1-1-2000

OT 501 Concise Hebrew (and Comprehensive Hebrew I)

Michael D. Matlock

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"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has commanded us to read the holy writings."

Masecheth Soferim, ch. XIV

Personal Welcome
Shalom! I am Michael Matlock, your professor and colleague in the learning process. I am excited about our collaborative course this semester because I know that we will gain insights into this wonderful language through which God chose to reveal himself and his relationship to his creation.

Many of you are anxious about taking Biblical Hebrew, I am sure. Let me tell you, although Hebrew seems strange compared to Indo-European languages, learning Hebrew is a fun and rewarding language if you diligently try to assimilate the peculiarities of the language.

Please give me a typed copy of a brief profile of yourself (limited to 100 words) by the second day of class so that I can get to know each of you better. By the way, you may discover some things about me by accessing my bio on the Internet at the following web address (www.asburyseminary.edu/exl/people/faculty/matlock.htm). Let me encourage you to sign up for an email account in the Media Center of Asbury Seminary; this is one of the ways you can correspond with your colleagues and me during and after the course.

Course Description
This course introduces you to Biblical Hebrew for purposes of exegetical work in Christian ministry. Thus, every type of Christian ministry can be enhanced if the goals of this course are achieved. Particular emphasis is given to inductive learning of the fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew, the use of standard exegetical tools, and the Bible study software available.

In other words, I will introduce the essentials of Hebrew grammar and much of the essential syntax; and in conjunction with our introduction to exegetical tools, you will gain dexterity understanding the expression and text of the Hebrew Bible and hopefully a greater love for the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God.

Course Objectives
1. To analyze properly Biblical Hebrew words through the learning of elementary phonology
2. To determine the range of grammatical functions and choose the most appropriate one(s) by knowing the changes in word formation (morphology)
3. To interpret the interrelations of Biblical Hebrew words (syntax)
4. To pronounce correctly and employ basic reading skills and translation of Hebrew texts
5. To distinguish the basics of Biblical Hebrew prose and poetry
6. To gain facility using a standard Hebrew lexicon such as Brown, Driver, and Briggs (BDB) and to become familiar with reference grammars such as Gesenius/Kautzsch/Cowley (GKC), Joüon/Muraoka (JM), and Waltke/O’Connor (W-O’C) in order to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures
7. To discover how to use an exegetical Bible software program for Hebrew study
8. To recognize and do a befitting word study in Biblical Hebrew
9. To memorize a few common vocabulary words in the Hebrew Bible (approximately 130 words)

Beyond the above course objectives, I will be trying to cultivate in you a passionate love for the study of God's word in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Many problems students encounter in Concise Hebrew are problems in terminology. Because this is a language course, I will be using grammatical terms that you may vaguely remember from your years in high school English classes but have since forgotten. Many of the terms I will employ have a basis in all languages, so first familiarizing yourself with the terms in English will certainly assist you in understanding Hebrew. If your English grammar is a bit rusty, let me encourage you to read a short book that I have found helpful and could help you "brush-up" on your understanding of the English language (Madeline Semmelmeyer, The New Webster's Grammar Guide, Berkley: New York, 1991.). Also, many internet sites are designed to help acquaint persons with English lingo and function (e.g. www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar).

Disclaimer Regarding Required Resources

Please keep in mind that the overall expense of the five required resources can be retrieved and their benefit further realized in the majority of other Old Testament classes offered at Asbury Seminary.

One of the required resources for this class is BibleWorks ("BW's," currently $299). This exegetical tool is required for two primary reasons: First, one of the primary objectives of this class is to introduce Bible software which will enable you to employ insights from Biblical Hebrew for your ministry; BWs is one of the best programs to facilitate this purpose. You will be given some "hands-on" assignments which can be completed with the use of BWs. Second, the purchase of BWs is an investment for additional classes. When you take other biblical study courses at Asbury Seminary, you should find this program very useful in your study (e.g. Inductive Biblical Studies, Exegetical Greek and Hebrew); moreover, BWs is required extensively in the Concise Greek course.

