A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

with CD

Jo Ann Hackett

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

with CD

Jo Ann Hackett

HENDRICKSON PUBLISHERS

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

© 2010 by Hendrickson Publishers, LLC
an imprint of Hendrickson Publishing Group
Hendrickson Publishers, LLC
P. O. Box 3473
Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473
www.hendricksonpublishinggroup.com

ISBN 978-1-59856-028-2

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

Sixth Printing — November 2021

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hackett, Jo Ann.
A basic introduction to Biblical Hebrew, with cd / Jo Ann Hackett.
p. cm.
Text in English and Hebrew (Masoretic text).
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-59856-028-2 (paper binding : alk. paper)
1. Hebrew language—Grammar. 2. Hebrew language—Grammar—Problems, exercises, etc. 3. Bible O.T.—Language, style. I. Title.
PJ4567.3.H33 2010
492.4'82421—dc22 2010001283

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xvii
How to Use This Book xix
Abbreviations xxiii

1. Introductory Matters 1
1.1. Overview 1
1.2. Linguistic setting 1
1.3. Historical development 1
1.4. Written (scribal) development 2
1.5. Exercise for lesson 1 4

2. Consonants א through ה and the Short Vowels 5
2.1. Scope of the lesson 5
2.2. Two systems for pronunciation 5
2.3 The *aleph* 6
2.4. The *bet* 6
2.5. The *gimel* 7
2.6. Short vowels 7
2.7. The *dalet* 7
2.8. The *he* 7
2.9. Exercises for lesson 2 8

3. Consonants ו through י and the Long Vowels 9
3.1. Scope of the lesson 9
3.2. The *vav* 9
3.3. The *zayin* 9
3.4. The *khet* 10
3.5. Long vowels 10
3.6. The *tet* 10
3.7. The *yod* 10

3.8. Vocabulary for lesson 3 11
3.9. Exercises for lesson 3 11

4. Consonants כ through פ and Irreducibly Long Vowels 12
4.1. Scope of the lesson 12
4.2. The *kaph* 12
4.3. The *lamed* 13
4.4. The *mem* 13
4.5. Irreducibly long vowels 13
4.6. The *nun* 14
4.7. The *samekh* 14
4.8. The *ayin* 14
4.9. The *pe* 15
4.10. Vocabulary for lesson 4 15
4.11. Exercises for lesson 4 15

5. Consonants צ through ת and Diphthongs 16
5.1. Scope of the lesson 16
5.2. The *tsade* 16
5.3. The *qoph* 16
5.4. The *resh* 17
5.5. Diphthongs 17
5.6. The *shin*/*sin* 17
5.7. The *tav* 18
5.8. The *beged-kephet* consonants 18
5.9. Vocabulary for lesson 5 19
5.10. Exercises for lesson 5 19

6. The Hebrew Syllable and Reduced Vowels 20
6.1. The scope of the lesson and a caveat 20
6.2. The two Hebrew syllables 20
6.3. The accent 20
6.4. The *dagesh* 21
6.5. Compensatory lengthening 21
6.6. The reduced vowels and *shwa* 21
6.7. Five guidelines for the use of *shwa* 22
6.8. The *hateph*-vowels 23
6.9. Unaccented syllables and the vowels they may contain 24

6.10. The furtive *patakh* 25
6.11. The triconsonantal root in Semitic languages 25
6.12. Exercises for lesson 6 25

7. Independent Personal Pronouns and Adjectives 27
7.1. The independent personal pronouns 27
7.2. Adjectives 28
7.3. Attributive adjectives 28
7.4. Predicate adjectives 29
7.5. The adverb מְאֹד 29
7.6. Vocabulary for lesson 7 29
7.7. Exercises for lesson 7 30

8. Nouns, the Definite Article, and the Conjunction וְ 32
8.1. Nouns generally 32
8.2. Two-syllable nouns with *qamets* in the first syllable 32
8.3. Segholate nouns 33
8.4. Gender of nouns 33
8.5. The definite article 34
8.6. The definite article with initial gutturals and *resh* 34
8.7. The definite article with certain words 35
8.8. Agreement between definite nouns and adjectives 35
8.9. The word 'and' 36
8.10. Vocabulary for lesson 8 37
8.11. Exercises for lesson 8 38

9. Prepositions, the Relative Pronoun, and the "Rule of *Shwa*" 40
9.1. Three kinds of prepositions 40
9.2. Inseparable prepositions and the definite article 41
9.3. Prepositions with pronouns (the paradigm בְּ) 41
9.4. Prepositions with pronouns (the paradigm אֶל־) 42
9.5. The preposition מִן 43
9.6. Another meaning of מִן 44
9.7. The relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר 44
9.8. Another way to construct a sentence 45
9.9. The rule of *shwa* for inseparable prepositions 45
9.10. Vocabulary for lesson 9 45
9.11. Exercises for lesson 9 47

