

Tools for the Study of the Old Testament

The essentials:

1. A Hebrew & Aramaic text
2. A Hebrew & Aramaic lexicon
3. A Hebrew grammar
4. A Hebrew concordance
5. A Septuagint text
6. A Septuagint lexicon
7. A Bible atlas
8. A Bible encyclopedia or dictionary
9. An introduction

1. Text

You *must* have a version of *BHS* (4th edition, revised 1997) that includes the Masorah (at least *Ketiv & Qere*), the accents, and the critical apparatus. For Logos users, this means SESB 2.0 or higher. This will remain true until *BHQ* or *HBCE* is complete (Don't hold your breath). Use of *BHQ* or *HBCE* volumes that are complete is encouraged.

1a. Basic textual helps

For help with the para-textual material in *BHS*, use:

BHS "Prolegomena" (pp II-LV; use the language of your choice)

Kelly, Page H., Daniel S. Mynatt, and Timothy G. Crawford. *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (MBHS). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Rüger, Hans Peter. *An English Key to the Latin Words and Abbreviations and the Symbols of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1985. Included in the front of your *BHS* 4th edition.

Scott, William R. *A Simplified Guide to BHS: Critical Apparatus, Masora, Accents, Unusual Letters, and Other Markings*. Fourth edition. N. Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press and William R. Scott, 1995. Note: this edition includes an introduction to *BHQ* by Harold Scanlin.

2. Lexicons

- A. Brown, Francis, et al. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (BDB). Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999 (4th printing).

Strengths: The long-time standard, referenced very frequently in secondary literature. Useful information from cognate languages. Reasonably priced.

Weaknesses: Very dated (e.g., it's pre-Dead Sea Scrolls). Leans heavily on etymology and is organized by tri-literal roots even when these are doubtful. Reflects nineteenth-century critical scholarship.

B. Clines, David, ed. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (DCH)*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011. 8 volumes.

_____. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009. One volume. All of the entries in the above (except a few extra-biblical words) but with less information on each.

_____. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew Revised (DCHR)*. Vol. I: Aleph. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2018. This is a complete revision. When all nine volumes are complete it will include 25% more words than *DCH*.

_____. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew Revised (DCHR)*. Vol. II: Beth-Waw. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2019.

Strengths: An attempt at a true dictionary of the language (“classical Hebrew”) rather than of a corpus (the OT). Includes information from extra-biblical texts (inscriptions, Dead Sea Scrolls, inter-testamental literature, etc.). When complete, *DCHR* will be 4 times the size of either *BDB* or *HALOT*, and will have other substantial improvements (345 semantic fields listed, synonyms listed in each entry, etc.)

Weaknesses: *DCHR* will be a big improvement but it's a long way from completion. The *Concise* edition of *DCH* is affordable, but scanty. Print version is pricey. At this writing Logos offers an electronic version of *DCH* for \$209.99 with the index volume (vol. 9) on “pre-pub” for \$24.99.

C. Gesenius, Wilhelm. *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*. 18th edition. Heidelberg, Dordrecht, London, and New York: Springer, 2013.

Strengths: Although he may be better known as a grammarian, Wilhelm Gesenius is the father of modern Hebrew lexicography. His initial 1810–1812 lexicon strongly influenced both *BDB* and *HALOT*. Published serially until the eighteenth edition was complete in 2013. This a comprehensive update that incorporates recent scholarship, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. Organized (mostly) alphabetically rather than by triliteral root.

Weaknesses: **Be warned: this is not the same thing as *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon***, which is an English translation of an old Gesenius edition (a predecessor of *BDB* and *HALOT*). The 2013 Gesenius under discussion here is, like *BDB* and *HALOT*, critical. Although exegetes with even a little German can use it profitably, it will be harder for those with no German at all. Currently

Logos has no electronic version. Can be pricey, but at this writing, used ones in good condition can be found for around \$75.00.

