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OT 501 Concise Hebrew (and Comprehensive Hebrew I)

Michael D. Matlock

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Concise Hebrew - OT 501
(& Comprehensive Hebrew I)

July 1999 – A Three Hour Course
Instructor: Michael D. Matlock
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Office Phone: 606.858.2153
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 1:15-2:15 P.M.

Personal Welcome
I am Michael Matlock, your professor and colleague in the learning process. I have many interests and hobbies which I enjoy doing (e.g. riding my bicycle, playing golf, "relaxing" by watching sports), but I love to teach Hebrew and continue to learn other facets of the language that reveal insights into God's word. So, 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 simply say, although Hebrew is very different than any Indo-European language and thus has many challenges, Hebrew is also a fun and rewarding language to learn if you diligently try to assimilate what you do not comprehend the first time around.

Please share a brief profile of yourself (limited to 100 words) and give me a typed copy by the second day of class so that we can all get to know one another better. We will read several of your profiles at the beginning of each class. 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.

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).

Encouragement
You are probably already familiar with a number of Hebrew words because of their import through the English Bible such as amen, hallelujah, adonai, cherubim, and seraphim. Many of the Biblical Hebrew names are common words, such as Esau which means "ruddy, red;" Noah which means "rest;" Seth which means "appointed;" and David which means "beloved." You might also know the traditional Hebrew greeting shalom is in fact far more than "hello" or "peace," containing a whole word picture of health, welfare, aid and friendship. So take heart, you are well on your way!

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 most of the essential syntax; and in conjunction with our introduction to exegetical tools, you will have 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 become familiar with a standard Hebrew lexicon such as Brown, Driver, and Briggs (BDB) and to gain facility using 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 study in Hebrew
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 160 words)
10. To discover the basics of Old Testament textual criticism

Many of the course objectives may appear pedantic to you, but I assure you they are very important. But, let us suppose for a moment that you meet all objectives with flying colors, yet have not developed a passionate love for the study of God's word in Hebrew. Then, I will have partially failed as your instructor. I know that much of the burden is on you, but I want you to know that I share much of the responsibility for your development of a love for interpreting God's word and teaching and/or preaching God's word more effectively.

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.).
Disclaimer Regarding Required & Recommended Resources

You will observe there are five required resources for this course. Please keep in mind that their overall expense can be retrieved and their benefit further realized in the majority of other Old Testament classes offered at Asbury Seminary.

One of the recommended purchases for this class is BibleWorks ($299), a significant outlay of money. This exegetical tool is recommended 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; BibleWorks is one of the best programs to facilitate this purpose. You will be given some "hand-on" assignments which can be completed with the use of BibleWorks. Second, the purchase of BibleWorks is an investment for additional classes. When you take other biblical study courses with Asbury Seminary, you will find this program very useful in your study (e.g. Inductive Biblical Studies, Exegetical Greek and Hebrew); moreover, BibleWorks is required extensively in the Concise Greek course.

Fortunately, the Asbury Seminary Media Center has BibleWorks 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


This is the foundation text for this course. We will systematically proceed through it in each module. It contains lessons which will help us to know all the essentials of Biblical Hebrew grammar. A major advantage of this text is that it is written in a personal dialogical way.


Even though this dictionary or lexicon was published around the beginning of this century, it still provides the most 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 worksheets to accomplish this task.


This is the Hebrew Bible reproduced from the oldest complete manuscript of the Old Testament, Codex Leningradensis (ca. 1008 A.D.), without significant alteration. We will read it throughout the course as we gain the appropriate knowledge.


This is a basic introduction to many of the peculiarities of the Hebrew Bible. Scott provides an English key to the Latin text critical notes at the very bottom of the page which were added by scholars this century who edited BHS and to the Aramaic side
marginal notes (a.k.a. "massorah") which were put there by Medieval Jewish rabbis who created the vowel and accent system of the Hebrew Bible. Scott also explains many other features of the Hebrew Bible that will help you to understand how it has been put together through hundreds of years.


This book is a brief introduction to Hebrew syntax (how words are put together). We will utilize this book toward the last one-third portion of the course. Williams is too brief at many points, but the alternative books pertaining to syntax are of massive proportion or too expensive. Williams uses many terms for syntax that are now outdated; nevertheless, his text continues to be useful for the beginning Hebrew student.

