11%) speak Hebrew, with about 5 million of those being native speakers. And there are only 13.5 million Greek-speaking people (0.17%), and they speak a modern Greek, not *Koine*. If God preserves his word forever, as he has promised in Psalm 12:6-7, and the original

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manuscripts are lost, and many of the good copies are portions (O.T. and N.T.); where does God preserve his complete inspired word today, if not in the translations?

For the record, I do not assume that Dr. Barrick would disagree that the world has the word of God. But there is a chance that some students of Hebrew may think their study of Hebrew to be indispensable if one is to learn the true word of God.

Furthermore, we have seen that through proper translation of the right texts of the word of God, the texts in the original tongues are actually improved and made clearer and more effective. I admit this might sound blasphemous to some scholars, but we will see what God says in this matter. I state this fact early so as to contend with the teaching that: “Ultimately, reading the text in translation is not a viable substitute.”

At the same time, we can agree that there is value in learning the Hebrew and Greek in order to *help understand*, and this in conjunction with other language translations. Hebrew and Greek studies are helpful, but dispensable, if one has a good translation. And if one is saying there is no perfect translation, I say he sets himself in a position contrary to what God says. How many *inspired* writers of the New Testament quoted the Old Testament? There are over 280 Old Testament verses quoted in the New Testament, translated under the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Will any scholar contend these translations are not perfectly rendered and inspired of God? And even better rendered since they are used in the context of Christ?

We also praise Dr. Barrick as he appears to give preeminence to the *Masoretic Text* over the BHS, the LXX, and others. We assume this as he uses the MT for his study.

As with other analyses and rebuttals, we shall take the best arguments of educated men and compare their words to “*thus saith the Lord.*” And we shall leave it to the reader to decide what position to take. But we can expect if the arguments on the other side are just men’s sayings, we are on solid ground with our scriptural response.

As we begin, here is Dr. Barrick’s *Introduction*, with our comments interjected within brackets []:

OT603 HEBREW EXEGESIS I
STUDY NOTES
Prepared by William D. Barrick, Th.D.
The Master’s Seminary
Sun Valley, California
Fall 2011

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

As readers of the Hebrew OT, we must approach the text as it has been preserved for us. Any alteration we might make in the text must be fully supported. Exegesis is the explication of what the text says, not what we wish the text to say. Every interpretation must be rooted and grounded in the Hebrew text. Ultimately, reading the text in translation is not a viable substitute.

One who made it his life’s work to interpret French literature, but who could only read it in an English translation, would not be taken seriously; yet it is remarkable

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how many ministers of religion week by week expound a literature that they are unable to read save in translation!

H. H. Rowley, *Expository Times* 74, no. 12 (Sept 1963): 383; cited in Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), 2–3

[This argument by H. H. Rowley carries no weight in this discussion. Most pastors, teachers, and gospel ministers are not translating anything, but reading, teaching, and “preaching the word” from a translation, most likely made by a person with the translation expertise. We do contend that the translation used should be translated rightly from the pure manuscripts, but this is another study.]

Exegesis starts with the text and views it within its syntactical, lexical, literary, historical, social/cultural, geographical, and theological contexts. Although the exegesis of the Hebrew text of the OT focuses upon the language, the linguistic factor is not the only factor to be considered. Everyday life differed greatly from our present-day Western culture. In the OT, culture changed from one century to another, from one people to another, and from one environment to another – just as it changes within our own setting. Attention must be given to identify the separate context for each passage. So much is unfamiliar to the modern, Western reader: clothing, food, the medium of exchange, local customs, religious observances, and dialects. How did these factors affect the meaning for both writer and recipient? That is the exegete’s challenge.

The temptation is to merely catalogue, collate, and arrange information. Exegesis, however, is more than the collection and filing of data – it is interpreting the information.

[This is such a scary statement! We should never allow one’s man view to affect the meaning of a passage or how it is translated. We say the right translation should be *word-for word*, independent of the opinion of the translator or *exegete*. Here Barrack says, “Exegesis, however, is more than the collection and filing of data – it is interpreting the information.” We answer with 2 Peter 1:20-21: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” *Private interpretation* after the holy men “spake” is just as wrong. Just give us the words God used in a good and right translation and we will allow the Holy Ghost to guide us into all truth (John 16:3).]

Anyone with a photocopy machine, scissors, and rubber cement can copy, cut, arrange, and paste quotations from sources and references in the form of a research paper. It takes an exegete to examine, evaluate, assimilate, and interact with the data in a coherent interpretative narrative employing only the most pertinent citations. The interpretative narrative should then be synthesized and applied theologically and pragmatically. When the seminarian’s exegetical digests and papers reflect this approach, he has attained the goal of his education: he has become an exegete and an expositor of the Word of God.

[We suppose if one is competing with other “seminarians” we can agree the studies should be based on research – which we all know includes reading sources. However, in the real work outside of seminaries of preaching and teaching God’s word, we shall go with the apostle Paul and his mandate, as found in 2 Timothy 4:2: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Our brothers Paul and Timothy are to be followed – we do not add to the word, we do not take away from the word, we do not change the word, and we do not redefine the word – we simply *preach the word*! We use the word to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. The goal of being “*an exegete and an expositor of the Word of God*” is not found in scripture. Expository teaching is a straw dummy

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created by places charging tuition to corrupt young minds. We contend there is value in education, and we encourage it; but we want men who are moved with the Holy Ghost and preach the word as God gave it.]

It is reported that an old prospector summed up his life in the following words: “I spent five years looking for gold and twenty years looking for my burrow. [sic]” Striking exegetical gold has about the same ratio. For every nugget the exegete finds, he can expect to spend four hours looking for it. Exegesis is not for the lazy or the quitter. It is a labor of love requiring commitment and perseverance.

Word studies alone will not suffice. Indeed, the over-occupation with word studies is a sign of the laziness and ignorance of the vast majority of what passes for biblical exposition in our times. It tends to be as inaccurate as translation solely by means of a dictionary.

[From whence should we get our “nuggets” (not chicken nuggets)? We contend it is God who gives these nuggets (James 1:5). We do encourage diligent study, but not in the original languages. The Bible method of study is given by God himself in Isaiah 28:9-11:

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

Proper biblical study and the means of proper exegesis is done by first obeying the commandments of God as found in the New Testament (precept upon precept). Second, the student of the word of God is to read and reread the Bible over and over (line upon line, line upon line). Third, the student compares spiritual with spiritual (here a little, there a little). Fourth, God uses another tongue to speak to his people (i.e., God’s word in another language – translations. And as to the *burro*, (a burro tried to burrow into a borough), God indeed blesses the study of his word (2 Timothy 2:15).]

Just as a sentence is more revealing than a single word, so the examination of a writer’s syntax and style is that much more important to a biblical commentator. It is not surprising that fewer books have been written on this subject than on vocabulary, because whereas students of vocabulary can quickly look up lists of words in concordances and indices, in the field of syntax the study is more circuitous. There is no help except in a few selective grammars and monographs, so that the worker really must work his way through all the texts in Greek.

Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), 2–3

[We do not discount the importance of syntax, style, and vocabulary. However, we must be obedient to our Lord when he said in Matthew 4:4: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Therefore, we look for word-for-word translations. We want the words, not the exegesis. We live by the words, not the exegesis. And as a side comment, Jesus himself adds a word to the Hebrew text in his *translation* of Deuteronomy 8:3. Can anyone contend Jesus was wrong to do this? Can anyone contend this is a bad translation? Can anyone contend these words are not inspired?]

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Having decried the over-emphasis on philology or etymology, we must recognize that the choice of individual words was significant to the writers of Scripture. It is legitimate for the exegete to ask, “Why did the writer choose this term as opposed to one of its synonyms?”

[We say God gave the writers the words to use, under inspiration of the Spirit of God. They may not have even known why they used their words at the time.]

Cicero somewhere has written of the *scientia iuris: res enim sunt parvae, prope in singulis litteris atque interpunctionibus verborum occupatae*.^{*} Delete the *prope* and you have a fair description of the matter of textual criticism. Whether Euripides wrote *δει* or *χρη* in a given passage is hardly of metaphysical import. But we must assume that he made a choice between them. This is sufficient justification for concerning ourselves with the problem. It made a difference to the poet; it should make a difference to us. This planet, I do not doubt, shall never want for people to despise such problems and those who try to resolve them. Such contempt is founded upon the remarkable premise that one who manifests a concern for minutiae must of necessity be both indifferent to and unequal to profound problems. The Greeks, on the contrary, in their simplicity had contrived a word to express this reverence before even the smallest truth; and that word is *υιλαλήθεια*. The sacred writer speaks not idly when he reminds us that *ὁ ἐξοστθενῶν σὰ ὀλίγα κασὰ μικρόν περσεῖσαι*.^{**}

Robert Renehan, *Greek Textual Criticism: A Reader*
(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 134

^{*} “knowledge of law: the matters are indeed small, mainly occupied with individual letters and also the punctuation of words” [WDB]

^{**} “the one despising the little things shall fall because of the insignificant” [WDB]

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TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

Perform a provisional or preliminary translation of the text.

Statements You Might Have Heard about Bible Translation(s)

“Reading the Bible in translation is like kissing your bride through a veil.”

(Haim Nacham Bialik). This simile describes what normally passes for Bible reading and exposition. For the most part, modern preachers and the people in the pew have accepted their distance from the real text of Scripture.

[Again, the author quotes some non-authority because he likes what he said. We could easily say with the same authority, that “studying the original languages instead of preaching the word is like kissing your wife’s great-grandmother.” But we refrain. My Savior and the apostles translated and quoted the Old Testament. And we prefer their translation over the “original.”]

“Traduttori traditori” = “Translators (are) traitors.” or *“Traduttore traditore”* = “Translator, traitor.”

[This is such a bold and ridiculous statement, breathed by a person of blind hubris, that it does not warrant a response. One will notice there is no source for this statement. I think few would admit to saying this. See our comment above.]

No translation is inerrant. Only the original manuscripts themselves were perfect, free of error. They were produced under the direct superintendence of the Holy Spirit. No subsequent copy, edition, or translation has been perfect. Sinful men who are in no way perfect produced them all. John Eliot, a British missionary who worked among the American Indians from 1631 to 1690, involved himself in translating the Bible into one of the Indian languages. He found himself unable to translate the word lattice in Judges 5:28. Describing the object as best he could to some Indian friends, Eliot received what he thought was the appropriate translation. Years later Eliot discovered, to his great amusement and consternation, that his rendering of the verse read: “The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the eel-pot.

[Again, the author provides no authority for his statement. Indeed, some translations are inerrant, and others are not. Since there are no originals in existence the author basically states we have no inerrant or perfect word of God, and that it is up to good scholars like himself to tell us what God meant. This is all very conducive to the author’s livelihood, but the conjecture goes contrary to what our Savior says in Matthew 4:4. Remember also what Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15-17:

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Timothy had no originals. But he had the holy scriptures. Furthermore, God has used imperfect men from Moses, Job, David, and Paul to Peter, James, and John. Paul said this in Romans 7:24: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Would anyone care to disagree with Peter

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when we said of Paul's writings in 2 Peter 3:16: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction?" Peter admitted Paul's epistles were scripture.

Using a translation is like watching a color film on a black and white TV set. Some of the artistry still comes through, but not enough to be fully cognizant of every detail.

[Again, the author provides no authority. We could just as easily say, using a good translation is like watching a digitally remastered and colorized version of the black and white Bogart movie *Casablanca* on a 70-inch 4K Crystal Ultra HD Smart TV. But what weight does this carry? We believe we have made our point clear on translations.]

Translations are only as good as their textual base. The text is important in the original languages.

[We agree with this statement. Poor translations of good texts, and good translations of poor texts equally yield faulty translations. We support and encourage accurate translations of the correct texts.]

Transferring the nuances of one language into another is a challenge containing risks. The rewards of Bible translation, however, far outweigh the risks entailed.

[We also agree the translation work of the scriptures involves risk and challenges. But it is a noble work. When we believers arrive at the judgment seat of Christ, we shall see the rewards given to those men by whose translations many were saved, including John Eliot.

And, as a brief commentary, soul-winning is the real work of those who profess to study and know the Bible. How many souls have you led to Christ? Recently, I led a man to Christ using a Spanish translation and my imperfect Spanish language. The man's soul is much more important than my ability to speak perfectly (Mark 8:36). But he did understand and do what God required of him.]

Some Basic Precepts:

1. The way to understand the word of God is not through study of archaic languages, but through the power of the Holy Ghost. We compare spiritual with spiritual. 1 Corinthians 2:10 says: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Also, 1 Corinthians 2:13 – Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
2. Understanding the Old Testament must first be done with a thorough understanding of the New Testament commandments (i.e., doctrines) of Christ and his work. See John 5:39.
3. There is no scripture in the Bible that teaches that the student of the word of God should learn the original tongues in order to understand the word of God. 2 Timothy 2:15 says study is done by "rightly dividing the word of truth."
4. 2 Timothy 2:7 says: "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." It is through the Author of the Bible that we get our understanding first and foremost.

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5. Luke says he had perfect understanding of all things in Luke 1:3: “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus....” He needed no language studies as a Gentile. He was not even present at the times about which he wrote.
6. The work and words of the Lord Jesus are recorded in the gospels and the New Testament. Nowhere did our Savior teach to learn languages. He said in John 5:39: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” We ought to be looking for Jesus, not syntax, style, and vocabulary.
7. Although we recognize some men and women have great expertise and abilities with tongues (and thank God for these gifts), we also understand the gift of tongues is *the least gift* in the church. 1 Corinthians 12:28 says: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” We ought to beware of men and women who think they are better teachers or better anything because they have abilities in tongues. 1 Corinthians 8:1 is clear: “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.”
8. God’s word is sufficient. Beware of men adding to the word of God – Matthew 4:4.

Then Why Study Hebrew and Greek

We do not take the position that the study of Hebrew and Greek is not profitable (Proverbs 14:23). We encourage such study. We teach such study. Having the background knowledge of the original tongues helps the student to understand the word roots better, the limitations of those languages, and why translations are made the way they are made (the addition of italicized words in the KJV, for example).

Yes, there are challenges with getting the right words in translation work. Sometimes it takes much research. But those words are not as common as one would expect. But we all can thank God for good translations of his word. I doubt that any good Christian would debate that statement.

Final Words

In respect to Dr. William D. Barrick and his excellent Hebrew studies, we wish not to insult him or degrade his work. We are simply being mindful to challenge the idea that some readers may get by running half-cocked on a few of his comments.

We expect Dr. Barrick would agree with some of our comments, and where we disagree, we hope he will take the editorial in the spirit it was given, as it is given without malice or ridicule. We are thankful to have the opportunity to rebut some of his assertions.

God bless,

NSD – www.HistoricBaptist.org; www.BaptistInternationalSeminary.org

Lesson 13: Consonants

The sounds of a language can be divided into consonants and vowels. Vowels are sounds that involve a continuous stream of air with only slight friction. Consonants are sounds that involve closing or partial closing of the flow of air. In English, the vowels are *a, e, i, o, u*, and sometimes *y*. All other letters are consonants. Hebrew was originally written only with consonants. You will learn about how the vowels are indicated in the next chapter. The following consonants make up the Hebrew alphabet:

Letter	Name	Sound
א	ʾaleph (awlef)	a stoppage of air
ב	bet (bayt)	b <i>or</i> v
ג	gimel (geemel)	g
ד	dalet (dawlet)	d
ה	heʾ (hay)	h
ו	vav (vawv)	v
ז	zayin (za-yin)	z
ח	ḥet (chayt)	ch as in “loch”
ט	ṭet (tayt)	t
י	yod (yod)	y
כ	kaph (kahf)	k <i>or</i> ch as in “loch”
ל	lamed (lahmed)	l
מ	mem (maym)	m
נ	nun (noon)	n
ס	samech (sawmech)	s
ע	ʿayin (a-yin)	a stoppage of air
פ	peh (pay)	p <i>or</i> ph
צ	tsade (tsawday)	ts as in “cats”
ק	qoph (qowf)	q as in “plaque”
ר	resh (raysh)	r
ש	sin (seen)	s
שׁ	shin (sheen)	sh
ת	tav (tahv)	t

In parentheses are approximations of how the names of the letters of the alphabet sound in English. The dot under the *h* in *het* distinguishes it from the Hebrew letter *he* and distinguishes the sound from the English letter *h*. The *het's* sound occurs rarely in English and never at the beginning of words.

