

Simplified Hebrew

Grammar

By

Justin T. Alfred

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <u>Introduction</u> | 1-3 |
| <u>Section One</u> | 3-6 |
| Alphabet | 3-4 |
| Cursive Writing | 4-6 |
| <u>Section Two</u> | 7-27 |
| Word Formation | 7 |
| Vowel Signs | 8 |
| Letters & Vowels | 8-23 |
| Sewa | 24 |
| Gender & Number In Hebrew Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, & Participles | 25-26 |
| The Definite Article | 26 |
| The ׀ Conjunction | 27 |
| The Inseparable Prepositions | 27 |
| <u>Section Three</u> | 28-42 |
| Verb Tenses | 24 |
| Perfect Tense | 29-34 |
| Imperfect Tense | 34-37 |
| Participles | 38-40 |
| Infinitives | 40-41 |
| Imperatives, Cohortatives, Emphatic Imperatives, Jussives, & Negative Prohibitions | 42 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <u>Section Four</u> | 42-44 |
| Use of Interlinear, Analytical & Hebrew-English Lexicon | 42-44 |
| <u>Section Five</u> | 45-47 |
| Practical Exegesis | 45-47 |
| <u>Conclusion</u> | 48-50 |

Simplified Hebrew Grammar Introduction

This course is designed to give busy pastors and lay people who want to learn the biblical languages an opportunity to do so without being overwhelmed with the rigors of having to learn the entire grammars of Greek and Hebrew. Most people, therefore, simply want to have a working knowledge of the biblical languages rather than trying to be a scholar in order to attain such knowledge.

Thus, after having taught the biblical languages courses for ten years at Fuller Theological Seminary's Extension School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the Lord began to impress upon me through a series of events that there was a great need in the body of Christ that wasn't being met; that is, the need to make the acquisition of a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew available to the masses who want such knowledge, but who do not have the time, giftedness, nor finances to spend on learning the minutiae of the grammars of each language.

During my years of teaching, I noticed that my Greek courses would usually have about a 50% attrition rate, and the Hebrew courses would average around 75%. I know that when I was in seminary there would always be people who would drop the language courses. Many of those who did so would go for degrees that didn't require any language proficiency, or they would pursue degrees that required a bare minimum simply for the sake of stating on one's transcript that they had taken Greek and Hebrew. However, such courses as the latter didn't really give the student anything as far as an ability to practically use the language; in fact, most of the students who took such courses forgot what little they learned soon after graduating! Thus, the idea behind requiring students to take the biblical languages was circumvented for the sake of merely getting a degree. That in turn brings into question the real purpose and motivation for a seminary education which is SUPPOSED TO BE FOR THE TRAINING AND EQUIPPING OF MEN AND WOMEN FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY!

Consequently, this course will require that the student read, study, and memorize; there is NO COURSE DESIGNED THAT CAN DO THOSE THINGS FOR A STUDENT, NOR THAT CAN CIRCUMVENT THE WORK THAT IS NECESSARY FOR ONE TO TRULY LEARN! Nonetheless, this course is designed to help facilitate someone receiving a good, solid, accurate,

working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew without spending the traditional two years of intense grammatical study that is the minimum time necessary to gain a beginning level of understanding for a more scholarly pursuit of the languages.

Approach To This Study

The first section of this course will be aimed at learning the Hebrew letters themselves, their pronunciation, the English equivalent, and how to write the Hebrew letters in cursive form.

The second section will be to put the Hebrew letters and the vowel signs together to form words and learn to pronounce them correctly (e.g., דָּבָר – *dābār* = word – Hebrew is read for right to left). This will be an exciting stage as you actually begin to recognize the Hebrew letters and vowel signs and their proper pronunciation when placed together to form words.

The third section will be learning the various verb tenses, voices, and moods and just what they mean. This probably will be the most exciting, as well as the hardest, in that you will have to begin to change your thought pattern from an English speaker and thinker to a Hebrew speaker and thinker.

The fourth section will be the light at the end of the tunnel as you begin to learn how to go from the *Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament*, to Davidson's *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, and then to Gesenius' *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* in discovering not only the definition of a word, but also how to understand its usage and application in a particular passage. To know the definition of a Hebrew word is important and beneficial, but to know how it is used and to be interpreted in a passage is the real key to using and understanding Hebrew, and that is what you will learn to do!

The fifth and final section will be the practical exegesis of various passages in the Hebrew Old Testament. In this section you will have repeated opportunity to research and investigate passages of interest to you. You may in turn write an exegesis paper that can be in the form of a sermon message, a Bible study, or a paper or booklet in

which you are writing on a topic to be disseminated for either evangelistic purposes, or for ministry to the body as a whole; the choice will be yours.

Section One The Hebrew Alphabet

| <u>Form</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Transliteration</u> |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| א | ʿAlep | ʿ |
| ב, בּ | Beṭ | b, <u>b</u> (bh/v) |
| ג, גּ | Gimel | g, <u>g</u> (gh) |
| ד, דּ | Dalet | d, <u>d</u> (dh) |
| ה | He | h |
| ו | Waw/Vav | w/v |
| ז | Zayin | z |
| ח | Heṭ | ḥ (ch-German) |
| ט | Teṭ | ṭ |
| י | Yod | y |
| כ, כּ, ך * | Kap | k, <u>k</u> , (ch-") |
| ל | Lamed | l |
| מ, ם * | Mem | m |
| נ, ן * | Nun | n |
| ס | Samek | s |
| ע | ʿAyin | ʿ |
| פ, פּ, ף * | Pe | p, <u>p</u> , (ph- <u>Phil</u>) |
| צ, ץ * | Sade | ṣ (p <u>its</u>) |
| ק | Qop | q |
| ר | Res | r |
| ש, שׁ | Sin, Shin | ś, š (sh- <u>shut</u>) |
| ת, תּ | Taw | t, <u>t</u> (th- <u>thump</u>) |

You will notice in the Hebrew alphabet that there are five letters with an asterisk (*) beside them (כ, כּ, ך * [k]; מ, ם * [m]; נ, ן * [n]; פ, פּ, ף * [p]; צ, ץ * [ṣ]), and the asterisk is indicating the five, final forms of those letters; i.e., this is how that letter will appear when it is the final letter of a word. Otherwise, it will appear as the initial form when it is at the beginning or middle of a word (e.g., the נ [n] in נָבִיא [nābīʾ] is at the beginning of the word, but in צִאן

[šō'n], נ [n] is the final letter of the word and takes the final form, ן [n], and this will be the case with the other four letters that also have a final form). In addition, you will also notice that there are six letters that have a form with a dot in the middle of the word, as well as a form without the dot. Those letters are: ב, ב (b); ג, ג (g); ד, ד (d); כ, כ, ך (k); פ, פ, ף (p); ת, ת (t). The letter with the dot in the middle is called a non-spirantized letter, and the letter without the dot is called a spirantized letter. The dot itself is called a *daghesh lene*, and we will discuss this further below, but suffice it to say that all of these forms, dots, etc., are important for you to know in learning the proper pronunciation of the letters.