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.


This text is helpful to do rapid reading of Hebrew after you complete this semester of Hebrew and even more so if you take another semester of Biblical Hebrew. Of course, speeds will vary upon individual skill and knowledge of Hebrew.

2. 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 provide 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: BibleWorks 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 BibleWorks for parsing help.


Kohlenberger's text is the best interlinear available (and one of only a few, in contrast to Greek interlinears) and can give you a sense of how the Hebrew is translated in the NIV translation. *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 the 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 which you are purchasing is like a "reader's digest" version of Waltke-O'Connor. If you read and understand 50 percent of this text, you will have at least an intermediate knowledge of Biblical Hebrew.

A indicates that the resource is on the reserve shelf in the library under "Matlock." Also, two beginning Hebrew grammars which have been used recently to learn Hebrew here at ATS are on the reserve shelf: Page H. Kelley,  *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar*,  (Grand Rapids:  Eerdmans, 1992) and C. L. Seow,  *A Grammar For Biblical Hebrew*,  Rev. Ed.  (Nashville:  Abingdon, 1995).

**Evaluation**

**Attendance Policy:**

Note carefully, only one absense (= one day) is allowable in this intensive course without a penalty. If you are absent for more than one day for whatever reason (excuse or no excuse), please note carefully that your final grade will penalized. For example, if you have two absenses and your final grade would be a B+, then it will move down to a B. If you have three absenses and your final grade would be a B+, then it will move down to a B-. Etc. Etc. If you have any questions, please see me the first day of class.
Approximate Grade Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your grade is calculated on the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Assignments (approx. 13) &amp; Readings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1 – Celebration of B. L.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2 – Celebration of B. L.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #3 – Celebration of B. L.</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Quizzes (approx. 10) – Celebration of S. L.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Class Participation** – 5% of course grade

   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. **Assignments & Readings** - 20% of course grade

   We will plod through our main text, *Bornemann*, in each module, covering from 1 to 3 lessons per module and complete the exercises at the end of the lessons. In addition, for some modules, I will create worksheets designed for you to achieve the objectives of that module.

   You will submit your responses/answers to the lessons and worksheets to your peer teams in the class. Teams will vary each week, so you will rotate with peers and work with different people in the class. Collaborating with your colleagues should be and will be a significant part of your learning experience.

   Full participation and engagement is essential in order to obtain the learning goals of this course, so please be prepared ready to discuss with your team members and instructor. 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 5% each calendar day and receive no comments.

   **ALERT**: You must watch my BibleWorks video, located in the Media Center, and complete the associated worksheet before July 13. You may download an outline of the presentation from my folder, "Matlock," on the "T-drive" in the ATS Media Center. Consult the staff of the Media Center for assistance.
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.

3. **Celebrations of Big Learning (3 Exams) – 60% of course grade**

   After the completion of several modules of major portions of grammar and at the end of the course, you will take a exam. The 2nd and 3rd Exams are comprehensive, so prior knowledge and understanding should not be discarded. See above for the value of each exam.

4. **Celebrations of Small Learning (Quizzes) - 15% of course grade**

   Starting in lesson 5 and continuing through 13 of Bornemann, you will be quizzed on vocabulary. We will memorize approximately 160 words. The quizzes are comprehensive; thus you are responsible for remembering any prior vocabulary after it has been introduced.

   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 qal perfect & qal imperfect paradigms (cf. Bornemann, lessons 10 & 11). A few additional quizzes will be announced later in the course.

   Quizzes will be taken the first 10 minutes of class on scheduled days. Cf. the Course Schedule below for dates of quizzes. You are allowed to make-up two quizzes by scheduling a time with the instructor.

   All quizzes are usually worth 10 points a piece. Your combined points will be totaled and averaged to form 15% of your total grade for the course.

**General Procedures**

Some general notes about our course procedure are necessary:

1. During my office hours (Monday-Friday, 1:15-2:15 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 office on the third floor, number AD 304B. If your schedule will not permit you to see me during my normal office hours, please see me or call me to schedule an appointment.