Final Forms

Five consonants in the table have two forms. The forms on the left side of the alphabet column (ך ם ן ף ץ) are called final forms because they appear whenever the letter occurs at the end of a word. Note that all but one of the final forms seem like pulled down versions of the letter. The forms on the right (כ ן נ פ צ) appear when the letter is anywhere else, namely, at the beginning or in the middle of the word.

BeGaD KePhaT Letters

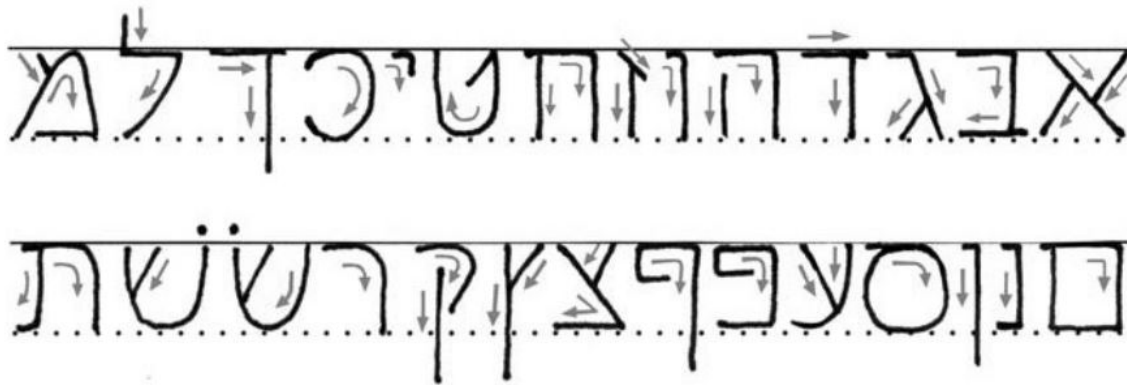
BeGaD KePhaT is a memory aid. The six capital letters in English represent the six letters (בגד כפת) that each had two pronunciations in Medieval Hebrew. Medieval Jewish scholars used a dot in the center of each letter to indicate the different pronunciations. This dot is called a **dagesh**. With the dagesh, the movement of air stopped during pronunciation of the letter. For this reason these letters with the dagesh are called **stops**. Without the dagesh, the movement of air did not stop during the pronunciation of the letters. For this reason these letters without the dagesh are called **spirants**. In Modern Hebrew only three of the BeGaD KePhaT letters are pronounced differently (ב כ פ). You might use BaK Pak to help remember them.

BeGaD KePhaT letters are pronounced as follows:

With Dagesh		Without Dagesh	
Letter	Pronunciation	Letter	Pronunciation
ב	b	ב	v
ג	g	ג	g
ד	d	ד	d
כ	k	כ	ch as in “Bach”
פ	p	פ	ph
ת	t	ת	t

Printing Hebrew Letters

Hebrew is written and read from right to left across a page. The reader of the Hebrew Bible also turns the pages in the opposite direction from English. The following is an example of how the letters are printed by hand. The small arrows show the direction the pen moves. Pen strokes move from top to bottom, right to left in preparation for writing the next letter.



Hebrew is printed hanging down from the line. Do not write the aleph as an X. Several letters are easily confused. In your reading and writing, you should be careful to distinguish the letters that appear together in the following table:

ב	כ	נ	ה	ח	ס	ם
ג	נ	ו	ז	י	ע	צ
ד	ך	ך	ן	י	ש	ש

One letter extends above the line – lamed (ל).

Several letters extend below the dotted line (ק, ף, ץ, ך).

Using a Dictionary

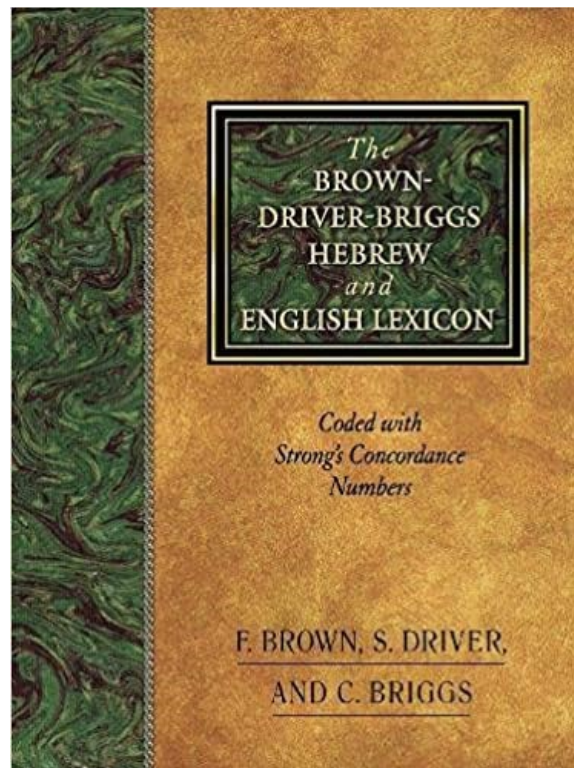
You want to learn the alphabet and do exercises 1, 2, and 3 before reading this section.

Once you have learned the alphabet, you know enough to begin learning to use a dictionary. One of the exercises at the end of this chapter is to look up several commonly occurring words.

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The best-known* one-volume dictionary of Biblical Hebrew is F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. (A **lexicon** is a dictionary of an ancient language.) The abbreviation commonly used for this work in biblical studies is **BDB** (for Brown-Driver-Briggs).

[* Editor's note: It is critical that the student understand all man-made lexicons are fallible and not trustworthy in defining Bible words. Fallible men – many who are critics of the Bible – write commentaries and lexicons correcting the King James Bible. Students should know and understand it is the KJV that is infallible and should be used to correct lexicons and commentators. We only show these works below so that the student is not ignorant of what critics use.]



BDB lists words under roots. These are usually three-letter roots. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, and so forth, listed under a three-letter root add different prefixes, suffixes, and vowel patterns to the root. The meanings of all the parts of speech listed under the root are related to the root meaning. The three-letter root and the root meaning are an abstraction created by scholars. Speakers of the language would determine the meaning primarily from where and how a word was used. But the root meaning is helpful in learning the language because many words do have related meanings.

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For example:

דברתי	I spoke
דבר	word
דברה	cause
מדבר	mouth

The three-letter roots are usually printed in the largest letters in BDB. Some letters are susceptible to change with the addition of prefixes, suffixes, or vowel patterns. For example, under the root בוא (go in, enter, come) BDB lists a noun בִּשְׁעָה (entrance). The vav has disappeared.

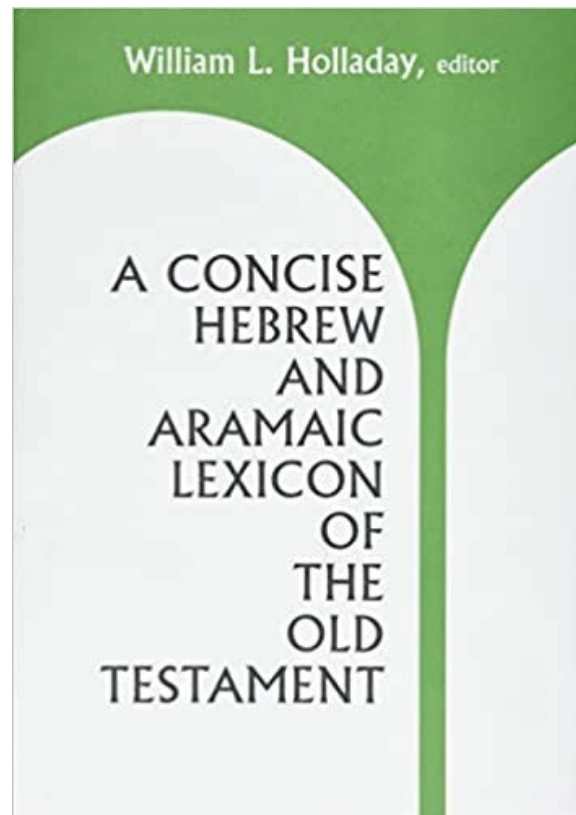
Roots with the same letters in the same positions tend to change in the same ways. For this reason it is convenient to classify roots according to the letter and whether it is the first, second, or third letter of the root. For example, of the roots you will look up in the exercise, בוא, מות, and שוב are II-vav, because their second letter is a vav.

The words at the tops of columns in BDB are the first and last words on the page. When looking up a root, the words at the tops of columns may be confusing because they may appear to be out of alphabetic order. Thus on page 99 of BDB, the top of the second column has מִבְּוֹא because it is derived from בוא, not because this is the beginning of roots beginning with מ. Words may add letters to the beginning, middle, or end of a root or omit root letters. For the moment, focus on the three root letters that are in the largest print in the body of the columns.

When you do exercise 4, try not to be intimidated by all you see on a page. Look only at the words in the largest Hebrew print and the definitions that immediately follow them.

As you move toward the end of the alphabet, beware that BDB has an **Aramaic** section at the back.

If you have trouble finding a root or word in BDB, you can try using William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. It lists words alphabetically, exactly as they are spelled. Because it abridges a multi-volume German dictionary that is a classic in biblical studies, Holladay is a useful resource. However, it does not contain as much information as BDB. In Holladay, the meanings of words are in bold print.



Sometimes the same three letters have such different meanings that lexicons list them as separate roots (with the same letters), usually listed as I., II., III., and so on. For example, in the exercises for this lesson, Holladay lists I. **רבר** ... turn away ... II. **רבר** ... speak.

Exercises

1. Practice writing and saying the alphabet until you have it memorized.
2. Read the following similar letters making sure that you can identify them correctly. Practice writing them, and make sure that your writing clearly distinguishes them. For example, check that there is a gap in your he (**ה**) and no gap in your het (**ח**).

- a. ב כ נ
- b. ך ן
- c. ג נ
- d. ס ם
- e. ר ך ך
- f. ע צ
- g. ח ה
- h. ש ש
- i. ז ר י ן

3. Match the letters in the left column with their final forms in the right column.

מ	ו
כ	ך
פ	ץ
צ	ך
נ	ם

4. Once you have learned the Hebrew alphabet sufficiently, copy the following commonly occurring roots to practice writing and then look up the basic meaning in BDB. In order to help you get started, the first word in the following list (אכל) is on page 37 of BDB. The abbreviation immediately following indicates that this form is a verb. The root means “eat.” (If you glance at page 38, you will see a number of nouns from the same root meaning food, a meal, even a knife.)

ישב	אכל
לקח	אמר
מות	בוא
נתן	דבר
עשה	היה
ראה	הלך
שוב	ידע
שמע	יצא

Lesson 14: Commonly Used Hebrew Words in the Old Testament

44 COMMONLY USED HEBREW WORDS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Class to go through each word, pronouncing and writing each word.

1. The – Ha (pronounced ha) ה

Example: “The heavens” in Genesis 1:1 is הַשָּׁמַיִם (ha-shuh-mah-yeem), with “ha” or “the” being a prefix to the word “heavens.”

A common use of this word is in the name of our Savior himself! In Hebrew, it is Yeshua Hamashiach, where “Yeshua” means Jesus and “Hamashiach” means “the Messiah” or, more literally, “the anointed one.”

2. And – Vav- (pronounced vuh) ו

Like “the,” the Hebrew word for “and” does not stand alone. It is attached to the word it precedes but otherwise functions just like “and” in English.

For example: In Genesis 1:2, “And darkness” is וְהָשֶׁךְ (vuh-ho-shekh), just one word.

In Genesis 1:2 we also find the phrase “and the earth” which shows us another neat thing about the Hebrew language. We can combine prefixes to make a single word from this phrase. The Hebrew word replacing “and the earth” is וְהָאָרֶץ (vuh-ha-ah-retz), where “ah-retz” means earth.

3. Lord – Yahweh, YHWH (pronounced Yahweh) יהוה

These 4 letters together are known as the Tetragrammaton or the Tetragram.

Example: This is the word used as the name of God in Exodus 3:15 when God tells Moses to tell the Israelites who sent him (Moses). It is the third person version of “I AM” (Exodus 3:14), so it is more literally “He is.”

4. God or gods – Elohim (pronounced e-lo-heem) אֱלֹהִים

Also another word for God, Elohim, could also mean gods in general. It’s a lot like the word “god” in that way since it could mean just any god or THE God.

Example: From Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning, God (אֱלֹהִים Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.”

5. King – Melech (pronounced meh-lekh) מֶלֶךְ

One thing that is both unique and interesting that greatly helps in understanding Hebrew is the concept of root words. A root, usually consisting of three Hebrew letters, gives you a clue into the meaning of the word. Related words usually have the same root.

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For example: While מֶלֶךְ (meh-lekh) means “king,” מָלַךְ (ma-lock) means “to reign” or “he reigns.” And from that same root, the letters מ and ל, and כ (which becomes ך when at the end of a word) also make up מַלְכָּה (mall-kah), which means “queen” and מַלְכוּת (mal-khootoe), meaning “kingdom.”

“Then the king (מֶלֶךְ meh-lekh) said to her, “What is troubling you, Esther, the queen (מַלְכָּה mall-kah)? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom (מַלְכוּת mal-khootoe) it shall be given to you.” Esther 5:3.

6. Israel – Yisra’el (Yis-ray-el) יִשְׂרָאֵל

This one is straight forward, but important since it is used a lot in the Hebrew Bible. Means “God Contends,” combining sarah (to contend or fight) and el (meaning God). Comes from Genesis 32:28 when Jacob wrestles with an angel.

Example: “Hear, O Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל Yis-ray-el)...” Deuteronomy 6:4

7. To, For, or In Regard To, According To, Belonging To – Le- (pronounced luh) לְ

Like the Hebrew words for “the” and “and,” this word is also a prefix attached to the word it precedes. Note in the below verse that the vowel pointing (tiny dots or marks) under the letter in this word changes when attached to certain words.

Note: לָ (el) can also be used as “to” or “toward.” While it is sometimes interchangeable with the prefix לְ (luh), this word appears by itself rather than as a prefix.

Examples: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes (לְעֵינֶיהָ luh-ae-nuh-eem)...” Genesis 3:6

8. From, Out of, By – Min (pronounced meen) מִן

This word can stand alone or be used as a prefix. It is מִן when by itself but when attached to another word, the letter ן (noon) drops off and appears as a dot (dagesh) in the word it attaches to. A third way this word can appear is as a prefix with different vowel pointing – מִן.

Example: “So Abram went up from Egypt (מִמִּצְרַיִם mee-meets-rah-yeem) to the Negev....” Genesis 13:1

9. That, Which, Who, Whom – Asher (pronounced ah-share) אֲשֶׁר

While certainly not one of the more exciting words in the Bible, this one sure is used quite often. Whether it’s translated as “which” or “that” depends on the translation and context.

Example: “So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that (אֲשֶׁר ah-share) he had done in creation.” Genesis 2:3.

10. All or whole – Kol (pronounced coal) כֹּל

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Here is another word that you'll find frequently in the Hebrew Bible and its meaning is straightforward. It is usually attached to the word it precedes with a hyphen and the vowel markings change when it is attached to a word.

Example: "And the whole congregation (כָּל־עֵדָת coal adat) of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness..." Exodus 16:2.

11. Direct object marker – Et (pronounced ate or et) אֶת

This word is not translatable in that its only purpose is to indicate that the word following it is the direct object of the verb that precedes it. This may be confusing since we do not use this in English but this is frequently used in the Hebrew Bible.