10. The Construct Chain and Demonstrative Adjectives and Pronouns 49
10.1. The construct chain in general 49
10.2. The definiteness or indefiniteness of a construct chain 49
10.3. The regular forms of a noun in the construct state 50
10.4. The forms of certain nouns in the construct state 51
10.5. Position of adjectives modifying members of a construct chain 52
10.6. The demonstrative adjectives and pronouns 52
10.7. Vocabulary for lesson 10 53
10.8. Exercises for lesson 10 54

11. Nouns with Pronominal Suffixes 56
11.1. Possessive pronouns generally 56
11.2. Possessive pronouns on the feminine singular noun 57
11.3. Possessive pronouns and vowel reduction on two-syllable words 57
11.4. Possessive pronouns on plural nouns 58
11.5. Nouns with dual number 59
11.6. Possessive pronouns on segholate nouns 60
11.7. Possessive pronouns on irregular nouns 61
11.8. The two pronunciations of the vowel *qamets* 62
11.9. Vocabulary for lesson 11 63
11.10. Exercises for lesson 11 64

12. The *Qal* Prefix Conjugation, the Imperative, and the Direct Object Marker 66
12.1. The *qal* prefix conjugation's use 66
12.2. The form of the *qal* prefix conjugation 66
12.3. The subject in the form of the *qal* prefix conjugation 67
12.4. Further remarks on the form of the *qal* prefix conjugation 67
12.5. The imperative form 68
12.6. A brief note on the negative imperative form 69
12.7. The verbal sentence in Biblical Hebrew 69
12.8. The definite direct object marker 69
12.9. The negation of the prefix conjugation 70
12.10. Vocabulary for lesson 12 70
12.11. Exercises for lesson 12 72

13. The Prefix Conjugation of Verbs with Variant Patterns; Resumptive Pronouns 74
13.1 Second- and third-guttural verbs 74
13.2. Stative verbs 75
13.3. Other verbs with *patakh* 75
13.4. Third-*aleph* verbs 75
13.5. First-guttural verbs 76
13.6. First-guttural verbs with *patakh* 77
13.7. First-*aleph* verbs 77
13.8. Resumptive pronouns 78
13.9. Vocabularly for lesson 13 79
13.10. Exercises for lesson 13 80

14. Indirect Imperatives, the Pronominal Suffixes on Verbs, and the Particles נָא- and -הֵ 82
14.1. The indirect imperative or volitive forms generally 82
14.2. The cohortative form 82
14.3. The jussive form 83
14.4. The negative imperative forms 84
14.5. The particle נָא־ 84
14.6. Object suffixes on prefix conjugation and imperative forms 84
14.7. The particle -הֵ 85
14.8. Vocabulary for lesson 14 86
14.9. Exercises for lesson 14 87

15. The Consecutive Preterite Verbal Form 89
15.1. The consecutive preterite generally 89
15.2. The retraction of accent in the consecutive preterite form 90
15.3. Other names for the consecutive preterite 90
15.4. An aside: The history of the consecutive preterite form 90
15.5. Where the consecutive preterite may be found and where it will not be found 91
15.6. The lengthening of *patakh* to *qamets* before the 1cs form 92
15.7. Vocabulary for lesson 15 92
15.8. Exercises for lesson 15 93

16. The *Qal* Suffix Conjugation, the *və-qatal* Form, and Its Object Suffixes 95
16.1. The suffix conjugation generally 95
16.2. The meanings of the suffix conjugation 95
16.3. The form of the suffix conjugation 95
16.4. The negation of the suffix conjugation 96
16.5. Examples of translations of the suffix conjugation 97
16.6. First, second, and third gutturals in the suffix conjugation 97
16.7. Additional meaning of the word כִּי 98
16.8. The *və-qatal* ("converted perfect") form 98
16.9. Pronominal suffixes on the suffix conjugation 98
16.10. Vocabulary for lesson 16 99
16.11. Exercises for lesson 16 100

17. The *Qal* Infinitive Construct and the Infinitive Absolute 102
17.1. The uses of the infinitive construct 102
17.2. The form of the infinitive construct 102
17.3. The ambiguity of the infinitive construct 103
17.4. The infinitive construct with pronominal suffixes 103
17.5. The negation of the infinitive construct 103
17.6. The infinitive construct in temporal sentences 103
17.7. The infinitive construct in conjunction with other temporal verbs 104
17.8. The "when" clause of a regular temporal sentence 104
17.9. The "when" clause of a temporal sentence without an infinitive construct 105
17.10. The infinitive absolute as more frequently used 105
17.11. The infinitive absolute as a substitute for any other verbal form 106
17.12. Vocabulary for lesson 17 106
17.13. Exercises for lesson 17 107

18. The *Qal* Participles, the Words יֵשׁ and אַיִן, and the Accents *Soph Pasuq* and *Atnakh* 109
18.1. The active and passive participles generally 109
18.2. The meanings of the active participle 109
18.3. The forms of the active participle 109
18.4. Word order with the active participle 110

18.5. The participle does not use the relative pronoun 110
18.6. The meaning and forms of the passive participle 111
18.7. Forms of possession using לְ, יֵשׁ, and אֵין 111
18.8. The use of אֵין with pronominal suffixes 112
18.9. Accents: the *soph pasuq* and the *atnakh* 112
18.10. Vocabulary for lesson 18 112
18.11. Exercises for lesson 18 113

