A Handbook to

Biblical Hebrew

An Introductory Grammar

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

There are arguments both for and against the publication of a handbook such as this. On the negative side, making an answer key available to students might tempt some of them to use it as a substitute for having to find the answers on their own. This would diminish the teaching value of the exercises. On the other hand, even the most conscientious students will sometimes be in doubt about the correctness of their answers to the exercises. Ideally, their work should be monitored on a regular basis, but time restraints and other factors often make this impractical. Still, it is poor pedagogy to make assignments in the exercises and then fail to provide the opportunity for students to check their work and correct their errors. This is why a number of users of the *Grammar* have requested the preparation of a handbook such as this. It is hoped that providing this help will enable students to resolve their individual problems at home, thus freeing up valuable class time for matters of broader concern.

Requests for the handbook have come from yet another group of users. It is made up of students who for one reason or another are studying Hebrew on their own. The *Grammar* was designed primarily for use in a classroom setting, but these persons, whether by choice or necessity, are using it to teach themselves. The handbook should make their private study of the language far more effective.

The purpose of the handbook is to facilitate the use of the *Grammar*, but not to revise it or to make it into a more advanced textbook. Revisions and corrections are made directly to the text of the *Grammar* itself, each time it is reprinted. This ongoing process of revision has been made possible by the willingness of users to share their suggestions and by the availability of modern computer technology. The text of the *Handbook* has been coordinated with that of the third printing of the *Grammar*.

The lessons in the handbook follow the same order as those in the *Grammar*. Each handbook lesson may contain some or all of the following sections:

Answer Key

All exercises requiring written answers are supplied with an answer key. A

few exercises at the beginning of the *Grammar* are omitted because they require oral instead of written answers.

Footnotes

The answer keys are footnoted where grammatical and syntactical problems exist. Footnotes are kept to a minimum to avoid tiresome explanations of the obvious. The student is sometimes referred to relevant sections of the *Grammar* for additional information. There may also be cross references to related sections of the *Handbook*.

Additional Helps

Various types of practical helps are included from time to time under this heading. Suggestions are offered for expediting the student's progress in the language. Important historical data are occasionally highlighted.

Suggestions for Further Testing

Sample tests on the various lessons of the *Grammar* are provided here. They represent the accumulated experience of a number of persons who have taught the course. The tests may be copied and used as written, or adapted in any way the teacher may choose. These sample tests have not been supplied with answer keys.

Dr. Terry L. Burden and Dr. Timothy G. Crawford have assisted in the preparation of the *Handbook*. Both have had classroom experience in the teaching of the *Grammar*. They have given invaluable assistance in the format and content of this book. Dr. Burden has also been responsible for providing a camera-ready manuscript for the publication. These two deserve much of the credit for whatever usefulness the *Handbook* may have.

Page H. Kelley
Spring, 1994

LESSON I

Answer Key
(Cf. *G*, pp. 4f.)

[Note: References to the *Grammar* are abbreviated as *G*; those to the *Handbook* appear as *H*.]

I.3 Transliterate the following verse (Ezek. 38:12, one of twenty-six verses containing all the letters of the alphabet).

לשלל שלל ולבז בז להשיב ידך על חרבות נושבת ואל עם
מאסף מגוים עשׂה מקנה וקנין ישבי על טבור הארץ

lšll š11 vlvz bz lhšyv ydkh 'l ḥrvvt[a] nvšvt v'l 'm

m'sf mgvym 'śh mqnh vqnyn yšvy[a] 'l ṭbvr h'rṣ

I.5 Locate and identify all the final forms of letters that occur in the verse above.

ידך, ך final kăf; עם, ם final mēm; מאסף, ף final pē'

מגוים, ם final mēm; וקנין, ן final nûn; הארץ, ץ final ṣādê

I.6 Transliterate the Hebrew names for all consonants as they appear in *G*, 1.8, pp. 2f.

(1) **אלף**
ʾlf

(2) **בית**
byt[a]

(3) **גימל**
gyml

(4) **דלת**
dlt

(5) **הא**
hʾ

(6) **וו**
vv

(7) **זין**
zyn

(8) **חית**
ḥyt

(9) **טית**
ṭyt

(10) **יוד**
yvd[a]

(11) **כף**
kf

(12) **למד**
lmd

(13) **מם**
mm

(14) **נון**
nvn[a]

(15) **סמך**
smkh

(16)	עין
	‘yn
(17)	פא
	p’
(18)	צדי
	ṣdy
(19)	קוף
	qvf[a]
(20)	ריש
	ryš
(21)	שׂין
	śyn[a]
	שׁין
	šyn[a]
(22)	תו
	tv

I.7 Certain letters are similar in form and thus easily confused. Examine the following letters and learn to identify each by name.