You do not have to purchase BWs because Asbury's B. L. Fisher Library has BWs loaded for your use on twenty-four computers. Take advantage of the free use of this program throughout this course and all during your graduate training in Wilmore.
Note: If you already own a Bible software program that fully "parses" (that is, explains the forms of) Hebrew words, then you may seek permission from me to use it in this class.

Required Texts

   Along with class lectures, you will be asked to read selected portions and complete selected exercises.

   Even though this dictionary or lexicon was published around the beginning of this century, it still provides a wealth of information per the expense. You will probably agree its format needs revising. We will learn how to use BDB throughout the course. I have designed worksheets to accomplish this task.

   Referred to as BHS, this is the Hebrew Bible reproduced from the oldest complete manuscript of the Old Testament, Codex Leningradensis (ca. 1008 A.D.), without significant alteration.

   This book is designed to assist a person determine the significance of the Hebrew text and to craft a way to communicate its significance for ministry. We will read the portions of the book that relate to word study methodology, syntactical issues, and the narrative/poetry issues of the Hebrew Bible.

5. BibleWorks 4.0 Hermenuetika, Big Fork, MT.
   This software program will assist us in spotting grammatical forms of Hebrew words (also called parsing) which we could not otherwise understand and provides an abridged Hebrew dictionary (Brown, Driver, and Briggs) for quick reference. It is also a powerful tool for doing Hebrew word studies functioning as a concordance to find all usages of a word and providing a quick and easy way to see how the recurrence of a word functions in context.
   *WARNING: BWs is a tool for ministry, but if your desire is to take additional Hebrew based courses take some precautionary measures in using this resource. Always try to push yourself to parse and translate as much Hebrew as possible before going to BWs for parsing help.

Recommended Texts & Software

You do not need to buy these Hebrew tools; however each one has value for gaining further competence with the Hebrew language and thought-world.

Kohlenberger's text is the best interlinear available (and one of only a few, in contrast to Greek interlinear) and can give you a sense of how the Hebrew is translated with an English "word for word" translation beneath the Hebrew and the NIV translation on the side margin.

*WARNING:* An interlinear is a tool for ministry, but if your desire is to take additional Hebrew based courses take some precautionary measures in using this resource. Always try to push yourself to parse and translate as much Hebrew as possible before consulting an interlinear for translation assistance.


This is the most up-to-date and comprehensive reference grammar. It was written by the French biblical studies scholar, Joüon, in 1923 and subsequently revised and translated by the Japanese biblical studies scholar, Muraoka, in 1991. It is clearly written and it has a thorough section on syntax, a section often neglected in Hebrew grammars. It is full of useful insights and information for anyone with a basic knowledge of Biblical Hebrew grammar.


This resource parses every Hebrew word in the Old Testament verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and book by book and gives the appropriate page where the word is found in the *Brown, Driver, and Briggs* lexicon. As mentioned above, the BibleWorks software program will also parse all Hebrew words, but Owens' work does so in a printed form.

*WARNING:* *Owens* is a tool for ministry, but if your desire is to take additional Hebrew based courses take some precautionary measures in using this resource. Always try to push yourself to parse and translate as much Hebrew as possible before going to *Owens* for parsing help.


This wonderful text contains virtually all the "ins and outs" of Hebrew syntax. In comparison, Williams' text is like a "reader's digest" version of Waltke-O'Connor. W-O’C is much easier to comprehend at the intermediate Hebrew level.


This book is a brief introduction to Hebrew syntax. Williams is too brief at many points and uses many terms for syntax that are now outdated; nevertheless, his text continues to be useful for the beginning Hebrew student.

A indicates that the resource is on the reserve shelf in the library under "Matlock." Also, another good beginning Hebrew grammar is on the reserve shelf: Page H. Kelley, *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).
Evaluation

Attendance Policy:

When studying a language, it is absolutely necessary that a student keep pace with the class. If a student falls behind, it can be disastrous. Therefore, each student is allowed one absence without penalty. **However, every absence (for any reason) beyond one will result in the loss of one grade increment in the final grade (e.g. from a B to a B-).**

*Attendance throughout the course is expected; persons absent for more than two sessions (days) of the course will not be eligible for a passing grade.*

If the policy raises a question for you, please see me the first day of class.
Approximate Grade Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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Your grade is calculated on the following factors:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments &amp; Readings</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes – Celebration of S. L.</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Exams – Celebration of B. L.</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Assignments & Readings** – 15% of course grade

Cf. the "Course Outline" below for assignments.

