HE210 – Readings in the Hebrew Bible
Pre-Course Information & Reading

Course Information

Teacher:	**Jason A. Hare** (Hebrew: גַּיְא or גֵ׳ייסוֹן)
Email Address:	jason@thehebrewcafe.com
Zoom Link:	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86926406774
Moodle Classroom:	https://moodle.thehebrewcafe.com
Class Times:	**Tuesdays** *&* **Thursdays**

@ 4:00 PM Los Angeles   6:00 PM Chicago
7:00 PM New York   12:00 AM London
2:00 AM Israel (Friday)   8:00 AM Manila (Friday)

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Introduction and Blessing | מָבוֹא וּבִרְכַּת הַקְּהִלָּה

שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם וּברוּכִים אַתֶּם בְּבֹאֲכֶם אֶל־בֵּית־הַקָּפֶה לְעִבְרִית!

Welcome to this brand-new course offered by The Hebrew Café! As it has been advertised, this course will use John Cook and Robert Holmstedt's *Intermediate Biblical Hebrew: An Illustrated Grammar* (Baker: 2020) [Amazon] as the basis for presenation of the stories of the life of Elijah the Tishbite (אֵלִיָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי) from 1 and 2 Kings. We are happy that you've chosen to join us for this study, and we will do all we can to make it interesting, challenging, and productive as we move through the textbook in our bi-weekly sessions (כְּלוֹמַר פַּעֲמַיִם בְּשָׁבוּעַ וְלֹא פַּעַם בִּשְׁבוּעַיִם).

This course is designed to enrich your knowledge of biblical Hebrew through the reading of text, the creation of short synopses (סְכּוּמִים) of the stories in your own words (to the best of your ability), analysis of the grammatical and syntactic features that appear in the text, and a review of first-year grammar. It is an intermediate course, which means that it is intended to follow after the regular course of beginning biblical Hebrew (such as I recently led through Kutz and Josberger's *Learning Biblical Hebrew*). It will assume that you have covered all of the בִּנְיָנִים covered in a first-year grammar (that is, *qal*, *piel*, *pual*, *hiphil*, *hophal*, and *hitpael*). You are not expected to have complete mastery of Hebrew to the point of *ad hoc* production. It is enough that you can read and have a general understanding of the text, even if you need a dictionary to get the meanings of all the words.

We'll get into specific study habits below, as we cover what will be expected of you as a student in this course. Preparation will surely guarantee success in this course. It will be difficult, but it is certainly manageable, so please notice the section on study habits and preparedness [Preparing for Classes] below. My goal is always to make the material as comprehensible as possible, and I will work to help you "get it" all along the journey. If you feel lost or discouraged at any point, let me know, and we'll have some one-on-one time to try to get you through it. Ever your fellow traveler, I wish you success and the best of luck as we move ahead!

Before moving on, it should be pointed out that we will be using the pronunciation of Hebrew as developed and used in Israel for all our reading and communciation.

To participate in this course, you will need to purchase the textbook. It will be impossible to do the homework and to follow along the course without the textbook (not to mention the violation of copyright if I share the comics with you when you don't own a copy of your own—and I'll be displaying the readings in each session via PowerPoint). So, please purchase the textbook before joining us. The authors have worked hard to give us a quality product, and they deserve to see their work rewarded.

My Philosophy on Language Acquisition | הַשְׁקָפָתִי עַל־רְכִישַׁת שָׂפוֹת

I am sold on the second-language acquisition theories of Dr. Stephen D. Krashen, who publishes his materials free-of-charge on his website. His "natural method" lays out the following five hypotheses (Krashen, 9–32; Krashen and Teller, 26–35):

1. The Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis.
2. The Natural Order Hypothesis.
3. The Monitor Hypothesis.
4. The Input Hypothesis.
5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

The acquisition–learning hypothesis states that a clear distinction must be made between learning a language (coverage of its grammar rules, morphology, orthography, etc.) and acquiring a language (becoming able to use a language for real purposes, being able to say that you really know the language). It is rare today to find a biblical language course geared toward having students acquire the languages in which the scriptures are written. Most learn to parse words, to understand where they fit on a grammatical table, but they never learn the simplest of expressions. Some well-known teachers have aimed at changing this in recent years. Most notable are Randall Buth (with The Institute for Biblical Languages), Christophe Rico (with Polis Jerusalem), and Michael Halcomb (with The Conversational Koine Institute). Our goal will be to begin to leave the page and the parser behind as we move into how the language *sounds* and what it *means*. Acquisition takes place when messages are exchanged, when language is comprehensible. This will be our goal.