   If you have an urgent question, please feel free to call me on campus. If I do not answer the phone, leave a message. I could be on another phone line, and if so, I will return your call promptly.

   Another option of reaching me is via email. See the top of page one for the address.

2. My tutoring assistant during this semester is Nancy Heeren. She will be available at various times in the afternoons and evenings. Nancy also works part-time in the library at the circulation desk; please call her (Library # is 858.2233) or go by and see her for a tutoring appointment. She is available for your assistance, so please make use of her knowledge of Hebrew and availability.

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 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. HBP or \( \beta \)). Students who earn a 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 & Schedule

Our class sessions will be a combination of presenting new material and reviewing the assignments. Most days we will read a selected biblical passage, so always bring your Hebrew Bibles!!

Each module will be fully explained when assigned by the instructor. For some modules, other reading & hands-on assignments will be added at the time you receive the module.

You will note that I have not put the actual dates of the modules, except for the first one. Because the pace of every class varies, I will assign the modules as we move throughout the course.

Module 1: Sights and Sounds of Biblical Hebrew – Consonants (Part 1)
July 6, 1999
1. A brief self-profile is due July 7
2. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, Introduction & pp. 1-7
3. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, all 3 parts of assignment, pp. 6-7

Module 2: Sights and Sounds of Biblical Hebrew – Vowels & Vowel Letters (Part 2)
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 8-17
2. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, all 3 parts of assignment, pp. 10-11 & 16-17
3. Alphabet quiz; Vowel quiz
4. BibleWorks video & worksheet due July 13
Module 3: Sights and Sounds of Biblical Hebrew – Syllables (Part 3)
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 18-22
2. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, all 4 parts of assignment, pp. 21-22
3. Exam #1

Module 4: Basics of the Hebrew Noun & Potpourri of Hebrew – Morphology
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 23-40
2. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, all parts of assignment, pp. 30-31 & 39-40
   NOTE: *** (Starting with p. 40 and throughout the rest of Bornemann, you may
   omit the "Translate into Hebrew" section of the assignment.) ***
3. First Vocabulary quiz (Bornemann, pp. 29, 38-39)

Module 5: Using the Hebrew Noun Genitively & Pronominal Suffixes– Morphology
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 41-53
2. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, assignment, pp. 47-48, 52-53
3. Vocabulary quiz (Bornemann, pp. 47, 52)

Module 6: General Introduction to the Hebrew Verb, Conjugating the Verb, & "Aspects" of the Verb – Morphology
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 54-64
2. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, assignment, p. 59 & 63-64
3. Vocabulary quiz (Bornemann, pp. 58-59, 62-63)

Module 7: Aspects of the Verb – Morphology
July, 1999
1. Qal perfect quiz (Bornemann, p. 62; cf. paradigm p. 276)
2. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 65-70
3. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, assignment, pp. 68-70
4. Vocabulary quiz (Bornemann, pp. 67-68)

Module 8: Aspects of the Verb – Morphology
July, 1999
1. Qal imperfect quiz (Bornemann, p. 65; cf. paradigm p. 276)
2. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 71-77
3. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, assignment, pp. 76-77
4. Vocabulary quiz (Bornemann, p. 75)
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 78-91
2. Hands-on Assignments: Bornemann, assignment, pp. 84-85 & 91
3. Last Vocabulary quiz (Bornemann, pp. 83-84)
4. Exam #2

Module 10: Particles, Clause Analysis, Word Studies, & Introduction to Reference Grammars
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Williams, skim pp. 6-43 and read & outline the Introduction & pp. 44-101
2. Hands-on Assignments: TBA

Module 11: Introduction to Textual Criticism & Accents & Basics of Hebrew Poetry
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: Bornemann, 92-106; Scott, read & outline Preface & pp. 1-36 and skim pp. 37-87
2. Hands-on Assignments: TBA

Module 12: Reading and Translating the Hebrew Text
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: TBA
2. Hands-on Assignments: TBA

Module 13: Reading and Translating the Hebrew Text
July, 1999
1. Reading Assignments: TBA
2. Hands-on Assignments: TBA
3. Exam #3
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 Interlinear

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.