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INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW
AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

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2

Level

Graduate Level

This Syllabus is Approved for
Baptist International University School of the Scriptures

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CLASS 305A5 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

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

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

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**CLASS 305A3 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW
AND THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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

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

May 4, 2022

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Scripture References

2 Timothy 3:16

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

Matthew 5

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

John 5

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

Matthew 24

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

Mark 13

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

Luke 21

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

Matthew 28:20

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

1 Corinthians 14:37

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

2 Peter 3

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

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

Luke 4

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

the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

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

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

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

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

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

1 Peter 1:25

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

Lesson 21: Modern Hebrew Grammar Introduction
www.hebrewpod101.com

I. Introduction

- A. As we look now at Hebrew grammar, you should know that it's particularly logical and orderly. For example, the most common way to express that everything is okay in Hebrew is to say, הכל בסדר (hakol be-seder), or "everything is in order."
- B. A useful Hebrew language grammar guide must take into account that Hebrew is both synthetic, meaning it changes words' meanings or relationships to other words by adding prefixes and suffixes (and, in Hebrew's case, also by changing vowels), as well as analytic, meaning it uses helping words to indicate meaning and relationship.
- C. A good command of Hebrew also requires proficiency in using grammatical gender and number correctly, as nouns, verbs, and adjectives are all gendered and must agree in terms of number. This can be particularly tricky for English speakers, who are lucky enough to not have to worry about grammatical gender, except in cases of biological gender (i.e. boy vs. girl or chicken vs. rooster).
- D. A final prominent grammatical feature of Hebrew is the fact that its word order is sometimes – but not always – parallel to that of English.

II. General Hebrew Grammar Rules

- A. A good way to broach the subject of Modern Hebrew grammar is to look at how it compares to what we know about English grammar.
- B. We'll cover three key points by way of comparing and contrasting Hebrew with English.

III. Basic Word Order

- A. First define the words subject, verb, and object. In the context of grammar, the subject is the agent or the noun (a person, place, thing, or idea) that is responsible for whatever the verb describes. The verb is a word describing an action or a condition or state that's being met. The object is the noun that the subject is acting upon or affecting through the verb.
- B. With that in mind, let's take a look at a simple example of how this plays out:

אני לומד עברית.
Ani lomed Ivrit.
"I study Hebrew."
- C. Here you can see the same syntax, or word order, as you would expect in English: SVO (Subject + Verb + Object). Luckily, most sentences will indeed follow this structure,

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though not always. One notable exception is the case of present tense sentences using the verb להיות (lehiyot), or “to be.” This verb is omitted – in fact, does not even exist – in present form. So don’t think something is missing if you see a sentence with just two words, like this one:

אני שרון.
Ani Sharon.
“I [am] Sharon.”

D. Or even one word, like this one:

חם!
Kham!
“[It’s] hot!”

IV. Tenses

A. Speaking of tenses, there’s more good news. In Hebrew grammar, tenses are one aspect where Hebrew is immensely easier than English. This is because there are only three of them. There are only simple tenses: past, present, and future.

B. Here are some examples to illustrate:

Present

אני הולכת הביתה עכשיו.
Ani holekhet habaytah akhshav.
“I am going home now.” [Literally: “I go home now.”]

Past

אני הלכתי הביתה בעשר.
Ani halakhti habaytah be-’eser.
“I went home at ten.”

C. Note that because the verb conjugation itself tells us not only the tense of the verb, but also the person and number of the subject (in this case, first person singular), we often omit the pronoun in Hebrew. This is the more common way to say the same sentence:

הלכתי הביתה בעשר.
Halakhti habaytah be-’eser.
“I went home at ten.”

Future

- D. We also tend to omit the pronoun for future tense. You can find both forms below, one with the pronoun and the other without.

אני אלך הביתה בעוד שעה.

Ani elekh habaytah be-'od sha'ah.

"I'm going home in an hour." [Literally: "I will go home in an hour."]

אלך הביתה בעוד שעה.

Elekh habaytah be-'od sha'ah.

"I'm going home in an hour." [Literally: "I will go home in an hour."]

V. Verb Conjugations

- A. Verb conjugation is one of the most difficult aspects of Hebrew grammar for beginners.
- B. This is because Hebrew uses the system of בניינים (binyanim), a word literally meaning "structures," to pattern verb conjugation – and there are a whopping seven different בניינים. To make matters more complex, all verb conjugations are gendered and numbered as singular or plural, in addition to having different forms for different speakers (e.g. first person singular ["I"] versus first person plural ["we"] or second person singular ["you"]).
- C. On the bright side, these patterns are very structured, as their name suggests, with few exceptions. Also to your advantage as a student of Hebrew is the fact that verbs are categorized logically into different בניינים based on the verb's function. For instance, they are classified based on whether they are active verbs, passive verbs, or reflexive verbs.
- D. Additionally, all of Hebrew is built on the שורש (shoresh), or "root," system, which forms related words using the same cluster of two, three, or sometimes four consonants. This means that you will see most verbs represented in different בניינים (binyanim) to apply a meaning related to the שורש (shoresh) in different relationships.
- E. For example, you can see how this works with the verb לשמוע (lishmo'a), meaning "to listen" or "to hear." Here you can see how changes to the letters and vowels around the root consonants – ש (shin), מ (mem), and ע ('ayin) – change the meaning from listening to something or someone, to being listened to or heard, to playing something (like a CD) or making it sound, etc.

שמעתי שיר יפה ברדיו.

Shama'ti shir yafeh ba-rad'io.

"I heard a lovely song on the radio."

השיר שנשמע ברדיו הוא מאת אריק איינשטיין.

Ha-shir she-nishma' ba-rad'io hu me'et Arik Aynshteyn.

"The song that was heard on the radio is by Arik Einstein."

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בוא, אני אשמיע לך את השיר.
Bo, Ani ashmi'a' lekha et ha-shir.
“Come, I’ll play the song for you.

- F. The bottom line is that, yes, verb conjugations are one of the tougher things to learn in Hebrew, but they do have a very clear system of patterns. Once you crack that code, you’re home free.

VI. Important Things to Know

- A. To sum up our general overview of Modern Hebrew grammar, let’s look at three golden rules for English speakers to keep in mind when embarking on any serious study of Hebrew grammar.

Rule #1: As we mentioned earlier, unlike in English, there is no verb להיות (lehiyot), or “to be,” in the present tense. This means we often encounter very terse-looking sentences, sometimes with just one or two words.