The natural order hypothesis is less relevant to us, since it has not been laid out with any success in the academic literature with regard to biblical Hebrew. It essentially says that language is naturally acquired in a specific order by which simpler structures are learned early one while more nuanced features of the language are acquired at a later stage. Given the proponderance of *vav*-consecutive forms in the Tanach, we will focus on verb forms and work out from there. That is about as "natural" as we can get when covering biblical language.

The monitor hypothesis states that we all have a voice inside our head (well, most of us do) that consciously checks what we say before we say it. Krashen calls this voice the "monitor" because it monitors what we are saying to make sure that it is grammatical and sounds good. The monitor is composed of the rules that we've learned and the language examples that we've stored, so that we can check what we are about to say against it. Those who are picking up new languages often hesitate at the point of speaking because they are overly critical of their use of the language. When we are too concerned with *how* we say something rather than the *message*, we overuse the monitor, and it keeps us from expressing ourselves. The proper use of the mental monitor is when we are writing, since written communication has higher grammatical standards than speech. When teachers give too much critical feedback, the student backs that information into their monitor, which might later lead to hesitation when communicating. Rather than "fixing your mistakes," the teacher's function is to be an example of fluent speech in the language, to offer *generalized* feedback in its proper time (not jumping on mistakes when they are made, but simply facilitating comprehension and the exchange of ideas in the language). My job will be mostly to offer help in expressing your ideas while you speak Hebrew. Your job will be to read the story enough to be familiar with its words and ideas, so that you can be ready to present on the chapter.

The input hypothesis says that in order for comprehension to take place, the *input* must be comprehensible. For our purposes, "comprehensible" means that with little effort the student can *understand* what is being said even if they cannot produce the same level of language. This is why language teachers often use simplified forms of language while giving lessons. My hope is to use

simplified Hebrew while asking questions and eliciting responses. It is perfectly acceptable to respond in the negative (לֹא) and time the teacher asks if you have understood (הֲבִינֹותָ [ms], הֲבִינֹות [fs], or הֲבִינֹותֶם [mp]). That will give him the chance to reword or reexplain what he expects of you. (Of course, you can always respond in the affirmative with הֲבִינֹותִי "I have understood"). Communication is always our goal. Krashen termed the phrase *i + 1*, meaning that the input should be one increment beyond the student's ability to produce. This is nearly impossible to attain completely, but as long as communication is taking place, *i + 1* is being used.

The affective filter hypothesis addresses the fact that there are such things as emotional blocks to language acquisition. If a student tells herself that she just *cannot* learn languages, if the teacher makes the material too difficult, if there are stressors in the classroom environment that get in the way of communication or make the student feel uncomfortable, real learning cannot take place. In an effort to tear down the emotional blocks that might exist, I will try to be as light and humorous as possible. Every effort will be made to create a mutually respectful environment in which to share our lessons, to learn and have fun.

Beyond these five hypotheses, Dr. Krashen stresses the importance of what he calls **free voluntary reading** (FVR). For those who love the Bible, there is plenty of material for reading and consumption. In fact, my hope is that you will learn to love reading the scriptures in Hebrew to the point that Hebrew will become the main language in which you experience the Bible. The language will become yours when you begin to become curious about everything you read in the Tanach and how it is expressed in Hebrew, when you memorize quippy statements from the Hebrew text, when grammar becomes displaced by examples of the language in various passages. This will happen only when you find yourself compelled to read more, not because you are required to for this or another class, but because you love what you are reading – and it has become comprehensible to you.

In-Lesson Hebrew | עִבְרִית בַּשִּׁעוּרִים

In order to attain some level of utility in the Hebrew language beyond the standard practices of parsing and grammatical analysis, we will be using Hebrew in our class sessions as much as possible. This will obviously present some issues. After all, we have students who are coming to us with previous experience in the communicative language teaching (CLT) environments and those for whom this will be their first ever experience with spoken Hebrew. What will be simply review for one migth be way over the head of the other, and that's to be expected in a course such as this. My hope is to use comprehensible input (*i + 1*) through "caretaker language" (Krashen). I will simplify the Hebrew that I use in questions as far as possible, hoping to be able to pass messages back and forth. As we get used to hearing Hebrew, I will make it a bit more engaging.

According to the best research in second-language acquisition, we should not expect students to respond verbally until they are ready. Ideally, we would each have as many communicative courses as necessary to move into fluency, and that would allow us each to have a silent period during which

we are simply receiving input and making sense of what is said to us. Krashen says that during this period, we should only expect students to respond to yes/no questions, perhaps obey when asked to perform a task, and to indicate whether or not what they heard was comprehended.

