OT 501 X Survey of Biblical Hebrew

John Choi

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Welcome!

#r<a'h'-ta,w> ~yIm;V'h;-ta, ~yhil{a/ar'b' tviareb.

The above is the Hebrew text of Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." At first impression, Hebrew might seem quite strange and unusual. During the first day of my first Hebrew class, I remember that everything looked backwards, the letters were really strange, and I kept thinking that there was no way I was going to ever learn any of this...If some of you have similar feelings, I want to let you in on a secret □ you already know some Hebrew! That’s right! Words that we hear in church all the time, such as amen, hallelujah, cherubim, and seraphim are genuine Hebrew words. Many of the names we use in English are also Hebrew words - Noah means "rest;" Seth means "appointed;" David means "beloved;" Esau means "ruddy, red." You might also know that 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 and relax! You are well on your way to mastering this wonderful and beautiful language!

I am thrilled that each of you are enrolled for this class. I consider it a true privilege to be a part of this course and I am really looking forward to embarking on this journey with you all. Though the work may seem daunting now, let me encourage you by saying that all of our endeavors in this class will go towards adding a new, exciting and penetrating dimension into your understanding, teaching and preaching of the powerful, redemptive word of God. Your efforts at reading the Old Testament in its original language will reap bountiful fruit in your teaching and preaching!

One of my hopes for this class is that a great community will be built among us, and that we would be able to share in true Christian fellowship. As an initial means of introduction, please share a brief profile of yourself (around 100 words) and post it in the "OT 501 Discussion Center." You can also fill out the "Resume" in the First Class program to give us a little extra insight into who you are. Feel free to be as creative and expressive as you want!
You can check out my resume on First Class. I also have a bit longer intro at http://www.asburyseminary.edu/exl/people/faculty/choi.htm.

Course Description
This course introduces Biblical Hebrew for the purposes of exegetical work in Christian ministry. Particular emphasis is given to inductive learning of the fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew and the use of basic exegetical tools, including several types of parsing aids, which are well suited for pastoral ministry.

Course Objectives
The course objectives are as follows:
1. To analyze Biblical Hebrew words through the use of elementary phonology.
2. To determine the range of grammatical functions and choose the most appropriate one(s) by observing word formation (morphology).
3. To interpret interrelationships of Biblical Hebrew words (syntax).
4. To become familiar with a standard Hebrew lexicon such as A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon by William Holladay, and to gain facility using a beginning Hebrew grammar.
5. To discover how to use an exegetical Bible software program for study in Hebrew.
6. To learn basic exegetical skills, such as word study.
7. To memorize a few common vocabulary words in the Hebrew Bible.

Throughout all our efforts, we will develop a greater love for the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God and use our knowledge of Hebrew to reinforce all facets of our ministry. Through all of these objectives, I hope that we not only learn a new and fascinating language, but also develop a passion for the study, interpretation, teaching and preaching of the Old Testament. In this way, what we do in this class will be of secondary benefit to ministry. That is, very few pastors will want to preach on the significance of the piel stem on Sunday morning. But, having a good knowledge of the verbal stems (of which the piel is one) and other facets of Hebrew grammar allows us to read the Old Testament critically, and to exegete it without over-reliance or dependence on secondary literature. In fact, I feel that one of the most important skills to be gained from language study is the ability to not just read and copy information from commentaries, but enter into critical dialogue with them, and perhaps even to disagree with them, at times. This type of reading allows us to approach scripture on its own, without the bias that other resources might carry.

Help!
Throughout the semester, questions might come up regarding the course. For general questions about course material please feel free to post questions or discussion matters to the Course Center. If you have questions or issues that you wish to keep private, or when submitting quizzes/exams, please send them to me using the To Office icon in the Collaborative Classroom. If you prefer a telephone call, I will be available during my office hours, posted above. For urgent questions, please feel free to call me at other times, but I may not be able to talk very long at that time. In case of true emergencies, please contact me at home. If you leave a message, I will return your call in a timely fashion.

In the event that I will have to be away for an extended time, I will let you know in advance. By the same token, if you are away from the virtual classroom for an extended time (e.g.
conferences, vacations, etc.), please let me and all of your peers know, so that arrangements can be made, and also so that we can be in prayer on your behalf. You can do this by posting a message to the "OT 501 Discussion Center."

In an on-line course, many questions regarding technical matters may also arise. Thankfully, we have a great team of gracious experts who are ready and willing to answer questions ranging from computer issues to acquiring books. Please note the following people and their areas of specialty to gain the maximum benefit from them.