D. Jastrow, Marcus. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. NY: Judaica Press, 1971.

A necessity for Mishnaic Hebrew (which is basically late biblical Hebrew with frequent Aramaisms). Illuminating for late biblical Hebrew, biblical Aramaic, and occasionally the NT.

E. Koehler and Baumgartner, eds. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT (HALOT)*. 5 vols. Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 1994. 3rd edition.

Note: you *do not* have this in your Logos 8 unless you added it. If you search *HALOT* in your Logos library, it will take you to William Holladay's *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner*. This is *not* the real *HALOT* and *not* adequate for our purposes.

Strengths: Much more up-to-date than BDB, in both the Hebrew texts and the secondary literature (books & articles) that it references. Organized (mostly) alphabetically rather than by tri-literal root.

Weaknesses: Also critical. Pricier than BDB, although a 2-volume "Scholar's Edition" in hardcover that has all the same information is reasonable. Currently \$159.95 at Logos.

F. Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (<http://sdbh.org/>). Only online and incomplete, but consulting entries that are finished is strongly recommended. Gives true definitions (not one-word glosses) and biblical usages via hypertext.

G. Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon (<http://cal.huc.edu/>). Also a work in progress. Includes a large database of Aramaic and Syria texts, concordance features, and other resources and tools.

<p>Recommendation: Either BDB, Gesenius 18th ed. (German), the <i>real</i> HALOT, or the <i>complete</i> DCH. DCHR when it's finished. The concise DCH only as a backup. Consult sdbh.org regularly! Serious philologists should add Jastrow.</p>
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3. Grammars

- A. Joüon, Paul and Takamitsu Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (J-M). Revised edition. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 2006.

A very thorough revision of Paul Joüon. More up-to-date and easier to navigate than GKC (below). Becoming a standard.

- B. Gesenius, Wilhelm. Enlarged by E. Kautzch. Revised by A. E. Cowley. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (GKC). Oxford: Clarendon, 1910. Second English edition.

Still the standard, referenced very often in commentaries. Thorough. Dated.

- C. Van der Merwe, Christo H. J., Jacobus A. Naudé, and J. H. Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (BHRG). Second edition. London: Bloomsbury/T & T Clark, 2017.

This is a very thorough revision of the 1999 edition (Sheffield). By far the most up-to-date, with approaches informed by (e.g.) cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis; yet it remains very accessible and easy to navigate.

- D. Waltke, Bruce K. and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (IBHS). Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Very helpful on syntax. For phonology and morphology, supplement this one with one of the above.

Recommendation: If you're going to buy only one, get *BHRG*, *GKC*, or *J-M*. If two, add *IBHS* for syntax.

4. Hebrew & Aramaic Concordances

These have mostly been rendered obsolete by resources such as SHEBANQ (<https://shebanq.ancient-data.org/>) and by the search features in Bible software programs. It can be a good idea to hand-check searches before you publish something.

- A. Even-Shoshan, Avraham. *A New Concordance of the Bible: Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible, Hebrew and Aramaic, Roots, Words, Proper Names Phrases and Synonyms*. 2nd edition. Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sefer, 1990.

The best and most complete. In the second edition the introduction is still in modern Hebrew, but entries are listed by English book names & chapter-and-verse numbers.

Recommendation: your computer. Evan-Shoshan for a print version.

5. Septuagint texts

The Septuagint's importance goes well beyond textual criticism. For the most part, it was the OT of the early Church, and it is extremely important for the history of the interpretation of Scripture. Various editions may differ considerably, mainly because the textual criticism of the Septuagint is so complicated.

- A. *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974 (Volume I).

Known as the "Göttingen edition," this one is published as separate volumes (over 20 to date) and is still not complete. A complete critical apparatus. Necessary for serious LXX research, but expensive.

- B. Brenton, Lancelot Charles Lee, ed. and transl. *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*. Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 1999 (8th printing).

Handy for quantity reading. English translation in the margin. Available online at:

<http://www.ccel.org/bible/brenton/>.

- C. Brooke, Alan E. and Norman McLean. *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus*. Cambridge University Press, 1906 (Volume I).