This is a short course, covering the normal time of a college semester—fifteen weeks. In these thirty sessions, we must ask that students use Hebrew as much as possible. This will be different for each person, but it will need to go beyond the yes/no response level.

How will this play out? One advantage that you have is that you can read the text as many times as possible. Also, you have a print copy of the book and can make notes all over the page. Because you have the text (which is also taken directly from the Bible), you are free to circle the verbs, make marks on portions that you don't understand or that you want to ask questions about, practice pronouncing the names of the characters, etc. You will not be taken by surprise by what is in the lessons, so you have ever advantage. If you take the time to prepare, then you will be ready even if you have never spoken a word of Hebrew before. In the following, I want to explain how you should prepare for our classes to take the most advantage of our online time together.

Online-Class Design | תִּכְנוּן הַשִׁעוּר הַמְּקֻוָּן

Each online session will be arranged as follows:

1. Posing of any questions that arose from the chapter reading or homework (in English).
2. Review and reading of the comic-style text from the textbook (in Hebrew).
3. Discussion of a language-related issue (grammar) from the chapter (in English).
4. Presentation of personal synopses by a few students (in Hebrew).
5. General feedback for the day.
6. Assignment of homework.

Each session is expected to last approximately an hour and a half.

In the class sessions, we will meet on Zoom (see link in Course Information) to go over all of the above. Office 365 products (such as Word and PowerPoint) as well as a white board provided by Zoom will be at our disposal for the lesson. **Students are asked to use both microphones and webcams** during sessions to personalize the experience of the online classroom environment. Sessions will be recorded to place on YouTube for review of the student. **You are asked not to share these videos publically.** They are for "internal use" only, meaning that a private link will be provided to enrolled students to allow them to review the lesson. This will also allow those who miss a session to catch up by covering the lesson passively. At the completion of the course, the entire playlist will be deleted from YouTube.

Preparing for Classes | הֲכָנוֹת לַשִׁעוּרִים

The English-language material in the chapters of this textbook is generally pretty straightforward and short. Sometimes, there are linguistic terms that are introduced and may require some attention. These may be clarified in the online session, or you may send me private emails for clarification. If it seems like something that others may not have understood, I will write something up to send out to the mailing list. To prepare for the class, it is recommended that you to read do something like the following:

1. Look at the comics and read through the Hebrew on the page. Mark anything that you didn't understand the first time through.
2. Look up the vocabulary in a dictionary or in the glossary at the end of the book. It is preferable to use a dictionary, but you may use the glossary if you cannot get one. Pay special attention to the words that you did not understand in your initial reading.
3. Read through the text again as quickly as you can, fitting the new words covered in the vocab into the reading as you go along.
4. Read through the English-language material and mark what you find confusing. This deals with grammar, word order, and such.
5. Do the homework assigned in the previous session. It is preferred that you type the material up, but you may write it by hand. Either way, upload it to the appropriate section of the Google classroom.
6. Listen to the text of the Bible in an audio production of the text. Links will be provided below. Read along with the text as the reader pronounces the words.
7. Read the text aloud on your own. Practice relating to the text as a story and not going word-for-word. Try to become as fluent as you can in your reading.
8. Prepare your synopsis.

This doesn't have to be your exact process. You may find something that works better for you. The key, though, is to read the passage several times. Fluency in reading comes from practice. The more you read it, the more prepared you will be for the class, and listening to it a few times with audio recordings will do wonders to improve your listening ability.

Personal Synopses | סְכוּמִים אִישִׁיִּים

A personal synopsis does not need to be more than a few sentences (in Hebrew). To create a synopsis, look at the verbs in the passage that you've read. Think of who is doing each act. You can use the same verb form (normally, the *vav*-consecutive) with the explicit subject, either by using the *vav*-consecutive or by converting it to a perfect. Either way, tell us *who* was in the story and *what* they did. You can choose a few key sentences from the story. Don't give all of the details. Just tell us the essence of what happened.

As you do this, write it down for yourself. You may choose to point the sentences, copying the נִקּוּד *niqqûd* from the page, or to write it out unpointed—perhaps that will help you get used to reading Hebrew without vowels as you read it back to yourself. Be especially mindful of the verbs. If the text reads וַיָּקָם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הָעִיר you might think of changing it to הַמֶּלֶךְ הָלַךְ אֶל־הָעִיר. Prepare yourself to use both the perfect and the *vav*-consecutive in your retelling, but keep your synopsis short and to the point. If you feel comfortable doing more, you should also feel free to do so. I just don't want you to feel that you need to write a book report over the passage to be delivered in Hebrew. A few sentences is sufficient, mentioning the characters and basically what they did. In the first lesson, I will give an example as you start to study Hebrew in this different way.