Rule #2: Unlike in English, there are only three tenses: simple present, simple past, and simple future. We can still express many of the same temporal states as English does, but we depend more on contextual words, such as time markers, to do so.

Rule #3: Unlike in English, verb conjugations are quite systematic. They convey meaning beyond just person, number, and tense, based on the בניין (binyan), or conjugation pattern, used. As there are seven such conjugation patterns, don’t expect to master them all in one go. Little by little is the name of the game.

VII. Gender and Number (For Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs)

- A. It’s very important to recognize that, unlike English, Hebrew is grammatically gendered, even when words are referring to something with no biological gender. This is similar to the Romance languages, such as Italian and French, as well as other languages like German and Russian. However, Hebrew works a bit differently, as it does not have separate masculine and feminine articles. In fact, ה (ha or he) is the only article in Hebrew, used whether a noun is masculine or feminine, singular or plural.
- B. Hebrew has both masculine and feminine forms of many nouns, as well as nouns that only have a masculine form or a feminine form. Most, but not all, feminine nouns end in either ה (heh) or ת (tav). Another helpful tip is that, in plural form, most—but not all—masculine words end in -ים (-im); most, but not all, feminine words end in -ות (-ot).
- C. Moreover, adjectives must agree with the gender of the noun they describe, and verbs must be conjugated according to the number and gender of their subject.

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D. Here are just a few examples of how this affects words.

1. Nouns with both a masculine and a feminine form

Masculine

אני רופא.
Ani rofeh.
“I am a doctor.”

אני רופא ילדים.
Ani rofeh yeladim.
“I am a pediatrician.”

Feminine

אני רופאה.
Ani rof'ah.
“I am a doctor.”

אני רופאת ילדים.
Ani rof'at yeladim.
“I am a pediatrician.”

2. Nouns which are either masculine or feminine

Masculine

זו סוס.
Zeh sus.
“This is a horse.”

זו כיסא.
Zeh kise.
“This is a chair.”

זה אוטו.
Zeh oto.
“This is a car.”

Feminine

זאת צלחת.
Zot tzalakhat.
“This is a plate.”

זאת קערה.
Zot ke'arah.
“This is a bowl.”

זאת כוס.
Zot kos.
“This is a cup.”

3. Gender and number with adjectives

As mentioned, in Hebrew grammar, adjectives must be in agreement with the number and gender of the nouns they describe. Here are some examples:

Masculine

הוא רופא טוב.
Hu rofeh tov.
“He is a good doctor.”

הם רופאים טובים.
Hem rof'im tovim.
“They are good doctors.”

זה סוס גדול.
Zeh sus gadol.
“This is a big horse.”

אלה סוסים גדולים.
Eleh susim gedolim.
“These are big horses.”

Feminine

היא רופאה טובה.
Hi rof'ah tovah.
“She is a good doctor.”

הן רופאות טובות.
Hen rof'ot tovot.
“They are good doctors.”

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זאת צלחת גדולה.
Zot tzalakhat gedolah.
“This is a big plate.”

אלה צלחות גדולות.
Eleh tzalakhhot gedolot.
“These are big plates.”

4. Gender and number with verbs

As we mentioned earlier, Hebrew verbs also need to be in agreement with their respective subjects in terms of number and gender. Here are some examples of how verbs change to accommodate this:

Masculine

הרופא עובד בבית החולים.
Ha-rofe ‘oved be-veyt ha-kholim.
“The doctor works at the hospital.”

הרופאים עובדים בבית החולים.
Ha-rof’im ‘ovdim be-veyt ha-kholim.
“The doctors work at the hospital.”

Feminine

הרופאה עובדת בבית החולים.
Ha-rof’ah ‘ovedet be-veyt ha-kholim.
“The doctor works at the hospital.”

הרופאות עובדות בבית החולים.
Ha-rof’ot ‘ovdot be-veyt ha-kholim.
“The doctors work at the hospital.”

VIII. Nikkud (Diacritical Marks)

- A. Another key point of both Hebrew grammar and Hebrew orthography is that of ניקוד (nikkud), or diacritical marks.
- B. Because Hebrew is an abjad, written Hebrew letters are restricted to consonants or placeholders for vowels, while vowels themselves are represented by lines and dots above, below, or next to these letters. To make the ride even more exciting, written and printed Modern Hebrew—as well as, incidentally, the Torah, or Hebrew Bible—almost always omit these diacritical marks. This means that learners will need to first learn to read with them, and then wean themselves off of the written vowels, eventually learning to infer them

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as native Hebrew speakers do. Think of it like learning to ride a bicycle with training wheels, which are eventually taken off so you can ride freely.

- C. As for the grammatical significance of ניקוד, there are two key points you should know.

1. Consonant Homonyms

Firstly, there are consonant homonyms. These are words whose letters (which, if you recall, are only consonants and vowel placeholders) look identical, but which are not actually homophones (words that sound the same). This is because the vowels make all the difference. We obviously need to know which word we're dealing with if we want to get the rest of our grammar right.

Here's an example of three letters that can spell out three totally different words, based on the vowels employed. Just remember that you would normally see these all written without the diacritical marks as דד (equivalent to dvd), and would have to infer the right word based on the context. Tricky, I know. But the fun is in the challenge!

דָּוִד

David

"David," as in the proper name

דוֹד

Dod

"Uncle"

דוּד

Dud

"Boiler"

IX. Construct States

- A. Another way that ניקוד is related to grammar is in the case of construct states.
- B. In Hebrew grammar, construct states are where two nouns work together to form either a compound noun or a genitive (possessive) phrase. In a construct state, the first noun will be the genitive of the second noun, making the second noun "possessed" by the first. In most cases, the words involved will see some change to their letters and their ניקוד, and in some cases only to their ניקוד. In the latter cases, considering that the vowels are generally omitted, you will once again have to learn to infer them.
- C. Here are some examples:

עֻגָּה

'Ugah

"Cake"

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עוגת שוקולד

'Ugat shokolad

"Chocolate cake" (Literally: "Cake of chocolate")

מלחמה

Milkhamah

"War"

מלחמת העצמאות

Milkhemet ha-Atzma'ut

"The War of Independence"

ספרים

S'farim

"Books"

ספרי ילדים

Sifrey yeladim

"Children's books"

בית

Bayit

"House"

בית ספר

Beyt sefer

"School" (Literally: "House of the book")

X. Hebrew's Root System

- A. Another key aspect is Hebrew's root system.
- B. One of the most interesting and unique aspects of the Hebrew language is its use of שורשים (shorashim), a system of using consonant roots to form words. Not only do these roots help you to acquire, recognize, and even infer new vocabulary, but they also make for a very systematic learning experience.
- C. If you visually and sonically contrast Hebrew words belonging to one root with their English counterparts, you will see just how much more inviting Hebrew's system is. Instead of having to memorize words that have no apparent connection other than their meanings, the relationships between Hebrew words is evident in both their look and their sound.
- D. This root system applies to all parts of speech, as we've already seen.