Cursive Writing

In the following exercise, I want you to begin practicing writing the Hebrew letters in cursive script; i.e., the script you will use in your own handwriting. The Hebrew cursive will be similar to the printed form, but it will also differ in the same way as English print differs from our cursive handwriting in English. After you write each Hebrew letter, I then want you to transliterate that letter into English (e.g., א-'; ב-b; ג-g; etc.), and I want you to do this all the way across the line. In addition, I have given you both the non-spirantized and spirantized form of six Hebrew letters mentioned above that have the dot (i.e., the *daghesh lene*). And again, as stated above, the non-spirantized form is the form with the dot in the letter, and the spirantized form does not have the dot. Therefore, I want you to transliterate those letters in the following manner: ב-b; ב-b(v); ג-g; ג-g(gh); ד-d; ד-d(dh); כ-k; כ-k(ch); ך (when this is the final letter in a word, it is written with these two dots in it, and it is pronounced as a spirant -ch); פ-p; פ-p(ph); ת-t; ת-t(th). As you will note, the spirantized, transliterated forms of these letters (i.e., the ones without the dots) have an English letter with a line under it (e.g., ת-t), and that is the way you write that letter when you are transliterating from Hebrew into

English, and then beside that English letter with the line under it, you will find an English, phonetical pronunciation of that letter, as with t (t h) . The “th” is the way the t is actually pronounced in English. For example, in Hebrew, the word for house is בַּיִת (bayit), I wrote the spirantized form of ת in English as “t,” and the English, phonetic pronunciation of “t” is “th.” In the exercise below, write the formal English transliterated form, and then in parenthesis, write the phonetic pronunciation of that letter, as with ת-t (t h) .

| | |
|---------|-------|
| א (') | _____ |
| ב | _____ |
| ג | _____ |
| ד | _____ |
| ה | _____ |
| ו | _____ |
| ז | _____ |
| ח | _____ |
| ט | _____ |
| י | _____ |
| כ | _____ |

ט _____

ת _____

י _____

כ _____

ל _____

מ _____

נ _____

ס _____

ע (') _____

פ _____

צ _____

ק _____

ג _____

ד _____

ה _____

ו _____

ז _____

ח _____

ט _____

ת _____

Section Two Word Formation

Hebrew, unlike Greek, has no letters that remotely compare to any English letters. Thus, it is a bit more difficult at first to associate the letters with the correct sound in word formations. In addition, unlike Greek as well, Hebrew does not have any vowel letters (except for ׀, ׀ and ׀ which help to form vowel sounds with certain vowel marks). Thus, from about the beginning of the seventh century AD toward the end of the tenth century AD, a major effort was undertaken to produce what is today called the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible as the following quote explains:

Masoretic (maz-uh-ret'ik) **Text**, the standard or traditional Hebrew text of the Bible, as preserved by the Masoretes, a group of rabbinic scholars active ca. 600–950 CE. There is, however, more than one version of the Masoretic Text. First, there were three major groups of Masoretes: Palestinian, Babylonian, and Tiberian. Of these, Tiberian Masoretes gained prominence, so the Tiberian version of the Hebrew Bible is usually associated with what is called the Masoretic Text today. Beyond this, however, the Tiberian Masoretes differed on minor matters and produced a number of slightly different texts. Those produced by the family of Aaron ben Asher came to be regarded as the best, and these are preserved today in two frequently consulted manuscripts: the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex. Both of these contain, not only the text of the Bible written out in Hebrew consonants, but also vowels and accent signs determined to be appropriate by the Masoretes. Further, both the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex contain numerous Masorah, numbers and abbreviations that occur as notes in the margins and other key points in the text. The Masoretic Text of the Bible (as preserved especially in the Leningrad Codex) forms the primary basis for most English Bible translations, including the NRSV, although manuscripts of the LXX are also consulted and sometimes given preference when the reading preserved there is believed to represent a more ancient tradition.¹

As stated above, this laborious task was completed in the tenth century, and we are still using it today! Therefore, not only do you have to learn the proper phonetic sound of the letters, but you also have to learn the proper pronunciation of those letters combined with the various vowel signs. However, as you memorize and practice both the phonetic pronunciation of the Hebrew letters, as well as the vowel signs and their corresponding sounds that were placed within, underneath, and around the Hebrew letters by the Masoretes, you will in turn be able to pronounce the Hebrew of the Masoretic text.

¹ Bruce M. Metzger, "Masoretic Text," in *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (revised & updated), 2011.

Vowel Signs

There are five short and seven long Hebrew vowels:

| <u>Short</u> | <u>Long</u> |
|--|--|
| אַ Pathah - a as in b <u>a</u> d | *אָ Qames - ā as in f <u>ā</u> ther |
| ֶ Seghol - e as in l <u>e</u> d | ֶ֫ Sere - ē as in ob <u>ē</u> y |
| ִ Hireq - i as in h <u>i</u> d | ִ֫ Sere-yod - ê as in ob <u>ê</u> y |
| ֹ Qibbus - u as in p <u>u</u> ll | ֹ֫ Hireq-yod - î as in Krist <u>î</u> ne |
| *אָ Qames-Hatuph - o as in m <u>o</u> st | בּוֹ - Sureq - û as in fr <u>û</u> it |
| | בּוֹ - Full-Holem - ô as in t <u>ô</u> e |
| | בּוֹ - Defective-Holem - ȫ in t <u>ȫ</u> e |

* These two signs are pronounced differently under certain, grammatical conditions. However, for our purposes at this point, you will only be given the long “fāther” form of pronunciation.

Letters & Vowels

We will now begin to put the vowel signs together with the letters to form words. This will be both challenging and fun as you begin to form actual Hebrew words and pronounce them. However, you must put forth the proper effort in order to do this correctly, or else you will have considerable trouble from this point forward; in other words, this is a foundational step, which if you don't master, you will be very frustrated and ineffective in your attempt to accurately and adequately use this material.

In Exercise One, I have written the Hebrew word with the appropriate vowel signs, and next to it I have written its transliterated form in *italics*. It is important that you too learn to properly write and identify the appropriate transliterated form, or else you will mistake what is actually written. After my written form, I want you in turn to copy exactly what I have written, both the Hebrew as well as the transliteration, to the end of the line.

In Exercise Two, I have only written the Hebrew word with the appropriate vowel signs, and you will in turn follow that with the correct transliterated form. At the end of Exercise One I have written the correct answers. But please, for your own sake, don't cheat by looking at the answers before you write the transliterated form; you will only hurt yourself in your learning process.

Exercise Three is the same in reverse form from Exercise Two in that I have given you the transliterated form, and your job is to write the correct Hebrew word, including the correct vowel signs and all other necessary marks. Here too, the correct answers are at the end of the exercise, but don't look at them until you have done your work.

Let us begin!

Exercise One

אֲבֵד - 'ōbēd _____

עֵבֶן - 'eben _____

אֲדֹן - 'ādōn _____

עַיִן - 'ayin _____

בָּטַח - bāṭaḥ _____

בָּקָר - bāqar _____

בָּשָׂר - bāśār _____

גָּדַל - gādal _____

גָּמַל - gāmal _____

דָּוִד - Dāvid _____

דֶּרֶךְ - derek _____

הוא - hû' _____

היכל - hêkāl _____

זהב - zāhāb _____

זרע - zera' _____

חדש - hōdeš _____

חכם - hākām _____

חלם - hālam _____

חסד - hesed _____

חשך - hōšek _____

יד - yād _____

יוסף - Yôsēp _____

ילד - yeled _____

יפה - yāpeh _____

ישב - yāšab _____

כבוד - kābēd _____

כהן - kōhēn _____

כסף - kesep _____

לוט - Lōt _____

לבן - Lebēn _____

מות - mût _____

מַיִם - mayim _____

מֶלֶךְ - melek _____

מָקוֹם - māqôm _____

מֹשֶׁה - Mōšeh _____

נָהָר - nāhār _____

נָחָשׁ - nāḥāš _____

נָטַע - nāṭa' _____

סוּס - sūs _____

סִינַי - sînay _____

סֵפֶר - seper _____

עֵדֶן - 'ēden _____

עִיר - 'îr _____

עֵצָה * - 'ēṣâ _____

עֶבֶר - 'eber _____

פֶּה - peh _____

פֶּסַח - pesah _____

פָּרָה * - pārâ _____

צֵאן - šō'n _____

צֶדֶק - ṣedeq _____

קֶבֶר - qeber _____

קדוֹשׁ - qāḏôš _____

קוֹל - qôl _____

קָטוֹן - qātōn _____

רֹאשׁ - rō's _____

רֶגֶל - regel _____

רוּחַ - rūah _____

רַחֵל - Rāḥēl _____

רַעֲב - rā'ēb _____

* שָׂרָה - sārā _____

שְׂאוּל - šā'ûl _____

שַׁבָּת - šabbāt _____

שָׁהַר - šahar _____

שָׁלוֹם - šālôm _____

שָׁמַיִם - šāmayim _____

שֶׁמֶשׁ - šemeš _____

* שָׁנָה - šānā _____

* שָׂטָה - šātā _____

תָּוֶק - tāvek _____

* תּוֹרָה - tôrā _____

* The words that contain the asterisk beside them are unique in that the final form of הַ is transliterated as â. Thus, in the word עֵצָה, it is written 'ēṣâ, with the â indicating a final הַ.