19. The Derived Stem *Niphal* (Part 1) and the Accent *Silluq* 115
19.1. The derived stems generally 115
19.2. The naming of the derived stems 115
19.3. The meaning and forms of the *niphal* stem 115
19.4. Passives in Biblical Hebrew do not express agent 117
19.5. Strong verbs learned to this point with *niphal* stems 118
19.6. Accent: the *silluq* 119
19.7. Vocabulary for lesson 19 119
19.8. Exercises for lesson 19 120

20. The Derived Stem *Niphal* (Part 2); the Numbers 1–2, the Partitive מִן, and the Accent *Zaqeph* 122
20.1. The *niphal* as reflexive or reciprocal 122
20.2. The *niphal* with active meaning 122
20.3. Variations of the form of *niphal* verbs learned to this point 122
20.4. Clues for recognizing *niphal* verbs 123
20.5. Recognizing numbers generally 124
20.6. The numbers 1 and 2 124
20.7. The partitive מִן 125
20.8. Accent: the *zaqeph* 125
20.9. Vocabulary for lesson 20 125
20.10. Exercises for lesson 20 125

21. The Derived Stem *Hiphil* (Part 1) and the Accent *Revia* 127
21.1. The most common meaning of the *hiphil* stem 127
21.2. The forms of the *hiphil* stem 127
21.3. Strong verbs learned to this point with *hiphil* stems 129
21.4. The *hiphil* with double accusative 130
21.5. Verbs with *niphal* and *hiphil* stems 130
21.6. Accent: the *revia* 130

21.7. Vocabulary for lesson 21 130
21.8. Exercises for lesson 21 132

22. The Derived Stem *Hiphil* (Part 2), the Derived Stem *Hophal*, the Numbers 3–10, and the Accent *Munakh* 134
22.1. The secondary *hiphil* meaning: denominative 134
22.2. The tertiary *hiphil* meaning: stative 134
22.3. More strong verbs learned to this point with *hiphil* stems 134
22.4. Clues for recognizing *hiphil* verbs 135
22.5. The *hophal* stem 135
22.6. The numbers 3–10 136
22.7. Accent: the *munakh* 137
22.8. Vocabulary for lesson 22 137
22.9 Exercises for lesson 22 138

23. The Derived Stems *Piel* and *Pual*, the Ordinal Numbers, and the Accents *Tiphkhah* and *Merkhah* 140
23.1. The *piel* stem generally 140
23.2. The forms of the *piel* stem for the strong verb 140
23.3. The forms of the *piel* stem with second guttural or *resh* 142
23.4. The meanings of the *piel* stem: intensive 142
23.5. The meanings of the *piel* stem: transitive 142
23.6. The meanings of the *piel* stem: denominative 143
23.7. The meanings of the *piel* stem: unclassified 143
23.8. Clues for recognizing *piel* verbs 143
23.9. The *pual* stem 143
23.10. Accents: The *tiphkhah* and the *merkhah* 144
23.11. Vocabulary for lesson 23 144
23.12. Exercises for lesson 23 146

24. The Derived Stem *Hitpael* and the Parsing of Verbs 148
24.1. The meanings of the *hitpael* stem 148
24.2. The forms of the *hitpael* stem 148
24.3. The art of parsing 150
24.4. Vocabulary for lesson 24 151
24.5. Exercises for lesson 24 152

25. Third-Weak Verbs 155
25.1. Third-weak verbs generally 155
25.2. Form of the third-weak verb in the *qal*, *niphal*, *hiphil*, and *piel* 155
25.3. Similarity of the most common forms of the third-weak verbs 157
25.4. Jussive and consecutive preterite forms of the third-weak verbs 160
25.5. Forms of the third-weak verb with first or second gutturals 161
25.6. Unusual deviations from the form of third-weak verbs 164
25.7. Vocabulary for lesson 25 164
25.8. Exercises for lesson 25 166

26. First-*Nun* Verbs and לָקַח; the Verb הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה 168
26.1. First-*nun* verbs generally 168
26.2. Two types of first-*nun* verbs 168
26.3. Type 1 first-*nun* verbs 168
26.4. Type 2 first-*nun* verbs 169
26.5. The *qal* forms of the type 2 first-*nun* verb נָשָׂא 171
26.6. The *qal* forms of the type 2 first-*nun* verb נָטָה 171
26.7. The *qal* forms of the type 2 first-*nun* verb נָתַן 171
26.8. The mixing of type 1 and type 2 forms 172
26.9. The verb לָקַח 172
26.10. The *niphal* forms of the first-*nun* verbs 173
26.11. The *hiphil* forms of the first-*nun* verbs 175
26.12. The *hiphil* forms of the first-*nun*, third-weak verb נכה 175
26.13. The rare stem *hishtaphel* 175
26.14. Vocabulary for lesson 26 177
26.15. Exercises for lesson 26 178