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- E. Let's have just a quick glimpse at some examples of words derived from a single root to better understand how this works in Hebrew. We'll use the triconsonantal root אמר (equivalent to amr) here, but keep in mind that the patterns you see here can be applied to almost any root to express almost anything.

לומר
Lomar
"To say"

להאמר
Lehe'amer
"To be said"

אמירה
Amira
"Saying"

מאמר
Ma'amar
"Article"

- F. As you can clearly see, by identifying the root consonants, you can get some idea of the "family" a word is in, even if you're unsure of its exact meaning. In this case, each of these words have to do with speaking or expressing oneself. Moreover, once you begin to recognize set patterns, you'll be even better prepared to grasp a word's meaning. For instance, the מ (mem) in מאמר (ma'amar) is a common prefix added to a root to create a noun form.
- G. In addition to using this root system to form different but related words, Hebrew uses suffixes and prefixes to provide further information about words. This is particularly true for the genitive form. For instance, מאמרי (ma'amari) would be "my article," מאמרו (ma'amaro) "his article," and מאמרנו (ma'amarenu) "our article."

XI. Synthetic Grammar

- A. A final, crucial grammar point to be aware of is that Hebrew is largely synthetic, meaning that it uses different morphologies, or physical forms of the same word, to convey meaning, relationships, and other information. We already saw this in terms of the genitive, but there are other cases where this is true as well.
- B. Let's look at some common situations, along with examples.
1. Prefixes for articles and prepositions

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One way in which words can change is by gaining a prefix or prefixes in order to accommodate an article, a preposition, or both. Note how all of these look, visually, like single words, but (apart from the first example) they all consist of two or three elements.

ספר
Sefer
“Book”

הספר
Ha-sefer
“The book”

מִסְפָּר
Mi-sefer
“From a book”

מֵהַסֵּפֶר
Me-ha-sefer
“From the book”

2. Suffixes for plurals and genitives

We also saw that suffixes are used, as in English, to form plurals. They can also be used to indicate that a noun is genitive, or both genitive and plural.

Here are some examples:

ספר
Sefer
“Book”

ספרי
Sifri
“My book”

ספרו
Sifro
“His book”

ספרים
Sfarim
“Books”

ספריו
Sfarav
“His books”

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אהבה
Ahavah
“Love”

אהבות
Ahavot
“Loves”

אהבותיהם
Ahavoteyhem
“Their loves” (with “their” referring to masculine or mixed gender)

Lesson 22: Extant Manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible

Hebrew Manuscripts

The original books of the Hebrew Bible, written by the original authors, are called autographs. These autographs were written on scrolls made of animal skins or papyrus (a type of paper made from reed plants).

7th C. BC - Ketef Hinnom Scroll

(Hebrew)

In a tomb at Ketef Hinnom in Israel, the oldest text of the Hebrew Bible was discovered. The text, inscribed on a silver scroll in the old Hebrew script dating to the 7th Century B.C., is the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24-26), which begins, “yeverekh’kha YHWH Vayishmarekha” (May Yahweh bless you and keep you).



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2nd C. BC - Nash Papyrus

(Hebrew)

Another very old fragment of the Hebrew Bible is the Nash Papyrus, discovered in Egypt in 1898. The fragment includes the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17) and the Sh'ma (Deuteronomy 5:6-21) and is dated to the 2nd Century B.C.



1st C. BC to 1st C. AD - Dead Sea Scrolls

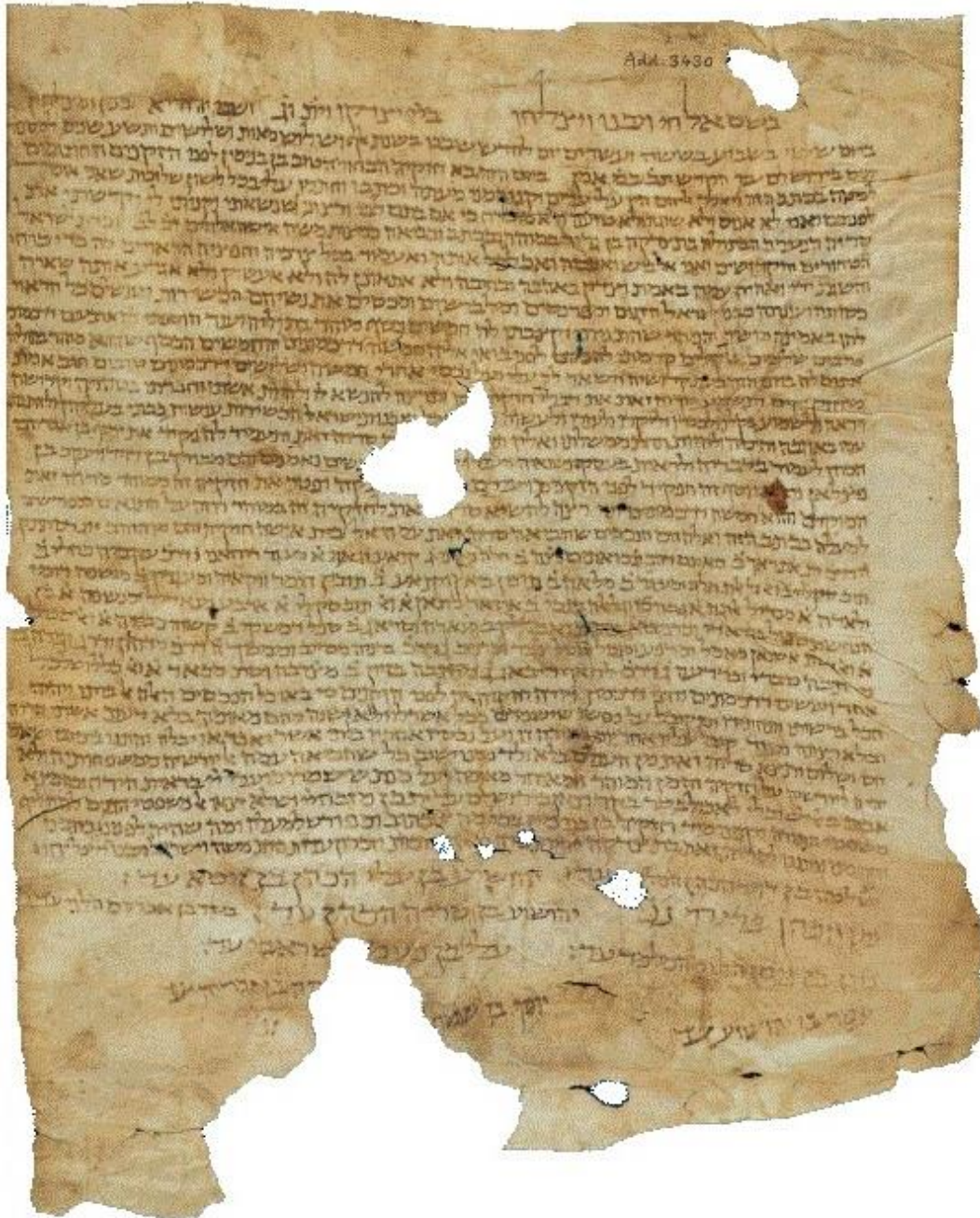
(Hebrew, some in Aramaic and a few in Greek)