When one of the בִּגְדִּיּוֹת letters occurs at the beginning of a syllable, either at the beginning or in the middle of a word, then that letter has the *daghes lene*, provided that there is no vowel immediately before the letter. On the other hand, if a בִּגְדִּיּוֹת does not begin a syllable, or if a vowel is immediately preceding the letter, then the *daghes lene* is absent, and the letter is pronounced as a spirant. However, there are times when another type of *daghes* may appear in any of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, except the אֶחָד letters, and it is called the *daghes forte*. When the *daghes forte* appears in a letter, that letter is doubled, as in שַׁבָּת (šabbāt), with the vowel coming after the second letter of the doubling. In some cases you will also have a doubled letter when it is combined with another word. For example, when a preposition such as מִן (min), which means “from,” is attached to a word, the ך (n) will drop off. Thus, when מִן is attached to the Hebrew idiom, “presence,” you have the form מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, which is transliterated, millipnê, with the ל (l) doubled containing the *daghes forte*. Another example is with the phrase, “from there,” which in Hebrew is written מִשָּׁם (miššām), where the ש (š) has the *daghes forte* and is doubled.

Exercise Two

1. אָבב _____
2. אָבה _____
3. אָביב _____
4. אַוּלם _____
5. פּראָ _____
6. בּוּדָּ _____
7. בּינָה _____
8. בּרִית _____
9. גָּלָב _____
10. גָּרֶשׁ _____
11. דְּבָה _____
12. דּוֹדָוָהוּ _____
13. הָבֵל _____
14. הַגִּיוֹן _____
15. זָבֵל _____
16. זָדוֹן _____
17. הוֹבָה _____
18. חָטָה _____
19. חָרָף _____

20. טָלָה _____
21. טָעַן _____
22. יוֹם _____
23. יוֹבֵל _____
24. בְּמֶר _____
25. בְּשָׁלוֹן _____
26. לַחֵץ _____
27. מִיכָאֵל _____
28. נָגִיד _____
29. נָשָׂא _____
30. סִיעָא _____
31. סָלָא _____
32. עוֹלָם _____
33. עֲתִיד _____
34. פִּישׁוֹן _____
35. פָּרֵשׁ _____
36. צָדִיק _____
37. צָנוּף _____
38. קֹדֶשׁ _____
39. קוֹם _____

40. קָרִים _____
41. קָרִיא _____
42. רִבִּץ _____
43. רוּר _____
44. רִיקָם _____
45. רָשַׁע _____
46. שָׁדָה _____
47. שׁוּב _____
48. שָׁכַל _____
49. תּוֹצְאוֹת _____
50. תַּפֵּשׁ _____

Answers to Exercise Two

1. 'ābab
2. 'ābâ
3. 'ābîb
4. 'ûlām
5. bārā'
6. būk
7. bînâ
8. bōrît
9. gālab
10. gāraš
11. dibbâ
12. Dôdāvāhû
13. hebel
14. higgāyôn
15. zābal
16. zādôn
17. hôbâ
18. ḥattâ
19. ḥōrep
20. ṭāleh
21. ṭā'an
22. yôm
23. yûbal
24. kōmer
25. kiššālôn
26. lāḥaṣ
27. Mîkā'ēl
28. nāgîd
29. nāsā'
30. sî'ā'
31. sālā'
32. 'ôlām
33. 'ātîd
34. pîšôn
35. pāraś
36. šādîq
37. šānôp
38. qōdeš

- 39. qûm
- 40. qādîm
- 41. qārî'
- 42. rābaş
- 43. rûr
- 44. rêqām
- 45. reşa'
- 46. şādeh
- 47. şûb
- 48. şākōl
- 49. tōşā'ôt
- 50. tāpaś

Exercise Three

You will now work backwards from a transliterated form to the actual Hebrew. This practice will familiarize you with the Hebrew as you now have to begin thinking in Hebrew, not just English.

1. 'āman _____
2. 'āpēs _____
3. bāgad _____
4. bā'al _____
5. gôlan _____
6. gāraš _____
7. dāhar _____
8. dārôm _____
9. hêdād _____
10. hāmôn _____
11. zûlâ _____
12. zeret _____
13. hiûb _____
14. ḥômâ _____
15. ṭāmēn _____
16. ṭārap _____
17. yāgā _____
18. yāmîn _____
19. kābûl _____

20. kāsā _____
21. lābēš _____
22. lā‘an _____
23. mazzārôt _____
24. mārēšā _____
25. nābî’ _____
26. nāqar _____
27. sūgar _____
28. sātām _____
29. ‘ābûr _____
30. ‘ôlêlôt _____
31. pallāsiût _____
32. pēšet _____
33. šûrîšaddāy _____
34. šāra‘at _____
35. qāmôn _____
36. qîşşu‘â _____
37. rāhîţ _____
38. raqqāḥâ _____
39. šākîr _____
40. šārōq _____
41. šābîs _____
42. šuppîm _____

43. kîssē' _____
44. yô'ē'lâ _____
45. lubîm _____
46. mō'ēšâ _____
47. nişşâ _____
48. 'ēnôtām _____
49. pu'â _____
50. qîbbuṣ _____

Answers to Exercise Three

1. אָמֶן
2. אָפֶס
3. בְּנֵד
4. בְּעֵל
5. גּוֹלָן
6. גֶּרֶשׁ
7. דְּהֵר
8. דֶּרוֹם
9. הִידֵד
10. הֶמּוֹן
11. זוּלָה
12. זָרֵת
13. חוּב
14. חוּמָה
15. טָמֶן
16. טָרֶף
17. יָנָה
18. יָמִין
19. כְּבוֹל
20. כֶּסֶה
21. לָבֶשׁ
22. לָעַן
23. מְזֻרוֹת
24. מְרֻשָּׁה
25. נָבִיא
26. נָקַר
27. סוּגֵר
28. סָתֵם
29. עֵבוֹר
30. עוֹלָלוֹת
31. פְּלָצוֹת
32. פֶּשֶׁת
33. צוּרֵי־שֶׁדִי
34. צָרַעַת
35. קֶמּוֹן
36. קִיצָאָה
37. רְהִיט
38. רִקְתָּה

- 39. שָׁבִיר
- 40. שָׁרֵק
- 41. שָׁבִיס
- 42. שָׁפִים
- 43. בִּיסָא
- 44. יוֹעֵאֲלָה
- 45. לָבִים
- 46. מֵאֲשָׁה
- 47. נָצָה
- 48. עֲנוּתָם
- 49. פָּעָה
- 50. קִיבֵּץ

Sewa

The *Sewa* is a sign under a letter indicating that it either has no vowel, or that the vowel sign is an abbreviated one. There are two types: the silent and vocal *sewa* and the composite *sewas*.

Silent and Vocal Sewas

The silent *sewa* consists of two dots under a letter indicating that that letter ends a syllable and thus there is no vowel sound attributed to it other than its phonetic value (which in the case of the ו, ה, י, ע, and א there is no phonetic value/sound). Thus, in the word נִפְתּוּלִים (*naptûlîm*) all you hear under the פ is the *ph* sound. The *silent sewa* will be preceded by one of the short vowels on page 7.

The *vocal sewa* is the same two dots under a letter that either begins a syllable, or is preceded by one of the long vowels listed on page 7. The sound associated with it is a short “e” sound. Thus, in the word סְנֵאָה (*s^enā’ā*) you simply pronounce the ס (s) with a short “e.”