(1)	ב, כ, פ	(bêt, kăf, pē’)
(2)	ף, ק	(final pē’, qōf)
(3)	ג, נ	(gîmĕl, nûn)
(4)	ך, ן	(final kăf, final nûn)
(5)	ד, ר	(dálĕt, rêš)
(6)	ו, ז, י	(vāv, zắyĭn, yôd)
(7)	ם, ס	(final mēm, sắmĕkh)
(8)	ט, מ	(ṭêt, mēm)
(9)	ה, ח, ת	(hē’, ḥêt, tāv)
(10)	ע, צ, ץ	(‘ắyĭn, ṣắdê, final ṣắdê)

I.8 Certain letters sound alike. Learn to identify these letters by name.

(1)	ס, שׁ	– S, as in Set	(sắmĕkh, śîn)
(2)	כּ, ק	– K, as in Keep	(kăf, qôf)
(3)	ט, תּ	– T, as in Tall	(ṭêt, tāv)
(4)	בּ, ו	– V, as in Vine	(bêt, vāv)
(5)	ח, כ	– CH, as in BaCH	(ḥêt, kăf)
(6)	א, ע	– Silent letters	(ʾắlĕf, ʿăyĭn)

I.9 What do the letters in each of the following groups have in common?

(1) ב ג ד כ פ ת (These six consonants are called the BeGaD KeFaT letters and may be written either with or without the dagesh lene, depending upon whether or not they are preceded by a vowel. Cf. *G*, 1.9, p. 3; *G*, 6, p. 12.)

(2) ב כ פ (These are the only BeGaD KeFaT letters whose pronunciations in Modern Hebrew are softened when they occur without a dagesh lene. Cf. *G*, 1.9, p. 3.)

(3) ך ם ן ף ץ (These are the forms taken by the letters כ מ נ פ צ when they occur as final consonants in a word. Cf. *G*, 1.11, p. 3.)

(4) א ה ח ע ר (א, ה, ח, ע, and sometimes ר, are classified as gutturals. Cf. *G*, 1.12, p. 3.)

I.10 Transliterate the following proper names and try to identify them from their consonantal forms. A reference is given to indicate where each may be found in the Hebrew Bible.

(1) בית לחם (Mic. 5:1; Eng. 5:2)
byt lḥm / Bethlehem[b]

(2) בלק (Num. 22:2)
blq / Balak

(3) בנימין (Gen. 42:4)
bnymyn / Benjamin

(4) גד (Gen. 30:11)
gd / Gad

(5) גלגל (Josh. 5:9)
glgl / Gilgal

(6) גשן (Gen. 46:28)
gšn / Goshen

(7) דוד (1 Sam. 16:23)
dvd / David

(8) הגר (Gen. 16:1)
hgr / Hagar

(9) חזקיה (2 Kgs. 18:1)
ḥzqyh / Hezekiah

(10) כנען (Gen. 12:5)
knʿn / Canaan

(11) ישראל (Gen. 35:10)
yśrʾl / Israel

(12) כלב (Num. 13:6)
klv / Caleb

(13) לאה (Gen. 29:16)
lʾh / Leah

(14) לבן (Gen. 24:29)
lvn / Laban

(15) משה (Exod. 2:10)
mšh / Moses

(16) נבכדנאצר (2 Kgs. 24:1)
nvkhdnʾṣr / Nebuchadnezzar

(17)　　　　נָתָן　(2 Sam. 7:3)

ntn / Nathan

(18)　　　　סדם　(Gen. 13:13)

sdm / Sodom

(19)　　　　עֵשׂו　(Gen. 25:25)

ʿśv / Esau

(20)　　　　פּארן　(Deut. 1:1)

pʾrn / Paran

(21)　　　　קדֹש　(Gen. 14:7)

qdš / Kadesh

(22)　　　　רבקה　(Gen. 22:23)

rvqh / Rebecca

(23)　　　　רחל　(Gen. 29:6)

rḥl / Rachel

(24)　　　　אברהם　(Gen. 17:5)

ʾvrhm / Abraham

(25)　　　　שׂרה　(Gen. 17:15)

śrh / Sarah

(26)　　　　שׁדרך　(Dan. 1:7)