Between 1947 and 1956, ancient scrolls and fragments of the Hebrew Bible were discovered in caves near the Dead Sea dating to the 1st Century B.C. and the 1st Century A.D. The manuscripts discovered in the Dead Sea Caves include; all of the Canonical Books of the Hebrew Bible with the exception of the book of Esther, non-Canonical Books such as Enoch, Jubilees, Tobit and Sirach as well as Psalms that are not part of the 150 Psalms in the Canonical Bible, and Sectarian Books such as, the Community Rule, the War Scroll, the Damascus Document and commentaries on books of the Bible.

4th C. AD - Cairo Geniza

(Hebrew)

Only fragments of the Hebrew Bible have survived and were discovered in a Cairo synagogue.



930 AD - Aleppo Codex

(Hebrew)

One of the Ben Asher Masoretic manuscripts; Source for the Hebrew University Bible; source for Maimonides Torah Scrolls; Portions of the codex destroyed in fire in 1948. Up until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest existing complete Hebrew Bible was the Aleppo codex. For centuries, this text has been the foundation for Jewish and Christian translators.



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1008 AD - Leningrad Codex

(Hebrew)

One of the Ben Asher Masoretic manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible. The Masoretic texts introduced the nikkudot (the dots and dashes above and below the Hebrew letters to represent the vowel sounds).

1516 AD - Rabbinic Bible

(Hebrew)

Considered the first Rabbinic Bible. Composed by Daniel Bomberg; second edition composed by converted Rabbi Abraham Ben Chayyim; The KJV is based on this text.

17th C. AD - Samaritan Pentetuch

(Samaritan Hebrew)

According to the Samaritans, this scroll of the Torah was written by Aaron's son, Abisha. Scholars suggest a date in the 17th C. AD.

1977 AD - Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

(Hebrew)

This Hebrew Bible is a copy of the Masoretic Text as recorded in the Leningrad Codex.

Other than Hebrew Manuscripts

4th C. BC - Septuagint

(Greek)

The Torah (the first five books of the Bible) are believed to have been translated in the 4th C. BC and is called the Septuagint (A 2,000-year-old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, also identified as LXX, the Roman numeral for 70). The remainder of the Hebrew Bible (the Prophets and the Writings) are believed to have been translated into Greek, and then included into the Septuagint, around the first century AD.



1st C. AD - Targum Onkelos

(Aramaic)

Targum Onkelos is an Aramaic translation of the Torah written by Onkelos, a Roman convert to Judaism. The word "targum" is Hebrew and Aramaic word meaning "translation."



1st C. AD - Targum Jonathon

(Aramaic)

Targum Jonathon is an Aramaic translation of the Prophets. It was written in the 1st Century B.C. by Jonathon Ben Uziel, a student of Hillel the Elder, the famous Jewish teacher and religious leader.



MS 206
Hebrew square book script. Iraq, 1st half of 11th c.

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2nd C. AD - Peshitta

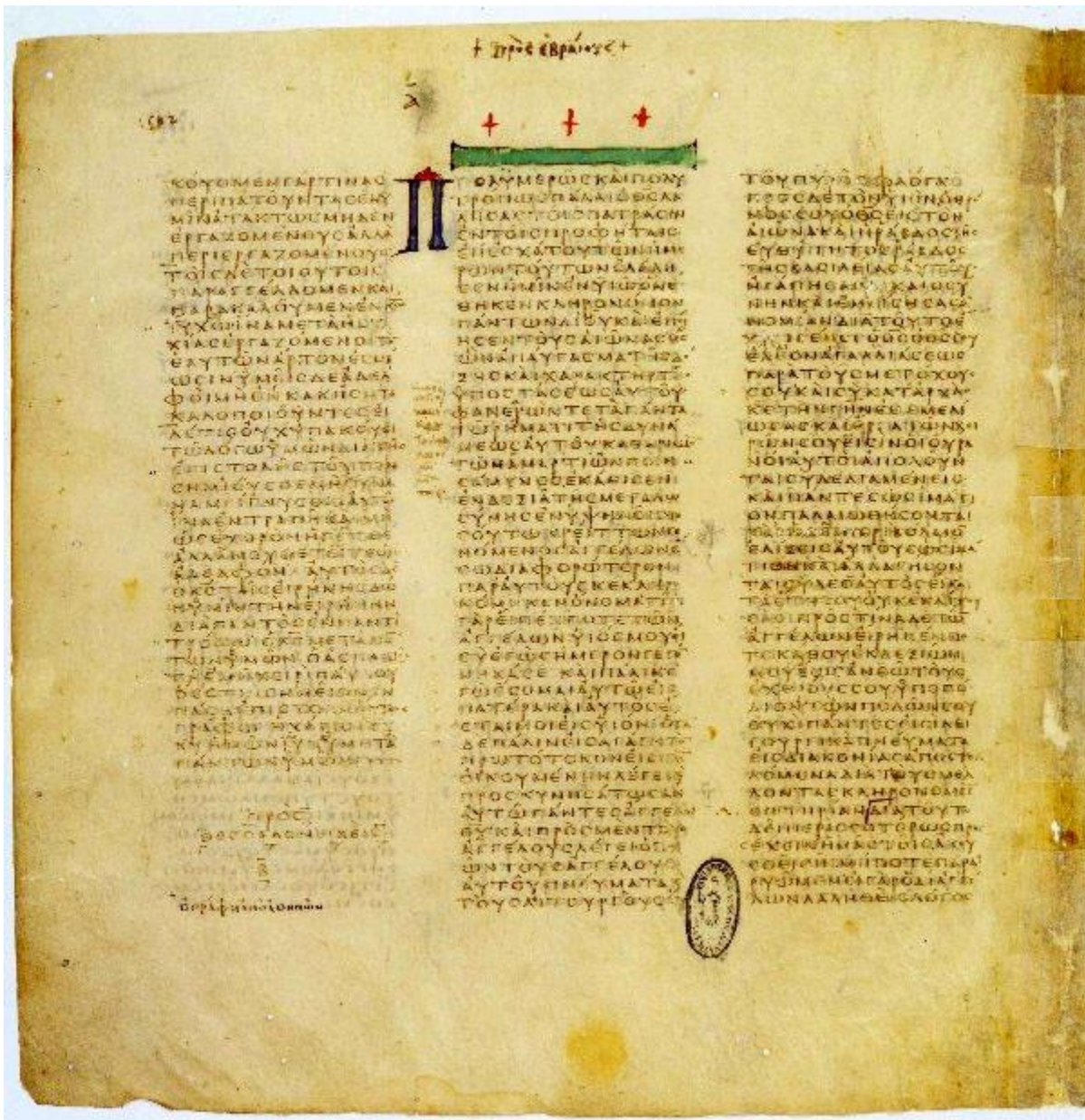
(Syriac Aramaic)