For example: "You shall love the Lord your God (אֶת־יְהוָה et-Yahweh) with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Deuteronomy 6:5

12. Day – Yom (pronounced yōm) יוֹם

In addition to being used often in the Hebrew Bible, yom is also used in the names of the days of the week in Hebrew. Yom Shabbat is Saturday, Yom Rishon is Sunday, etc.

Example: In this verse, the prefix for "the" is attached to the word for sabbath (shabbat). "Remember the sabbath day (אֶת־יוֹם־הַשַּׁבָּת et-yom-ha-shabbat), to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8.

13. Man or husband – Ish (pronounced eesh) אִישׁ

אִישׁ (eesh) is the word for "man" and word for "woman" or "wife" is very similar – אִשָּׁה (ee-shah).

Example: "So Haman answered the king, "For a man (אִישׁ eesh) the king wants to honor..." Esther 6:7.

14. House – Bayit (pronounced ba-yeet) בַּיִת

This word can be pronounced "ba-yeet" but is often pronounced "beth" as well. It is the first part of a word you already know, Bethlehem – בֵּית לֶחֶם, which means "house of bread."

Example: "By wisdom a house (בַּיִת ba-yeet) is built, And by understanding it is established;" Prov. 24:3

15. People – Am (pronounced ahm) עַם

This can mean the plural for "person" or can also mean "a people" as in a nation or people group.

Example: "Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people (הָעָם ha-ahm) go." Exodus 7:14.

16. He said – Amar (pronounced ah-mar) אָמַר

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Verbs in Hebrew are conjugated depending on the gender and number of people doing the action, just like in Spanish, Arabic, or any grammatically gendered languages. The vowel pointing in אָמַר is the most common form for a verb and is third-person masculine singular meaning “he” performed the action. So אָמַר means literally “he said.”

When changing who is doing the action, both the letters and vowel pointing change. With this verb “to say,” we change it to “she said” like this אָמְרָה (ahm-rah) and to “they said” like this אָמְרוּ (ahm-roo).

In the Old Testament, “he said” often appears as “and he said” or “then he said,” which is וַיֹּאמֶר (vie-oh-mehr).

Example: “The king said (וַיֹּאמֶר vie-oh-mehr, literally “and said the king”)...” Esther 6:3.

17. Word or thing – Davar (pronounced dah-var) דָּבָר

This word can be translated a few different ways in addition to “word” and “thing.” It can also mean “speech,” “matter,” “anything,” “saying,” “utterance,” and other similar words or concepts.

Like other nouns, דָּבָר (dah-var) can be conjugated depending on whether it is plural. דְּבָרִים (duh-var-eem) is the plural form “words.”

Example: “Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word (דָּבָר dah-var) spoken in right circumstances” Proverbs 25:11.

18. Word – also pronounced Dabar (pronounced duh-bar) דָּבָר

The most basic translation of dabar is that it means “word.” It can also mean “speak,” “pronounce,” “formalize,” “thing,” or “establish.” Here are some examples of its use in the Old Testament.

“And the Lord spoke [dabar] to Moses, saying, “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.” Exodus 6:10-11.

“Is anything [dabar] too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” Genesis 18:14.

“Then behold, the word [dabar] of the Lord came to him...” Genesis 15:4.

Although dabar is translated as three different English words in the verses above, it means all of them. The context of each is used to derive the word’s meaning in each situation in which it is used so that the essence of the scripture is not lost.

Its Use in the New Testament

But it’s when dabar is translated from Hebrew into Greek in the New Testament that things get exciting. This word is translated as two different Greek words: logos, referring to a written word, and rhema, which refers to the utterance or the thing that was said.

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Jesus, Our Written Word

At the beginning of the book of John, Jesus is referred to as “the Word.” Logos is the Greek word used here, so we can conclude that Jesus is a type of written word. He was here on earth in a physical form and could be “read” as people were able to watch him and listen to him teach about God and himself. Some of these people recorded the events of his life on earth so that we too can “read” him.

“In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word [Logos] was with God, and the Word [Logos] was God.” John 1:1

The Power of God’s Word

Later in the New Testament, Hebrews 11:3 tells us that it was God’s word that created something out of nothing.

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word [rhema] of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Hebrews 11:3

In this verse, the Greek rhema is used in place of “dabar” and it is translated into English as “word.” But the implication of this verse is to show us just what kind of power there is in God’s spoken words! God spoke – dabar – into the nothingness and created order, an entire universe, and even us!

Dabar teaches us that we can “read” Jesus, our “written” Word. He has been there all along, from before creation, but came to earth so we could learn from him and to rescue us from certain destruction. It also shows the power of God’s very utterances. He’s so awesome that things that previously didn’t exist spring into existence, just at His word!

So, it is not surprising, then, when the two of these concepts come together further into the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 calls Jesus “the power and the wisdom of God.” The Word, God’s dabar, IS His very power and wisdom! Our Savior is the magnificent power and the infinite wisdom of God!

19. He or it – Hu (pronounced hoo) הוּא

“He” is pronounced “who” while “she” (הִיא) is pronounced “he.”

Example: “He (הוּא who) shall build a house for My name...” 2 Samuel 7:13.

20. To go, come, or walk – Halak (hah-lock) הָלַךְ

The word הָלַךְ (hah-lock) can mean “to walk” but also “go,” “come,” “enter,” and is even used as the verb when Noah’s ark is floating on the water.

This is another verb so it may appear differently, depending on who’s doing the walking. “She walked” is הִלְכָה (hall-khah) and “they walked” is הִלְכוּ (hall-khoo).

Example: “...And the Lord helped David wherever he went (הִלְכָה hah-lock).” 2 Samuel 8:6.

21. Son – Ben (pronounced beyn): בן

The plural form of בן (beyn) is בָּנִים (ba-neem). On the other hand, daughter is similar – בַּת (bot) and it is the plural form is בָּנוֹת (ba-note).

Example: “Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son (בן beyn)...” Isaiah 7:14.

22. Peace – Shalom (pronounced sha-lōm) שָׁלוֹם

Used as a greeting in Hebrew, this is a common one. Upon meeting someone, you would say “Shalom” and they would respond with the same. Many Hebrew speakers also say, “Shalom Aleichem” (peace be with you) instead. On the Sabbath, we wish each other “Shabbat shalom” (Peaceful Sabbath).

The word shalom is often translated simply as peace. While this is in part what shalom means, it doesn’t fully convey its meaning. The concept of shalom goes deeper than that and brings us to realize the perfection in our holy God!

Shalom is a noun with many meanings. Completeness, soundness, and welfare are included in its definition, along with harmony, prosperity, and tranquility. We are left without an English word to convey all of these but a search through the bible for the word shalom can shed some light on its more profound significance. Believe it or not, understanding shalom can help us to better understand the character of our God.

A Name for God

Shalom is part of one of the names for God in Judges 6:24. Having met God himself and seen firsthand His supernatural power, Gideon built an altar and named it “Jehovah shalom” or “The LORD is peace” to let everyone know that our God is shalom. He is peace and wholeness, completeness and perfection and harmony and prosperity – all of it.

The Way Things Ought to Be

In his book, *Not the Way it's Supposed to Be*, Cornelius Plantinga of Calvin Theological Seminary says the following about shalom:

The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be.

We can also better know Jesus, our Messiah through an examination of the word shalom. Isaiah calls Jesus the “Prince of shalom” in verse 9:6. All the words above used to define shalom – Jesus not only has those qualities, but he is the Prince of them!

We can also use other words from the same root word to get a better idea of what Jesus is Prince of. “Whole,” “it was worth it,” “perfect,” “was paid for,” and “paid for in advance,” are meanings of words

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that come from the same root as shalom. It is no coincidence that those concepts are part of our story as well. The perfect Prince of Shalom found us worth it and paid for our sin, making us whole!

Perhaps the best-known Hebrew word today is shalom, which means “peace” or “wellbeing.” It also can be used for both “hello” and “goodbye.”

23. Hallelujah הללויהָ (pronounced hal-loo-yah)

You already know this one. It is a word we use in song and otherwise to praise God all the time. Hallelujah is made up of halal and jah. Halal means “to praise,” “to shine,” “to be boastful,” “to act foolish,” and other similar terms. Jah or Yah is short for the name of God in the bible, Yahweh. So, hallelujah is to praise God, make Him shine, boast in Him, or even go crazy worshiping Him!

24. Joshua or Jesus – Yeshua (pronounced yeh-shoo-uh) יֵשׁוּעַ

This word is often translated “Joshua” in the Hebrew Old Testament. It is also the name of Jesus, our Savior. So, wait. If his name is actually Yeshua, why do we call him Jesus? Where did that come from?

Why Do We Call Him Jesus?

Where Yeshua is found in the Hebrew Old Testament, it is translated into English as Joshua. It was a male name in bible times and there are a few different Joshuas or Yeshuas in the bible. When translated from Greek to English in the New Testament, it went through a couple transitions, then became Jesus.

Jesus’s Hebrew Name, Yeshua, Olive Wood Wall Cross

There are many now that argue that the name Jesus is incorrect and, therefore should not be used but we should be careful not to get sidetracked by this. The area in which Jesus lived was multilingual and he would have been as well. He probably taught and conversed in different languages as necessary. What’s important here, as well as it was in the teachings of Jesus is to make sure the meaning of the word is not lost.

More Than Just a Name

Beyond being a name, the word Yeshua is used throughout the Hebrew scriptures meaning “salvation.” It was derived from the Hebrew word yasha, which means “to deliver” or “to rescue.” There are many well-known examples of where it’s used in the Old Testament but here are a couple of my favorites:

The LORD is my strength and song,
and he is become my salvation [yeshua]:
he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation;
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.
Exodus 15:2

He only is my rock and my salvation [yeshua];
he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.
Psalm 62:2

25. Mercy – Chesed (pronounced che-sed, the “ch” coming from the throat, as in Bach) חֶסֶד

Inexpressible: Hesed, and the Mystery of God’s Lovingkindness

by Michael Card

Known for its difficulty to translate into English, this word contains a “chet,” a letter with a sound called a guttural. Since we do not have true gutturals in English, it can be difficult for us to say this word correctly. Go ahead and practice. Say “Bach,” like the composer. Say it out loud. Listen for the sound at the end of the word, then say it at the beginning of chesed.

Chesed’s Meaning

Now that we know how it sounds, what does it mean? It is translated most commonly as mercy, kindness, lovingkindness, and goodness. It is often used to convey God’s love toward His people but, somewhat like God, it is much more complex than our first impression shows. Here are some very different examples of how chesed is used in the bible.

“Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness [chesed] and truth; who keeps lovingkindness [chesed] for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” Exodus 34:6-7

“If there is a man who takes his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, so that he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace [chesed]; and they shall be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. He has uncovered his sister’s nakedness; he bears his guilt.” Leviticus 20:17

Which is it?

In the above verse from Exodus, chesed is commonly translated “lovingkindness.” God declares chesed an attribute of Himself. But then the very same word, is used to describe incestuous behavior, translated into English as “disgrace.” The contexts of both verses seem to suggest that there are two meanings for the same word, but this is not so.

Chesed being translated as lovingkindness, mercy, charity, or even disgrace does not do justice to its full meaning. This complex word conveys instead a type of attitude or behavior that shows an overflow of zeal or a lack of boundaries. Chesed comes from the Hebrew root meaning “eager and ardent desire.” It can mean both God-sized lovingkindness and disgrace worthy of great punishment because it is not a specific action but the passion or motivation behind it.

God’s Infinite Love

When God describes His love for us using the word chesed, He is telling us that He has a boundless, overflowing love for us. Inside the love He has for us is His infinite grace, His immeasurable love, inexhaustible forgiveness, and unlimited charity. None of us deserves that. What an awesome God we have that He would extend His chesed to us!

26. Shema (pronounced shuh-ma) שמע

This is the first word of The Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which is recited regularly by Orthodox Jews and by many Christians. It is also the verse Jesus refers to when asked what the greatest commandment is.

“Hear [Shema], O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:4-9

To Hear?

Shema is generally translated as “hear.” But right now, I can hear birds singing out the window, my daughter’s TV show in the background, and the keystrokes on my laptop. If the word shema is used to call the attention of the people of Israel and is followed by informing them that their lives should be a walking testament to God Himself, the word “hear” does not quite convey what’s being said. In addition to “hear,” shema is also translated elsewhere in the Old Testament as “report,” “fame,” “tidings,” “loud,” and “speech.”

It Requires Action

If you take the word with its context, however, it means more than even the culmination of these words. In Deuteronomy 6, Shema is a command to not only hear the words God is saying but to act on them. I think of it in the same way as when I tell my children to listen. I don’t only mean for them to stop what they’re doing and hear what I say. I mean for them to hear and internalize what I say so that they remember and obey it.

This is the same meaning that shema can have. We need to be paying attention – always studying God’s Word and spending time in prayer with Him so we can hear His words in the first place. Then we need to internalize what He says, not just read or hear it and forget it. We need to remember it and, when the need arises, obey it, and apply it to our very lives.

27. Amen (pronounced ah-meyn) אמן

I know, I know – everyone knows this one. But did you know that it was a Hebrew word? Also, look at the above pronunciation. We can argue all day whether or not it is pronounced ah-men or ay-men or when to use either but for those who want to be purists about it, it’s neither.

The Deeper Meaning

This biblical Hebrew word is unique in that its basic meaning has not been lost in translation and in culture differences. “So be it” is the usual translation for amen. It is used correctly when we use it to affirm something someone says or after a prayer. Its root is the word aman, meaning “to confirm or support.” A

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related word is amanah, which means truthfulness, confirmation, credence, or belief. By saying amen, we are stating that we confirm what has been said, we believe in it, and we find it to be true.

We say it to conclude our prayers and to signify when we are praying in unison with other people. We also use it in song to affirm the words and the message of our worship. Some even yell it out in church when a pastor says something that really resounds with them.

The Conclusion of God's Word

Our entire bible concludes with this word. The last verse in the bible sums up the entire word, then affirms this message of truth with the "so be it" we know so well:

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.." Revelation 22:20

Amen is also translated as "truth" as in the following verse.

That he who blesseth himself in the earth
shall bless himself in the God of truth [amen];
and he that sweareth in the earth
shall swear by the God of truth [amen];
because the former troubles are forgotten,
and because they are hid from mine eyes.
Isaiah 65:16

Each of the words "truth" in this verse are from amen in Hebrew. It says twice here that God is the "God of amen" so this is one of God's attributes or characteristics. He is the God of truth but also of confirmation, faithfulness, support, and affirmation of that truth. How privileged are we to have someone like this as our God!

28. Messiah – Mashiach (pronounced ma-shee-ach) מָשִׁיחַ

This word can be translated as "messiah," but more literally means "anointed one." In most places in the bible, the English is "anointed one." Only two places translate it as "Messiah." When used to refer to Jesus as the messiah, Yeshua HaMashiach is used. This means "Jesus the Messiah" or "Jesus the Anointed One."

Why Anoint?

The process of anointing someone with oil served to set that individual apart for service to God. It was used to appoint priests in the Old Testament (Ex. 29:7). It was also used to establish kings over God's people. Saul and David were both appointed in this way (1 Samuel 10:1 and 2 Samuel 16:12-13) and prophecy in the Old Testament speaks of Jesus as mashiach, "anointed one."

"So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah [Mashiach] the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress." Daniel 9:25

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Mashiach in this verse is usually translated as “Messiah” instead of “Anointed one” but the Hebrew word is the same. Jesus is truly our maschiach! He has been anointed by God, chosen, and appointed to be both our king and our high priest!

29. Evil – Ra’ (pronounced rah) רָע

There are many different words for sin in the bible but ra’ is used more than 600 times! It comes from another Hebrew word ra’a, meaning evil or bad. When you remove the “a” sound at the end, its meaning encompasses “evil,” “harm,” “displeasure,” or “misery,” but it also conveys an aspect of brokenness. It can mean “broken into pieces,” like when something’s completely ruined or “blemished,” like things unfit for presentation to God, such as for sacrifice.