For technical support, please contact Andy Adams at exl_support@asburyseminay.edu or 859.858.2373

For questions and concerns related to the ExL program, please contact Amy Jo Adams at exl_coach@asburyseminary.edu or 859.858... or you can contact Kevin Osborn at exl_director@asburyseminary.edu or 859.858.2191

For library assistance, please contact the ExL reference librarian, Hannah Kirsh at Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu or 859.858.2189

For library assistance regarding book and article requests, contact Dot James at Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu.

To order textbooks or for textbook information contact Asbury's Bookstore at exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu or 859.858.4242

**Obtaining library materials and reference assistance**

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local libraries. However, if they are unavailable or inadequate, you can also obtain library books and journal articles by mail from Asbury's B. L. Fisher Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be emailed to the ExL Reference Librarian, Hannah Kirsch (Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu). Hannah will also assist ExL students with reference requests, using various online databases, or in doing research on a specific topic.

To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library□ WebPac (online catalog of the library□ holdings) or one of the journal databases available on the ExL Virtual Library web page (found in the Resource Center of your ExL classroom). Then send an email to Hannah citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to ask. Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) and the cost of shipping. Express mail services (price varies according to weight) and faxing ($1.50 for the first page and 25 cents for each additional page plus photocopy charges) are also available, but it will generally take 1-2 days from the receipt of the request for it to be processed, so it is important to plan ahead and make your requests early.

**Required Texts and Software**

You may contact a salesperson at the Asbury Seminary Bookstore for all required resources at exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu or 859.858.4242.

   This is the foundation text for this course. We will proceed through the text systematically in each module, and it will be referred to often in the lectures and assignments. The text contains lessons which will help us to know the essentials of Biblical Hebrew grammar. It is very helpful because it introduces references from the Old Testament almost immediately.


   This is the Hebrew Bible reproduced from the oldest complete manuscript of the Old Testament - Codex Leningradensis (ca. 1008 A.D.), without significant alteration. Referred to as BHS, we will read it throughout the course as we gain the appropriate knowledge. The formatting of BHS may cause some confusion to students. We'll be sure to look at all of the nuances of the Bible as time approaches.

3. BibleWorks 5.0  Hermenuetika, Big Fork, MT.

   This software program will assist us in spotting grammatical forms of Hebrew words (also called parsing), which we might not otherwise understand. It also provides an abridged Hebrew dictionary (Brown, Driver, and Briggs) for quick reference. The program is also a great concordance program, and allows for quick execution of simple and complex searches in Hebrew, Greek, English and many other languages.


   This is the basic dictionary used in this text. It has a simple and clear presentation, and is ideal for the beginning student.


   This short booklet is invaluable for explaining the masora and the critical apparatus of the BHS (the notes surrounding the Hebrew text within BHS).


   This text is a treatment of Hebrew syntax, dealing with the various functions of parts of speech in Hebrew, as well as how individual words work together to give meaning to a text. For this class, you will be given an electronic copy in the Course Center, as the text has not been published yet. I will assign specific readings from this guide as the semester progresses.

**Disclaimer Regarding Required Resources**

Concerning these texts: The prices may seem steep, at first, but please keep in mind that the texts can and will be beneficial, if not required, in the majority of other Old Testament classes offered at Asbury. The BibleWorks program is also a significant outlay of money (approx. $250). This purchase may sound unreasonable, but we feel that it is a valuable tool for several reasons. First, one of the primary objectives of this class is to introduce Bible software that will enable us to employ insights from Biblical Hebrew for ministry. BibleWorks is one of the best programs to facilitate this purpose. Second, this program will be of valuable assistance in other biblical studies/exegesis studies (in either Greek or Hebrew!) at Asbury or any other institution. In fact, you may find that you will use this
program quite often through the rest of your education here at Asbury. Therefore, the purchase of BibleWorks is an investment for this class and for the future.

Note: If you already own a program that fully "parses" (that is, explains the forms of) Hebrew words, then you may seek permission not to purchase BibleWorks by contacting me.

**Recommended Texts**

These texts are valuable resources if you wish to further your skills in Biblical Hebrew.

   This book is designed to help a student figure see the significance of the Hebrew text and to craft a way to communicate its significance.

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

   This resource parses every single Hebrew word in the Old Testament and gives the appropriate page where the word is found in the Brown, Driver, and Briggs lexicon. The same parsing information is also available through BibleWorks.

   This book, often referred to as A-B-C, is similar to Owens, except it only parses words that appear less than fifty times in the entire Old Testament. This text may be more useful in that it requires the student to memorize the more common occurrences.

   *DISCLAIMER: Owens, ABC, Bibleworks and other parsing resources are good tools for ministry, but, again, 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 these resources 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□ is much easier to comprehend at the intermediate Hebrew level.

This dictionary, published in the beginning of the 20th century, is a bit outdated, but is still the best English resource available for students. If you are interested in further pursuing Hebrew studies, this will be an invaluable resource.