šdrkh / Shadrach

(27)　　　　שׁכם　(Judg. 9:6)

škm / Shechem

(28)　　　　שׁלמה　(2 Sam. 12:24)

šlmh / Solomon

(29)　　　　שׁם　(Gen. 9:23)

šm / Shem

(30)　　　　שׁפן　(2 Kgs. 22:9)

šfn / Shaphan

(31)　תל אביב　(Ezek. 3:15)

tl ʾvyv / Tel-abib

(32)　　　　תמר　(Gen. 38:6)

tmr / Tamar

Footnotes

(a) In this first lesson, vāv is consistently transliterated as "v" and yôd as "y," although this produces some rather strange combinations of letters. In subsequent lessons it will become apparent that certain letters, especially vāv and yôd, represent consonants only when they begin a word or a new syllable within a word. Otherwise, they stand as component parts of long vowels and are known grammatically as *matres lectionis* (cf. *G,* pp. 6, 7, 18, 437). Understanding the frequent function of these letters as vowels, or vowel indicators, will greatly facilitate their transliteration.

(b) The English language takes certain liberties with Hebrew proper names. First, the English language capitalizes proper names, although there are no capital letters in Hebrew. Second, English translations sometime make a single name from a compound name, as in "Bethlehem." Third, the English language frequently anglicizes the spelling of Hebrew names, as in "Rebecca."

Additional Helps

The Origin and Early History of Biblical Hebrew

Hebrew belongs to the Semitic family of languages, a classification based on the cultural-linguistic elements of Genesis 10:21-31. Semitic languages are usually divided according to their geographical distribution into Northeast Semitic, Northwest Semitic, and Southwest Semitic. Northeast Semitic consists mainly of Akkadian, which in turn is divided into two dialects, Babylonian and Assyrian. Northwest Semitic is comprised of Amorite (known mainly from proper names), Ugaritic (known from the Ras Shamra tablets, discovered in 1929), Canaanite (known from inscriptions), Moabite (known almost exclusively from the Mesha stele), Hebrew, and Aramaic. Southwest Semitic includes Classical Arabic (the language of the Quran), Southern Arabic (known from inscriptions), and Ethiopic.

Before they arrived in Canaan, the Hebrews probably spoke a form of proto-Aramaic. Having settled in Canaan, they borrowed and adapted its language, although it is not known how much time was required for this

process to be completed. Indications of the Canaanite origin of Hebrew are obvious. The Bible itself describes the language as "the language of Canaan" (Isa. 19:18). Elsewhere it is described as "Judahite," i.e., as the language spoken by the inhabitants of Judah (2 Kgs. 18:26, 28; Neh. 13:24). The earliest known use of the term "Hebrew" to designate the language is in the Prologue to Sirach (c. 180 B.C.E.). In Rabbinical writings it is often referred to simply as "the sacred language."

During the Babylonian exile and the following centuries, Hebrew was gradually replaced by Aramaic as the everyday language of the people. Still, Hebrew remained the literary language of the Jews. Among the late books of the Hebrew Bible, Esther and Ecclesiastes show rather strong Aramaic influence. Portions of Ezra and Daniel are actually written in Aramaic, at least in the form in which they have survived. A late variety of Hebrew mixed with Aramaic and variously know as Mishnaic, Rabbinic, or Tannaitic Hebrew is preserved in the Mishna, the oldest part of the Talmud, and in other Rabbinic writings.

In recent times Hebrew has been resurrected as the language of the new State of Israel. However, Israeli Hebrew is significantly different from Biblical Hebrew, especially in its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

Biblical Hebrew reflects the history of the Hebrew people and their interactions with their neighbors. It does this by the use of loan words and phrases characteristic of neighboring languages as well as by the physical appropriation of neighboring scripts. Though the books of the Hebrew Bible were largely edited under the influence of southern (i.e., Judean) editors (either in pre-exilic Judah or during the Exile) other influences also survive. For example, the difficult text of Hosea has long been regarded as "corrupt" because of its divergence from standard Hebrew word forms, syntax, etc. However, more recently some scholars have suggested that these difficulties are due rather to dialect and that Hosea reflects the northern (i.e., Israelite) dialect of the time (cf. Judg. 12:6).

The Hebrew Bible is largely grammatically uniform considering the vast centuries involved in its composition, but significant differences appear between the various documents. The time factor in the development of the language appears most dramatically when comparing earlier books (Samuel and Kings) with the latter books (Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles).