27. First-Weak Verbs, Including the Verb הָלַךְ; the Verb יכל 181
27.1. The first-weak verbs generally 181
27.2. The *qal* forms of the type 2 first-weak verbs 182
27.3. The *qal* forms of the type 2 first-weak, third-guttural verb 183
27.4. The *niphal* and *hiphil* forms of the type 2 first-weak verb 183
27.5. The *piel* forms of the type 2 first-weak verbs 185
27.6. The *qal* forms of the type 1 first-weak verbs 185
27.7. The verb הָלַךְ 186
27.8. The verb יכל 187
27.9. Vocabulary for lesson 27 188
27.10. Exercises for lesson 27 190

28. Middle-Weak Verbs and Locative ה 193
28.1. Middle-weak ("hollow") verbs generally 193
28.2. The *qal* forms of the middle-weak *vav* verbs 193
28.3. The *qal* forms of the middle-weak *yod* verbs 195
28.4. The *qal* forms of the verb בּוֹא 197
28.5. The *niphal* and *hiphil* forms of the middle-weak verbs generally 198
28.6. The *niphal* forms of the middle-weak verbs 198
28.7. The *hiphil* forms of the middle-weak verbs 199
28.8. A summary of the forms of the middle-weak verbs 201
28.9. The locative ה 201
28.10. Vocabulary for lesson 28 202
28.11. Exercises for lesson 28 203

29. The Derived Stems *Polel*, *Polal*, and *Hitpolel*, the Word הִנֵּה, and the Forms of Oaths 206
29.1. The derived stems *polel*, *polal*, and *hitpolel* generally 206
29.2. The forms of the *polel* 206
29.3. The forms of the *polal* 207
29.4. The forms of the *hitpolel* 207
29.5. The word הִנֵּה 208
29.6. Forms of oaths 209
29.7. Vocabulary for lesson 29 210
29.8 Exercises for lesson 29 211

30. Geminate Verbs and the Numbers above Ten 214
30.1. Geminate verbs generally 214
30.2. The difficulties associated with distinguishing geminate verbs 214
30.3. The regular nonstative *qal* forms for geminate verbs 215
30.4. The regular stative *qal* forms for geminate verbs 216
30.5. The alternative *qal* forms for geminate verbs 217
30.6. The *niphal* and *hiphil* forms for geminate verbs 218
30.7. The numbers 11 and 12 220
30.8. The numbers 13–19 221
30.9. The decade numbers 221
30.10. The numbers 100, 1,000, and 10,000 222
30.11. The numbers to commit to memory 222
30.12. Vocabulary for lesson 30 222
30.13. Exercises for lesson 30 224

Appendices
A. The Consonants of Biblical Hebrew 229
B. Transliteration of Hebrew Vowels 233
C. Genesis 22:1–19 235
D. Clues for Finding the Root of Weak Consecutive Preterites 239
E. Accents and Other Special Markings 242
F. Wordlist, English to Hebrew 243
G. Wordlist, Hebrew to English 263
H. Verbal Paradigms 279

Further Reading 289

Index 293

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several years of my beginning Biblical Hebrew classes at Harvard and the University of Texas have been the guinea pigs for this book, and their reactions, corrections, and good humor have made it a much better work, for which I thank them tremendously. Many individuals have also been instrumental in helping me through the process of turning out a finished product. A number have been using the book in its photocopied form and have often added their own and their classes' comments (and, as always, corrections): Mark Arnold, Walter Aufrecht, Joel Baden, Cory Crawford, Robert Daum, Peggy Day, Carrie Duncan, John Ellison, Eve Feinstein, Karen Grumberg, Martien Halvorson-Taylor, Ted Hiebert, Vivian Johnson, Jonathan Kaplan, Na'ama Pat-El, Greg Schmidt-Goering, Jennifer Singletary, Jeffrey Stackert, Keith Stone, Christine Thomas (and my sincere apologies to anyone I may have missed). Catherine Beckerleg is responsible for much of the final proofreading. I know how good her Hebrew is and was delighted that her trained eye was combing through the galleys. Both Josef Tropper and Carol Norman read earlier versions and encouraged me with their positive feedback to get the book finished. Two readers deserve special mention: Jonathan Kline and Ben Thomas both went through the book with a fine-toothed comb; no matter how much I worked on the final version, the two of them found more errors. They were both amazingly attuned to the fine points (pun intended) of Biblical Hebrew.

Michael Heidenreich, at the College of Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services at the University of Texas in Austin, recorded John Huehnergard and me reading from the book's lessons for the CD included with this book. He worked with us at very short notice, making us feel perfectly comfortable in what is, for us, an alien environment, even providing candy to keep our growling stomachs from ruining the readings—all the while calmly and professionally producing the recordings that made it possible for us to stay on a very tight schedule. Without him, we would have been lost.

I am particularly grateful and indebted to Bob Buller, who pulled off the daunting task of typesetting the book. He not only dealt with details like standardizing my idiosyncratic font use but also enhanced the usefulness and look of each page.

What a treat to have a typesetter with his knowledge of Hebrew! And as the schedule for finishing the book stretched on far beyond our original projections, he kept his sense of humor with each change of the hundreds we asked him to make. I can't imagine anyone doing a better job.

