Biblical Hebrew – Class #1

Our word for Alphabet comes from

the first two letters of the Greek alphabet

Alpha and Beta

Likewise, the Hebrew’s do the same thing

Aleph Bet.

א ב

Hebrew Grammar – Verbs and Nouns

In our modern western languages, a verb is a word of action and a noun is an inanimate object.

In Ancient Hebrew both verbs and nouns are words of action.

The verb describes the action of something while nouns describe something of action.

As an example, the word מָלַךְ as a verb means “to reign,”

while as a noun, מֶלֶךְ, means “someone who reigns, a king.”

Because Hebrew nouns are action oriented, verbs are not always required in every sentence as they are in English.

שָׁלוֹם Shälōm

hello, good-bye {completeness, peace, soundness (in body), welfare, health}

(The Koreans use the same greeting: “Are you in peace?” “Go in peace.”

Turn to page 51 in your manual.

Genesis 1:1

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָֽרֶץ

Most Hebrew words are built upon a **three-consonant root**, called the “shoresh שֹׁרֶשׁ” that contains the essence of the word’s meaning. Vowel patterns and other changes are added to a shoresh to give a Hebrew word a more determinat meaning. The root for love is

א.ה.ב

A key to understanding a given Hebrew word is to identify the root and then to identify the function of the letters and vowels attached to the root. ~ Zola

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| Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.  בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָֽרֶץ׃  preposition ‘in’ suffix gender/number direct objective the and the rest are all roots | |
| בְּרֵאשִׁית  in the beginning | in ~ first, beginning, former state/times (plural suffix) |
| בָּרָא  created | verb: to cut, to form, to fashion, carve, produce |
| אֱלֹהִים | Elohim (plural suffix) |
| אֵת | Direct Object marker , sometimes translated as ‘even’ |
| הַשָּׁמַיִם | the ~ heavens (plural suffix) |
| וְאֵת | and ~ Direct Object marker |
| הָאָֽרֶץ | the ~ earth |
| In the former times formed Elohim the heavens and the earth. | |

In this course we are learning to read and write basic Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament was written. Therefore, it is call **Biblical Hebrew**. It is also call **Classical Hebrew** because it is supposedly the same language that was spoken during the classical period of Israel’s greatness when Kings, Saul, David and Solomon reigned. In general this language was spoken from the time of Moses, and when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, until they were taken into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, or roughly from 1500 to 600 B.C.

Look-alike letters

ו ז י ב כ בּ כּ ה ח

Practice

אַב אָד אַג אָז בַּט בָח בָּא בָּה אַבָא.1

הִט הִו הִיב הִד יִח יִה בִּי כִּי בִּכָּה.2

אַט בּז וִז אִט גַב דָג טִי הִיא דָיָג.3

כַּה בִּי וָו כִּב גָט הִד יָד זַכָה גִדָה.4

הַג חַג זִו טָב כִּא יַח דִב גָד כָּכָה.5

6. זָח טַא יִד כִּי אַו הַו בָּג בִּיט הַטָא

7. אָבִי אַחַד אָבִיב בָּאָה בָּטַח גָּאָה גָּבַה גָּדַד

8. דָּאַג הָגִיג הָדָה הַזַָּב זָבַד הַזָּהַב יָדָו זָזָא חָבָה

9. חָגָּא חַדָּה חִטָּה יִגָּה יָדָהּ כָּאַב כָּבַד טַבָּח זִיזָא