The Peshitta is an Aramaic translation of the entire Hebrew Bible that was written around the 2nd Century A.D. The Peshitta also includes an Aramaic New Testament that was written around the 5th Century A.D.

300 to 325 AD - Codex Vaticanus

(Greek)

This codex includes the Septuagint. It is believed that the Torah portion of the Septuagint was originally written around 250 BC and the prophets and the writings around the 1st century AD.



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330 to 360 AD - Codex Sinaiticus

(Greek)

This codex includes the Septuagint. It is believed that the Torah portion of the Septuagint was originally written around 250 BC and the prophets and the writings around the 1st century AD.

3rd or 4th century CE - Coptic Bible

(Egyptian Coptic)

Old and New Testament translations translated from the Alexandrian Greek version.

402 AD - Vulgate

(Latin)

The Latin Vulgate, consisting of the Hebrew Bible as well as the New Testament, was written by Jerome, a Christian priest and apologist, in the 5th Century A.D. This translation was commissioned by Pope Damasus in 382 and is based on Origen's Septuagint and Hebrew manuscripts.

1380 AD - Wycliffe's Bible

(Middle English)

Considered to be the first complete bible (Old and New Testament) written in the English language (Middle English).

1455 AD - The Guttenberg Bible

(Latin)

The Gutenberg Bible was the first major book printed in the West and the first printed Bible using mass-produced movable type. It marked the start of the "Gutenberg Revolution" and the age of the printed book in the West. Prior to the Guttenberg Bible all Bible manuscripts were hand-written.

1525 AD - Tyndale's Bible

(Modern English)

The first complete Bible (Old and New Testament) printed in the modern English language and is the foundation to most English Bibles today.

<https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/biblical-history/extant-manuscripts-of-the-hebrew-bible.htm>

Lesson 23: The Aleppo Codex

I. The Aleppo Codex

- A. Info supplied by *wiki*.
- B. The Aleppo Codex (Hebrew: כִּתְרֵי אֲרָם צִוּיָּא, romanized: Keter Aram Tzova, lit. “Crown of Aleppo”) is a medieval bound manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. The codex was written in the city of Tiberias in the 10th century CE (circa 920) under the rule of the Abbasid Caliphate and was endorsed for its accuracy by Maimonides. Together with the Leningrad Codex, it contains the Ben-Asher masoretic tradition.
- C. The codex was kept for five centuries in the Central Synagogue of Aleppo, until the synagogue was torched during anti-Jewish riots in 1947. The fate of the codex during the subsequent decade is unclear: when it resurfaced in Israel in 1958, roughly 40% of the manuscript—including the majority of the Torah section – was missing, and only two additional leaves have been recovered since then. The original supposition that the missing pages were destroyed in the synagogue fire has increasingly been challenged, fueling speculation that they survive in private hands.

II. Authoritative Text

- A. The consonants in the codex were copied by the scribe Shlomo ben Buya’a in Palestine circa 920. The text was then verified, vocalized, and provided with Masoretic notes by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, the last and most prominent member of the ben Asher dynasty of grammarians from Tiberias, rivals to the ben Naphtali school. The tradition of ben Asher has become the one accepted for the Hebrew Bible. The ben Asher vocalization is late and in many respects artificial, compared to other traditions and tendencies reaching back closer to the period of spoken Biblical Hebrew.
- B. The *Leningrad Codex*, which dates to approximately the same time as the Aleppo codex, has been claimed by Paul E. Kahle to be a product of the ben Asher *scriptorium*. However, its *colophon* says only that it was corrected from manuscripts written by ben Asher; there is no evidence that ben Asher himself ever saw it. However, the same holds true for the Aleppo Codex, which was apparently not vocalized by ben Asher himself, although a later colophon, which was added to the manuscript after his death, attributes the vocalization to him.
- C. The community of Damascus possessed a counterpart of the Aleppo Codex, known as the Damascus Pentateuch in academic circles and as the “Damascus Keter,” or “Crown of Damascus,” in traditional Jewish circles. It was also written in Israel in the 10th century, and is now kept at the National Library of Israel as “ms. Heb 5702.” It is available online here. (This should not be confused with another Damascus Keter, of medieval Spanish origin.)

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- D. The Aleppo Codex was the manuscript used by Maimonides when he set down the exact rules for writing scrolls of the Torah, *Hilkhot Sefer Torah* (“the Laws of the Torah Scroll”) in his *Mishneh Torah*. This halachic ruling gave the Aleppo Codex the seal of supreme textual authority, albeit only with regard to the type of space preceding sections (*petuhot* and *setumot*) and for the manner of the writing of the songs in the Pentateuch. “The codex which we used in these works is the codex known in Egypt, which includes 24 books, which was in Jerusalem,” he wrote. David ben Solomon ibn Abi Zimra testifies to this being the same codex that was later transferred to Aleppo.