Allan Emery at Hendrickson Publishers was the editor for this book. I have known Allan well for more years than either of us will admit to. It was his encouragement that got me to put on paper finally the ideas I had had for years about a one-semester, basic grammar of Biblical Hebrew. He stuck with the project through many years of my procrastination, my sickness, and my change of venue. He has been splendid. He has kept track of thousands of details that made my head spin, and he always approaches his work with a kindness and professionalism that made me want to do him proud.

As with everything scholarly I've ever written, John Huehnergard has read every word of this book, and read them again, and yet again. John is a brilliant scholar and knows Biblical Hebrew inside and out, and so my work through the years has benefited enormously from his comments, but he also has a fine eye for the way a book should look. He has been involved in virtually every aspect of this project and has actually seemed to enjoy it. The number of errors he has caught and the number of illogical explanations he has pointed out are far too many to remember, let alone mention, and he has steadfastly encouraged me through the above-mentioned procrastination, sickness, and change of venue, and so much more. It is to him, with love, that this book is dedicated.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This textbook is meant as a one-semester or one-term introduction to the basics of Biblical Hebrew. It is divided into 30 lessons in order to fit into 15-week semesters and 10-week terms. Any instructor will find, however, that the last 6 lessons are more challenging than the first 24, so the ideal division into two or three lessons per week will probably never be followed. In the following paragraphs, I explain some of my thinking behind various aspects of this grammar, in the hope that it will make that thinking transparent, to use a timely term.

The boxes and paradigms in this textbook present words from right-to-left, or top-to-bottom and right-to-left, in the hope that using the Hebrew order will help to familiarize students with that aspect of the writing system. In general, anything in boxes with single lines around them is information that is interesting for the student to know but not necessary for learning the language. Information in boxes with double lines around them, however, is something that is essential to the language.

As noted in the book, I have presented verbs in the vocabularies according to the 3ms suffix conjugation, even before the suffix conjugation is introduced. Since this is the way most verbs in Biblical Hebrew are "named" ('to guard' is שָׁמַר), I have continued that tradition. The exception is the middle-weak verbs, which are usually "named" according to their infinitives construct ('to arise' is קוּם). More controversial is that I have listed the verbal paradigms in the order first-person, second-person, then third-person, unlike the traditional Biblical Hebrew textbook order, which begins with the third-person, since that is in the suffix conjugation the simplest form of the verb. Most of us have learned the verbal paradigms in the traditional way, but I have found that listing pronominal suffixes from first-person to third-person (בִּי, בְּךָ, and so on), while listing verbal forms from third-person to first-person, is confusing to many students. This is especially so as modern languages, including English, present the verbs in the order first-person, second-person, third-person, and that is the order students are used to when they first approach Biblical Hebrew.

I deliberately introduced the strong verb first, through all its stems and forms, and only at the end do I bring in the weak verbs. The other common way to introduce Biblical Hebrew is to introduce the *qal* completely, strong and weak verbs alike, and then to move on to the other stems. I have always found that I learn languages more easily when they are presented in the former order, so I have followed it here.

I have also deliberately not used the rubrics "perfect," "imperfect," or "converted," because they carry with them either complete misinformation ("converted") or old-fashioned methods of dealing with the Biblical Hebrew verbal system ("perfect" and "imperfect"). Luckily, the merely descriptive terms "prefix conjugation" and "suffix conjugation" are available (and were in fact the terms we used in the first Hebrew classes I took as a student). I have also been happy to see the term *və-qatal* applied to the form that is וְ plus suffix conjugation (often called "converted perfect"), and I have used it here. Several years ago, John Huehnergard and I together came up with the term "consecutive preterite" for the verb form that is usually called the "converted imperfect." I hesitated to use a new name in this beginning textbook for such a common form, but our rubric fits so perfectly that I decided to introduce it here. It is the only time I have used a term that is otherwise not a part of the scholarly literature. We have since been made aware that a few other scholars had previously proposed the same terminology.

I have presented the verbs in an order that is unusual: first the prefix conjugation, then the volitives, then the consecutive preterite. I was first given the idea to begin the Biblical Hebrew verbs with the prefix conjugation by George Landes in an offhand conversation many years ago, and I have thought it a good idea ever since. It is a logical progression to begin with the prefix conjugation and lead up to the consecutive preterite. The consecutive preterite is the form beginning students must know thoroughly in order to read most biblical prose, and in order to lead them to that form, I needed to introduce the jussive, and in order to introduce the jussive, I first needed to present the prefix conjugation. So the order of lessons 12–15 was determined by my desire to get to the consecutive preterite as quickly as possible, plus the seed planted long ago by George Landes. The suffix conjugation and *və-qatal* forms follow in the next lessons, along with the infinitives and participles.

Using the accent marks of the biblical text, the טְאָמִים, can be a great help to students attempting to discover the syntax of a given passage; I have introduced the most common ones in this book and have used them in the sentences in the exercises. I did this knowing that I was often not using the accents in the appropriate way, according to the biblical rules, but I wanted to present both disjunctive and conjunctive accents to the students, and at this early time in their Biblical Hebrew

study, the impossibility of some of my combinations will not affect their learning the usefulness of the system as a whole. Those who know biblical accentuation well will cringe, but the students will know what to do with the most common accent marks when they approach the biblical text.