Composite Sewas

The *composite sewas* are shortened vowel sounds; i.e., they are vowels, but when pronounced, they are done so with a quick, abbreviated sound:

1. Hateph-Patah - פְּ (חֲסֵדִים - *h^äsāḏîm*)
2. Hateph-Seghol - פֿ (אֱלֹהִים - *’ēlōhîm*)
3. Hateph-Qames - פֿ (בִּקְגָרִים - *biq^ögārîm*)

Gender & Number In Hebrew Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, & Participles

In Hebrew, you have a masculine and feminine gender in nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and participles. In English, we too have masculine and feminine pronouns (e.g., “he” and “she”), and although we do not have a specifically designated neuter gender, we often times refer to something as “it” or “that” in our designations of objects, which in some languages such as Greek, Latin, and German, you do have what is called a neuter gender, and whatever gender the noun may be in one of those three languages, the adjective (including the participle when used adjectively) must also correspond with the noun it is modifying in the same gender. The same is true for Hebrew, with the difference being that Hebrew does not have a neuter gender, which is true of all Semitic languages. In addition, that which Semitic languages have that Latin and German do not have is a masculine and feminine form for regular verb forms in the second and third persons, singular and plural.

The first list below contains the primary plural endings for masculine and feminine nouns, adjectives, and participles. However, with the masculine and feminine singular endings, the very best way to unequivocally identify the gender of a noun, adjective, or participle is to look it up in either the *Analytical Lexicon*, or the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*. On the other hand, there are five identifying marks for a singular feminine noun, adjective, or participle that will be helpful, and those identifying, feminine marks are in the second list.

First List:

Masculine Plural – םִי (îm) – However, there are times that a feminine noun will take the masculine plural (e.g., נָשִׁים [nāšîm] – “women”). The masculine plural also has what is called a “construct form,” which occurs when the plural, masculine noun is attached to another noun, describing the plural number of whatever is being talked about. Thus, when you read in Genesis 13:13 the following, “and the men of Sodom were very wicked and sinners against the Lord,” the phrase “men of” is in the construct form, and consequently the written form is אֲנָשֵׁי (’anšê), versus the normal plural of “men,” which is אֲנָשִׁים (’ānāšîm).

Feminine Plural – םֹת (*ôth*) – However, some nouns have both masculine and feminine plural endings (e.g., “generation” is a masculine noun, but it has both masculine and feminine, plural endings – דֹּר [dôr], דֹּרִים [dôrîm] and דֹּרֹת [dôrôth]).

Second List:

- (1) Female individuals and animals are feminine nouns.
- (2) Typically, nouns ending in the singular form with ךְּ are feminine nouns.
- (3) Some nouns that are masculine, but also have a female counterpart, are made feminine by appending the ךְּ to it (e.g., מֶלֶךְ [melek] – “king,” and מַלְכָּה [malkâ] – “queen”).
- (4) Nouns ending in the singular with ת are generally feminine (e.g., אֱמֶת [emeth] – “truth”).
- (5) Nouns that refer to those parts of our body that are in pairs are typically feminine (e.g., אוֹז [’ôzen] – “ear” is a feminine noun, and its plural form, which indicates a dual form – that is, two of each – is אוֹזְנַיִם [’oznayim], which is the typical, masculine, plural form).

The Definite Article

There is no indefinite article in Hebrew like we have in English, which is the “a” and the “an.” A noun by itself is typically translated, based on the context of the passage, with the English indefinite article “a” or “an.” The definite article in Hebrew, which is “the,” is written as הַ (*ha*), and the first letter of the word it is attached to contains what is called a Dagesh Forte in it, which is a dot in the middle of the word, such as the phrase, “the king,” is written in Hebrew as הַמֶּלֶךְ (*hamelek*). There are other variations of the definite article with what are called guttural letters (e.g., אֶהְיֶה and also הֵן), but for your translation purposes, this is the primary information about the article that is important for you to know.

The ו Conjunction

This is called the “waw” or “vav” conjunction, depending upon the way you pronounce the letter (e.g., when I took Hebrew, the ו was called the “waw,” but today in more recent, Hebrew grammars, it is called the “vav.” However, regardless of how you pronounce it, it functions as the Hebrew conjunction, and its primary translation is “and,” but there are instances where it is translated as “but” (e.g., “But (ו) a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground” – Genesis 2:6).

The Inseparable Prepositions

There are three prepositions in Hebrew that are always attached to the word they are modifying, and that is why they are called “inseparable.” These three prepositions, with their primary meanings, in alphabetical order are: ב – “in, by, with”; כ – “as, like, according to”; ל – “to, for, at.” Now all of these prepositions have other translations as well (e.g., “among & before” for ב; “thus & after” for כ; “into & concerning” for ל, and many others for all three), but the first ones listed are the ones they are primarily identified with.

Section Three Verb Tenses

You are now going to be entering an extremely exciting phase of this study as you begin to learn the verb tenses, voices and moods. This is what might be called the "guts" of biblical Hebrew in that this is what will enable you to understand what is actually being said in the Hebrew text.

We will start off by looking at the seven, main verb tenses (I say main because there are some others that we will also include later):

| | | | |
|----|-----------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Kal (Qal) | Simple Active | "He shot" |
| 2. | Niphal | Simple Passive and Reflexive | "He was shot" "He shot himself" |
| 3. | Piel | Intensive Active/Causative | "He <i>really</i> shot" |
| 4. | Pual | Intensive Passive | "He was <i>really</i> shot" |
| 5. | Hiphil | Causative Active | "He <i>caused</i> to be shot" |
| 6. | Hophal | Causative Passive | "He was <i>caused</i> to be shot" |
| 7. | Hithpael | Reflexive | "He shot himself" |

These are the seven, main verb tenses, but there are also some more that are offshoots of the above with an intensive and reflexive emphasis. And while these are far less frequent than the above (and there are other ***Hith*** forms even less frequent), you will encounter them, and, therefore, you need to know what they are.

| | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Polel | Intensive Active | "He <i>really</i> shot" |
| 2. | Pilel | Intensive Active | "He <i>really</i> shot" |
| 3. | Polal | Intensive Passive | "He was <i>really</i> shot" |
| 4. | Polpal | Intensive Passive | "He was <i>really</i> shot" |
| 5. | Hithpolel | Reflexive | "He shot himself" |
| 6. | Hithpalel | Reflexive | "He shot himself" |
| 7. | Hithpaal | Causative Passive/Reflexive | "He was <i>caused</i> to be shot" |

Perfect Tense

The perfect tense in the Hebrew verb is translated in much the same way we translate the "past tense" in English. However, in Hebrew there really is no "past tense," only action that is regarded as completed. Thus, the Hebrew perfect tense indicates action that is completed in a variety of forms.

1. Simple Perfects

The simple perfect is the most common use of the perfect, and it simply states that an act is completed (in English past time), or it may be stated with a present tense or future usage. If stated in the present tense, it is usually describing a characteristic of a life style within a particular segment of time. However, even in the present tense usage, the main idea of completion is still inherent in its meaning by the person/persons performing the act, etc., only the act is seen as taking place in the present time of the narration, versus at some time in the past. If it is given a future tense translation, it is normally for the purpose of emphasizing "assurance" of the action being described by the verb:

- (a) Past Time - a simple act that belongs to a specific time period considered in the past:
 - 1. "In the beginning God בָּרָא (*bārā*)-created-the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).
 - 2. "Noah הִתְהַלֵּךְ (*hiḥallek*)-walked-with God" (Gen. 6:9).
- (b) Present Time - in the use of the present tense, we usually see actions that are considered characteristic of a person or life style of a particular time:
 - 1. "Everything, O king, Araunah נָתַן (*nātan*) -gives- to the king" (II Sam. 24:23). In this passage, David is wanting to purchase Araunah's "threshing floor . . . in order that the plague may be held back from the people" (II Samuel 24:21). David had taken a census of the people, against God's will, and God gave him a choice of three consequences for his sin, and David chose the "three days pestilence in your land" (II Samuel 24:13). Thus, David is now wanting to purchase Araunah's

threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord, but Araunah is insisting that David simply take the “threshing floor” as a gift to him, and so he says, “Everything, O king, Araunah has given (נָתַן - *nātan*) to the king,” which means from Araunah’s perspective, it is a completed act in the sense that all he owns has already been made available to the king, and so, his “threshing floor” “is given” at this very moment to the king, and was so before he even asked. The important thing to remember when attempting to understand the translation of a perfect tense verb into a present time frame is the context in which it is written.

