

The Mechanics of the Hebrew Language

Summary of Characteristics, Similarities and Differences from English

22 Paleo Letters developed from time of Joseph 2000 BC to Moses 1600 B.C.

5 Letters that split to make different sounds

5 of the 22 Letters have a differ shape if it is at the end of a word.

9 Vowels consisting of dots and dashes around the ancient letters date from 200 AD.

This course uses the **Sephardic** pronunciation of the many spoken dialects today.

22 of the 25 sounds of the Hebrew alphabet are equivalent to the English alphabet.

There are **2 Silent Letters** and **3 Letters** require **digraphs** to translate i.e sh, th & ts.

Original Scriptures (Ten Commandments) written in **Paleo Hebrew** in 1600 BC.

The scriptures at the time of Christ were written in **Middle Classical Hebrew** and this is what we are studying today.

The oldest scriptures we have today are from the Leningrad Codex and the Aleppo Codex of the Old Testament. They are almost completely identical. We use the **Leningrad Codex** in this course.

There were **no spaces between the words** in the original Hebrew. We present them today with spaces for easier reading.

There was **no punctuation** in the Original Hebrew. Today there are **diacritical** systems in addition to the vowels that were added from 200 - 800 AD to show how to parse the words, show what to accent and how to sing the words in synagogs. These markings are called **Cantillation**. You can ignore these completely because they are irrelevant to the purpose of this course