Use in Scripture

The ugly, gaunt cows from Pharaoh’s dream in Genesis 41 are described using this word, as is the wild beast that Joseph’s brothers claimed devoured him in Genesis 37. It’s also the word that was translated into “evil” in describing the tree in the Garden of Eden. It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Ra.’

30. Help – Ezer (pronounced a-zher) עֶזֶר

“Help!” This one word is the most frequent prayer I pray now. Whenever I need more wisdom or patience as I go about my day, this little word invokes God’s generous assistance. But I did not always realize help was so readily available. Nor did I always possess the humility to ask for it.

I used to feel the pressure to manage so much of my life on my own. And I wrongly saw God standing at a distance judging my performance.

Often, I would feel overwhelmed with the idea that I may not be able to cope with all the plates I was spinning. I feared that I would drop the ball on the important roles and responsibilities God had entrusted to me. And I so sincerely wanted to get it right.

But God used the little Hebrew word ezer to change my perspective.

Throughout the Bible our compassionate God continually offers himself to us as our ezer. “You are my help (ezer) and my deliverer; Lord, do not delay” (Psalm 70:5).

God gave us the Holy Spirit to be our readily available helper (see John 14:26). I can always call on him and he is not annoyed or disapproving when I do.

We were never meant to do all of life alone. Nor were we designed to depend on ourselves. It is not a badge of honour to be self-reliant and independent. God always intended us to rely on his ezer in order to draw us into a deeper dynamic relationship with him. And hopefully the help of his Church is one way God’s help is expressed in our communities.

God delights to be our ezer and that truth gives me new-found confidence to face each day’s tasks and trials.

31. Hope – Tikvah (pronounced tik-vaw) תִּקְוָה

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In the English language we casually use the word ‘hope’ with the downgraded meaning of a wishful thought or desire: “I hope it doesn’t rain tomorrow,” or “I hope our cricket team wins.” This can easily cloud our understanding of biblical *tikvah* which, in contrast, is a guaranteed assurance that if the Lord says it will come to pass, then it will do so. “There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope (*tikvah*) will not be cut off” (Proverbs 23:18).

Tikvah is an expectant waiting for a desired outcome. It means to gather together, wait for, hope for or bind (by twisting) together. While the idea of hope in English is abstract, this Hebrew root word offers a more concrete expression of hope as an ever-strengthening rope as its strands are collected and then twisted together.

A thin thread may be faster and simpler to make than a shipyard standard rope, but it certainly would not hold up under pressure. To make a durable, useful rope, the process of binding and twisting many threads together is essential.

As we hope and wait upon the Lord for his direction, his timing and his action, then our faith and character can be built up: “But those who hope/wait expectantly [the verb form of *tikvah*] in the Lord will renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31). Our microwave-oven, instant-gratification culture has taught us that waiting is a waste, but the biblical viewpoint values the process and outcome of expectantly waiting.

Hope used to be such a vague word for me, but now I can cling to biblical hope as the sturdy rope that it is! “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;” (Hebrews 6:13).

32. Fear – Yirah (pronounced yir-aw) יִרָא

Yirah means ‘fear.’ I felt drawn to study this word because I wanted freedom from the growing number of fears that rattled around in my head. I tried not to dwell on them, but that did not seem to actually make them go away.

I had always found the phrase “fear of God” a strange one to comprehend. And I imagined there must be a different source word behind the fear of God as opposed to other types of fear – especially as the phrase “fear of God” is sometimes translated into English as “reverence” or “awe of God.” But this one word *yirah* is used to speak of both the fear of God and the fear of other things, like enemies or death.

The question is actually whether our fear is rightly directed. We all have an innate drive to fear something. It is impossible to be truly fearless. The scriptures are very clear about who deserves all of our *yirah*: “Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.” (Deuteronomy 6:13).

We should realise there are entities more powerful than us and there are circumstances outside of the realm of our control. God wants us to recognise our limitations and then direct our *yirah* towards him. After all, he is the most powerful one in the universe. So why should we fear anything above him or besides him?

Fear directed towards anything else grows like a weed and then festers like a sore. However, the fear of the Lord is a wellspring of life, goodness and wisdom to those who take hold of it. “The fear [*yirah*] of the

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LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.” (Proverbs 19:23).

The wonderful news is that we are not stuck. We can ask God to help us uncover the lies behind any ungodly fears and to replace them with biblical truth. The central key to dealing with unhealthy fears is to choose to put all of our fear onto our trustworthy, faithful God.

Now whenever a fear pops into my head, which thankfully is much rarer, I have an effective strategy. I stop and say: “I choose to fear God instead of X. He alone is worthy of my fear” (Isaiah 8:13-14). Then I ask God to give me wisdom about any practical action I may need to take and I move on with my day. Life with our yirah rightly placed on the Lord is so liberating!

33. Thanks – Todah (toe-DAH) תודה

Hebrew for gratitude or acknowledgement, this is the modern word for “thank you.” In Temple times, a Jew who felt grateful for G-d’s salvation from danger would bring a korban todah, a “sacrifice of gratitude.”

As with 33 and 35 below, the vav is pronounced with an “oo” sound rather than the “vah” sound.

Instruction – Torah (toe-RAH) תורה

Literally “guide” or “instruction,” the Torah refers to the Five Books of Moses which contain God’s instructions. More broadly, Torah refers to the entire corpus of Jewish spiritual scholarship.

As in 32 and 35, the vav sound is not a “v” sound, but an “oh” sound. Sometimes “oo.”

34. Commandment – Mitzvah (mitz-VAH) מצוה

Literally “commandment,” mitzvah refers to any of the 613 commandments in the Torah, especially giving charity. Since a Jew is obligated to follow the commandments after reaching the age of majority, a boy’s 13th birthday is his “bar mitzvah” and a girl’s 12th birthday is her “bat mitzvah.”

35. Jews – Yehudi (Ye-hoo-DEE) יהודי

The Jewish nation is known by various names, including Ivrim (Hebrews) and Bnei Yisrael (Israelites). The most common term nowadays, however, is Jews, Yehudim (or Yehudi in singular) in Hebrew. This name came into being since the Jews of the Holy Land were ruled by the Davidic kings, descendants of the tribe of Judah.

Readers will notice in the case of the vav, it is pronounced “oo” instead of “vah.”

36. Love – Ahavah (ah-hah-VAH) אהבה

This is the Hebrew noun for “love.” The Torah speaks extensively about love: Ahavah of Isaac toward his wayward son, Esau; ahavah of Jacob toward his wife Rachel; ahavah between G-d and His people; ahavah we are to have for each other; and ahavah we are enjoined to extend to “strangers” (converts).

37. Sabbath – Shabbat (Shah-BOT, or SHAH-boss) שבת

The progenitor of the English word “sabbath,” Shabbat refers to the Jewish day of rest. Observed from Friday afternoon until Saturday evening since our Exodus from Egypt, Shabbat is celebrated with special prayers, candle-lighting (on Friday afternoon), feasting, and resting.

38. Sacred – Kodesh (CO-desh) קדש

Kodesh means “set aside” or “sacred.” Shabbat, the holiest day, is referred to as Shabbat kodesh. Kodesh is also the root of Kaddish (the prayer in which we sanctify G-d’s name), Kiddush (the prayer in which we proclaim the holiness of Shabbat), and chevra kadisha (sacred [burial] society).

39. The Name (Creator) – Hashem (hah-SHEM) השם

The Torah contains many names for God. Jews have historically refrained from using these names in conversation, instead referring to the Creator as Hashem, which means “the name.” Bonus: The word baruch (bah-ROOKH) means “blessed,” so if someone asks you how you are doing (or whenever you want to report good news), you can preface your answer with baruch Hashem, “blessed be God.”

40. Hebrew – Ivrit (eev-REET) עברית

Jews traditionally refer to the Hebrew language as Lashon Hakodesh, “the Holy Tongue.” Modern Hebrew, on the other hand, is referred to as Ivrit (Hebrew for “Hebrew”).

41. Mommy – Imma (EE-mah) אמה

The Torah refers to Eve, the first woman, as aim kol chai, “the mother of all life.” Aim is the root word of imma, the Hebrew equivalent of “mommy.” Hebrew word for mother is “im,” mommy is “imma.”

42. Daddy – Abba (AH-bah) אבא

Abba is the Hebrew equivalent of “daddy.” In Judaism it is actually a mitzvah to refer to our parents by these honorifics, rather than by their given names. Hebrew word for father is “ab,” daddy is “abba.”

43. Fit – Kosher (kah-SHER) כשר

The Hebrew word kosher literally means “fit.” The laws of kosher define the foods that are fit for consumption for a Jew (as well as the ritual items that are fit to be used), but the word has come to refer more broadly to anything that is “above board” or “legit.”

A. Student to be familiar with the interlinear study.

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Lesson 16: Using Strong's Hebrew Lexicon
References from BibleHub.com

I. Genesis 1:1 using "Hebrew" tab on BibleHub.com

◀ **Genesis 1:1** ▶

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Hebrew](#)

Strong's	Hebrew	English	Morphology
7225 [e]	בְּרֵאשִׁית bə-rê-šît	In the beginning	Prep-b N-fs
1254 [e]	בָּרָא bā-rā	created	V-Qal-Perf-3ms
430 [e]	אֱלֹהִים 'ē-lō-hîm;	God	N-mp
853 [e]	אֶת 'êṭ	-	DirObjM
8064 [e]	הַשָּׁמַיִם haš-šā-ma-yim	the heavens	Art N-mp
853 [e]	וְאֶת wə-'êṭ	and	Conj-w DirObjM
776 [e]	הָאָרֶץ hā-'ā-res.	the earth	Art N-fs

II. Each Word Defined Using Strong's Tab – Reshith

◀ 7225. reshith ▶

Strong's Concordance

reshith: beginning, chief

Original Word: רִאשִׁית

Part of Speech: Noun Feminine

Transliteration: reshith

Phonetic Spelling: (ray-sheeth')

Definition: beginning, chief

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from rosh

Definition

beginning, chief

NASB Translation

beginning (19), choice (2), choicest (3), finest (2), first (16), first fruits (7), foremost (2).

Englishman's Concordance

Genesis 1:1

HEB: בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים

NAS: *In the beginning* God created

KJV: *In the beginning* God created

INT: *in the beginning* created God

Genesis 10:10

HEB: וְתָהִי רִאשִׁית מַמְלַכְתּוֹ בָּבֶל

NAS: *The beginning* of his kingdom was Babel

KJV: *And the beginning* of his kingdom

INT: become *the beginning* of his kingdom was Babel

Genesis 49:3

HEB: אֶתֶּה כְּחֵי וְרִאשִׁית אוֹנִי יִתֵּר

NAS: My might *and the beginning* of my strength,

KJV: my might, *and the beginning* of my strength,

III. Each Word Defined -- Bara

◀ 1254. bara' ▶

Strong's Concordance

bara': choose

Original Word: בָּרָא

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: bara'

Phonetic Spelling: (baw-law')

Definition: to shape, create

Brown-Driver-Briggs

I. 53 בָּרָא **verb shape, create** (compare Arabic بَرَأَ probably loan-word, *form, fashion by cutting, shape out, pare a reed for writing, a stick for an arrow*, but also بَرَأَ, *create*, Phoenician הברא CISⁱ. 347 *incisor, a trade involving cutting*, Assyrian *barû, make, create*, COT^{Gloss} & Hpt KAT^{2Gloss} 1 but dubious; Sabeian ברא *found, build*, DHM^{ZMG} 1883, 413, synonym בנה; Ba^{ZA}. 1888, 58, compare Assyrian *banû, create, beget*, with change of liquid; Aramaic בָּרָא, בָּרָא, *create*) —

Englishman's Concordance

Genesis 1:1

HEB: בְּרָאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־

NAS: God *created* the heavens

KJV: God *created* the heaven

INT: in the beginning *created* God the heavens

Genesis 1:21

HEB: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־

NAS: God *created* the great sea monsters

KJV: And God *created* great whales,

INT: *created* God sea

Genesis 1:27

HEB: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־

NAS: God *created* man in His own image,

KJV: So God *created* man in his [own] image,

IV. Each Word Defined – Elohim

◀ 430. **elohim** ▶

Strong's Concordance

elohim: God, god

Original Word: אֱלֹהִים

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

Transliteration: elohim

Phonetic Spelling: (el-o-heem')

Definition: God, god

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

pl. of **eloah**

Definition

God, god

NASB Translation

divine (1), divine being (1), exceedingly (1), God (2326), god (45), God's (14), goddess (2), godly (1), gods (204), great (2), judges (3), mighty (2), rulers (1), shrine* (1).

Englishman's Concordance

Genesis 1:1

HEB: בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת

הַשָּׁמַיִם

NAS: In the beginning **God** created

KJV: In the beginning **God** created the heaven

INT: in the beginning created **God** the heavens the earth

Genesis 1:2

HEB: תְּהוֹם וָרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-

NAS: and the Spirit **of God** was moving

KJV: And the Spirit **of God** moved

INT: of the deep and the Spirit **of God** was moving over

Genesis 1:3

HEB: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר

NAS: **Then God** said, Let there be light;

KJV: **And God** said, Let there be

V. Each Word Defined – Eth

◀ 853. eth ▶

Strong's Concordance

eth: untranslatable mark of the accusative case.

Original Word: אֶת

Part of Speech: Untranslatable mark of the accusative; mark of accusative

Transliteration: eth

Phonetic Spelling: (ayth)

Definition: untranslatable mark of the accusative case

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. particle

Definition

untranslatable mark of the accusative case.

Englishman's Concordance

Genesis 1:1

HEB: בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת

KJV: created the heaven *and* the earth.

INT: in the beginning created the heavens the earth

Genesis 1:1

HEB: אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

INT: created God the earth

Genesis 1:4

HEB: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי־

INT: saw the light that

Genesis 1:7

HEB: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל

INT: made the expanse and separated

VI. Each Word Defined -- Shamayim

◀ 8064. shamayim ▶

Strong's Concordance

shamayim: heaven, sky

Original Word: שָׁמַיִם

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

Transliteration: shamayim

Phonetic Spelling: (shaw-mah'-yim)

Definition: heaven, sky

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from an unused word

Definition

heaven, sky

Englishman's Concordance

Genesis 1:1

HEB: אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

NAS: God created *the heavens* and the earth.

KJV: God created *the heaven* and the earth.

INT: created God *the heavens* the earth

Genesis 1:8

HEB: אֱלֹהִים לָרִקִּיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־ עֶרֶב:

NAS: the expanse *heaven*. And there was evening

KJV: the firmament *Heaven*. And the evening

INT: God the expanse *heaven* and there

VII. Each Word Defined -- Erets

◀ 776. erets ▶

Strong's Concordance

erets: earth, land

Original Word: אֶרֶץ

Part of Speech: Noun Feminine

Transliteration: erets

Phonetic Spelling: (eh'-rets)

Definition: earth, land

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. root

Definition

earth, land

Englishman's Concordance

Genesis 1:1

HEB: הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

NAS: created the heavens *and the earth*.

KJV: the heaven and *the earth*.

INT: God the heavens *the earth*

Genesis 1:2

HEB: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֶּהוֹ:

NAS: *The earth* was formless and void,

KJV: *And the earth* was without form,

INT: *the earth* was was formless

Genesis 1:10

HEB: אֱלֹהִים | לִיבֹשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמִקְוֵה:

הַמַּיִם

Lesson 17: 500 Hebrews Words

500 Commonly-Used Basic Hebrew Words in the Old Testament

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500 Basic Hebrew Words

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(This list contains the 500 most frequent and most important words of the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible and is intended to help you keeping up your Hebrew. The transcription follows the rules of ZAW).