2. “Even the stork in the sky יָדָעָהּ (*yād^eâ*) - knows-her seasons,... but my people do not יָדְעוּ (*yād^eû*) - know-the ordinance of the Lord” (Jer. 8:7).

Once again, the idea of “completeness” is inherent in the translation of these two verbs in that the stork innately and instinctively “has known her seasons” from her conception, and thus, she presently “knows” them, but with God’s people, apart from a re-birth experience such as Abraham had (Genesis 15:6), as well as their hearts having been “circumcised by the Spirit” into an eternal relationship with the Lord (Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:28-29), they have never really “known the ordinance of the Lord as a reality in their hearts and lives,” and thus, they “do not know the ordinance of the Lord.” Thus, the idea of “completeness” is set forth in the present reality from Jeremiah’s perspective.

- (c) Future Time – the use of the future tense with the perfect is to express assurance about the action being expressed by the verb. Thus, its use is to emphasize assurance about whatever is being expressed in the sense that the “completeness” of that event is an assured conviction and truth.

1. “Then Leah said, ‘Happy am I! For women אֲשֶׁרֶנִּי (*iššērûnî*)-will call me happy’” (Gen. 30:13). That is, in Leah’s mind, she sees the birth of Zilpah’s second son to Jacob (Zilpah was Leah’s personal maid), she assumes that it is a “completed” act in the mind of other women who will hear in the future of her being more fruitful than Rachel and they “call me happy,” that is, she sees in her mind as an already accomplished fact the respect and esteem she wants to garner from other women.
2. “And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, ‘If you will only please listen to me; נָתַתִּי (*nāṭattî*)-I will give-the price of the field, accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there’” (Gen 23:13). Once again, from Abraham’s perspective, his having given the money to Ephron for the field is an already accomplished fact, and he is stating it as such as the English translation gives it in a future tense, but in Abraham’s mind, it is already a “completed act” on his part.

2. Previous Perfects

The previous perfect in Hebrew is commonly translated with the English auxiliary verbs “had,” or “have.”

(a) Past Time

1. “The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom יָצָר (*yāṣār*) He had formed” (Gen 2:8).
2. “He also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon לָקַח (*lāqah*) had married” (I Kings 7:8).

(b) Present Time

1. “Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They עֲזָבוּ (‘āẕāḥū) -have abandoned-the Lord (and are presently “abandoning the Lord”), they נִאָצְרוּ (ni’āṣū) have despised-the Holy One of Israel (and are presently “despising the Holy One of Israel”), they נָזְרוּ (nāẕōrū) -have turned away-from Him (and are presently turning away from Him)” (Is. 1:4).
2. “I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You עֲשִׂיתָ (‘āśītā) have shown-to Your servant (and are showing “to Your Servant”)” (Gen. 32:10).

In the above two examples, the English translation gives a past tense translation, but the idea inherent in these verbal constructions is that not only is this something that has characterized past action, it is also a picture of a present reality – thus, what began in the past is continuing in the present.

(c) Future Time

1. “It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the Lord יָצָא (yāṣā) will have gone out-before you to strike the army of the Philistines” (II Sam. 5:24)
2. “But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the Lord נָתַן (nāṭan) -will have given them-into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us” (I Sam. 14:10).

In the above two instances, the “future tense” is stated in the translation, but what is actually being stated is that God has already accomplished what He has promised to do, and we will see that accomplishment in future time. As we look at this grammatically, it is also imperative that we see the spiritual truth contained in this wonderful promise, contained in Hebrew grammar, and that is, with God His promises are “Yea and Amen,” which means, in our sense and perception of the past, present, and future, God’s Word and promises are “completed and done”!

3. Characteristic Perfects

Characteristic perfects are normally always translated in the present tense, and its emphasis is that of a universal truth. That is, whatever is considered to be true of the subject being described may also be considered to be true for us as well.

Isaiah 40:8: “The grass יָבֵשׁ (yābēš)-withers-, the flower נָבֵל (nābēl)-fades-, but the Word of our God stands forever.”

Psalm 1:1: “How blessed is the man who does not הִלֵּךְ (hālāk)-walk-in the counsel of the wicked, Nor עָמַד (‘āmād) -stand-in the path of sinners, Nor יָשָׁב (yāšāb)-sit-in the seat of scoffers!”

Here too, what we see is an eternal truth that began in the past (Isaiah 40:8 with creation, and Psalm 1:1 with the man at some point in his life began his relationship with the Lord and has carried it forward to a present reality of his current lifestyle)

4. Coordinate Perfects

The coordinate perfect is used with the conjunction “and.” What happens is that in a narrative situation (i.e., in a continuing dialog), if the beginning verb of the clause is in the imperfect tense (i.e., future), then the perfect, with the conjunction “and,” will be translated as a future tense, or, if a participle begins the clause, then the perfect will be translated accordingly to compliment the tense of the participle. What this does is continue the narration in the time frame of the governing verb that began the clause, which may be the imperfect (i.e., future), or a participle, in which case the perfect will compliment its usage. Thus, the perfect is “coordinated” with the lead verb.

Genesis 24:7: “He יִשְׁלַח (yishlah) -will send (imperfect) - His angel before you וְלָקַחְתָּ (v^lāqah^{tā})-and you will take (perfect) - a wife for my son from there.” Here the phrase “you will take” is in the perfect, preceded with the conjunction “and,” which has an imperfect as the governing verb of the sentence, “will send.”

Jeremiah 34:2: “. . . הִנְנִי נֹתֵן (hinnî nōtēn) - Behold, I am giving (perfect active participle) - this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, וְשָׂרְפוּהָ (ûś^ʿrāp^ā)- and he will burn it (perfect) - with fire.

Imperfect Tense

The imperfect tense is translated in Hebrew most often as a future tense, but in reality what is actually being expressed is an incomplete condition, which is what the future tense indicates. However, there are other times when future time is not the focus, but rather continuous, unfinished action which may be expressed in past, present and future time.

1. Simple Future Imperfect

This is the most basic use of the imperfect:

- (a) “On your belly תֵּלֵךְ (tēlēk) - you shall go -, and dust תֹּאכַל (tō^ʿkal) - you shall eat-all the days of your life” (Gen. 3:14b).
- (b) “אֶלְמַדְתִּי (ʾā^lamm^ʿdā) -I will teach-transgressors Your ways, and sinners יָשׁוּבוּ (yāšūbū) -will turn back-to You” (Ps. 51:13).

2. Frequentative Imperfect

The frequentative aspect of the imperfect is used to indicate action that is repeated on a continuous basis, or at frequent intervals.

(a) Past Time

- 1. “But a mist יַעֲלֶה (ya^ʿleh)-used to rise (repeatedly in the past)-from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground” (Gen. 2:6).

2. “We who נִמְתִּיק (namtîq) -had sweet (continually in the past)-fellowship together, in the House of God נִהְלַךְ (n^hallēk)-we walked (continually in the past)-in the throng” (Ps. 55:14).

(b) Present Time

1. “The Lord is far from the wicked, but the prayer of the righteous יִשְׁמַע (yishmā)-He hears (continually)” (Prov. 15:29).
2. “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man יִרְאֶה (yir’eh)-looks (continually)-at the eyes, but the Lord יִרְאֶה (yir’eh)-looks (continually)-at the heart’” (I Sam. 16:7).