III. Physical Description

- A. The Codex, as it presents itself now in the Israel Museum where it is kept in a vault, consists of the 294 pages delivered by the Ben-Zvi Institute, plus one full page and a section of a second one recovered subsequently. The pages are preserved unbound and written on both sides. Each page is parchment, 33 cm high by 26.5 cm wide (13 inches x 10.43 inches). In particular, only the last few pages of the Torah are extant. The ink was made of three types of gall, ground and mixed with black soot and iron sulfate.
- B. The manuscript has been restored by specialists of the Israel Museum, whose director declared that, given the Codex’s history, it is “in remarkably excellent condition.” The purple markings on the edges of the pages were found to be mold rather than fire damage.

IV. Contents

- A. When the Aleppo Codex was complete (until 1947), it followed the Tiberian textual tradition in the order of its books, similar to the Leningrad Codex, and which also matches the later tradition of Sephardi biblical manuscripts. The Torah and the Nevi’im appear in the same order found in most printed Hebrew Bibles, but the order for the books for Ketuvim differs markedly. In the Aleppo Codex, the order of the Ketuvim is Books of Chronicles, Psalms, Book of Job, Book of Proverbs, Book of Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Book of Lamentations, Book of Esther, Book of Daniel, and Book of Ezra and Book of Nehemiah.
- B. The current text is missing all of the Pentateuch to the Book of Deuteronomy 28.17; II Kings 14.21–18.13; Book of Jeremiah 29.9–31.33; 32.2–4, 9–11, 21–24; Book of Amos 8.12–Book of Micah 5.1; So 3.20–Za 9.17; II Chronicles 26.19–35.7; Book of Psalms 15.1–25.2 (MT enumeration); Song of Songs 3.11 to the end; all of Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, and Ezra-Nehemiah.

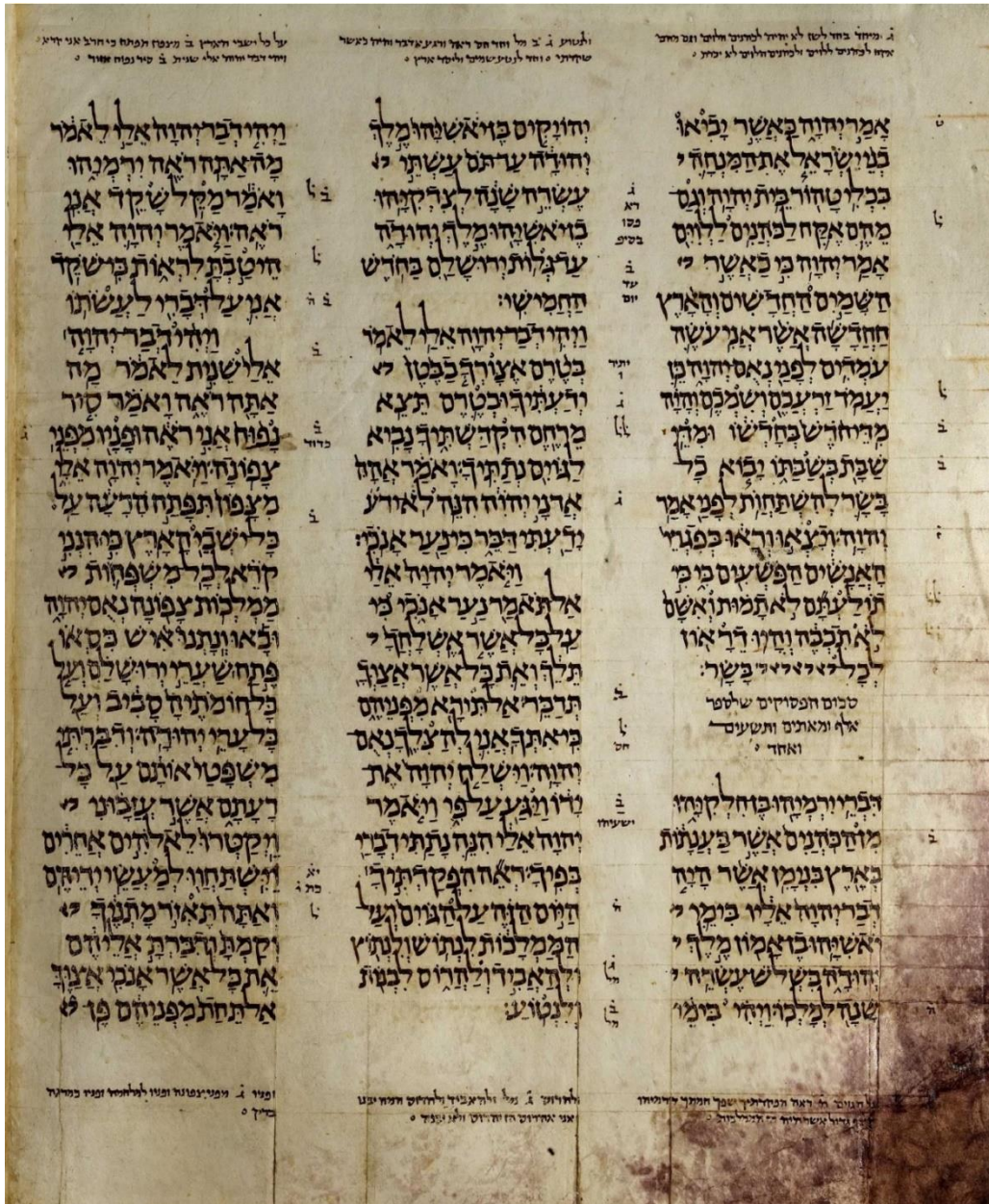
V. Image of a Page from Jeremiah

A. On-line high-resolution .pdf images can be found here:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1_Aleppo_Codex_FULL_high-resolution.pdf