Suggestions for Further Testing

1. Five letters take different forms when they are final in a word. Write each of these, first in its regular and then in its final form.

   (a) _____ _____   (b) _____ _____   (c) _____ _____

   (d) _____ _____   (e) _____ _____

2. Write the six BeGaD KeFaT letters, first with and then without a dagesh lene.

   (a) _____ _____   (b) _____ _____   (c) _____ _____

   (d) _____ _____   (e) _____ _____   (f) _____ _____

3. Write the five letters that are classified as gutturals.

   (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____ (d) _____ (e) _____
                        (sometimes)

4. Use the space above each letter in the following verse (Ezek. 38:12) to number the letter according to its alphabetical order. Repeated letters should be numbered alike. The same is true of regular and final forms of certain letters. Remember that שׁ and שׂ are also numbered alike (cf. *G*, 1.3, p. 2).

לִשְׁלֹל שָׁלָל וְלָבֹז בַּז לְהָשִׁיב יָדְךָ עַל חֳרָבוֹת נוֹשָׁבֹת וְאֶל

עַם מְאֻסָּף מִגּוֹיִם עֹשֶׂה מִקְנֶה וְקִנְיָן יֹשְׁבֵי עַל טַבּוּר הָאָרֶץ

5. From your study of the Glossary (cf. *G*, pp. 424ff.), define the following terms.

1) Alphabet
(2) Aramaic
(3) BeGaD KeFaT Consonants
(4) Dagesh Lene
(5) Hebrew Language
(6) Semitic Languages
(7) TANAKH

LESSON II

Answer Key
(Cf. *G*, pp. 9ff.)

II.3 The following combinations of Hebrew letters and vowels sound like English words with which you are familiar. However, the combinations for the most part have no meaning in Hebrew. See if you can discover an English word that matches each of the sounds.

(1)	אֶג	ʾĕg	"egg"
(2)	אָר	ʾār	"are"
(3)	בֵּית	bêt	"bait"
(4)	בִּיד	bîd	"bead"
(5)	בּוֹת	bôt	"boat"
(6)	בֻּל	bŭl	"bull"
(7)	בֹּן	bōn	"bone"
(8)	גֶּן	gŭn	"gun"
(9)	גֵּיט	gêṭ	"gate"
(10)	דֶּן	dĕn	"den"
(11)	דּוֹר	dôr	"door"
(12)	הֵיט	hêṭ	"hate"
(13)	הַג	hŭg	"hug"
(14)	הוֹל	hôl	"hole"
(15)	וִיל	vîl	"veal"
(16)	וֶת	vĕt	"vet"
(17)	טָר	ṭār	"tar"
(18)	טוּל	ṭûl	"tool"
(19)	יֶט	yĕṭ	"yet"
(20)	יוּס	yûs	"use"

(21)	יֵשׁ	yĕś	"yes"
(22)	כֵּק	kēq	"cake"
(23)	כֹּר	kōr	"core"
(24)	כִּיל	kîl	"keel"
(25)	לֶת	lĕt	"let"
(26)	לִין	lîn	"lean"
(27)	מֶט	mĕt	"met"
(28)	מִין	mîn	"mean"
(29)	מֶן	mĕn	"men"
(30)	נִיד	nîd	"need"
(31)	נֹת	nōt	"note"
(32)	נֻט	nŭṭ	"nut"
(33)	סֵף	sēf	"safe"
(34)	סוּן	sûn	"soon"
(35)	פֵּיא	pê᾿	"pay"
(36)	פֵּט	pĕṭ	"pet"
(37)	רוּת	rût	"root"
(38)	שֹׁל	śōl	"sole"
(39)	שֹׁל	šōl	"shoal"
(40)	תוּל	tûl	"tool"

II.4 We learned that י and ו can function not only as consonants but also as vowels *(matres lectionis)*. See if you can determine which of the following words use ו as a consonant and which use it as a vowel. (Cf. *G,* p. 6)

(1)	לוּן(a)	V
(2)	רוּת	V
(3)	וְשֵׁם(b)	C
(4)	וִיהִי	C
(5)	מָוֶת	C
(6)	בּוֹשׁ	V
(7)	וַיְהִי	C
(8)	קוּם	V

II.5 See if you can determine which of the following words employ ׳ as a consonant and which employ it as a vowel.

(1)	יָד	C
(2)	יוֹם	C
(3)	אִישׁ(c)	V
(4)	שִׁי(d)	C
(5)	בֵּית	V
(6)	שִׂים	V

II.6 Point the following words (supply them with vowels) by consulting a dictionary or word list. (Cf. *G*, pp. 374ff.)

