



## BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

### UNIT OUTLINE

#### GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY

UNIT TITLE	<b>BIBLICAL HEBREW I</b>
UNIT CODE	A74111
UNIT STATUS	Elective
HOST FIELD	A/B
PREREQUISITE/S	-
INCOMPATIBLES	A52110
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13 week semester
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Odd years – Semester 2
PREPARED BY	Revd Douglas Jones
UNIT COORDINATOR	Revd Douglas Jones
TEACHING STAFF	Revd Douglas Jones
DATE PREPARED	11 March 2004
DATE UPDATED	1 March 2007

---

#### **Rationale**

A study of Biblical Hebrew provides students with an opportunity to gain a sound understanding and knowledge of Biblical Hebrew including its alphabet, basic vocabulary, and major features of its grammar and syntax. Such understanding and knowledge provides a solid foundation for working with the Old Testament text in its original language and for using associated reference works that require a basic competence in Biblical Hebrew with a view to assisting the student in the task of biblical interpretation. Knowledge of Biblical Hebrew has an important place in scholarly study of the Old Testament. It is particularly relevant to students who intend to specialise in Old Testament studies at the postgraduate level.

#### **Relation to Course**

This unit provides students with a good working knowledge of the original language of the Old Testament. As the Old Testament is a significant part of the scriptures of the Christian church, study of the Old Testament is important for developing an understanding of the history and religion of the people of Israel, and the biblical background to the doctrines and theology of the church. The unit also provides the foundation for an appreciation of the task of translation, and some of the limitations of translations being used in the church. It is also the basis for further study of Biblical Hebrew at a more advanced level. A good working knowledge of Biblical Hebrew also widens the avenues available for research.

#### **Aim**

This unit aims to provide students with an understanding of the elements of Biblical Hebrew (alphabet, form and function of nouns, adjectives and verbs, and the construction of basic sentences). It also aims to assist

students to develop competence in reading and translating Biblical Hebrew. It also aims to draw students' attention to issues in translation and to develop their competence in accessing resources such as Hebrew lexicons, dictionaries and computer software (e.g. BibleWorks5).

## Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of this unit, students will:

1. Be competent in vocalising words and reading sentences reading from Biblical Hebrew (Square) script.
2. Be able to understand and use fundamental concepts of Hebrew grammar and syntax.
3. Be able to recognise and translate frequently occurring words.
4. Be able to recognise and translate the Simple Active (Qal) and Intensive Active (Piel) forms of regular Hebrew verbs.
5. Be aware of the Simple Passive (Niphal), Intensive Passive (Pual), Causative Active (Hiphil), Causative Passive (Hophal), and Reflexive (Hithpael) forms of the Hebrew verb.
6. Be competent in using basic tools such as Hebrew lexicons, theological wordbooks, dictionaries and relevant computer software (e.g. BibleWorks5).
7. Have memorised a basic Hebrew vocabulary.
8. Be able to use the above in reading and analysing sentences in Hebrew and translating sentences from Hebrew to English.

## Content

- Session 1 Introduction to unit  
The Hebrew alphabet, phonetic value of letters, explanation of Hebrew writing, vowel signs, open and closed syllables, the Methegh, Milra' and Mil'el, Šewa.
- Session 2 Revision.  
Maqqeph, Qamets-Chatuph, Dāghēš, Mappiq, Raphe, Quiescent Letters, The Gutturals, Accents, Pause, Kethibh and Qere, the Article, the Inseparable Prepositions, Nouns and Adjectives.
- Session 3 Revision .  
Gender and Number of Nouns and Adjectives, The Dual Number, The Conjunction, The Interrogative Pronouns, The Absolute and Construct States, and a Basic Introduction to the Verb. Translation of texts.
- Session 4 Revision.  
Pronominal Suffixes, The Inseparable Prepositions with Suffixes, The Sign of the Definite Object, The Personal Pronouns, and the Regular Verb.  
Translation of texts set in Session 3, reading exercises, and a demonstration of BibleWorks5.
- Session 5 Revision.  
More Nouns in the Absolute and Construct States, Feminine Singular Nouns with Suffixes, the Demonstrative Adjectives, Prepositions with Suffixes, the Active Participle and the old Accusative Ending for Nouns.  
Translation of texts.
- Session 6 Revision, reading exercises and translation of Hebrew sentences that incorporate features of grammar, syntax and vocabulary covered in Session 1 to 5.
- Session 7 Revision and translation of texts.  
A mid-semester exam with both written and oral components.
- Session 8 A review of the exam.  
The Imperfect of the Regular Verb, the Imperative, Negative Commands or Prohibitions, and the Regular Verb.  
Reading and translation of Hebrew texts including some biblical text.
- Session 9 Revision.  
Nouns with Suffixes, Some Irregular Nouns with Suffixes, Possession, and the Infinitive.  
Reading and translation of Hebrew texts including some biblical text.
- Session 10 Revision.  
The "He" Interrogative, the Passive Participle, Prepositions with Plural Suffixes, and the Waw Consecutive.  
Reading and translation of Hebrew texts including some biblical text.
- Session 11 Revision.

