

Genesis 1:1

What you thought you knew about Genesis

Hebrew

- Do I really need to know Hebrew to understand the Bible? Yes, at least have a “working” understanding of Hebrew and some syntax and the ability to use basic Hebrew resources.
- Introduction to Hebrew? I can only give a VERY simple introduction to Hebrew. If you REALLY want to learn Hebrew I know a great teacher....
- Today’s teaching will give you just a little understanding why I have these views.

Key Hebrew Linguistics

Hebrew reads right to left

Word Play: Unfortunately one of the major literary techniques employed in the biblical narrative is word play. Sometimes that word play is used to bring the reader back to a certain point in the text to highlight the importance of what is happening.

Bifids and Chiasms: These are literary techniques employed to relate stories from differing viewpoints. May also have use in the memorization of material.

First Letter: Some psalms employ this technique to help in memorization.

Idioms and Figures of Speech: Probably the hardest category for linguists to handle as the meanings are not always apparent. This also includes euphemisms that are often employed in biblical text.

Masoretic Text

- **Masoretic Text** is the authoritative, standardized Hebrew and Aramaic text of the 24 books of the Jewish Bible (Tanakh). Codified by Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes between the 6th and 10th centuries CE, it established precise vocalization, accentuation, and marginal notes to ensure accurate transmission of the text. It is the foundation for most modern translations of the Old Testament.

**בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:
ha-arets ve-et ha-shamayim et Elohim bara berashit**

Traditional View: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (a statement of creation from nothing).

Grammatical View (Dependent Clause): "When God began to create the heavens and the earth..." (suggesting verse 2 describes the state of the earth *as* creation began).

Another Possible Translation: "When first God created the heavens and the earth."

בְּרֵאשִׁית bereshit

בְּ A preposition generally meaning: in, by, with, against, but can also mean when. This particular syntax DOES NOT include the definite article.

Original Word: בְּרֵאשִׁית

Part of Speech: Noun Feminine

KJV: beginning, chief(-est), first(-fruits, part, time), principal thing

NASB: beginning, first, first fruits, choicest, choice, finest, foremost

Word Origin: [from the same as [H7218 \(- רֹאשׁhead\)](#)]

1. the first, in place, time, order or rank (specifically, a firstfruit)

Kabbalism

- **Kabbalah** - the ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible, first transmitted orally and using esoteric methods (including ciphers). It reached the height of its influence in the later Middle Ages and remains significant in Hasidism.

Gnosticism

- **Gnostic** - The Gnostics were a sect of philosophers that arose in the first ages of christianity, who pretended they were the only men who had a true knowledge of the christian religion. They formed for themselves a system of theology, agreeable to the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, to which they accommodated their interpretations of scripture. They held that all natures, intelligible, intellectual and material, are derived by successive emanations from the infinite fountain of deity. These doctrines were derived from the oriental philosophy.

בְּרֵאשִׁית bereshit

Non-traditional approach, Kabbalistic approach.

ברא To create (only applied to Yahweh creating)

שית To order appoint or fix

Breaks with traditional language syntax as both are verb forms and Hebrew language syntax NEVER combines verb forms.

בָּרָא
bara

Original Word: בָּרָא

Part of Speech: Verb

KJV: create (creator)

Only used for creation by Yahweh

Qal Perfect 3ms

אֱלֹהִים elohim

Original Word: אֱלֹהִים

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

KJV: angels, X exceeding, God (gods)(-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty

NASB: God, gods, God's, judges, goddess, great

Word Origin: [plural of [H433](#) (- אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים God)]

1. gods in the ordinary sense
2. but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God
3. occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates
4. and sometimes as a superlative

אֶת
et

Original Word: אֶת

Part of Speech: Untranslatable mark of the accusative; mark of accusative

KJV: (as such unrepresented in English)

Word Origin: [apparent contracted from [H226 \(- אֶת sign\)](#) in the demonstrative sense of entity]

1. (properly) self
2. (generally) used to point out the object of a verb (or preposition) more definitely
3. (hence) even or namely

ת - Tav

א - Alef

Isaiah 44:6 ...I am the **FIRST**, and I am the **LAST**;
and beside me *there is* no God.



Covenant / Mark / Sign

אות
Oth



Leader / Strength / Ox / God

Alef



הַשָּׁמַיִם ha-shamayim

Prefaced by the Hebrew letter Hey הַ which indicates the definite article: the

Original Word: שָׁמַיִם

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

KJV: air, X astrologer, heaven(-s)

NASB: heaven, heavens, sky, highest heavens, heavenly, heaven and the highest, compass

Word Origin: [from an unused root meaning to be lofty]

1. the sky (as aloft
2. the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve)

הַשָּׁמַיִם ha-shamayim

Non-traditional Kabbalistic approach:

Shin (שׁ): The 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It can be used as a prefix meaning "that," "which," or "who" (often pronounced *sheh-* or *sha-* in modern/late Hebrew).

מַיִם Waters, dual

וְ ve-et

We already covered this word, but in this case it is prefaced by the Hebrew letter Vav וְ which is simply a conjunction generally translated as And or But.

הָאָרֶץ ha-arets

Prefaced by the Hebrew letter Hey הָ which indicates the definite article: the

Original Word: אָרֶץ

Part of Speech: Noun Feminine

KJV: X common, country, earth, field, ground, land, X nations, way, + wilderness, world

NASB: land, earth, ground, lands, country, countries, world

Word Origin: [from an unused root probably meaning to be firm]

1. the earth (at large, or partitively a land)