אָב	'āb	father
אָבֵד	'bd	Q. perish; Pi., Hi. ruin
אָבָה	'bh	be willing
אָבֶן	'æbæn	stone
אָדוֹן	'ādōn	master, lord
אֲדֹנָי	' ^a dōnāy	lord
אָדָם	'ādām	man, mankind, people
אֲדָמָה	' ^a dāmā	(arable) soil
אֲהֵב	'hb	like, love
אֹהֶל	'ohæl	tent
אוֹ	'ō	or
אוֹר	'ōr	shine, light up
אֹרֶךְ	'ōr	light
אוֹת	'ōt	sign
אָז	'āz	then
אָזֶן	'ozæn	ear
אָח	'āḥ	brother
אֶחָד	'æḥād	one
אָחוֹת	'aḥôt	sister
אֲחֵר	'aḥēr	another, different
אַחֲרַי	'aḥar	later on, afterwards
אַחֲרֵי	'aḥ ^a rê	after
אַחֲרִית	'aḥ ^a rît	end, behind, issue, the future
אֹיֵב	'oyēb	enemy

אֵיל	'ayil	ram
אֵין / אֵין	'ayin / 'ēn	is not, non existence, nothing
אִישׁ	'îs	man
אֶךְ	'ak	only
אָכַל	'kl	eat
אֶל	'æl	towards
אֵל	'al	not
אֵל	'ēl	god
אֵלֶּה	'ellæ	these
אֱלֹהִים	'ælo ^a h	god
אֱלֹהִים	'ælo ^a hîm	god, gods
אַלְפֵּי	'ælæf	thousand
אִם	'im	if
אִם	'ēm	mother
אָמָּה	'āmā	(maid), servant
אָמָּה	'ammā	forearm, cubit
אֱמוּנָה	'æmûnā	faithfulness, trustworthiness
אָמַר	'mr	say
אֱמֶת	'æmæt	faithfulness
אֲנִי	' ^a nî	I
אֲנֹכִי	'anokî	I
אָסַף	'sf	gather (food), collect
אֵף	'af	also, even
אֵף	'af	nose, anger
אַרְבַּע / אַרְבַּעַת	'arba' / 'arbā'ā	four
אַרְבָּעִים	'arbā'im	forty
אָרוֹן	' ^a rôn	chest, ark of the covenant
אֶרֶץ	'æræṣ	ground, country, territory, the earth
אָרַר	'rr	curse
אֵשׁ	'ěš	fire
אִשָּׁה	'iššā	woman

אֲשֶׁר	'ašær	relative clause
אֶת	'et	together with, along with
את	'et	accusative particle
אַתָּה	'attā	you (sg.)
אַתֶּם	'attæm	you (pl.)
בְּ	b ^e	in, at, because of, by way of
בְּגָד	bægæd	garment, covering
לְבַד/בֶּד	bad/l ^e bad	part/apart, alone, only
בְּהֵמָה	b ^e hēmā	cattle, animals
בֹּא	bô'	Q. enter, come to Hi bring (conduct, lead) in
בּוֹר	bôr	cistern, water pit
בָּחַר	bħr	choose, elect
בָּטַח	bṭħ	be reliant, trust
בֵּין	byn	Q., Hi. to understand
בֵּינָם	ben	between
בַּיִת	bayit	house
בָּכָה	bkh	weep
בְּכֹר	b ^e kor	first-born
בְּלִי/בְלֹתִי	b ^e lî/biltî	without
בָּמָה	bāmā	hill, high-place, place of worship
בֶּן	ben	son
בָּנָה	bnh	build
בְּעַד	ba'ad	for, for the benefit of
בָּקָר	bāqār	cattle
בֹּקֶר	boqær	morning
בָּקַשׁ	bqš	seek
בָּרָא	br'	create (god exclusively)
בְּרִית	b ^e rît	covenant, arrangement
בָּרַךְ	brk	Pi. bless

בְּרָכָה	b ^e rākā	blessing
בָּשָׂר	bāśār	flesh
בַּת	bat	daughter
גָּאֵל	g'l	redeem
גְּבוּהָ	gbh	be high/tall, be exalted
גְּבוּל	g ^e bûl	boundary, territory
גִּבּוֹר	gibbôr	hero, fighter
גָּדוֹל	gādôl	great
גָּדַל	gdl	be, become great/strong
גּוֹי	gôy	people, nation
גַּיְא/גֵּי	gaj'/gē	valley
גַּם	gam	also
גֵּר	gēr	sojourner
גָּרַשׁ	grš	drive out
דָּבַק	dbq	cling, cleave to
דָּבַר	dbr	speak
דָּבָר	dābār	word, matter, affair
דְּבַשׁ	d ^e baš	honey
דּוֹר	dôr	generation
דָּם	dām	blood
דֶּרֶךְ	dæræk	way, road
דָּרַשׁ	drš	seek, inquire of
הַ	h-	the (definite article)
הֲ	h ^a -	interrogative particle
הוּא	hû'	he
הִיא	hî'	she
הִיָּה	hyh	occur, happen
הַיְכָל	hêkāl	palace, temple
הֵלֵךְ	hlk	go

הלל	hll	Pi. praise
הֵמָּה/הֵם	hem(mā)	they
הֵן/הִנֵּה	hen/hinne	behold!
הַר	har	mountain(s)
הרג	hrg	kill
הרה	hrh	be, become pregnant
וְ	w ^e	and
זֹאת	zōt	this (sg. f.)
זבח	zbḥ	to sacrifice, slaughter
זֶבַח	zæbaḥ	(communion) sacrifice
זֶה	zæ	this (sg. m.)
זָהָב	zāhāb	gold
זכר	zkr	remember, call to mind
זנה	znh	be unfaithful, commit fornication
זעק/צעק	z'q/s'q	cry out, call for help
זָקֵן	zqn/zāqēn	be old, grow old
זֶרַע	zæra'	seed, descendant(s)
חַג/חָג	ḥāg/ḥag	feast
חָדָשׁ	ḥādāš	new
חֹדֶשׁ	ḥodæš	(new) moon, month
חווה	ḥwh (cf. ḥyh)	Hišt. honor, adore
חוֹמָה	ḥômā	wall
חוּץ	ḥûṣ	outside, street
חזה	ḥzh	see, behold
חזק	ḥzq	Q. grow strong, firm Hi. seize, take hold of
חֲזָק	ḥāzāq	firm, strong
חטא	ḥt'	miss, offend, commit a sin

חַטָּא/חַטָּאת	ḥet/ḥaṭṭāt	offence, sin
חַי	ḥay	alive, living
חַיה	ḥyh	be alive
חַיִּים	ḥayyim	life
חַיִל	ḥayil	faculty, power
חָכַם	ḥkm	be wise
חָכְמָה	ḥākām	wise
חָכְמָה	ḥōkmā	wisdom
חֲלוֹם	ḥ ^a lôm	dream
חָלַם	ḥlm	to dream
חֶמָּה	ḥēmā	rage, wrath
חָמֵשׁ/חַמִּשָּׁה	ḥāmēš/ ḥ ^a mišša	five
חַמִּשִּׁים	ḥ ^a miššim	fifty
חֵן	ḥēn	favour, grace
חָנָה	ḥnh	encamp
חָנַן	ḥnn	to favour
חֶסֶד	ḥæsæd	kindness, solidarity
חָפֵץ	ḥfṣ/ḥāfēṣ	take pleasure in, take care of
חֲצִי	ḥ ^a šî	half
חֶצֶר	ḥāšēr	court
חֶק/חֻקָּה	ḥoq/ḥuqqā	regulation, prescription
חֶרֶב	ḥæræb	(short) sword
חָרַשׁ	ḥrš	to plough
חָרָשׁ	ḥrš	Q. be deaf Hi. be silent
טוֹב/יָטִב	ṭōb/yṭb	be good, be pleasant
טוֹב	ṭōb	good
יָאֵר	y ^e ’or	river (mostly: Nile)
יָבֹשׁ	ybš	dry up, wither
יָד	yād	hand, power

יָדָה	ydh	Hi. praise
יָדַע	ydʿ	(get to) know
יוֹם	yôm	day
יַיִן	yayin	wine
יָכַל	ykl	be able, have it in one's power
יָלַד	yld	Q. bear, Hi. procreate
יָלֵד	yælæd	child
יָם	yām	sea
יָמִין	yāmîn	right hand, the right side
יָסַף	ysf	Q., Hi. add, continue
יָעַץ	yʿš	advise, counsel
יָצָא	yšʾ	Q. go out, come forth Hi. cause to go forth, bring forth
יָצַק	yšq	pour out
יָצַר	yšr	form, shape
יָרָא	yrʾ	to fear
יִרְאַה	yirʾā	fear, reverence
יָרַד	yrd	descend, go down
יָרַשׁ	yrš	Q. take possession of, inherit Hi. drive away
יָשׁ	yēš	existence, there is, it exists
יָשַׁב	yšb	sit, dwell
יִשׁוּעָה	y ^e sûʾā	(acts of) help
יָשַׁע	yšʿ	help, save
יָשָׁר	yāšār	straight, right, upright
יָתַר	ytr	Ni. remain, Hi. leave over
כֹּ	k ^e	as
כָּבֵד	kbd	Q. be heavy, weighty Pi. honour
כְּבוֹד	kābôd	splendour
כֶּבֶשׂ	kæbæś	lamb, young ram

CLASS 305A1 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

כֹּה	ko	thus
כֹּהֵן	kohēn	priest
כּוֹן	kûn	Ni. be firm, be established Hi. make ready, prepare
כֹּחַ	ko ^a ḥ	strength, power
כִּי	kî	therefore, because
כֹּל/כָּל-	kol/kōl	the whole, all
כֵּל	klh	Q. be completed, cease Pi. bring to an end, finish
כֵּלִי	k ^e lî	vessel
כֵּן	ken	thus
כַּנָּף	kānāf	wing
כִּסֵּא	kissē'	throne
כֶּסֶה	ksh	Pi. cover
כֶּסֶף	kæsæf	silver (the metal)
כַּף	kaf	palm, flat of the hand
כִּפֵּר	kpr	Pi. make expiation
כָּרַת	krt	Q. cut off, make a covenant Hi. cut off, destroy
כָּתַב	ktb	write
ל	l ^e	for, concerning
לֹא	lō'	not
לֵב/לִּבָּב	lēb/lēbāb	heart
לָחַם	lḥm	Ni. fight
לֶחֶם	læḥæm	bread
לַיְלָה	laylā	night
לָכַד	lkd	catch, seize
לָמַד	lmd	learn
לְמַעַן	l ^e ma'an	with regard to, for the sake of
לָקַח	lqh	take
לָשׁוֹן	lāšôn	tongue, language

מֵעַן	ma'an	for the sake of, in order that
מַעֲשֵׂה	ma'asæ	deed
מִצָּא	mš'	find
מַצָּה	maṣṣā	unleavened bread
מִצְוָה	miṣwā	commandment(s)
מָקוֹם	māqôm	place
מַרְאֵה	mar'æ	appearance
מַשָּׂא	maśśā'	burden, utterance
מָשַׁח	mšḥ	anoint
מְשִׁיחַ	māšî ^a ḥ	anointed
מִשְׁכָּן	miškān	dwelling-place
מִשַּׁל	mšl	rule
מִשָּׁל	māšāl	proverbial saying
מִשְׁפָּחָה	mišpāḥā	(larger) family, clan
מִשְׁפָּט	mišpaṭ	(legal) decision, justice
נָא	na'	now! come!
נְאֻם	n ^e 'um	utterance (of god)
נִאֲף	n'f	commit adultery
נָבִיא	nābî'	prophet
נֶגֶב	nægæb	south, the south-country
נִגַּד	ngd	Hi. make known, report, tell
נֶגֶד	nægæd	in front of
נָגַע	ng'	touch, hurt a person
נִגַּשׁ	ngš	Q., Ni. draw near, approach Hi. bring, bring near
נִדַּר	ndr	vow
נָהָר	nāhār	river
נוּחַ	nû ^a ḥ	rest
נוּס	nûs	flee
נַחַל	naḥal	wadi, torrent
נַחֲלָה	naḥ ^a lā	hereditary property

מְאֹד	m ^e ’od	very
מֵאָה	me’ā	hundred
מָאָס	m’s	reject, despise
מָגֵן	māgēn	shield
מִגְרָשׁ	migrāš	pasture-ground
מִדְבָּר	midbār	wilderness
מָה	mā	what?
מוֹעֵד	mo’ēd	appointed time
מוֹת	mût	Q. die, Hi. kill
מָוֶת	mawæt	death
מִזְבֵּחַ	mizbe ^a ḥ	altar
מִזְמוֹר	mizmôr	song, psalm
מַחֲנֶה	maḥ ^a næ	encampment
מַטֵּה	maṭṭæ	staff, rod, tribe
מִי	mî	who?
מַיִם	mayim	water, waters
מָכַר	mkr	sell
מָלֵא	ml’	be full, be accomplished
מַלְאָךְ	mal’āk	messenger, angel
מִלְאָכָה	m ^e lā’kā	sending, labour, work
מִלְחָמָה	milḥāmā	fight, battle
מָלַט/פָּלַט	mlt/plṭ	Ni. save oneself, escape Pi. save
מָלַךְ	mlk	be king, to reign
מֶלֶךְ	mælæk	king
מַלְכוּת	malkût	royal power, reign
מַמְלָכָה	mamlākā	kingdom, dominion
מִן	min	from, off
מִנְחָה	minḥā	gift, present
מִסְפָּר	mispār	number
מְעַט	m ^e ’at	few, a little
מֵעַל	ma’al	on the top of, above

נַחְנוּ	naḥnû	we
נְחֹשֶׁת	neḥošæt	copper, bronze
נָתַח	nṭh	Q. extend, incline Hi. recline, bend
נָכַח	nkḥ	strike, smite
נָסָה	nsh	Pi. test, try
נָסַע	nsʿ	set out, journey
נָעַר	naʿar	lad, young boy, servant
נַעֲרָה	naʿ ^a rā	young girl, maid
נָפַל	nfl	fall
נַפֶּשׁ	næfæš	soul, living being, person
נָצַל	nšl	Hi. tear away, deliver
נָשָׂא	nśʾ	bear, carry
נָשִׂיא	nāšîʾ	deputy, chief
נָשַׁק	nšq	kiss
נָתַן	ntn	give
נָתַץ	ntṣ	tear down, destroy
סָבַב	sbb	turn, be round about, march around
סָבִיב	sābîb	all around
סוּס	sûs	horse
סוּר	sûr	Q. turn side, Hi. remove
סָפַר	sfr	Q. count, Ni. be counted Pi. tell
סֵפֶר	sefær	book
עָבַד	ʿbd	serve, work
עֶבֶד	ʿæbæd	servant, slave
עֲבָדָה	ʿ ^a bōdā	work, labour, service
עָבַר	ʿbr	pass by, go over
עֵבֶר	ʿebær	the region beyond/opposite
עִבְרִי	ʿibrî	Hebrew

עַד	ʿad	until
עֵד	ʿēd	witness
עֵדָה	ʿēdā	gathering, congregation
עוֹד	ʿôd	still, once more, again
עוֹלָם	ʿôlām	eternity
עוֹן	ʿāwôn	sin, guilt
עוֹף	ʿof	fly
עוֹף	ʿof	flying creatures, bird
עֹז	ʿoz	power, strength
עָזַב	ʿzb	leave, abandon
עֵין	ʿayin	eye, spring
עִיר	ʿîr	town, city
עַל-	ʿal	upon, above, against
עָלָה	ʿlh	Q. go up, ascend, Hi. bring, lead up, offer sacrifices
עֹלָה	ʿôlā	(whole burnt-) offering
עֲלִיּוֹן	ʿælyôn	the upper, the highest
עַם	ʿam	people
עִם	ʿim	(together) with
עָמַד	ʿmd	stand
עַמּוּד	ʿammûd	pillar, column
I עָנָה	ʿnh	answer, hear, grant
II עָנָה	ʿnh	Q. be downcast, afflicted Pi. humiliate, do violence
עָנִי	ʿāni	poor, humble
עֲנִי	ʿnî	poverty, affliction
עָנָן	ʿānān	cloud
עָפָר	ʿāfār	dust
עֵץ	ʿēs	tree(s)
עֲצָם	ʿæṣām	bone, being
עָרַב	ʿæræb	evening
עָשָׂה	ʿśh	make, manufacture