This leads me to explain another decision: most of the exercises are artificial; they are not generally biblical passages. As my professor Thomas Lambdin once said (and here I am supplying my own examples), if the biblical text has a sentence such as "He struck the cat" and we know the word for "dog," it does not matter that "He struck the dog" is nowhere in the biblical text. We still know how it would have been said/written. On the other hand, in making up examples of biblical prose, I have risked introducing Hebrew phrases and syntax that never, in fact, existed. I can only say that I hope I have avoided that pitfall.

Thus, not every form for a given "model" verb in a paradigm will be found in Biblical Hebrew. If, however, that form that is not found in the "model" verb is found in another verb, it will usually be provided in the paradigm as part of the "model" verb (with exceptions such as חָוָה in the *hishtaphel*). A blank space in a paradigm indicates that the form is not found in *any* verb of the type that the paradigm represents.

I have always found it useful for students to memorize a few paradigms because their forms are used again and again. The endings of the paradigm of the preposition בְּ plus pronominal suffixes are almost exactly the same as those of singular nouns with possessive pronominal suffixes, but the בְּ paradigm is much easier to remember. Likewise, אֵל plus pronominal suffixes prepares one for the plural nouns and their possessive pronominal suffixes. Furthermore, learning the entire paradigm of the *qal* strong verb makes recognizing the same forms in other stems, and even in the weak verbs, a much easier task.

This textbook includes a CD with a great deal of pronunciation supplied for the beginning student: of some necessary but unfamiliar English words (for lesson 1); of many of the paradigms; and of all of the vocabulary words. It also includes pronunciation of all the Hebrew-to-English exercises in lessons 1–15 and of the first two exercises in lessons 16–30. Assuming the computer has speakers, the vocabulary words can be heard by passing one's cursor over the word in the vocabulary list. The phrases and sentences of the exercises can be heard by passing one's cursor over those phrases and sentences. At first, the reading seems painfully slow—painful for the instructor, but probably not for the student. Gradually the speed of reading is increased. Moreover, many Biblical Hebrew instructors use Genesis 22:1–19 as a sample text to help students learn to read more quickly and correctly, and I have included it on the CD as well. It is a well-known text for most students, and it has

the helpful feature that the consecutive preterite of most of the common Biblical Hebrew verbs are part of the passage. On this textbook's CD, John Huehnergard and I are the readers, except for the recording of Gen 22:1–19 made by Prof. David Levenson of Florida State University. Both Prof. Huehnergard and Prof. Levenson have kindly given me permission to use their voices for this textbook.

Like all language textbook authors, I considered not including answers for the exercises, because too many students simply use the answers given to them without struggling with the exercises first, and then, of course, they are in trouble when they take exams. On the other hand, anyone attempting to use the book outside an organized class will definitely need an answer key. Hendrickson suggested a compromise: the answers to the exercises are included in this package, but they are on the CD rather than in the textbook itself. This at least forces people to go to some trouble to find the answers, and I hope it will promote working on the exercises in the book without access to the answers, then checking the work with the answers on the CD, if one wants to.

It was Allan Emery's idea to number each lesson in Arabic numerals augmented on the left and right with the same numbers in the Hebrew system, which uses Hebrew consonants to represent numbers: *aleph* is "1," *bet* is "2," and so on. This system adds to the distinctive appearance of the beginning of each lesson and painlessly teaches students the look of the Hebrew numbers 1–30. The student will notice that in the traditional Hebrew numbering system "15" is written טו rather than יה, because the latter looks too much like the Tetragrammaton, the name of Israel's god, יהוה. "16" is טז rather than יו for the same reason.

Finally, a second book is in the works that will depend on this basic textbook. It will consist of graded readings of biblical passages, with glosses where necessary, additional vocabulary, and references to this book when something basic might need to be reviewed. I hope instructors and students alike will appreciate the approach and the contents of this basic introduction.

Jo Ann Hackett
Austin, Texas
January 2010

ABBREVIATIONS

1cp	first person common plural (in paradigms)
1cs	first person common singular (in paradigms)
2fp	second person feminine plural (in paradigms)
2fs	second person feminine singular (in paradigms)
2mp	second person masculine plural (in paradigms)
2ms	second person masculine singular (in paradigms)
3cp	third person common plural (in paradigms)
3fp	third person feminine plural (in paradigms)
3fs	third person feminine singular (in paradigms)
3mp	third person masculine plural (in paradigms)
3ms	third person masculine singular (in paradigms)
adj.	adjective
B.C.E.	Before the Common Era
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
ca.	*circa*, about
C.E.	Common Era
cf.	*confer*, compare
cohort.	cohortative
cons. pret.	consecutive preterite
cs.	construct
def. art.	definite article
dir.	direct
dir. obj.	direct object
du.	dual
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
esp.	especially
f	feminine (in paradigms)
fem.	feminine
fp	feminine plural (in paradigms)