A diplomatic rather than a critical edition, this one is based on one manuscript (Vaticanus). Very useful. Also incomplete, expensive, and hard to get.

- D. Rahlfs, Alfred, ed. Revised and corrected by Robert Hanhart. *Stuttgart*: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.

Text is mostly Vaticanus, but with use of some other mss. A basic critical apparatus. Affordable and fine for our purposes. Text (but no app crit) available online at: <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/septuagint-lxx/read-the-bible-text/>.

Note: Codex Sinaiticus can be viewed online at: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>.

Recommendation: Rahlfs.

6. Septuagint lexicons

Your NT lexicon (e.g., BDAG) will not give you much help here.

- A. Lust, Johan, et al. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. (LEH) Revised edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003.

Good enough for our purposes (and a big improvement on the two-volume paperback Lust).
Included with SESB 2.0.

- B. Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (GELS). Leuven: Peeters, 2009.

Much better than Lust. Pricey.

6A. Serious textual critics will also want a LXX concordance.

- A. Hatch, Henry, et al. *A Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament*. (Known as “Hatch and Redpath” or HR). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998.

The standard. Classifies entries by which Hebrew words they are used to translate, which is very useful. Available online at:

www.archive.org/details/ConcordanceGreekSeptuagint.greekversot.apocr.suppl.Hatch.redpath.

- B. Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint*. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

An improvement on Hatch & Redpath. A bit pricey.

Lexicon recommendation: Muraoka is better but LEH is good enough. Add Muraoka’s *Two-Way* if textual criticism is an interest of yours.

7. *Bible atlases*

- A. Beitzel, B. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2009.

Good all-round atlas. Includes links to electronic maps.

- B. Brisco, Thomas V. *Holman Bible Atlas*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- C. Cleave, Richard. *The Holy Land Satellite Atlas: Student Map Manual Illustrated Supplement, Volume 1*. Nicosia, Cyprus: Rohr, 1994.
- D. Currid, John and David Barrett. *ESV Bible Atlas*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Includes a CD with maps and searchable indices.

- E. Rasmussen, Carl. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.

F. *Student Map Manual*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.

The most detailed maps (in terms of geography, not history).

G. Rainey, Anson and R. Steven Notley. *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World*. Second Emended and Enhanced Edition. Jerusalem: Carta, 2014.

A thorough updating of MacMillan, now a standard. Critical. Logos's electronic version is on pre-order at this writing for \$89.99.

Recommendation: Rainey & Steven and/or Rasmussen

8. Bible encyclopedias or dictionaries

Lots of choices. A sample:

A. Achtemeier, Paul, ed. *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. NY: Harpercollins, 1996.

One volume. Less conservative than Marshall (below).

B. Bromiley, Geoffrey, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE). 4 volumes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995 (latest edition).

Moderate-evangelical. Older editions are available online at various sites (e.g., <https://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/>).

C. Freedman, David Noel et al., eds. *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (ABD). 6 volumes. NY: Doubleday, 1992.

The most complete, and the best scholarship. Critical (some articles much more so than others). Logos's electronic version currently goes for \$159.95.

D. Barry, John D. et al., eds. *Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Probably part of your Logos. Very current. Useful articles on approaches and schools of thought (e.g., source criticism).

Conservative-evangelical. One volume.

E. Tenney, Merrill and Moisés Silva, eds. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible: Revised Full-Color Edition*. 5 volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Conservative-evangelical. A big improvement on earlier editions, especially esthetically.

Recommendation: ABD or Zondervan.

9. OT Introductions

- A. Dillard, Raymond and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Second edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Moderate-evangelical.

- B. Gaebelin, F. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976-1992.

Evangelical.

- C. Hill, Andrew and John Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

Brief.

- D. Lessing, R. and A. Steinmann. *Prepare the Way of the Lord: An Introduction to the Old Testament*. St. Louis: Concordia, 2014.

LCMS. Up-to-date.

Recommendation: Steinmann & Lessing.

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