עָשָׂר/עֶשְׂרֵה	ʿæsær/ʿ ^a sārā	ten
עֶשְׂרִים	ʿæsřîm	twenty
עַתָּה	ʿēt	time
עַתָּה	ʿattā	now
פָּדָה	pdh	buy (off), ransom, redeem
פֶּה	pæ	mouth
פָּלַט / מָלַט	plt/mlt	Q. escape, Pi. save
פָּלַל	pll	Hitp. pray
פָּן	pæn	lest
פָּנָה	Pnh	turn toward a direction
פָּנִים	pānîm	face, surface
פָּעַל	pʿl	make, do
פָּעַם	paʿam	step, occurrence, time
פָּקַד	pqd	go to see, take care of
פָּר	par	young bull
פְּרִי	p ^e rî	fruit
פָּשַׁע	pšʿ	rebel, revolt against
מִשְׁפָּחָה	pæšaʿ	rebellion, revolt,
פָּתַח	pth	open
פֶּתַח	pætaḥ	opening, entrance
צֶאֱנָן	ṣôn	small cattle
צָבָא	ṣābā	host
צַדִּיק	ṣaddîq	righteous
צָדַק	ṣdq	be in the right, be just
צִדְקָה / צָדִיק	ṣædæq/ṣedāqā	righteousness
צִוָּה	ṣwh	Pi. to command
צוּר	ṣûr	rock
צָעַק	ṣʿq	cry, call (to aid)
צָפוֹן	ṣāfôn	north
צָפַן	ṣfn	hide

קבץ	qbṣ	Q., Pi. collect, assemble
קבר	qbr	bury
קדוֹשׁ	qādôš	holy
קֶדֶם	qædæm	in front, bygone days, east
קדֹשׁ	qdš	Q. be holy, Pi., Hi. consecrate
קִדְּשׁ	qodæš	holiness, holy place
קהל	qhl	Ni. assemble, Hi. call together
קְהָל	qāhāl	assembly, convocation of the people
קוה	qwh	Pi. hope, wait for
קול	qôl	sound, voice
קום	qûm	arise, last
קטן/קטון	qtn/qaṭon	be insignificant, small
קטר	qṭr	Pi. send sacrifices up in smoke
קלל	qll	Q. be slight, Pi. curse
קנה	qnh	acquire, buy, create
קִצִּיר	qāṣîr	harvest of grains
קרא	qr'	call
קרב	qrb	Q. approach, Hi. offer
קֶרֶב	qæræb	the inward part (of body), in the midst
קֶרְבָּן	qōrbān	offering, gift
קרה	qrh	meet, occur
קרוב	qārôb	near
קִשֵּׁת	qæšæt	bow
ראה	r'h	Q. see, Ni. be seen, show oneself, appear, Hi. show
ראשׁ	rôš	head, summit, upper end
רִאשׁוֹן	rī'šōn	the first (position)
רֵאשִׁית	rē'šît	beginning, the first, choicest
רב	rab	much, many

שָׁפָה	šāfā	lip, shore, bank
שָׂר	śar	official, chief, leader
שָׂרַף	śrf	burn
שֶׁ	šæ	relative particle
שָׁל	š'l	ask, inquire
שְׂאוֹל	š'ol	underworld, realm of dead
שֶׁבַע/שִׁבְעָה	šæba'/šib'ā	seven
שִׁבְעִים	šib'im	seventy
שֶׁבֶט	šebæt	rod, staff
שָׁבַע	šb'	Ni. swear
שָׁבַר	šbr	break (in pieces)
שַׁבָּת	šabbāt	Sabbath
שׁוּב	šûb	Q. turn back, turn around Hi. bring back
שׁוֹר	šôr	bull, ox, steer
שַׁחַט	šḥṭ	slaughter
שַׁחַת	šḥt	Hi. spoil, ruin
שָׁיר	šîr	sing
שִׁיר	šîr	song
שָׁכַב	škb	lie down
שָׁכַח	škḥ	forget
שָׁכַן	škn	settle down to abide, live in
שָׁלוֹם	šālôm	peace
שָׁלַח	šlh	send
שֻׁלְחָן	šulḥān	table
שָׁלַךְ	šlk	Hi. throw
שָׁלֵם	šlm	intact, complete
שָׁלֹשׁ/שְׁלֹשָׁה	šālōš/š'lošā	three
שְׁלִישִׁי	š'lišî	the third
שְׁלֹשִׁים	š'lošîm	thirty
שֵׁם	šēm	name

רֹב	rob	multitude
רַבב	rbb	be, become many, much
רַבַּה	rbh	Q. become many Hi. make many
רֶגֶל	rægæl	foot
רָדַף	rdf	pursue, persecute
רוּחַ	rû ^{ah}	wind, breath, spirit
רוּם	rûm	be high above, be exalted
רֹחַב	roḥab	breadth
רַחַם	rḥm	Pi. have compassion
רָחַק	rḥq	be far, become far
רִיב	rîb	dispute, conduct a (legal) case
רִיב	rib	dispute, case of law, lawsuit
רֶכֶב	rækæb	vehicle, chariot
רָע	ra ^ʿ	bad, evil
רֵעַ	re ^{ac}	fellow, companion, friend
רָעַב	rā ^ʿ āb	hunger, famine
רָעָה	r ^ʿ h	pasture, tend
רָעָה	rā ^ʿ ā	evil, misery, trouble
רָעָה	r ^{ʿʿ}	be bad, do evil
רַק	raq	only
רָשָׁע	rš ^ʿ	be, become guilty, act wickedly
רָשָׁע	rāšā ^ʿ	being wrong, guilty, impious
שָׂדֶה	śādæ	open field
שָׂם	śîm	set, put, put down
שָׂכַל	śkl	Hi. understand, have success, prosper
שְׂמֹאל	ś ^e mō ^ʿ l	the left side, left
שָׂמַח	śmḥ	rejoice
שִׂמְחָה	śimḥā	joy, gladness
שָׂנֵא	śn ^ʿ /śānē ^ʿ	hate

שָׁם	šām	there
שָׁמַד	šmd	Hi. exterminate, Ni. be destroyed, exterminated
שָׁמָּה	šammā	thither, (as far as) there
שָׁמַיִם	šāmayim	heaven
שֶׁמֶן	šæmæn	oil (of olives)
שְׁמוֹנֶה/שְׁמוֹנָה	š ^e monæ/š ^e monā	eight
שָׁמַע	šm ^ʿ	hear
שָׁמַר	šmr	keep, watch over, retain
שֶׁמֶשׁ	šæmæš	sun
שֵׁן	šen	tooth
שָׁנָה	šānā	year
שֵׁנִי	šēnî	the second
שְׁתַּיִם/שְׁנַיִם	š ^e tayim/š ^e nayim	two
שַׁעַר	ša ^ʿ ar	gate
שִׁפְחָה	šifhā	maid-servant
שֹׁפֵט	šft	judge
שָׁפַךְ	šfk	pour out
שֶׁקֶל	šæqæl	shekel
שֶׁקֶר	šæqær	lie, deception
שֵׁשׁ/שֶׁשׁ	šeš/šišša	six
שָׁתָה	šth	Q. drink, Hi. to water
תְּהוֹם	t ^h ôm	the primaeval ocean
תְּהִלָּה	t ^h illā	glory, praise
תוֹךְ	tawæk	the midst
תוֹעֵבָה	tô ^ʿ ēbā	abomination
תוֹרָה	tôrā	instruction
תַּחַת	taḥat	under, instead of
תָּמִיד	tamîd	continually, regular
תָּמִים	tamîm	complete, blameless
תָּמַם	tmm	be complete

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תֵּעַב	t'ḇ	Pi. be abhorred
תְּפִלָּה	tefillā	prayer
תִּפְשׁ	tfś	capture
תְּרוּמָה	t ^e rûmā	tribute, contribution
תִּשְׁעָה / תִּשְׁעָה	těsa'/tiš'a	nine

Lesson 18: Understanding Diacritical Markings

I. Hebrew Diacritical (vowel) markings

A. Hebrew orthography includes three types of diacritics:

- *Niqqud* in Hebrew is the way to indicate vowels, which are omitted in modern orthography, using a set of ancillary glyphs. Since the vowels can be understood from surrounding context, context can help readers read the correct pronunciations of several letters of the Hebrew alphabet (the rafe sign and other rare glyphs are also listed as part of the niqqud system but are not in common use).
- *Geresh* and *gershayim*, two diacritics that are not considered a part of niqqud, each of which has several functions (e.g. to denote Hebrew numerals).
- *Cantillation*, “accents” which are used exclusively to indicate how Biblical passages should be chanted and may possess a punctuating function.

II. The Niqqud

- A. In modern Hebrew orthography, vowel and consonant pointing is seldom used, except in specialized texts such as dictionaries, poetry, or texts for children or for new immigrants.
- B. Hebrew has five vowel phonemes—/i/, /e/, /a/, /o/ and /u/—but many more written symbols for them. *Niqqud* distinguish the following vowels and consonants.
- C. See chart below.

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Name	Symbol	Transliteration	English Example	Hebrew	Alternate Names
Hiriq	◌ִ	i	seek	חִירִיק	n/a
Tzere	◌ֵ	e and ei	men	צִירֵי or צִירָה	
Segol	◌ֹ	e, (ei with succeeding yod)	men	סְגוֹל	
Patach	◌ַ	a	far	פָּתַח	
Kamatatz	◌ָ	a, (or o)	far	קָמָץ	
Sin dot (left)	◌ׂ	s	sour	שִׁי"ן	
Shin dot (right)	◌׃	sh	shop	שְׁי"ן	
Holam Haser	◌ְ	o	bore	חֹלֶם חָסֵר	
Holam Male or Vav Haluma	◌ִ			חֹלֶם מָלֵא	
Dagesh or Mappiq	◌ּ	N/A	N/A	דָּגֵשׁ or מַפְיֵק	
Shuruk or Vav Shruqa	◌ׁ	u	cool	שׁוּרוּק	
Kubutz	◌ׁ			קִבּוּץ	
Below: Two vertical dots underneath the letter (called sh'va) make the vowel very short.					
Shva	◌ֻ	apostrophe, e,	silent	שְׁוָא	n/a
		or nothing			
Reduced Segol	◌ִ	e	men	חֲטַף סְגוֹל	Hataf Segol
Reduced Patach	◌ַ	a	far	חֲטַף פָּתַח	Hataf Patakh
Reduced Kamatz	◌ָ	o	bore	חֲטַף קָמָץ	Hataf Kamatz
Note 1: The symbol "ס" represents whatever Hebrew letter is used.					
Note 2: The letter "ש" is used since it can only be represented by that letter.					
Note 3: The <i>dagesh</i> , <i>mappiq</i> , and <i>shuruk</i> are different, however, they look the same and are inputted in the same manner. Also, they are represented by the same Unicode character.					
Note 4: The letter "י" is used since it can only be represented by that letter.					

III. Vowel Comparison Chart

Vowel Comparison Table					
Vowel length					
Long	Short	Very short	Notes	Transliteration	English Example
א	א	א	2, 3	a	far
י	י	י	2, 3, 4	o	cold
ו	ו	n/a	5	u	you
יְ	י	n/a		i	ski
ע	ע	ע	2	e	let
Notes:					
1. These vowels lengths are not manifested in Modern Hebrew.					
2. Adding two vertical dots (sh'va) to the "short-vowel" diacritic produces the diacritic for "very short vowel" (Hebrew: חטף חטף <i>ḥatáf</i>).					
3. The short /o/ and long /a/ are represented by the same diacritic.					
4. The short /o/ is usually promoted to a long /o/ (holam male, vav with dot above) in Israeli writing for the sake of disambiguation.					
5. The short /u/ is usually promoted to a long /u/ (shuruk, vav with middle dot) in Israeli writing for the sake of disambiguation.					

IV. The Meteg

- A. The *Meteg* is a vertical bar placed below a character next to the niqqud for various purposes, including marking vowel length and secondary stress. Its shape is identical to the cantillation mark *sof pasuq*.

V. Cantillation

- A. Cantillation has a more limited use than vowel pointing, as it is only used for reciting the Tanakh, and is not found in children's books or dictionaries.
- B. In general, each word in the Tanach has one cantillation sign. This may be either a *disjunctive*, showing a division between that and the following word, or a *conjunctive*, joining the two words (like a slur in music).
- C. *Disjunctives* divide a verse into phrases, and within each phrase all the words except the last carry *conjunctives*. (There are two types of exception to the rule about words having only one sign. A group of words joined by hyphens is regarded as one word, so they only have one accent between them. Conversely, a long word may have two—e.g., a disjunctive on the stressed syllable and the related conjunctive two syllables before in place of meteg.)
- D. The *disjunctives* are traditionally divided into four levels, with lower-level disjunctives marking less important breaks.
- The first level, known as “Emperors,” includes *sof pasuk* / *siluk*, marking the end of the verse, and *atnach* / *etnachta*, marking the middle.
 - The second level is known as “Kings.” The usual second level disjunctive is *zakef qatan* (when on its own, this becomes *zakef gadol*). This is replaced by *tifcha* when in the immediate neighborhood of *sof pasuk* or *atnach*. A stronger second level disjunctive, used in very long verses, is *segol*: when it occurs on its own, this may be replaced by *shalsholet*.
 - The third level is known as “Dukes.” The usual third level disjunctive is *revia*. For musical reasons, this is replaced by *zarka* when in the vicinity of *segol*, by *pashta* or *yetiv* when in the vicinity of *zakef*, and by *tevir* when in the vicinity of *tifcha*.
 - The fourth level is known as “Counts.” These are found mainly in longer verses and tend to cluster near the beginning of a half-verse: for this reason their musical realization is usually more elaborate than that of higher-level disjunctives. They are *pazer*, *geresh*, *gershayim*, *telisha gedola*, *munach legarmeh* and *qarne farah*.
 - The general conjunctive is *munach*. Depending on which *disjunctive* follows, this may be replaced by *mercha*, *mahpach*, *darga*, *qadma*, *telisha qetannah* or *yerach ben yomo*.

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- One other symbol is *mercha kefulah*, double *mercha*. There is some argument about whether this is another conjunctive or an occasional replacement for *tevir*.
- Disjunctives have a function somewhat similar to punctuation in Western languages. *Sof pasuk* could be thought of as a full stop, *atnach* as a semi-colon, second level disjunctives as commas and third level disjunctives as commas or unmarked. Where two words are written in the construct state (for example, *pene ha-mayim*, “the face of the waters”), the first noun (*nomen regens*) invariably carries a conjunctive.