Collaborating with your colleagues should be and will be a significant part of your learning experience. Thus, I strongly encourage you to work with peers outside of class after you have first independently worked on the assignments. Collaboration is good, but wholesale co-optation is not.

Full participation and engagement is essential in order to obtain the learning goals of this course, so please be prepared for class discussions. At my discretion, I will grade the assignments in order to determine that work is being done or choose not to grade certain assignments.

**NOTE:** Late exercises & worksheets will be accepted, but penalized 25% for each calendar day late and receive no comments.

Please stay current with your reading. Students will be asked to turn in a reading report at the end of the semester for all assigned reading.

A key factor of this part of your grade is your attitude and affectation towards the material in this course. It goes without saying, but bears repeating, that a large majority of your success in understanding Hebrew is achieved by a positive attitude and lots of motivation.

2. **Celebrations of Small Learning (Quizzes)** – 25% of course grade

You will be quizzed on vocabulary from the list given to you by the instructor. We will memorize approximately 135 words. The quizzes are comprehensive; thus you are responsible for remembering any prior vocabulary after it has been introduced. Quizzes will have approx. ten words each on them.

In addition to vocabulary quizzes, you will also be quizzed on certain grammatical forms throughout the course. For example, there will be quizzes on the consonants, vowels,
qal perfect, & qal imperfect paradigms (cf. the "Course Outline" below). If other quizzes are determined to be necessary, they will be prepared by the instructor. Quizzes will normally be taken the first 5 to 10 minutes of class on scheduled days. You are allowed to make-up one quiz by scheduling a time with the instructor.

3. Celebrations of Big Learning (4 Exams) – 60% of course grade
   After the completion of each module of major portions of grammar you will take a exam. All exams assume prior knowledge from the course and are thus accumulative.

General Procedures
Some general notes about our course procedure are necessary:
1. During my office hours (M-F 1:20-2:30 p.m.), I will be glad to talk to you about class concerns. All you need to do is go to the Administration building and come to my office, AD 304B, on the third floor. If your schedule does not permit you to see me during my normal office hours, please schedule an appointment with me.
   Another option of reaching me is via email. See the top of page one for the address.
   If you have an urgent question, please feel free to call me on campus. If I do not answer the phone, leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible.
2. If you want a tutor, please talk to me and I can recommend some people for you.
3. Put your name and Seminary Post Office (SPO) box number on the back of everything you turn in to me.

Further Study in the Hebrew Language
1. After you complete the objectives in OT 501 you will be ready for a second semester of Biblical Hebrew (OT 502) which is designed to give you a mastery of beginning Hebrew and make you more of a complete Hebraist. It is offered two or three times a year in various semesters. Then, upon completion of OT 502, a student may take any Hebrew exegesis course and other Semitic language courses (e.g. Biblical Aramaic).
2. OT 501 prepares you to take any upper level OT Inductive Biblical Study course.
3. I will encourage you to read daily from the Hebrew Scriptures and participate in weekly Hebrew reading groups that meet on campus in the fall and spring semesters.
4. Asbury Seminary has a chapter of a Hebrew honor society entitled Eta Beta Rho (a.k.a. HBR & ῬΦ]). Students who earn a combined grade of 3.0 or higher after taking both OT 501 & 502 with the intent to complete an exegesis class or an OT 700 class are eligible for membership into the society.

Course Procedure & Outline
During our class sessions I will present new material and most days we will read a selected biblical passage, so always bring your Hebrew Bibles!
We will review portions of the assignments virtually everyday. I will put the answers to assignments on the reserve shelf in the library.

Each module will be fully explained when assigned by the instructor. Note especially that each assignment listed according to Seow's page numbers will be clarified at the appropriate time. For some modules, other reading & hands-on assignments will be added at the time it is formally assigned.