fs	feminine singular (in paradigms)
I-א	Hebrew letter *aleph* for first consonant (in a verbal root)
I-G	Hebrew guttural letter for first consonant (in a verbal root)
I-נ	Hebrew letter *nun* for first consonant (in a verbal root)
I-weak	Hebrew "weak" letter for first consonant (in a verbal root)
II-ו	Hebrew letter *vav* for the second consonant (in a verbal root)
II-G	Hebrew guttural letter for second consonant (in a verbal root)
II-י	Hebrew letter *yod* for second consonant (in a verbal root)
II-weak	Hebrew "weak" letter for second consonant (in a verbal root)
III- א	Hebrew letter *aleph* for third consonant (in a verbal root)
III-G	Hebrew guttural letter for third consonant (in a verbal root)
III-ה	Hebrew letter *he* for the third consonant (in a verbal root)
III-weak	Hebrew "weak" letter for third consonant (in a verbal root)
III-ת	Hebrew letter *tav* for the third consonant (in a verbal root)
impv.	imperative
inf. abs.	infinitive absolute
inf. cs.	infinitive construct
juss.	jussive
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew
LXX	Septuagint
m	masculine (in paradigms)
masc.	masculine
mp	masculine plural (in paradigms)
ms	masculine singular (in paradigms)
MH	Mishnaic Hebrew
MT	Masoretic Text
obj.	object
pref. conj.	prefix conjugation
pl.	plural
ptcp.	participle
SBH	Standard Biblical Hebrew
suff. conj.	suffix conjugation
sf.	suffix
sg.	singular

Biblical references

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus

Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
1, 2 Sam	1, 2 Samuel
1, 2 Kgs	1, 2 Kings
Ps(s)	Psalm(s)
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Hab	Habakkuk
Zeph	Zephaniah

א ◄ 1 ► א

Introductory Matters

1.1. Overview

In this lesson we will place Biblical Hebrew, which is the focus of this grammar, in summary fashion within its linguistic, historical, and written (scribal) settings. Much has been written on each of these subjects, for which see the suggestions for further reading.

1.2. Linguistic setting

Biblical Hebrew (BH) is a member of the Canaanite branch of the Semitic language family, along with Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite. It is also closely related to Aramaic, Ugaritic, and even Arabic. The literature of the Hebrew Bible extends from ca. 1100 B.C.E. to ca. 150 B.C.E.

In the Bible itself, the word 'Hebrew' is not used by Israelites or Judahites to describe their own language. Instead, we have 'the language of Canaan' (Isa 19:18) and 'Judahite' (e.g., 2 Kgs 18:26 = Isa 36:11). The prologue to the Wisdom of Ben Sira (written in Greek) contains our first extant attestation of 'Hebrew' being used of the language: Ben Sira's grandson claims to have translated his grandfather's words from the original Hebrew.

B.C.E. and C.E. stand for "Before the Common Era" and "Common Era." B.C.E. and C.E. are modern scholarly conventions for B.C. and A.D., respectively, an attempt to represent time in something other than a purely Christian way.

1.3. Historical development

Biblical Hebrew is usually divided into three large chronological periods: early poetry, Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH), and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH). Not all scholars agree on what should be included in the "early poetry," but many would

accept that the poems in Exod 15 and Judg 5 are earlier than the tenth century B.C.E., because linguistic and stylistic features in those poems can be compared to those of the thirteenth-century Ugaritic epics from Ras Shamra and to the Canaanite language known from the fourteenth-century Amarna letters found in Egypt. Other passages that are often considered tenth century or earlier are Deut 33 and Gen 49, and some would add one or more of the following: parts of the oracles of Balaam in Num 23 and 24; and the poems in Deut 32; 1 Sam 2; 2 Sam 22 = Ps 18; Pss 29; 68; 72; 78; 2 Sam 1; 23; and Hab 3.

SBH is generally used to refer to the narrative prose of the Deuteronomistic History and of the Pentateuch. LBH includes grammar and vocabulary that is different from SBH and can be found, in part or completely, in Chronicles (those portions that are not parallel to material elsewhere in the Bible); Ezra; Nehemiah; Esther; Ecclesiastes; Daniel; and Ben Sira. The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) is the latest LBH. The Hebrew of the rabbinic writings (the Mishnah and the Talmuds), called Mishnaic Hebrew (MH), is a different dialect of Hebrew from any BH. MH was still spoken in the second century C.E., but after the failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt, Hebrew became a literary language and *lingua franca* for Jews all over the world, until its revival in modern times.