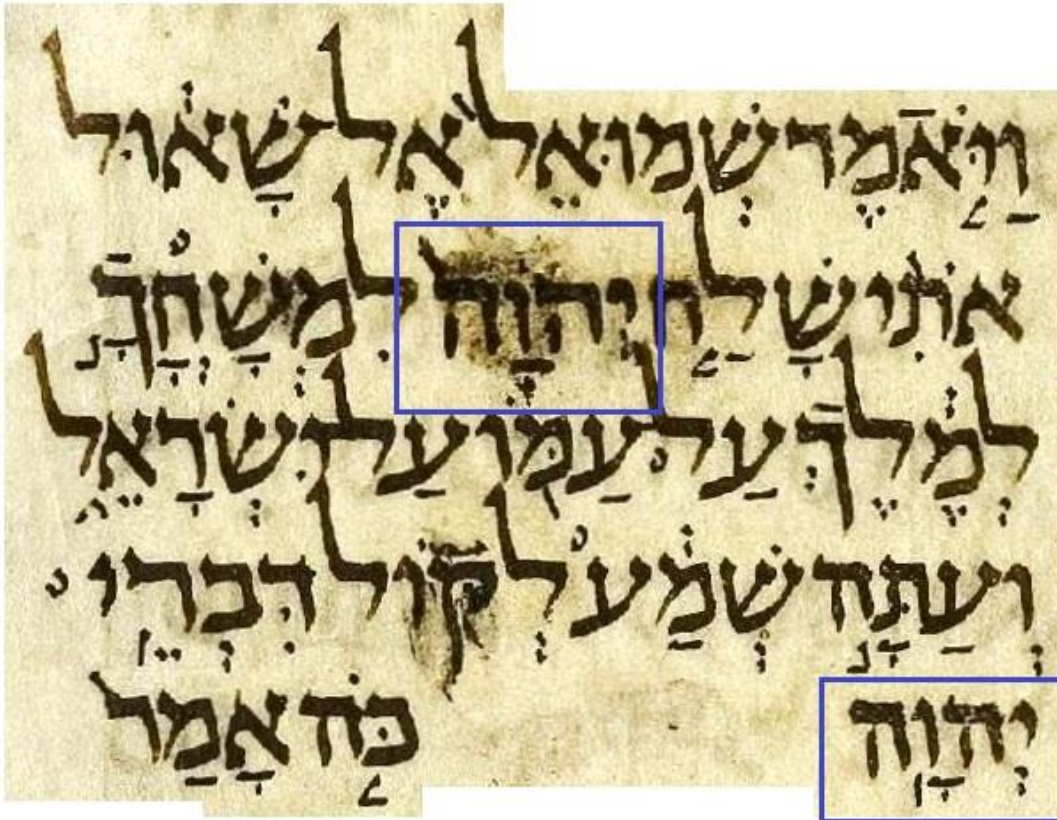
B. Program to search, study, and read the Aleppo Codex is located here:

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/hebrew-bible/the-aleppo-codex-online/>

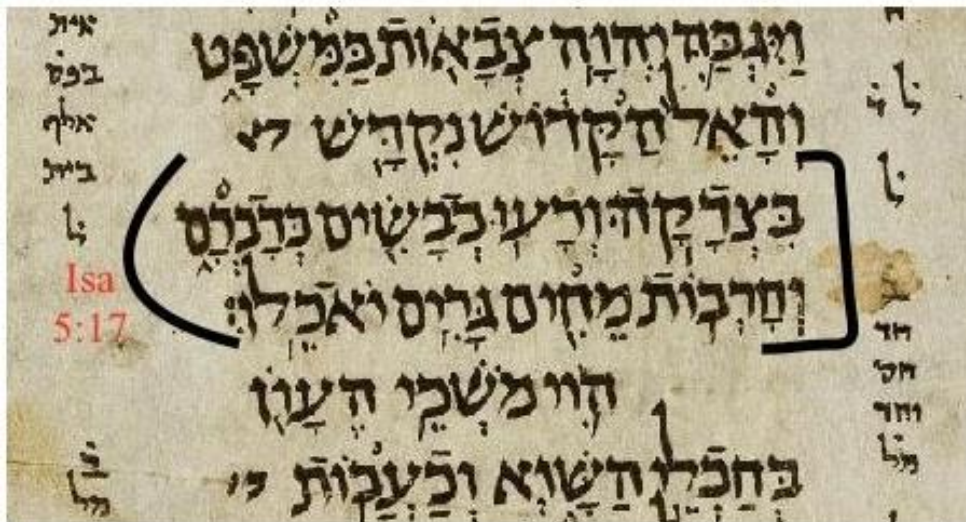


VI. Enlargement of the Text

A. Can you identify the word in the blue rectangle?



B. Isaiah 5:17 in the Aleppo



VII. Some Information About the Dead Sea Scrolls

- A. From *wiki*
- B. The Dead Sea Scrolls (also the Qumran Caves Scrolls) are ancient Jewish and Hebrew religious manuscripts first found in 1947 at the Qumran Caves in what was then Mandatory Palestine, near Ein Feshkha in the West Bank, on the northern shore of the Dead Sea. Dating back to between the 3rd century BCE and the 1st century CE, the Dead Sea Scrolls are considered one of the most important finds in the history of archaeology, and have great historical, religious, and linguistic significance because they include the oldest surviving manuscripts of entire books later included in the Bible canon, along with deuterocanonical and extra-biblical manuscripts which preserve evidence of the diversity of religious thought in late Second Temple Judaism, while at the same times casting new light on the emergence of Christianity and of Rabbinic Judaism. Most of the scrolls are held by the State of Israel in the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum, whereas some of the scrolls had been taken to Jordan and are now displayed at The Jordan Museum in Amman. Ownership of the scrolls, however, is also claimed by the State of Palestine.
- C. Many thousands of written fragments have been discovered in the Dead Sea area. They represent the remnants of larger manuscripts damaged by natural causes or through human interference, with the vast majority holding only small scraps of text. However, a small number of well-preserved, almost intact manuscripts have survived – fewer than a dozen among those from the Qumran Caves. Researchers have assembled a collection of 981 different manuscripts – discovered in 1946/47 and in 1956 – from 11 caves. The 11 Qumran Caves lie in the immediate vicinity of the Hellenistic-period Jewish settlement at Khirbet Qumran in the eastern Judean Desert, in the West Bank. The caves are located about one mile (1.6 kilometers) west of the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, whence they derive their name. Archaeologists have long associated the scrolls with the ancient Jewish sect called the Essenes, although some recent interpretations have challenged this connection and argue that priests in Jerusalem, or Zadokites, or other unknown Jewish groups wrote the scrolls.
- D. Most of the texts use Hebrew, with some written in Aramaic (for example the Son of God Text; in different regional dialects, including Nabataean), and a few in Greek. Discoveries from the Judean Desert add Latin (from Masada) and Arabic (from Khirbet al-Mird) texts. Most of the texts are written on parchment, some on papyrus, and one on copper. Scholarly consensus dates the scrolls from the last three centuries BCE and the first century CE, though manuscripts from associated Judean Desert sites are dated as early as the 8th century BCE and as late as the 11th century CE. Scholarly consensus dates the Qumran Caves Scrolls from the last three centuries BCE to the first century CE. Bronze coins found at the same sites form a series beginning with John Hyrcanus (in office 135–104 BCE) and continuing until the period of the First Jewish–Roman War (66–73 CE), supporting the radiocarbon and paleographic dating of the scrolls.
- E. Image of the area where the scrolls were found

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F. Image of a scroll



Lesson 24: Biblical Aramaic

Biblical Aramaic

(Wikipedia) Biblical Aramaic is the form of Aramaic that is used in the books of Daniel and Ezra in the Hebrew Bible. It should not be confused with the Aramaic paraphrases, explanations and expansions of the Hebrew scriptures.