When I make the request for retelling the story (סַפְּרוּ־נָא לָּנוּ אֶת־הַסִּפּוּר בְּמִלִים אֲחֵרוֹת \ שׁוֹנוֹת), I will ask for volunteers (מִתְנַדְּבִים). This is a great time to practice thinking in Hebrew. Try not to read from what you prepared, but use it as a model of how you can present the information.

כְּתִיבַת עִבְרִית בַּמַּחְשֵׁב | Typing in Hebrew

Typing in any language requires practice and memorization. Installing the Hebrew keyboard on your computer varies depending on your operating system. To get started, Google "install Hebrew keyboard" with your operating system to find instructions. I'm currently using the keyboard *Hebrew (Standard)* on Windows 10.

Once you have the keyboard installed, you may choose to use an on-screen keyboard to learn where the keys are. On Windows 10, press the Windows key ⊞ and type "on-screen keyboard" to open it. If you hit Alt and Shift together, it will allow you to switch keyboards from English to Hebrew (and back).

Using vowels is a bit more difficult. The easiest thing that I have found is to type it out without vowels, then copy the text and paste it into a site called a נַקְדָּן *nakdan* (a "pointer," from נִקּוּד *nikud*). Dicta.org.il has a great page for this. Once you've pasted the text into the textbox, hit הָחֵל נִיקוּד to "begin pointing." Most of the time, it does very well. But, if you click on a word that has been pointed, it will give you a list of options on the left from which you can choose to correct the pointing. If the correct choice isn't there, you might need to check your spelling of the word. If it's correct and your choice isn't there, you can add points by using the character map (hunting and pecking), or you can learn how to point Hebrew yourself. You can find instructions for your computer type by searching Google.

Online Resources | מַשְׁאַבִּים הַנִּמְצָאִים בָּאִינְטֶרְנֶט

Online Bibles

There are plenty of online Hebrew bibles that you can choose from. The simplest version is the one provided on Mechon Mamre's website. They have a version with vowel points and cantillation marks ("trope") as well as several other versions. The navigation of the Bible is in unpointed Hebrew, using the Hebrew letters for numbers. The German Bible Society has the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* online without its apparatus. You can read a digital version of the Leningrad Codex at Tanach.us, complete with facsimile copies of the codex's folios. The Aleppo Codex can be viewed on mgketer.org by going to הַצֵּג "display" → תָּנָ״ךְ וַעֲזָרִים נוֹסָפִים "Bible and other helps" → צִלּוּם כת״י כֶּתֶר אֲרַם צוֹבָא "scan of the Aleppo Codex manuscript" (כת״י means כְּתַב יָד "manuscript" or "handwriting"). Note that the Aleppo Codex is not complete, so this option will not be avaible for the entire Bible. In fact, most of the text of the Torah is missing. Our stories from 1 and 2 Kings is extant in the manuscript, however. There is a complete printout of the Aleppo Codex's edition of our stories at the end of the textbook, which we will bring into the lessons throughout the class.

Audio Bibles

There are two great sources of free audio recordings for the Hebrew Bible. The first is Mechon Mamre, mentioned above. The audio files can be found here, which you can locate on Google by searching for *Mechon Mamre audio*. The second is a site that also has an app that can be downloaded to any smartphone, called Bible.is. Simply choose the chapter that you want to listen to, and when it is loaded press the play button. Being able to download the app to your phone makes Bible.is extremely useful.

Dictionaries

It's important to have access to some dictionary or other. I personally recommend that you have a portable dictionary the likes of Holloday's *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (CHALOT) (Eerdmans, 1972). It is inexpensive and extensive (Amazon). There is free access to Gesenius's lexicon through BlueLetterBible.org. You can search for word (in English) or by verse, and it will connect you via "LexiconC" to the number in Strong's dictionary and the entry in Gesenius. It is dated but good. If you are up for giving out your money, you may get the best dictionary that there is currently for sale—Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm's *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brill, 2001), which can be purchased at a reduced price digitally through Logos and Accordance. It's a worthwhile purchase for those who have some extra shekels.

Bibliography | בִּיבְּלִיוֹגְרַ֫פְיָה

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