**Course Outline**

**Module 1: Sights and Sounds of Biblical Hebrew**  
July, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Quiz*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>Consonants</td>
<td><strong>Seow, 4</strong></td>
<td>___</td>
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<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>Consonants</td>
<td><strong>Seow, 4</strong></td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Semitic Language Introduction</td>
<td>___</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Vowels &amp; Vowel Letters</td>
<td><strong>Seow, 15-16</strong></td>
<td>Vowels</td>
<td>___</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>___</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Narrative/Poetry as Literature</td>
<td><strong>Chisholm, 149-184</strong></td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>___</td>
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***Requirement of watching the BibleWorks video & completing a worksheet is due by July 12

**Module 2: Basics of the Hebrew Noun & Its Accessories – Morphology**  
July, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Quiz*</th>
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<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>Basics of the Nouns</td>
<td><strong>Chisholm, 57-61, 64-66</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seow, 22 &amp; 36-37</strong></td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Three Noun Declensions</td>
<td><strong>Chisholm, 66-70, 72-75</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seow, 62-63; 76-77</strong></td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Definite Art., Preps., Conjs, &amp; Adjs.</td>
<td>Chisholm, 66-70, 72-75</td>
<td>Adjective Wkst</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Intro. to BDB</td>
<td>&quot;How to Read BDB . . .&quot;</td>
<td>BDB Worksheet #1</td>
<td>___</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>Construct State</td>
<td><strong>Chisholm, 62-64</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seow, 126-28</strong></td>
<td>___</td>
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<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td><strong>Chisholm, 70-72</strong></td>
<td>Noun Construct State Wkst</td>
<td>___</td>
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<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>___</td>
<td><strong>Seow, 102-03, 114-15 &amp; 143-44</strong></td>
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</table>
## Module 3: General Introduction & Conjugating the Hebrew Verb & Particles – Morphology

**July, 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Quiz*</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Seow</em>, 245-46</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Imperf. Verbal Aspects (Part 2)</td>
<td><em>Chisholm</em>, 66-70, 76-78, 103-07</td>
<td><em>Seow</em>, 86-88, 253 &amp; 262</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Verbal Stems</td>
<td><em>Chisholm</em>, 78-85</td>
<td><em>Kelley</em>, 121-23 &amp; 148-49</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Particles</td>
<td><em>Chisholm</em>, 113-118</td>
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<td>Vav-Consec./ Coord. Rel.Wkst</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to Reference Grammars</td>
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<td><strong>Exam #3</strong></td>
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## Module 4: Word Studies

**July, 2000**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Quiz*</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word Study Method &amp; Resources</td>
<td><em>Chisholm</em>, 31-56</td>
<td>Practice Wkst</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction to OT Commentaries and other Reference Resources</td>
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<td><strong>Exam #4</strong></td>
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**Vocabulary Quizzes** – After exam #1, there will be a vocabulary quiz each day. Cf. the vocabulary list handout given to you by the instructor.

**Readings** will be assigned from *Seow* throughout the course.

**Copies of the BibleWorks video are located in the Library Computer Lab. For instructional purposes, you may download an outline of the file "Hand - Intro to BibleWorks" from the folder, "Matlock," on the "T-drive". Consult the staff of the Computer Lab for assistance.**
Select Bibliography

Elementary Biblical Hebrew Grammars

Advanced Biblical Hebrew Grammars

Hebrew Lexicons

Hebrew Lexical Helps
**Hebrew Analytical Lexicons**

1. Accordance 3.0. Oaktree, Altamonte Springs, FL. (Macintosh based)
2. BibleWorks 4.0. Hermenuetika, Big Fork, MT. (Windows based)

**Hebrew Interliners**


**Hebrew Word Study Tools**


**Hebrew Concordances**

1. Accordance 3.0. Oaktree, Altamonte Springs, FL. (Macintosh based)
2. BibleWorks 4.0. Hermenuetika, Big Fork, MT. (Windows based)

**Hebrew Vocabulary Aids**

1. Hebrew Tutor. Parsons Technology, Hiawatha, IA.