During the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, which began around 600 BCE, the language spoken by the Jews started to change from Hebrew to Aramaic, and Aramaic square script replaced the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet. After the Achaemenid Empire annexed the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE, Aramaic became the main language of public life and administration. Darius the Great declared Imperial Aramaic to be the official language of the western half of his empire in 500 BCE, and it is that Imperial Aramaic that forms the basis of Biblical Aramaic.

Biblical Hebrew was gradually reduced to the status of a liturgical language and a language of theological learning, and the Jews of the Second Temple period that started in 516 BCE would have spoken a western form of Old Aramaic until their partial Hellenization from the 3rd century BCE and the eventual emergence of Middle Aramaic in the 3rd century CE.

As Imperial Aramaic had served as a lingua franca throughout the Ancient Near East from the second half of the 8th century BCE to the end of the 4th century BCE, linguistic contact with even the oldest stages of Biblical Hebrew, the main language of the Hebrew Bible, is easily accounted for.

Aramaic and Hebrew

Biblical Hebrew is the main language of the Hebrew Bible. Aramaic accounts for only about 250 verses out of a total of over 23,000. Biblical Aramaic is closely related to Hebrew, as both are in the Northwest Semitic language family. Some obvious similarities and differences are listed below:

Similarities

Hebrew and Aramaic have simplified the inflections of the noun, adjective and verb. These are more highly inflected in classical Arabic, Babylonian and Ugaritic.

Differences

- The definite article is a suffixed -ā (א) in Aramaic (an emphatic or determined state), but a prefixed h- (ה) in Hebrew.
- Aramaic is not a Canaanite language and so did not experience the Canaanite vowel shift from * ā to ō.
- In Aramaic, the preposition dalet functions as a conjunction and is often used instead of the construct to indicate the genitive/possessive relationship.

Sound changes

Proto-Semitic	Hebrew	Aramaic
ð, ð	ז	ז
z	ז	
t	ת	
θ	שׁ	ת
ś	שׁ	
š	שׁ	
s	ס	
θ	צ	ט
ś	צ	
š	צ	ק. ע

Undisputed occurrences in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 31:47 – translation of a Hebrew placename, Jegar-Sahadutha Strong’s #H3026
 Proverbs 31:2 – the Aramaic word bar is used instead of the usual Hebrew ben, (both meaning “son”).
 Jeremiah 10:11 – a single sentence denouncing idolatry occurs in the middle of a Hebrew text.
 Daniel 2:4b–7:28 – five stories about Daniel and his colleagues, and an apocalyptic vision.
 Ezra 4:8–6:18 and 7:12–26 – quotations of documents from the 5th century BCE on the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Truthonlybible.com

Aramaic is also important for New Testament studies, as several direct quotes from Jesus and others are preserved in the original Aramaic that was spoken by Palestinian Jews of the Second Temple period. New Testament verses which include Aramaic words transliterated by Greek letters are: Matt 5:22; 27:46; Mark 5:41; 7:34; 10:51; 14:36; John 1:42; 20:16; Acts 9:36, 40; Rom 8:15; 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 4:6.

In the Old Testament, four verses make a direct reference to the Aramaic language: 2 Kings 18:26, Ezra 4:7, Isaiah 36:11, and Daniel 2:4. Each of these verses calls Aramaic “Aramaic” (אַרְמֵיתָא, an adverbial form of אַרְמֵי), though this used to be translated as “Syrian” or “Chaldee” in English. Aramaic is called “Hebrew” (Ἑβραϊκή or Ἑβραϊστί) in the New Testament, since it was the tongue of the Hebrews (John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16; Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14). Some newer translations render the Greek word for “Hebrew” in these verses as “Aramaic,” which recognizes that these verses refer to the language we now call Aramaic.



The Various Forms of Aramaic

Early Aramaic alphabet

The Early Aramaic alphabet was developed sometime during the late 10th or early 9th century BC and replaced Assyrian cuneiform as the main writing system of the Assyrian empire.

ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
ḥēth	zain	waw	hē	dālath	gāmal	bēth	āalph
ḥ	z	v	h	d	g	b	ʾ
ע	ס	נ	מ	ל	כ	י	ט
'ē	semkath	nun	mim	lāmadh	kāph	yudh	ṭēth
'	s	n	m	l	k	y	ṭ
		ת	ש	ר	ק	צ	פ
		tau	shin	rēsh	qoph	ṣādhē	pē
		t	sh	r	q	ṣ	p

Imperial Aramaic alphabet

This version of the Aramaic alphabet dates from the 5th century BC and was used to write Imperial Aramaic, the standardised and official language of the Archaemenid Empire. It was adapted to write Hebrew during the 5th century BC, and the modern version shown below is still used to write Neo-Aramaic dialects.

𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈
ḥēth	zain	waw	hē	dālath	gāmal	bēth	āalph
[ħ]	[z]	[w/o:/u:]	[h]	[d/ð]	[g/ɣ]	[b/v]	[ʔ/a:/e:]
𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐
'ē	semkath	nun	mim	lāmadh	kāph	yudh	ṭēth
[ʕ]	[s]	[n]	[m]	[l]	[k/x]	[j/i:/e:]	[tʕ]
		𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔	𐤕	𐤖
		tau	shin	rēsh	qoph	ṣādhē	pē
		[t/θ]	[ʃ]	[r]	[q]	[sʕ]	[p/f]

Square script for Aramaic

𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈
ḥet	zayin	waw	he	dalat	gammal	beth	'alaph
[ħ/x]	[z]	[w]	[h]	[d]	[g]	[b]	[ʔ]
𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐
'ayin	semkath	nun	mim	lammadh	kaph	yudh	ṭet
[ʕ]	[s]	[n]	[m]	[l]	[k]	[j]	[tʕ]
		𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔	𐤕	𐤖
		taw	shin	resh	qoph	ṣadhe	pe
		[t]	[ʃ]	[r]	[q]	[sʕ]	[p]