VI. The *Geresh*

- A. *Geresh* is a mark, ⟨'⟩ that may be used as a diacritic, as a punctuation mark for initialisms, or as a marker of Hebrew numerals. It is also used in cantillation.
- B. As a diacritic, the *geresh* is combined with the following consonants:

Letter	Value	with <i>geresh</i>	Value	English Example	Usage
ג	[g]	ג'	[dʒ]	age	For slang and loan words (phonologically native sounds)
ז	[z]	ז'	[ʒ]	vision	
צ	[ts]	צ'	[tʃ]	change	
		(non standard)			
ו	[v]	ו'	[w]	quiet	
ד	[d]	ד'	[ð]	there	For transliteration of sounds in foreign languages (non-native sounds, i.e. sounds foreign to Hebrew phonology).
ח	[h]	ח'	[χ][ʃ]	tech	
ס	[s]	ס'	[sʰ]	n/a	
ע	[ʕ]	ע'	[ʏ]	n/a	
ר	[r]	ר'			
ת	[t]	ת'	[θ]	think	

VII. The Gershayim

- A. The *Gershayim* between the penultimate and last letters (" e.g. פּוֹצֵט"א) marks acronyms, alphabetic numerals, names of Hebrew letters, linguistic roots and, in older texts, transcriptions of foreign words.
- B. Placed above a letter (׀ e.g. פֿ׀י) it is one of the cantillation marks.
- C. *Gershayim* (Hebrew: גֶּרְשָׁיִם, without *niqqud* גֶּרְשִׁיִּים), also occasionally *grashayim* (Hebrew: גֶּרְשָׁיִם), is two distinct typographical marks in the Hebrew language. The name literally means “double geresh.”
- D. *Gershayim* most commonly refers to the punctuation mark (״). It is always written before the last letter of the non-inflected form of a word or numeral. It is used in the following ways:
 - To indicate an acronym. For example: דו"ח (singular), דו"חות (plural), “report” represents דִּין וְחִשְׁבּוֹן; and מ"כ (masculine), מ"כִּית (feminine), “squad commander” represents מִפְקֵד כִּיתָה.
 - To indicate a multi-digit Hebrew numeral. For example: י"ח represents 18. (Single-digit numerals are indicated with a following geresh.)
 - To indicate the names of Hebrew letters, differentiating them from any homographs. Compare שָׁרַט עֵין “he sketched an eye” with שָׁרַט עֵינַן “he sketched an ayin.”
 - To indicate Hebrew word roots. For example: the root of תַּשְׁבִּיצִים/taʃbe'tsim/ “crossword puzzles” is שִׁבֿצֿ (š—b—š); the root of לְהַטּוֹת/leha'tot/ “to tilt, to conjugate” is נִטֿהֿ (n—t—h); and the root of הִסְתַּכְּרְנוּ/histankre'nut/ “becoming synchronized” is סִנֿכֿרֿנֿ (s—n—k—r—n).
 - In older texts, to indicate the transliteration of a foreign word. This use corresponds to English’s use of italics. For example: in printed works of Rashi, the town of Rashi’s birth, Troyes, is spelled טְרוּיִ״שׁ.

VIII. Hebrew Syllables – Accent marks

Hebrew Syllables

Hebrew Accent Marks

Most Hebrew words are generally accented on the **last syllable** of the word:

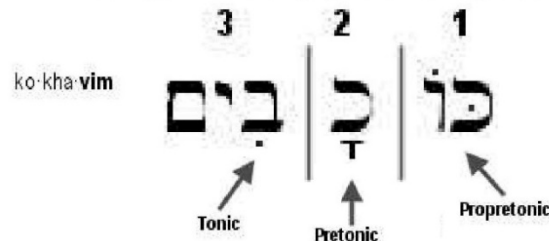
ha-ish·shah 

However, some words (segolate nouns, furtive patach nouns, certain verb forms) accent the next to last syllable. In the vocabulary sections of the units, I will indicate non-standard accents by using the symbol "<" above the accented syllable:



Syllable (Phonetic) Classification

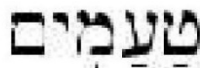
Some Hebrew grammars identify syllables according to the following scheme:

ko·kha·vim 

The "tonic" syllable is the syllable that receives the stress or accent; the "pretonic" syllable is the syllable before the tonic syllable, and the "propretonic" syllable is the syllable before the pretonic. Don't let this nomenclature intimidate you: in the Scriptures, accented syllables are usually identified with one or more accent marks (see below).

The Masoretes and the Masoretic Text

Between the 7th and 9th centuries A.D, a group of Jewish scribes called the Masoretes added vowel signs (*nikkudot*), cantillation symbols and accent marks (*ta'amim*) to the text. This process came to be known as the *Masorah* (tradition). The marked text was called the Masoretic Text and became the standard text for the Jews around the world.



Accents of the Masoretic Text

Every word in the Tanakh (except those joined by a hyphen or maqqef) carries an accent mark on its "tonic" syllable (i.e., the syllable that receives the stress). In the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia there are 27 prose and 21 poetic accent marks used in the text. These marks (like the vowel marks) may appear above or below the word.

Three Main Accent Marks

Most accent marks can be classified according to whether they are disjunctive (pausal) or conjunctive (connecting).

Disjunctive Accents

Disjunctive accents mark a pause or break in the reading of the text, and function something like commas, semicolons, and colons in English. There are 18 disjunctive accent marks you might see in the Masoretic text, but the two most important are:

- **Atnach** - Placed under the last word of the first half of a verse.
- **Silluq** - Placed under the last word of the second half of a verse.



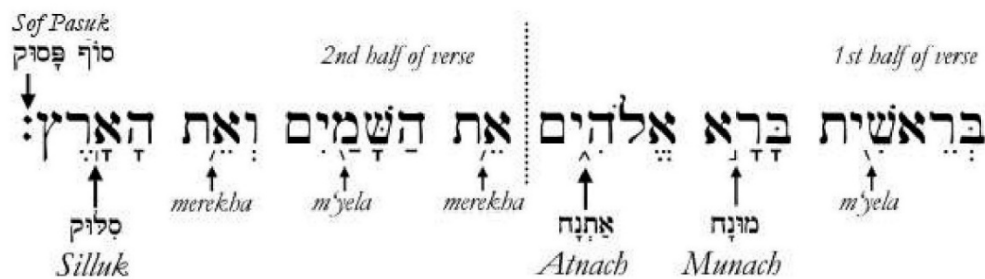
Conjunctive Accents

Conjunctive accents connect two words in the text. There are 9 conjunctive accent marks you might see in the Masoretic text, but the most important is:

- **Munach** - Placed under a word that is connected with a following word.



The following shows Genesis 1:1 as you might see it in a typical Masoretic text:



Note: You do not need to memorize the names of these accent marks; however, when you see one of them in your reading of the Tanakh, accent the syllable where the mark appears (for example, the silluq in the last word of the *pasuk* (verse) tells us to accent the pretonic syllable: ha-**a**-rets).

The mark at the end of the *pasuk* (:) is called a **Sof Pasuk**, and simply indicates the end of the verse (somewhat like a period in modern English writing).

The Least You Should Know...

In general, unless otherwise indicated by some sort of accent mark, assume that the Hebrew word you are looking at is accented on the last syllable.

Vowels are normally long in open syllables (i.e., *ba*, *be*, *bo*) and short in a closed syllables (*ab*, *eb*, *ob*).

Reference: The Rules of Stress

The following information is provided for reference purposes only:

1. If the last syllable has a long vowel, it usually has the stress:

לוי

2. A long vowel in a closed syllable gets the stress:

צפון

3. A closed unaccented syllable must take a short vowel:

אלף

4. The Sheva (or chateph form) never receives the stress.

אשר

5. Verbs are often accented on the second syllable

שמרת

6. If a word has a Maqgef (hyphen), the stress usually shifts away from the preceding word and attends to the following word.

בן-אדם ← בן אדם

In the example above, the words *ben adam* means "son of man." With the Maqgef, the phrase still means "son of man," but the accent moves to the word *adam*, resulting in a closed, unaccented syllable for the first word. The vowel therefore changes from Tsere (long) to Segol (short), according to rule 3, above.

Note: You may also be interested in Helmut Richter's article regarding Hebrew Cantillation marks (special accent tags used for chanting the Torah).

Lesson 19: Review and the Hebrew Numbering System

Hebrew Alphabet

Level: Basic

The Hebrew and Yiddish languages use a different alphabet than English. The picture below illustrates the Hebrew alphabet, in Hebrew alphabetical order. Note that Hebrew is written from right to left, rather than left to right as in English, so Alef is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and Tav is the last. The Hebrew alphabet is often called the "alefbet," because of its first two letters.

- Hebrew uses a different alphabet than English
- Hebrew is written right-to-left
- The Hebrew alphabet has no vowels, but pronunciation aids are often added
- There are several styles of Hebrew writing
- Hebrew letters have numerical values
- Writing in Hebrew may require a special word processor and fonts

Letters of the Alefbet

ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
Teit	Cheit	Zayin	Vav	Hei	Dalet	Gimel	Beit	Alef
(T)	(Ch)	(Z)	(V/O/U)	(H)	(D)	(G)	(B/V)	(Silent)
ס	נ	נ	מ	מ	ל	ך	כ	י
Samekh	Nun	Nun	Mem	Mem	Lamed	Khaf	Kaf	Yod
(S)	(N)	(N)	(M)	(M)	(L)	(Kh)	(K/Kh)	(Y)
ת	ש	ר	ק	ץ	צ	ף	פ	ע
Tav	Shin	Reish	Qof	Tzadei	Tzadei	Fei	Pei	Ayin
(T/S)	(Sh/S)	(R)	(Q)	(Tz)	(Tz)	(F)	(P/F)	(Silent)

Table 1: The Hebrew Alphabet

Contents

Letters of Alefbet

Vowels and Points

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Hebrew Language: Root Words

If this sounds like Greek to you, you're not far off! Many letters in the Greek alphabet have similar names and occur in the same order (though they don't look anything alike!): Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta ... Zeta ... Theta, Iota, Kappa, Lambda, Mu, Nu ... Pi ... Rho, Sigma Tau.

The "Kh" and the "Ch" are pronounced as in German or Scottish, a throat clearing noise, not as the "ch" in "chair."

Note that there are two versions of some letters. Kaf/Khaf, Mem, Nun, Pei/Fei and Tzadei. The second version, usually extending below the baseline of the letter, is the "final" form of the letter, used only at the end (the left side) of a word. When a letter with a second pronunciation (discussed along with [Table 3](#) below) appears at the end of a word, it almost always takes the second pronunciation, so I have identified the final forms of Kaf and Pei above with their second pronunciation.

Vowels and Points

Like most early Semitic alphabetic writing systems, the alefbet has no vowels. People who are fluent in the language do not need vowels to read Hebrew, and most things written in Hebrew in [Israel](#) are written without vowels.

However, as Hebrew literacy declined, particularly after the Romans expelled the Jews from Israel, [the rabbis](#) recognized the need for aids to pronunciation, so they developed a system of dots and dashes called nikkud (points). These dots and dashes are written above, below or inside the letter, in ways that do not alter the spacing of the line. Text containing these markings is referred to as "pointed" text.

Illustration 1: Pointed Text

Illustration 1 is an example of pointed text. Nikkud are shown in blue for emphasis (they would normally be the same color as the consonants). In [Sephardic](#) pronunciation (which is what most people use today), this line would be pronounced: V'ahavtah l'reyakhah kamokhah. (And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. [Leviticus 19:18](#)).

Most nikkud are used to indicate vowels. Table 2 illustrates the vowel points, along with their pronunciations. Pronunciations are approximate; I have heard quite a bit of variation in vowel pronunciation.

Vowel points are shown in blue. The letter Alef, shown in red, is used to illustrate the position of the points relative to the consonants. The letters shown in purple (Vavs and Yods) are technically consonants and would appear in unpointed texts, but they function as vowels in this context.

Vav, usually a consonant pronounced as a "v," is sometimes a vowel pronounced "o" as in "alone" (transliterated "o") or "oo" as in "moon" (transliterated "u" or "oo"). When a Vav has a dot on top, it's usually pronounced "o", but sometimes "vo". When it has a dot in the middle, it's usually pronounced "u", but sometimes "v". So how do you know which way to pronounce these Vav forms? There are simple rules:

1. If the letter before it has a vowel (even a silent vowel), it is pronounced as a Vav
2. If the Vav itself has a vowel underneath it, it is pronounced as a Vav
3. Otherwise, it's pronounced as a vowel.

Table 2: Vowel Points

	a as in father
	Sephardic: a as in father Ashkenazic: aw as in saw
 or 	ey as in they
	e as in met
 or 	i as in machine
 or 	o as in alone
 or 	oo as in moon
	At end of syllable: silent In middle of syllable: a schwa sound, like the a in alone
	A schwa sound, with just a hint of the a as in father
	A schwa sound, with just a hint of the aw as in saw
	A schwa sound, with just a hint of the e as in met

Table 2: Vowel Points

הָעוֹלָם Three common prayer words, found in just about every blessing, illustrate these rules: ha'olam,
 ha'olam b'mitz'votav and v'tzivanu. Ha'olam pronounces the Vav with a dot on top as you would expect: as
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו an "o" sound. B'mitz'votav has a Vav with a dot on top, but it's pronounced "vo." You have to
 b'mitz'votav pronounce the "v" because the consonant before it has its own vowel (albeit a silent one, the
וְצִיבָנוּ vertical dots) and a Vav vowel can't follow another vowel. Note that the consonant before the Vav
 v'tzivanu in ha'olam has no vowel (although the consonant is silent). In v'tzivanu, the Vav in the middle of
 the word has a vowel of its own underneath (looks like a T), so it is a consonant and is
 pronounced as a "v" sound. The Vav with a dot in the middle at the end of the word is pronounced as you would
 expect, as a "u" sound, because it has no vowel and the consonant before it has none.

There are a few other nikkud, illustrated in Table 3.

The dot that appears in the center of some letters (we saw it above in the Vav) is called a dagesh. It can appear in just about any letter in Hebrew. With most letters, the dagesh does not significantly affect pronunciation of the letter; it simply marks a split between syllables, where the letter is pronounced both at the end of the first syllable and the beginning of the second. With the letters Beit, Kaf and Pei, however, the dagesh indicates that the letter should be pronounced with its hard sound (b, k, p) rather than its soft sound (v, kh, f). See Table 3. In [Ashkenazic](#) pronunciation (the pronunciation used by many [Orthodox Jews](#) and by many older Jews), Tav also has a soft sound, and is pronounced as an "s" when it does not have a dagesh. That's why you may have heard people speak of the female [coming-of-age ceremony](#) as a **bas** mitzvah instead of a **bat** mitzvah. The ritual of [circumcision](#) is most commonly referred to as a **bris**. Both words end with an undotted Tav. With Vav, as we saw above, it usually (but not always) indicates a "u" sound instead of the usual "v" sound.

בּ	ב
B	V
כּ	כ
K	Kh
פּ	פ
P	F
תּ	ת
T	T (S)
וּ	ו
U	O V
שּׁ	שׂ
Sh	S

Table 3:
Other Nikkud

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Shin is pronounced "sh" when it has a dot over the right branch and "s" when it has a dot over the left branch. The letter is called Sin when the dot appears on the left, and functions as a completely separate letter of the alphabet, even to the extent of appearing in a separate chapter in dictionaries!

מֹשֶׁה The dot over the Shin or Sin can sometimes merge into an "o" vowel next to it, so that an "osh" sound or a "so" sound usually have just one dot instead of two next to each other. The best-known example of this is the name Moshe (Moses), which has an "o" vowel followed by a Shin and the dots combine so there is no visible vowel on the first consonant.

Styles of Writing

The style of writing illustrated above is the one most commonly seen in Hebrew books. It is referred to as block print, square script or sometimes Assyrian script.

For sacred documents, such as [torah scrolls](#) or the scrolls inside [tefillin](#) and [mezuzot](#), there is a special writing style with "crowns" (crows-foot-like marks coming up from the upper points) on many of the letters. This style of writing is known as STA"M, an acronym for "Sifrei Torah, Tefillin and Mezuzot," which is where you will see that style of writing. For more information about the STA"M alphabet, including illustrations and relevant rules, see [Hebrew Alphabet used in writing STA"M](#).

There is another style commonly used when writing Hebrew by hand, often referred to as Hebrew cursive or Hebrew manuscript. Table 4 shows the complete Hebrew alphabet in a font that emulates Hebrew cursive.

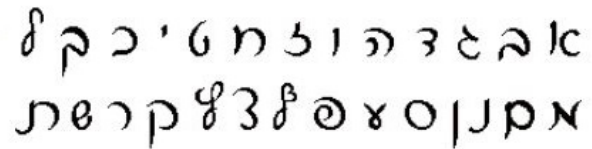


Table 4: Hebrew Cursive Font

אזגדוהזחטיכךל
מסנסעפפאקקרת

Table 5: Rashi Script

Hebrew alphabet in a Rashi Script font.