Segholate Nouns, the Preposition “With”, The Cohortative and Jussive, Stative Verbs, and the Piel.

Reading and translation of Hebrew texts including some biblical text.

Session 12 Revision.

Reading and translation of Hebrew texts including some biblical text.

Session 13 A thorough revision of the material covered in the unit.

Reading and translation of Hebrew texts including some biblical text.

### **Organisation and Teaching Strategies**

Teaching will be face-to-face. A textbook will be used and the lessons will be based upon the material set out in that textbook. An interactive process will be used in class with as much of the time as possible given to engaging with Hebrew text through reading, analysis and translation. The class will have frequent opportunities to practice pronunciation and translation. Translation technique will be regularly demonstrated through the use of analysis (particularly the identification of stems and prefixes and suffixes) and parsing of Hebrew words. Weekly homework, revision and tests will be used to reinforce the new concepts and vocabulary introduced in each session.

The format for the weekly three hour sessions will generally be:

- Revision. Reading and translation of weekly homework. Students will participate in reading, vocabulary drills, and in assisting with translation. (50 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Weekly Test (50 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Teaching of new material. (50 minutes)

### **Assessment**

The assessment is aimed at assessing and consolidating the student’s cumulative acquisition of Hebrew vocabulary, and knowledge and skills necessary for reading and understanding Hebrew and translating it into English.

- (i) Weekly homework comprising learning vocabulary, revising material covered in the lectures, translation of Hebrew text and accessing lexicons, theological wordbooks, dictionaries and relevant computer software. This assessment relates to Postgraduate Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
- (ii) Weekly tests - “open book” drawing upon material covered in previous sessions. Relates to Postgraduate Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8.
- (iii) A mid-semester examination (“open book”) of one and a half hours duration. Relates to Postgraduate Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8.
- (iv) An “open book”, end of semester examination (oral and written) of two hours duration. Relates to Postgraduate Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8.

Note that (ii), (iii), and (iv) also relate to Learning Outcome 7 even though the tests and exams are “open book”.

### **Generic Skills**

- Foundational skills in primary text research
- Ability to retrieve, evaluate and use relevant information
- Development of an understanding and appreciation of biblical research
- Mastery of skills underpinning scholarly discourse in theology.

### **Textbooks**

#### ***Required***

Kelley, Page H., *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.

Kelley, Page H., Terry L. Burden and Timothy Crawford, *A Handbook to Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

### **Recommended**

Seow, C. L., *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew (Rev. ed.)* Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

Weingreen, J., *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew* (2nd ed.) Oxford: Clarendon, 1959.

### **References - Books**

Botterweck, G. J. and H. Ringren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volumes 1-14*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, (The volumes have been published progressively from 1974 to 2004).

Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver and Charles C. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1974 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1907).

Clines, David J. A. (ed.), *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew: Volumes I to V*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, (The volumes have been published progressively from 1993 to 2001).

Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph (eds). *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5th ed.) Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.

Jenni, E. and C. Westermann (eds.), *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament: Volumes 1-3*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997 (English translation).

Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Volumes I-V* Leiden: Brill, (1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000).

Saenz-Badillos, Angel, *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

VanGemeren, Willem A. (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: Volumes 1-5*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Würthheim, Ernst, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*. London: SCM, 1979.

### **References – Online and Other IT Resources**

*BibleWorks 5* Big Fork, Montana: Hermeneutika, 2001.

*Navigating the Bible World* ORT Union (<http://davka.com>), 1998.