(c) Future Time

1. “Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and יִהְיֶה (yihyeh) -he will be (continually in future time)-as a mouth for you and תִּהְיֶה (tihyeh) -you will be (continually in the future)-as God to him” (Ex. 4:16).
2. “אֶרְפָּא (’erpā) I will heal (continually/repetitively into the future)-their apostasy, אֶהְבֶּם (’ōhabēm) -I will love them (continually into the future)-freely, For My anger has turned away from them” (Hosea 14:4).

3. Progressive Imperfect

The emphasis of the progressive imperfect is action that is moving forward in a progressive manner toward a goal or a specific idea. However, the difference between the progressive imperfect and the frequentative imperfect, is that the progressive imperfect looks at a single thought or action moving toward a goal as one event, versus repeated movements of the frequentative imperfect toward that same goal. Thus, it sees the one event being described as being in a single, progressive state toward the stated goal.

(a) Past Time

1. “Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, אֶעֱלֶה (‘a^āleh) -I brought up-you from Egypt...” (Judges 2:1).
2. “Then Solomon יָקַח־לֵל (yaqhēl) -assembled-the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, . . .” (I Kings 8:1).

(b) Present Time

1. “Then Achish said to his servants, ‘Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why תָּבִיאוּ (tābîû) -do you bring-him to me?’” (I Sam. 21:14).
2. “Woe to us, for the day declines, for the shadows of the evening יִנָּטוּ (yinnāṭû) -lengthen!” (Jer. 6:4).

(c) Future Time

1. “And the Lord set a definite time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord יַעֲשֶׂה (y‘āśeh) -will do-this thing in the land” (Ex. 9:5).
2. “And behold, אֶשְׁלַח (‘eślah) -I will send-the lad saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ . . .” (I Sam. 20:21).

4. Characteristic Imperfect

On occasion the repetitive or frequentative use of the imperfect makes a statement about something or someone that tends to characterize that subject as belonging to a particular delineation or specific group of entities.

- (a) “Benjamin is a wolf that יִטְרֹף (yitrāp)-tears...” (Gen. 49:27).
- (b) “...and her salvation like a torch that יִבְעַר (yib‘ār)-burns” (Is. 62:1).

5. Consecutive Imperfects

At times progressive imperfects are joined whereby they present a sequential order of events.

(a) Past Time

1. “Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, וַיֹּלֶד (vayôled) -and he beget-sons and daughters” (Gen. 5:4).
2. “Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; וַיֹּאכַל (vayyōkal)-and he ate-וַיִּשְׂתֵּי (vayyēšt)-and he drank-וַיִּקְמוּ (vayyāqom)-and he arose-וַיֵּלֶךְ (vayyēlak) -and he went away...” (Gen. 25:34).

(b) Present Time

“The man shapes iron into a cutting tool and does his work over the coals, and with hammers יַצְרֶהוּ (yīṣṣrēhû) -he fashions it-וַיַּעַלְהוּ (vayyīpālēhû)- and makes it-with his strong arm...” (Is. 44:12).

(c) Future Time

“For a child will be (was) born to us, a son will be (was) given to us; And the government וַתְּהִי (vattēhî)-will be-on His shoulders; And His name וַיִּקְרָא (vayyiqrā) -will be called-Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Is. 9:6).

Participles

The participle functions as a verbal adjective. That is, it has qualities of both. As a verb, present participles may be translated as “is going,” or “the one who is going.” As an adjective, when used in the passive voice, the participle is making a statement about the noun it is modifying. For example, in the phrase, “the blessed man,” the “blessed” is a passive participle and is functioning adjectively: **הָאִישׁ הַבָּרֹךְ** (*hā'îš habbārûk*)-“the man the blessed one.” In the phrase, “blessed are you,” here too, “blessed” functions in an adjectival manner.

As far as the action indicated by participles, it is a continuous and ongoing state of activity they represent. The difference, however, between a participle and a progressive imperfect is that the participle has no boundaries as far as to when the action it is describing either began or ended. It simply makes a statement about the action happening, and it is seen as continuous. Adverbs or other particles of speech within the clause will insert a time element that can modify the action pictured by the participle.

1. Participles used as Adjectives

(a) The attributive use

The participle, when used adjectively, is normally attributing a quality or defining the noun it is modifying in some way. Typically it follows the noun and agrees with it in gender, number and definiteness. By definiteness, I mean that when the noun has a definite article, so too will the participle, and vice versa (except when the noun being modified is the name of a person and has no definite article, but the participle will). Often times when used in this fashion, the participles are translated as a relative clause and are accompanied with who, which, or that.

1. “For thus says the Lord in regard to Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, **הַמֹּלֵךְ** (*hammōlēk*)-who reigned-in place of Josiah his father, . . .” (Jer. 22:11).

2. “Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, ‘Go back to Egypt, for all the men **הַמְּבַקְשִׁים** (*ham ḥ̄baqšîm*)-who were seeking-your life are dead” (Ex. 4:19).

(b) The predicative use

In this use of the participle, it is making a statement about the noun being modified. Normally it is joined to the noun by some form of “to be,” although in many instances no verb is there, but you have to supply it as an understood translation.

1. “**בָּרוּךְ** (*bārûk*)-blessed-are you in the city,...” (Dt. 28:3).
2. “Your land is desolate, your cities *are* **שָׂרָפוֹת** (*ś̄rupôt*)-burned-with fire” (Is. 1:7).

2. Participles used as Verbs

As said earlier, when used as a verb, the action represented by the participle has no limits. That is, they present a continuous action of the verb in use, whether past, present, or future, and only the context, other verbs, adverbial modifiers, or particles of speech can help determine the time frame.

(a) Past Time

1. “Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, and he **יָשָׁב** (*yōšēb*)-was sitting-at the tent door in the heat of the day” (Gen. 18:1).
2. “And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush **בָּעָר** (*bō ‘ēr*)-was burning-with fire, yet the bush was not consumed” (Ex. 3:2).

(b) Present Time

1. “For I the Lord **אֲהֵב** (*’ōhēb*)-love-justice, . . .” (Is. 61:8).
2. “And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood **צֹעֲקִים** (*śō ‘āqîm*) - is crying - to me from the ground” (Gen. 4:10).

(c) Future Time

1. “So I said to you, ‘Let My son go, that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I הָרַגְתִּי (*hōrēg*) - will kill - your son, your first-born” (Ex. 4:23).
2. “For I have told him that I am שֹׁפֵט (*šōpēṭ*) - about to judge - his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, . . .” (I Sam. 3:13).

3. Participles used as Noun

Quite often the participle is used as a noun. For example, the participle שֹׁפֵט (*šōpēṭ*) may be translated as “judging.” However, it may also be used as a substantive (i.e., substitute for a noun) and be simply translated as “judge.” This is a very common use of the participle, and it may have a definite article הַשֹּׁפֵט [*haššōpēṭ*]- “the judge”), or it may stand alone, and it may be masculine or feminine, or singular or plural. Therefore, be ready for this usage as you will see it applied many times in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Infinitives

The infinitive is a verbal noun. On the one hand the infinitive construct is much like our infinitive and expresses “to go,” “to eat,” etc. However, the infinitive absolute may be translated as a gerund with an “-ing” attached to the end of a word.

1. Infinitive Construct

(a) Without prefixes or suffixes

1. “...Behold, I do not know how דַּבֵּר (*dabbēr*) - to speak” (Jer. 1:6).
2. “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man הָיִתָּה (*hēyôṭ*) - to be - alone; . . .’” (Gen. 2:18).

(b) With prepositions

1. When used with בְּ, the translation given may be “when,” or “while”:
בְּהִיְיֹוֹתָ (*bihēyôṭ*) - while he was - in Jericho, that is Joshua” (Josh. 5:13).