Another style is used in certain texts, particularly the [Talmud](#), to distinguish the body of the text from commentary upon the text. This style is known as Rashi Script, in honor of [Rashi](#), the greatest commentator on the [Torah](#) and the [Talmud](#). Rashi himself did not use this script; it is only named in his honor. Table 5 shows the complete

K'tav Ivri: Ancient Hebrew Script

As mentioned above, the Hebrew alphabet that we use today is referred to as Assyrian Script (in Hebrew, K'tav Ashuri). But there was once another way of writing the alphabet that the [rabbis](#) called K'tav

Ivri, which means "Hebrew Script." Scholars call it Paleo-Hebrew or Proto-Hebrew. Many examples of this ancient way of writing the Hebrew alphabet have been found by archaeologists: on coins and other artifacts. It is quite similar to the ancient Phoenician writing. Note that there are no final forms, as there are for some letters in the Hebrew scripts we use today, which is why there aren't as many letters here.

ל ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ ק ר ש ת
א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ ק ר ש ת

Table 6: K'tav Ivri (Paleo-Hebrew)

The rabbis of the [Talmudic](#) period were well aware of this ancient K'tav Ivri, and they raised the question whether the [Torah](#) was originally given in K'tav Ivri or K'tav Ashuri. A variety of opinions are expressed in the Talmud at [Sanhedrin 21b-22a](#): one opinion states that the Torah was originally given in K'tav Ivri, but was changed to K'tav Ashuri in the days of Ezra, during the Babylonian Exile (the Babylonians used K'tav Ashuri, and consequently the Jews in exile used it in the same way that we [transliterate](#) Hebrew into the Roman alphabet). Another opinion says that the Torah was written in K'tav Ashuri, but that holy script was denied the people when they sinned and was replaced with another one; when the people repented, the K'tav Ashuri was restored. A third opinion states that the Torah was always in K'tav Ashuri.

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The general consensus is that the Torah was given in K'tav Ashuri, because the Talmud makes other references that don't make sense in K'tav Ivri. The Talmud talks about final forms of letters in the original Torah, but K'tav Ivri doesn't have final forms. It talks about the center of the Samekh and the Final Mem miraculously floating when the [Ten Commandments](#) were carved all the way through the tablets, but there is no Final Mem in K'tav Ivri, and neither Samekh nor Mem would have a floating center in K'tav Ivri as they do in K'tav Ashuri.

All authorities maintain that today, the only holy script is K'tav Ashuri. Any [Torah scrolls](#), [tefillin](#) or [mezuzot](#) must be written in K'tav Ashuri, and specifically in a style of K'tav Ashuri known as STA"m, discussed [above](#).

K'tav Ivri is understood to be in the nature of a font, like Rashi script, rather than in the nature of a different alphabet, like Greek, Cyrillic or Roman. The names of the letters, the order of the letters, and the [numerical value](#) of the letters are apparently the same in both K'tav Ashuri and K'tav Ivri; thus, any religious significance that would be found in the numerical value of words or the sequence of the alphabet is the same in both scripts. The only difference is the appearance.

Transliteration

The process of writing Hebrew words in the Roman (English) alphabet is known as transliteration. Transliteration is more an art than a science, and opinions on the correct way to transliterate words vary widely. This is why the Jewish [festival of lights](#) (in Hebrew, Cheit-Nun-Kaf-Hei) is spelled Chanukah, Chanukkah, Hanuka, and many other interesting ways. Each spelling has a legitimate phonetic and orthographic basis; none is right or wrong.

The Roman letters in Table 1 above are probably the most common transliterations of those consonants in America, except that Khaf is often transliterated as ch. I prefer to use kh to distinguish between Khaf and Cheit, but that's just my preference. Fei is often transliterated as ph, which I like because it makes it clear that this is the same letter as Pei. That's also part of why I like kh for khaf, because kaf is usually transliterated as k, not c.

It's the vowels that make transliteration particularly complicated. Americans pronounce the English vowels differently (local accents), and Americans don't all pronounce Hebrew in quite the same way (certainly not the same way they do in Israel), so it's hard to write the Hebrew words in English letters that Americans would pronounce in a recognizable way. There are also different opinions about how to represent the schwa vowels. Do we use an apostrophe (') or a vowel that sounds close (usually an "e")? And do we use a hyphen to separate prefixes like ha (which is the definite article "the" in Hebrew)? Transliteration from different sources could be hard to recognize as the same original Hebrew text!

Numerical Values

Each letter in the alefbet has a numerical value. These values can be used as numerals, similar to the way Romans used some of their letters (I, V, X, L, C, D, M) as numerals. Table 6 shows each letter with its corresponding numerical value. Note that final letters have the same value as their non-final counterparts.

The numerical value of a word is determined by adding up the values of each letter. The order of the letters is irrelevant to their value: the number 11 could be written as Yod-Alef, Alef-Yod, Hei-Vav, Dalet-Dalet-Gimel or many other ways. Ordinarily, however, numbers are written with the fewest possible letters and with the largest numeral first (that is, to the right). The number 11 would be written Yod-Alef (with the Yod on the right, because Hebrew is written right-to-left), the number 12 would be Yod-Beit, the number 21 would be Kaf-Alef, the number 611 would be Tav-Reish-Yod-Alef, etc. The only significant exception to this pattern is the numbers 15 and 16, which if rendered as 10+5 or 10+6 would be a [name of G-d](#), so they are normally written Teit-Vav (9+6) and Teit-Zayin (9+7).

Table 7: Values of Hebrew Letters

100	ק	10	י	1	א
200	כ	20	כ, כּ	2	ב
300	ש	30	ל	3	ג
400	ת	40	ד, דּ	4	ד
		50	ה, הּ	5	ה
		60	ו	6	ו
		70	ז	7	ז
		80	ח, חּ	8	ח
		90	ט, טּ	9	ט

Table 6: Values of Hebrew Letters

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Because every letter of the alphabet has a numerical value, every word also has a numerical value. For example, the word Torah (Tav-Vav-Reish-Hei) has the numerical value 611 ($400+6+200+5$). There is an entire discipline of [Jewish mysticism](#) known as Gematria that is devoted to finding hidden meanings in the numerical values of words. For example, the number 18 is very significant, because it is the numerical value of the word Chai, meaning life or living. Donations to Jewish charities are routinely made in denominations of 18 for that reason (\$18, \$36, \$180 and \$360 are quite common). It is often very confusing to gentile charities when Jews make donations in these kinds of numbers!

Some have suggested that the final forms of the letters Kaf, Mem, Nun, Pei and Tzadei have the numerical values of 500, 600, 700, 800 and 900, providing a numerical system that could easily render numbers up to 1000. However, there does not appear to be any basis for that interpretation in Jewish tradition. A cursory glance at any Jewish tombstone will show that these letters are not normally used that way: the year 5766 (2005-2006) is written Tav-Shin-Samekh-Vav ($400+300+60+6$; the 5000 is assumed), not Final Nun-Samekh-Vav ($700+60+6$). Indeed, writing it in that way would look absurd to anyone familiar with Hebrew, because a final letter should never appear at the beginning of a word! But even where numerology is used only to determine the numerical values of words, you will not find examples in Jewish tradition of final letters being given different values. For example, in traditional sources, the numerical value of one [name of G-d](#) that ends in Final Mem is 86, not 646.

In the early days of the World Wide Web, I received several e-mails pointing out that the numerical value of Vav (often transliterated as W) is 6, and therefore WWW has the numerical value of 666! The Internet, they say, is the number of the beast! It's an amusing notion, but Hebrew numbers just don't work that way. In Hebrew numerals, the position of the letter/digit is irrelevant; the letters are simply added up to determine the value. To say that Vav-Vav-Vav is six hundred and sixty-six would be like saying that the Roman numeral III is one hundred and eleven. The numerical value of Vav-Vav-Vav in Hebrew would be $6+6+6=18$, so WWW is equivalent to life! (It is also worth noting that the significance of the number 666 is a part of Christian numerology, and has no basis that I know of in Jewish thought).

While we're on the subject of bad numbers, it is worth noting that the number 13 is not a bad number in Jewish tradition or numerology. Normally written as Yod-Gimel, 13 is the numerical value of the word ahava (love, Alef-Hei-Beit-Hei) and of echad (one, as in the daily prayer declaration, [G-d is One!](#), Alef-Cheit-Dalet). Thirteen is the age of responsibility, when a boy becomes [bar mitzvah](#). We call upon G-d's mercy by reciting his Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, found in [Exodus 34:6-7](#). [Rambam](#) summed up Jewish beliefs in [Thirteen Principles](#).

Hebrew Numbers

Modern versus Traditional Number Forms in Hebrew Writing

Most Hebrew text today uses European digits (0, 1, 2, 3...9) to represent numbers. However, religious or biblical text, and calendars in Hebrew will use the traditional form which uses Hebrew letters as numeric values.

Hebrew Letters And Their Number Values

Each letter in the Hebrew alphabet (or aleph-bet) has a numerical value. The first 10 letters (consonants actually) have the values 1-10. The next 9 letters are valued 20, 30, ... 100. The remainder are valued 200, 300, and 400. The number values for each character are shown in the table below. There is no representation for zero (0). This is the system used by Hillel II in the fourth century A.D., when he prescribed the rules for the Hebrew calendar system.

Later, the final forms of the letters kaf, mem, nun, pe, and tzadi were used for the missing values 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900.

Number Values For Hebrew Letters

These tables show the number values for hebrew letters. Left-to-right readers will prefer the table with left-to-right ordering. Right-to-left readers will prefer the table with right-to-left ordering. Otherwise the tables are identical. The number values do not change with writing direction. The tables are presented as a convenience to readers. (They also highlight the ease with which [table direction](#) can be changed in HTML markup by adding "DIR=RTL" to the table element.)

Left-To-Right Ordering										Right-To-Left Ordering									
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Value
Value x 1	א Alef 05D0	ב Bet 05D1	ג Gimel 05D2	ד Dalet 05D3	ה He 05D4	ו Vav 05D5	ז Zayen 05D6	ח Het 05D7	ט Tet 05D8	ט Tet 05D8	ח Het 05D7	ז Zayen 05D6	ו Vav 05D5	ה He 05D4	ד Dalet 05D3	ג Gimel 05D2	ב Bet 05D1	א Alef 05D0	Value x 1
Value x 10	י Yod 05D9	כ Kaf 05DB	ל Lamed 05DC	מ Mem 05DE	נ Nun 05E0	ס Samekh 05E1	ע Ayin 05E2	פ Pe 05E4	צ Tzadi 05E5	צ Tzadi 05E5	פ Pe 05E4	ע Ayin 05E2	ס Samekh 05E1	נ Nun 05E0	מ Mem 05DE	ל Lamed 05DC	כ Kaf 05DB	י Yod 05D9	Value x 10
Value x 100	ק Qof 05E7	ר Resh 05E8	ש Shin 05E9	ת Tav 05EA											ת Tav 05EA	ש Shin 05E9	ר Resh 05E8	ק Qof 05E7	Value x 100
Value (later)! x 100	ק Qof 05E7	ר Resh 05E8	ש Shin 05E9	ת Tav 05EA	ף Final Kaf 05DA	ם Final Mem 05DD	ן Final Nun 05DF	פ Final Pe 05E3	ץ Final Tzadi 05E5	ץ Final Tzadi 05E5	פ Final Pe 05E3	ן Final Nun 05DF	ם Final Mem 05DD	ף Final Kaf 05DA	ת Tav 05EA	ש Shin 05E9	ר Resh 05E8	ק Qof 05E7	Value (later)! x 100

Note¹: The final forms of the letters kaf ף, mem ם, nun ן, pe ף, and tzadi ץ were not used in Hebrew numbers originally, but in later years they were added to represent the values 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900.

Example

The number 764 in Hebrew is: תשסד.

The value is calculated as 400 (ת) + 300 (ש) + 60 (ס) + 4 (ד) = 764.

Hebrew Number Formation

Hebrew numbers are formed differently from Western or European numbers. In the west, only 10 digits are used, and the position of the digit indicates its value in powers of 10 beginning at 1, so the digit value is multiplied by 1, 10, 100, 1000, etc. as the position increases from right to left. (Being position-based, a zero digit is an absolute requirement.)

Hebrew numbers on the other hand, simply add the values of each letter together and the position doesn't matter. However, they are generally written from largest to smallest, which in the right-to-left Hebrew script, means the largest is right-most. For numbers greater than 799, tav (400 ת) is repeated.

Numbers are formed by choosing the hebrew letter with the largest value that doesn't exceed the number and then selecting the next largest valued letter that reduces the remainder. For example, to represent 765, the largest valued letter is tav (400 ת) leaving a remainder of 365. Adding the letter shin (300 ש) leaves 65. Adding somekh (60 ס) and he (5 ה) eliminate the remainder. So 765 is represented by tav, shin, somekh, he: תשסה.

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Exceptions to Hebrew Number Formation

There is one exception. Numbers ending in 15 or 16 would be written as yud-he (10+5) and yud-vav (10+6), but the letters "yud he vav he" spell out the name of God and for religious reasons are not used. Instead, by convention, tet-vav (9+6 טו) and tet-zayin (9+7 טז) are always used.

Well ok, there is another exception- Some numbers spell out a word with strongly negative or positive connotations. In these cases, the order of the letters might be changed. The number 18 for example, yud-het, uses the same letters as the word for life het-yud. So instead of יח, you may see חי.

Thousands, Millions



Thousands are represented by the same letters as the unit values, sometimes a character similar to an apostrophe is appended. The character is a punctuation mark called geresh. When geresh is not available, the single quote (U+0027) is often substituted. A space (U+0020) often separates thousands, millions, etc. The pattern for numbers 1-999 is repeated for each thousand from 1,001- 999,999. Millions and Billions etc. are formed by extending and repeating the pattern.

Examples

The number 764 in Hebrew is: תשסד.

The value is calculated as 400 (ת) + 300 (ש) + 60 (ס) + 4 (ד) = 764.

This table shows different numbers written in hebrew. The numbers in blue show the special handling for numbers ending in 15 and 16.

1-10	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י
11-20	יא	יב	יג	יד	טו	טז	יז	יח	יט	כ
711-720	תשי"א	תשי"ב	תשי"ג	תשי"ד	תשי"ה	תשי"ו	תשי"ז	תשי"ח	תשי"ט	תש"ך
5,821-5,830	ה'תכ"א	ה'תכ"ב	ה'תכ"ג	ה'תכ"ד	ה'תכ"ה	ה'תכ"ו	ה'תכ"ז	ה'תכ"ח	ה'תכ"ט	ה'תל"א

Here are a few more examples:

1,000 א'

1,000,000 א' א'

3,001,764 ג' א' תשסד

Numbers Mixed With Text



Using letters for numbers, there is the possibility of confusion as to whether a string of letters is a word or a numerical value. Therefore, when numbers are used with text, punctuation marks are added to distinguish their numerical meaning. Single character numbers (numbers less than 10) add the punctuation character geresh after the numeric character. Larger numbers insert the punctuation character gershayim before the last character in the number.

Examples of Numbers with Geresh and Gershayim

This table shows numbers written in hebrew with the geresh and gershayim punctuations marks, as they would be if the numbers were embedded in text.

1-10	א'	ב'	ג'	ד'	ה'	ו'	ז'	ח'	ט'	י'
11-20	יא"	יב"	יג"	יד"	טו"	טז"	יז"	יח"	יט"	כ"

It may be difficult to distinguish a number embedded in text (and therefore followed by geresh) that is less than 10, from several thousand of the same amount (e.g. 5 versus 5,000). They are both written as a single letter followed by geresh. In these situations, the hebrew word for thousand may be written out.

Hebrew Calendar

The year 2004 in the Gregorian calendar is (for most of the year) the year 5764 in the Hebrew calendar. The 5000 is generally dropped on calendars and so the year is written as 764 or תשסד. The year 2005 is written 765 or תשסה. This form of representation for years is also used for [copyright dates](#).

Note: The Hebrew calendar year begins on Rosh Hashanah which generally occurs during the month of September or October. Since the Hebrew calendar does not begin on January 1 nor end on December 31, the Hebrew year will span two Gregorian years. (Or conversely, the Gregorian year will span two Hebrew calendar years.) For example, the year 2004 will span the Hebrew calendar years 5764-5765. The year 5764 began on the eve of September 26, 2003 and ends on September 14, 2004. On September 15, 2004 the year 5765 begins.