1.4. Written (scribal) development

The earliest Hebrew script was an offshoot of the Phoenician script, as was Aramaic, and the Phoenician script was itself a continuation of an earlier Old Canaanite tradition that goes as far back as the eighteenth century B.C.E. The earliest Hebrew inscriptions copied the Phoenician custom of writing only the consonants. In ninth-century Aramaic inscriptions, we begin to see the use of *matres lectionis* ("mothers of reading"; pronounced máh-tres lek-tee-óh-nis), that is, consonants used to indicate a (long) vowel sound. This Aramaic innovation seems to have influenced Hebrew writing so that Hebrew inscriptions have final *matres lectionis* beginning in the eighth century and regularly use internal *matres lectionis* by the end of the seventh. The earliest Hebrew system of final matres lectionis used *w* (Hebrew ו) to mark a final long *u*, *y* (Hebrew י) for final long *i*, and *h* (Hebrew ה) for all other final long vowels. The earliest Hebrew system of internal *matres lectionis* copied the system of final *matres lectionis* and used *w* to mark long *u* and *y* to mark long *i*. Eventually, the system was expanded so that both final and internal *w* could represent long *o* as well as long *u*, and final and internal *y* could mark long *e* as well as long *i*. An *h* was used for all other final long vowels and was never used as an internal *mater lectionis* (máh-ter lek-tee-óh-nis), often referred to as simply a *mater*.

The received text of the Hebrew Bible is called the Masoretic Text (MT) because medieval scholars known as Masoretes added vocalization and accentuation to the consonantal text. (They were called Masoretes because they handed down the tradition, the Masorah, of their pronunciation of the Hebrew text.) It is possible to narrow the dates for the addition of vowel signs and accents to ca. 600–750 C.E., on the basis of citations in external sources.

Because the Masoretes were concerned that the biblical text be copied and transmitted correctly from one copyist to the next, they wrote thousands of marginal notes (also called Masorah), pointing out when a word or combination of words only occurs once in the Bible or only two or three times, for instance. A selection of the Masorah to the MT is included in many modern Bibles, and the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (*BHS*) includes notes in the margins (the Masorah parva [Mp]) and in an apparatus at the bottom of each page (pointing to discussions in the Masorah magna [Mm], available in several collections).

The history of the Hebrew Bible that we use today is even more complicated. The Masoretic tradition most commonly available today is the Tiberian Masoretic tradition, but it is only one of three (or more) used in antiquity: Tiberian, Babylonian, and Palestinian. The Tiberian system was passed down by at least two schools, named after the family names of their most famous adherents: the Ben Asher school and the Ben Naphtali school. *BHS* is based on the Leningrad Codex, a manuscript from ca. 1000 C.E., which is a Ben Asher Tiberian Masoretic text, as is the Aleppo Codex, an even earlier (tenth century) but incomplete manuscript, which is the basis for the Hebrew University Bible. So the "Biblical Hebrew" we will learn in this book is actually the vocalized Hebrew of the MT of the Ben Asher Tiberian tradition, as represented by the Leningrad Codex.

As we have seen, there is a span of almost one thousand years of literature included in the Hebrew Bible, and over that long time period, the Hebrew language must have changed considerably. The Masoretic tradition, however, used the same vocalization system for the entire text, leveling any differences in pronunciation or accentuation or even possibly grammar that might have existed at an earlier time. (Note the Shibboleth story in Judg 12, which turns on precisely the existence of dialectal differences in pronunciation.) Furthermore, the Masoretic tradition of the biblical text was not the only ancient Hebrew biblical tradition. The Hebrew text from which the earliest Greek translation was made (called the Septuagint and abbreviated LXX) was not identical to the MT, nor are many of the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran. The differences are mostly small but sometimes significant. So the Masoretes not only added a system of vowel and accent signs but also preserved a tradition of the consonants themselves that was

only one among several extant around the turn of the eras.

The Tiberian Masoretic vowel system is usually interpreted according to Joseph Qimkhi's (twelfth century C.E.) system of corresponding short and long vowels. Because by their time the consonantal text was considered sacred, the Masoretes had to insert vowel marks without changing the line of the consonantal text; consequently, vowels in BH are small lines and combinations of dots inserted above, below, and within the consonantal text.

Unlike the Qimkhi system, the Masoretic vocalization (or vowel "pointing") itself suggests seven basic vowels, differentiated by vowel quality ([a] versus [o], for instance) rather than quantity (long or short), and medieval grammarians corroborate this interpretation of the system. Despite these problems, most modern students and scholars of Hebrew still use the Qimkhi short and long vowel pronunciation system, so that is the system we will learn in this grammar.

When we speak of "the Hebrew alphabet," we mean only the twenty-two consonantal letters. That is, reciting the alphabet is simply reciting the consonants.

Be sure to read and refer back to the section "How to Use This Book," beginning on page xix, for information on decisions about various features of the book, such as the ordering of paradigms.

1.5. Exercise for lesson 1

In lesson 2 we will begin to learn how to recognize, draw, and pronounce the consonants and vowels of BH. It is important to learn the alphabet in its proper order, of course, in order to use a dictionary, so we will also memorize and recite the alphabet. At the end of each of the first four lessons, we will memorize the names of the letters of the alphabet that are to be taken up in the following lesson. These names are not written out here in any transliteration system, but rather, they are written in a fashion that will make them easily pronounceable by English speakers. We will learn their proper transliterated spellings as we learn to draw them. So, before going on to lesson 2, memorize the following set of "words":

áhlef, bait, gímmel, dóllet, hay. (The *g* in gímmel is a hard *g* as in "get.")

Repeat this list until you can say it when called upon.