7. Mitchel, Larry A. A Student's Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. This guide categorizes every single Hebrew word in the Old Testament according to the number of occurrences. It can be a good tool to aid you in increasing your Hebrew vocabulary.

8. English Grammar Guides
Many of the problems students face in a language course are related to a lack of familiarity with grammatical terminology. For some of us, the grammatical terms used in this course may be vaguely familiar from earlier days. Because many of these terms have a basis in all languages, becoming re-acquainted with English grammar may be of great help in learning Hebrew. A good resource to build on knowledge of English Grammar is: Madeline Semmelmeyer, The New Webster's Grammar Guide, Berkley: New York, 1991. An excellent on-line resource is www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar. There is also a short review, prepared by Prof. Ryan Winter here at Asbury, that is available in the Course Center.

Hebrew Honor Society
Asbury has a chapter of Eta Beta Rho, a national honor society that recognizes achievement in Biblical and Classical Hebrew. Any student who earns a grade of "B" or higher in OT501 and another Asbury course which requires Hebrew will be eligible and encouraged to seek induction.

Evaluation
Although this not a traditional class, I as your "virtual instructor" will monitor the frequency and quality of your discussions with your colleagues, especially via Team folders and the "OT 501 Discussion Center."

Grade Scale
A 93-100
A- 90-92
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F 0-59

Your grade will be calculated on the following factors:
Assignments and Readings: 25%
Celebrations of Learning (Quizzes - ten throughout the term): 35%
Participation (via the Discussion Center) 10%
Final Celebration of Learning 30%
Total 100%

Course Procedure
Teams
To facilitate discussion among class members, each of you will be placed in teams. These teams will be rotated two or three times during the semester so that you have an opportunity to interact with every other member of the class. Collaborating with your colleagues via Team folders and the OT501 Discussion Center will be a significant part of your learning experience and grade in this area. Full participation and engagement is essential in order to obtain the learning goals of this course, so please join in the discussion with your team members, and with the class as a whole.

1. Assignments & Readings - 25% of course grade
We will work through Seow, our main text, covering 1 to 3 lessons per each module. The assignments for each module will be comprised of the exercises from Seow, as well as other material intended to achieve the objectives of a particular module.

The assignments can be posted to the Course Center, where you can observe other students; work, as well. The assignments can also be sent to me, using the "To Office" icon or by fax. Virtually all the assignments will be graded in order to determine how much work is being done and give secondary weight to accuracy. 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 to complete assignments.
Note: Late exercises & worksheets will be accepted, but penalized 25% each calendar day late and receive no comments. Late assignments will not be accepted after four days. Timely completion of all assignments is a requirement for passing this course.

One of the early obstacles to submitting assignments is learning how to type with the Hebrew font. Early on in the semester, it may be easier if you wish to write out the assignments and fax them to me. However, I encourage all of you to learn as best as you can, to type in Hebrew, to ease and facilitate our on-line discussion. There is also a feature in BibleWorks that will help you type in Hebrew - refer to the user's manual for more information. The fax number to submit assignments is 859 858 2018.

Some of the assignments throughout the semester will be team assignments that are to be completed by the entire team. These will be announced in the "OT 501 Discussion Center." Please have fun and learn together on these assignments and equally share the responsibilities of the assignment.

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.

Note: Only Assignments should be submitted to the Discussion Center or the Team Folders. Quizzes and Exams, and other private correspondence, should be submitted to me using the "To Office" Icon.
2. Celebrations of Learning (10 quizzes) - 35% of course grade
Throughout the semester, there will be eleven days of joyous festivity, when we will gather to celebrate the knowledge that we have gleaned during that time. For an odd reason, students often call these occasions exams or quizzes. They will cover the major issues discussed in each module, as well as the vocabulary from Seow’s grammar - the specific lessons from which words will appear will be announced. Audio files of the vocabulary words will also be made available, so that you can hear the words. These celebrations are comprehensive, and may include material from previous modules. These should be either faxed to me, or sent to me by e-mail using the To Office icon. **Do not submit exams or quizzes to the Discussion Center!**

3. Final Celebration of Learning (Final Exam) - 30% of course grade
At the end of the term will be one last celebration of our journey into Hebrew. The exam will cover vocabulary, a few short translation exercises (roughly one or two verses from the OT), and an Exegetical Assignment, in which you will be given a selected passage and asked to dissect it using the skills acquired throughout the semester. The due date for the final will be announced.

**The quizzes will be posted to the Course Center each Friday, and are due the following Monday by Midnight, EST.**

**FirstClass Icon Procedures**
Let me summarize how we will use the icons in the OT501ExL folder.
1. The modules (e.g lectures, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, any other forms of media) will be posted in the "Course Center" by Noon EST every Monday.

2. As noted above, your assignments will be submitted to either your specific Team Folder, or to the main Discussion Center. The Discussion Center is also a place to post questions and/or comments about a module, an assignment, or the course in general for everyone to see.

3. Your quizzes/exams should be posted directly to the "OT 501 Office" folder. The "Office" is for all private correspondence between only you and myself.

4. I may assign some "chat session" times when everyone in the class can synchronically dialogue with one another; and if so, I will ask you in advance for a day and time when you will be available to chat by posting a message to the Discussion Center. You should also use the "Chat Center" to get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics.

5. The "Archives Center" will be used for storing correspondence that has already been explored or is yet to be explored during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too cluttered.

6. The "Resource Center" provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the chapel services, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a PowerPoint Viewer (which you
can use to view my overheads) as well as a Real Audio player. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these resources. In particular, I encourage you to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary opportunities for spiritual growth.

**Course Schedule:**
The course will kick off Tuesday, September 2nd, 2002. On that day, Module 1 will be available in the Course Center. On each subsequent Monday, a new module will be posted to the Course Center by Noon EST, available for your perusal. The course will end Monday, December 16th, 2002 at Midnight, EST.

Each module will be more fully explained when the module is posted to the "Course Center." Other reading & hands-on assignments may be added at the time you receive the module.

Please note carefully the dates for each module!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Components of the Course</th>
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<td>9/2/02</td>
<td>Syllabus and Course Introduction</td>
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<td>The Alphabet</td>
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<td>The Writing System</td>
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<td>The Dagesh and the begadkephat letters.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9/09/02</td>
<td>Simple vowels, stress, and accents.</td>
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<td>Vowel markers and the Sheva.</td>
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<td>Syllabification</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/16/02</td>
<td>Nouns and noun endings: Word patterns</td>
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<td>(geminates, segolates, prefixed nouns, etc).</td>
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<td>Hebrew roots and patterns.</td>
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<td>Introduction to dictionaries and lexical tools.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9/23/02</td>
<td>The definite article</td>
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<td>Prepositions and simple conjunctions</td>
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<td>Excursus B: Reading Markers and Pausal Forms</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9/30/02</td>
<td>The Adjective</td>
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<td>More on Prepositions</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/7/02</td>
<td>Introduction to the Verbal Derived Stems</td>
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<td>The Qal Participle</td>
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<td>Excursus C: Nomenclature for the stems.</td>
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Introduction to all the derived stems in

*Quiz - Verbal Patterns/The Binyanim*

7  10/14/02  Independent Personal Pronouns
     Suffixed Pronouns
     Uses of the Qal/Niphal

*Quiz - Uses of the Qal, The Binyanim*

8  10/21/02  Demonstrative Pronouns
             Relative Clauses
             Interrogative clauses, exclamations and emphatic questions.
             Uses of the Piel, Pual, Hithpael

*Quiz - Vocabulary, The Binyanim*

9  10/28/02  The Construct Chain
             The Superlative
             Nouns with pronominal suffixes.
             Uses of the Hiphil, Hophal
             Excursus D: Reference Grammars.

*Quiz - Vocabulary*

10  11/4/02  Introduction to "aspect" in the Hebrew verb
             The Qal perfect - forms and uses.
             Excursus E: Hebrew Poetry

*Quiz - Forms of the Qal*

11  11/11/02  The Qal perfect of weak roots
             Stative verbs
             Excursus F: Orientation to the Hebrew Bible
             Introduction to word study methodology

12  11/18/02  The Imperfect Aspect - forms and uses.

*Quiz - Forms of the Imperfect*

**Reading Week - No New Material 11/25-11/29**

Happy Thanksgiving!

13  12/2/02  Narrative Discourse Patterns, Qal Infinitive
             Absolute and Construct, Introduction to Exegetical Process.

14  Final Exam - due date TBA.

**Select Bibliography**

*Elementary Biblical Hebrew Grammars*
Hebrew Tutor. Parsons Technology, Hiawatha, IA.

Advanced Biblical Hebrew Grammars

Hebrew Lexicons
Clines, David J. A., ed. The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew. 3 Vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993-. (3 vols. to date □ more coming!)

Hebrew Lexical Helps

Hebrew Analytical Lexicons
Accordance 3.0. Oaktree, Altamonte Springs, FL. (Macintosh based)
BibleWorks 4.0. Hermenuetika, Big Fork, MT. (Windows based)

Hebrew Interlinears
Hebrew Word Study Tools

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

Hebrew Vocabulary Aids
Hebrew Tutor. Parsons Technology, Hiawatha, IA.