2. When used with כִּ (kē) the translation may be “when,” “as,” “just as,” or “as soon as”: “כִּיְדַבֵּר (kēḏabbēr) - when he had spoken - the man of God to the king” (II Kings 7:18).
3. לִ (lē) is the preposition most often prefixed to the infinitive construct, and its translation is “to”: “. . . for it is time לִדְרוֹשׁ (līdrôš)-to seek the Lord...” (Hos. 10:12).
4. When a pronominal suffix is attached to the infinitive construct, it can function as either the subject or object of the infinitive respectively:
 - a. “...בְּשָׁכְבְּךָ (bēšokbēkā – kā being the pronominal suffix, “you”) when you sleep-she will watch over you” (Prov. 6:22).
 - b. “...לְשָׁמְרְךָ (lišmorkā – kā being the pronominal suffix, “you”)-to guard you-in all your ways” (Ps. 91:11).

2. Infinitive Absolutes

(a) As a gerund

“Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, הָרֹג (hārōg)-killing-of cattle and וְשָׁחַט (wēšāḥōṭ) and slaughtering-of sheep...” (Is. 22:13)

(b) For emphasis (in this usage, it stands immediately before the same finite verb of which it is an infinitive)

“And Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am about to die, but God יִפְקֹד יִפְקֹד (pāqōd yipqōd)-will surely take care-of you,...’ (Gen. 50:24).

(c) For duration (in this instance, the infinitive immediately proceeds the finite verb of which it is an infinitive)

“And He said, ‘Go and tell this people; שִׁמְעוּ שְׁמֹעוּ (šim ‘û šāmôa ‘)-keep on listening-but do not perceive,...’” (Is. 6:9).

(d) As a finite verb form (in particular the imperative)

“זָכוֹר (zākôr)-Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8).

Imperatives, Cohortatives, Emphatic Imperatives, Jussives, & Negative Prohibitions

Imperatives are simple positive commands, never prohibitions, and are always used with the second person singular or plural of a verb; cohortatives are used with the first person singular or plural, and a ׀ is attached at the end of the word for emphasis; the emphatic imperative, like the cohortative, has a ׀ attached to the end of the imperative; and jussives are the imperfect form of a verb that, based on the context of the passage, will read, “let me, let him, let her, let us, let them” do something. With regard to a negative prohibition, it will occur with the Hebrew particle לֹא (*lō*), “no or not,” with a normal imperfect, or with a jussive with the particle אַל (*’al*), “not.”

1. Simple Imperative

“כְּבֹדֵם (kabbēd)-Honor-your father and mother,...” (Deut. 5:16)

2. Negative Prohibition

“לֹא תִשְׁמָעַ (lō’ tīšma’)-you will not listen-to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams;...” (Deut. 13:3).

“אַל-תִּסְתֵּר (’al-tastēr) -Do not hide-Your face from me,...” (Ps. 27:9).

Section Four

Use of Interlinear, Analytical, & Hebrew-English Lexicon

In the *Analytical Lexicon*, you will come across a number of delineations that we are now going to explore:

1. Pret. (Pf.) = Past tense (perfect)
2. Fut. (Impf.)= Imperfect tense (translated as though future)
3. Imp. (Imv.) = Imperative (i.e., a command)
4. Part. (Pt.) = Participle
 - a. Act. = Active voice (i.e., the agent is producing the action)
 - b. Pass. = Passive voice (i.e., the agent is being acted upon by someone or something else)
5. Inf. = This is equivalent to the English “to” do something, or it can also express an “-ing” meaning.

- a. abs. = This form of the infinitive can express either emphasis or duration and is usually translated with an “-ing.”
- b. constr. = This form is usually translated with the “to.”
- 6. Noun = Noun
- 7. Masc. = Masculine
- 8. Fem. = Feminine
- 9. Pr. = Proper (usually referring to the name of a person or place)
- 10. Pers. = Person (either singular or plural)
- 11. Constr. (cstr.) = Construct (when used with a noun it simply means the noun has been shortened)
- 12. Sing. = Singular
- 13. Pl. = Plural
- 14. Suff. = Suffix (i.e., an addition to a verb or noun indicating a person or persons [1st pers., 2nd pers., etc.])
- 15. Chald. = Chaldean (this is a reference to the Aramaic parts of the Bible, and we will treat those individually)
- 16. Conv. = Conversive means that the w in front of the word changes it from a fut. to a pret., or vice versa.
- 17. Ap./Apoc. = Apocopated means that a fut. form of the verb has been shortened.

[KEY: Davidson’s Analytical Lexicon (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon)]

There are also some delineations in the *Hebrew-English Lexicon* that we are going to look at that differ from the *Analytical Lexicon*:

- 1. For verbs, the lexical form you find in the *Hebrew-English Lexicon* is the Qal pf., 3rd masc. sing.
- 2. The following are some differences in the identification of verbs between the *Analytical* and the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*:

- a. The pret. in the *Analytical* is written as the pf., in the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*.
(from now on *AL* will stand for *Analytical Lexicon*, and *HEL* will stand for the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*).
- b. In the *HEL*, Qal is the same as Kal in the *AL*.
- c. In the *HEL*, Impf. is the same as Fut. in the *AL*.
- d. In the *HEL*, Inv. is the same as Imp. in the *AL*.
3. In the *HEL*, the words in small, bold print immediately after the Hebrew word give the basic meaning. However, the residual meanings are written in *italics*, and they are found in particular with the different verb forms.
4. In both the *HEL* and the *AL*, if you come across abbreviations that you do not know what they mean, you may simply turn to the front of each book and find them under the section called, *Abbreviations*. And, in turn, if you do not understand the definition of the abbreviation, simply look it up in *Webster's Dictionary*.

Section Five Practical Exegesis

Psalm 23:1-5

- 1) לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר
 of David Psalm
- : אֶחְסֶר לֹא רֹעִי יְהוָה
 I will want not my shepherd The Lord
- 2) יְרֵבִיצֵנִי דֶּשֶׁא בְּנֵאוֹת
 He makes me lie down of grass in pastures
- : יְנַהֲלֵנִי מִנְחֹת עַל-מֵי
 He leads me of resting-places upon/by/towards waters
- 3) יְנַחֲנִי יִשׁוּבֵב נַפְשִׁי
 He guides me He restores my soul
- : שְׁמוֹ לְמַעַן בְּמַעְגְלֵי-צֶדֶק
 His name for the sake of in the paths of righteousness
- 4) צַלְמוֹת בְּגִיאָה כִּי-אֵלֶךְ גַּם
 of darkness in valley I walk - if Even
- עִמָּדִי כִּי-אַתָּה רָע לֹא-אִירָא
 with me you - for evil I will fear – not
- : יְנַחֲמֵנִי הֵמָּה וּמִשְׁעֶנְתְּךָ שִׁבְטְךָ
 they comfort me they and your staff your rod
- 5) צָרָרִי נֶגֶד שֻׁלְחָן לְפָנַי תַּעֲרֹךְ
 of my enemies in the presence a table before me You prepare
- : רוּיָהּ בּוֹסִי רֹאשִׁי בְּשֶׁמֶן דִּשְׁנָתְךָ
 overflows my cup my head with oil You anoint

At this point you want to look up the phrase, “He makes me lie down” in verse 2. You will in turn look this verse up in the *Interlinear Hebrew-English Bible*, and, under “He makes me lie down,” you will see the Hebrew word, יִרְבִּיצְנִי (yarbîṣēnî) You will look this word up in the *Hebrew Analytical Lexicon*, and there you will find the following entry:

יִרְבִּיצְנִי Hiph. fut. 3 pers. sing. masc., suff. 1 pers. sing. רָבַץ

The “Hiph.” stands for the Hiphil verb stem which is the “causative active” (p. 24). The “fut.” stands for the imperfect that is translated with a future meaning (the real implication if the action is either ongoing or not yet completed). The “3 pers. masc.” is referring to either “he, she or it” performing the action, and in this case it is referring to the “Lord” performing the action who is masculine, which is what “masc.” stands for. The “suff.” is referring to the suffix at the end of the verb, and in this case it is the suffix for the “1 pers. sing.,” that is, the first person singular suffix, “me.” The רָבַץ is referring to the root verb, רָבַץ (rābaṣ).