(1)	אֲדָמָה(e)
(2)	אֱלֹהִים
(3)	חֲלוֹם
(4)	חֲלִי
(5)	חֲמוֹר
(6)	חֲצִי
(7)	נַחֲלָה
(8)	עֲרָבָה

II.7 Listed below are the letters of the alphabet written in their full Hebrew forms. Transliterate the Hebrew names for these letters and practice pronouncing them.

Example: אָלֶף, ʾ*ālẹf*; בֵּית, *bẹt*; etc. [The accent mark used in אָלֶף and elsewhere in this list is explained in *G*.8.1(1), p. 16.1

(1)	אָלֶף	ʾắlĕf
(2)	בֵּית	bêt
(3)	גִּימֶל	gî́mĕl
(4)	דָּלֶת	dắlĕt
(5)	הֵא	hĕ̄ʾ
(6)	וָו	vāv
(7)	זַיִן	zắyĭn
(8)	חֵית	ḥêt
(9)	טֵית	ṭêt
(10)	יוֹד	yôd
(11)	כַּף	kăf
(12)	לָמֶד	lắmĕd
(13)	מֵם	mĕm
(14)	נוּן	nûn
(15)	סָמֶךְ	sắmĕkh
(16)	עַיִן	ʿắyĭn
(17)	פֵּא	pĕ̄ʾ
(18)	צָדֵי	ṣắdê
(19)	קוֹף	qôf
(20)	רֵישׁ	rêš
(21)	שִׂין	śîn
	שִׁין	šîn
(22)	תָּו	tāv

II.8 Here is a similar list of the vowels. Transliterate these and practice pronouncing them.

(1)	קָמֵץ	qā́měṣ[(f)]
(2)	פַּתַח	pắtăḥ[(f)]
(3)	צֵרֵי	ṣḗrê
(4)	צֵרֵי יוֹד	ṣḗrê yôd
(5)	סְגוֹל	sᵉgôl
(6)	חִירֶק יוֹד	ḥírěq yôd
(7)	חִירֶק	ḥírěq
(8)	חוֹלֶם	ḥṓlěm
(9)	חוֹלֶם וָו	ḥṓlěm vāv
(10)	קָמֵץ חָטוּף	qā́měṣ ḥāṭûf
(11)	שׁוּרֶק	šŭ́rěq
(12)	קִבּוּץ	qĭbbûṣ

II.9 Transliterate the proper names listed below and practice pronouncing them in Hebrew.

(1)	בֵּית לֶחֶם	bêt lĕ́ḥěm
(2)	גָּד	gād
(3)	גֹּשֶׁן	gṓšěn
(4)	דָּוִד	dāvĭd
(5)	הָגָר	hāgār
(6)	כְּנַעַן	kᵉnắʿăn
(7)	כָּלֵב	kālēv
(8)	לֵאָה	lḗʾāh
(9)	לָבָן	lāvān
(10)	מֹשֶׁה	mōšěh
(11)	נָתָן	nātān
(12)	סְדֹם	sᵉdōm

(13)	עֵשָׂו	ʿēśāv
(14)	פָּארָן	pāʾrān
(15)	קָדֵשׁ	qādēš
(16)	רָחֵל	rāḥēl
(17)	שָׂרָה	śā́rāh
(18)	שְׁכֶם	šᵉkhĕm
(19)	שְׁלֹמֹה	šᵉlōmōh
(20)	שֵׁם	šēm
(21)	שָׁפָן	šāfān
(22)	תֵּל אָבִיב	tēl ʾāvîv
(23)	תָּמָר	tāmār
(24)	יִשְׂרָאֵל	yĭśrāʾēl

Footnotes

(a) Vāv functions as a *vowel* when it occurs immediately after a consonant and is pointed either as šûrĕq (וּ) or ḥólĕm vāv (וֹ). Examples in this exercise are בּוֹשׁ, רוּת, לוּן, and קוּם.

(b) Vāv functions as a *consonant* when it occurs at the beginning of a word or a new syllable within a word. In all such cases, vāv must be written with an accompanying vowel, which may be either a half-vowel or a full vowel. Examples in this exercise of vāvs that begin words are וָשֵׁם, וִיהִי, and וַיְהִי. An example of vāv at the beginning of a new syllable with a word is found in מָוֶת. The division of words into syllables will be studied later in Lesson IV (cf. *G*.12, pp. 19ff.).

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