The next step, therefore, is to look up the root verb in the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*. In the *Analytical*, you will not find the root verb with the vowel pointings as I have written above. When you look up רָבַץ in the *Lexicon*, you will find it listed as I have just written it. In turn, you will see the basic meaning written in **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS: “TO LIE DOWN, TO RECLINE.”** Because this is a Hiphil verb, you want to go to the meaning of the Hiphil stem. There you will find the proper translation of the Hiphil stem of רָבַץ (rābaṣ) written in italics: “to make (a flock) to lie down.”

Thus, based on the meaning of the Hiphil stem of the verb, what you have in Ps. 23:2 is a statement of God’s sovereign care of me, “His sheep” in which “He causes me to lie down” when I am not necessarily willing nor wanting to “lie down”! What a powerful statement of God’s love, care, compassion and abounding mercy for “His sheep,” and it is just as true today as it was when David penned this over three thousand years ago.

Let's say that you next want to look up the word that translates the phrase, "of deep darkness," or "shadow of death." You will follow the same procedure as above, the only difference in that this is a noun, not a verb. Thus you will find in the *Interlinear Hebrew-English Bible* the word **צִלְמוֹת** (*šalmāwet*).

You will now once again look up this very word in the *Analytical Hebrew Lexicon*, and there you will find the following entry:

צִלְמוֹת ׀ noun m.s., compnd. of **צִל** & **מוֹת**, see under **צָלַל**

The ׀ indicates that the conjunction, "and," can occur with this word also (you will find this in the beginning of the *Analytical Lexicon* under the **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS** at the bottom of the page). Obviously, "noun" means noun, and "m.s." means masculine singular. The word "compnd." means compound, and it next shows the two Hebrew words that come together to make up this compound word, **צִל** and **מוֹת**. Here too, you see that this noun has as its root the Hebrew verb, **צָלַל**.

In this instance, when you go to the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*, you may look up both the noun as it is written, **צִלְמוֹת** (*šalmāwet*), as well as the verb, **צָלַל** (*šālal*). When you look up the verb, you will find that it gives you three different meanings listed by three Roman numerals: I, II, III. Roman numeral III is the one you are looking for, and its meaning is *to be shaded, dusky*. The next nine nouns are derived from this verb, with **צִלְמוֹת** (*šalmāwet*) being the eighth noun. There you will see that the literal meaning is *shadow of death*, but that the actual poetical meaning ("poet.") is "very thick darkness." Therefore, when you look at this verse, you begin to realize that the type of "very thick darkness" David is referring to is not a literal, physical darkness, but rather, a deep, emotional "darkness" where he cannot see or feel God's presence at all, but he is having to walk by faith in trusting God and the promises of His Word explicitly in whatever difficulty he may find himself.

Conclusion

You have now completed a foundational beginning of the study of biblical Hebrew. In order for this study to be of any use to you, you need to practice using it. My suggestion is that you pick out a verse at least once a week, but preferably two to three times a week to work through, and let it be a verse or verses that are of interest and significance to you as you minister to others, as well as to yourself. Otherwise, if you let this study and effort you have put forth in this beginning grasp of Hebrew lie dormant, then the following old adage will become true in your life, “if you don’t use it, you will lose it!”

One very important thing to keep in mind as you continue your study of Hebrew, or any other biblical/academic discipline, is that just having the knowledge of a particular academic discipline does not make anyone a man or woman of God. That which is the foundation of one becoming a man or woman of God is the brokenness you experience over your sin and your submission to the Lordship of Jesus in your life on a daily basis – that is unequivocally the foundation of your growth in the Lord. Thus, as you get into an in-depth study of the Hebrew text, the Holy Spirit will bring out things to you in connection to the verb tenses, Hebrew grammatical syntax (e.g., the emphatic nature of the infinitive absolute, etc.), the Hebrew verb roots behind Hebrew nouns, the expanded definition of verbs and nouns, and a plethora of other important aspects of Hebrew that are not seen in the English text alone. And this is not limited to the study of Hebrew, but it includes all or your biblical/academic disciplines you have acquired, and through the “mind of Christ” within your life, He will bring His life and Truth through your study into the hearts, minds, and lives of those to whom you are preaching, teaching, and sharing the Gospel with.

One of the most significant biblical passages that deal with God’s life and ministry in and through our lives to others is found in John 3:30: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” In the Greek, this sentence may be read in an amplified, syntactical, practical manner in the following: “He must continually increase, but I must continually choose being decreased.” The last phrase, “but I must continually choose being decreased” comes from the one Greek verb, ἐλαττοῦσθαι (*elattousthai*), which is a present, middle or passive, infinitive, and thus, it may be read as either a middle or passive voice, and in this case, both are correct – that is, as believers in Jesus Christ, our we must “choose” for

our **ψυχή** (*psuchē*), or “inner man,” to die to its narcissistic, self-centered desires, and choose to obey in faith and follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: “And He was saying to *them* all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life (**ψυχή** – *psuchē*) shall lose it, but whoever loses his life (**ψυχή** – *psuchē*) for My sake, he is the one who will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

As we indeed need to continually emphasize to others the fact that we have been brought to a saving faith in Jesus by the grace of God, and that we are moment by moment, and breath by breath being kept by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-10), the very real danger for a believer in Jesus Christ to not walk in the manner described in Luke 9:23-24 above is that it will unequivocally lead a believer to falling into the carnal and narcissistic trap of “self-deification.” This continual, carnal draw upon our minds and thinking of “self-deification” emanates from our own narcissistic, self-centered, and egotistical pursuit of glory and honor before men for the sake of our false sense of identity and worth, whereby we see ourselves as being “greater” than others:

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 "But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. 27 "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. (Luke 22:24-27)

What we see in the above passage is the innate desire of men and women to find their sense of worth and identity by measuring how superior they are to others in their field of endeavor, wherein they find their measure of worth and self-acceptance before others. However, Jesus is saying that such a measure of one’s identity and worth is false and self-destructive, and what we should be pursuing in our mind is a sense of insignificance in our thinking with regard to how we perceive ourselves being viewed by others in their minds for the sake of our own glory and praise. Thus, what we are drawn into through our corrupt, carnal, and narcissistic natures is the desire to see ourselves in our thinking being adulated and honored by men for the sake of our glory and recognition, versus for the sake and glory of Jesus. In the above passage in Luke 22:24-27, Jesus is emphasizing

the fact that He is a “waiter,” not the person at the “head table,” and consequently, this should also be where we find our true identity as a “servant” to others, versus as a “ruler” over others.

On the other hand, God never rewards laziness and slovenliness, but rather we are to do our work with a 150% effort to and before the Lord, versus to and before men: “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve” (Colossians 3:23-24). And once again, we see the Greek word for “inner man,” *ψυχή* (*psuchē*), being used in this passage to describe how we are to do our work. The word “heartily” above in the English translation comes from the Greek construction, *ἐκ ψυχῆς* (*ek psuchēs*), which literally means, “out of the inner man.” Thus, in your academic pursuits and studies of the Biblical Languages, as well as all other academic studies, you should be giving a 150% effort as unto the Lord so that He will use what He is putting into you to feed, shepherd, and care for the “sheep” that He allows you to be the vessel through which He feeds and cares for them. One very important passage to always remember with regard to God’s using you as a shepherd through which He will feed His “sheep” is found in Paul’s writing to the Corinthian Church: “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth” (I Corinthians 3:5-7).

May the Lord bless, strengthen, and encourage you, by the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit, to put Him first in all areas of your lives, including the disciplined and committed study of His Word, as He leads you to consistently use the Hebrew you have learned, in order that He through you will pass on to others the spiritual “gems of truth” you will gain from applying that knowledge to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ!