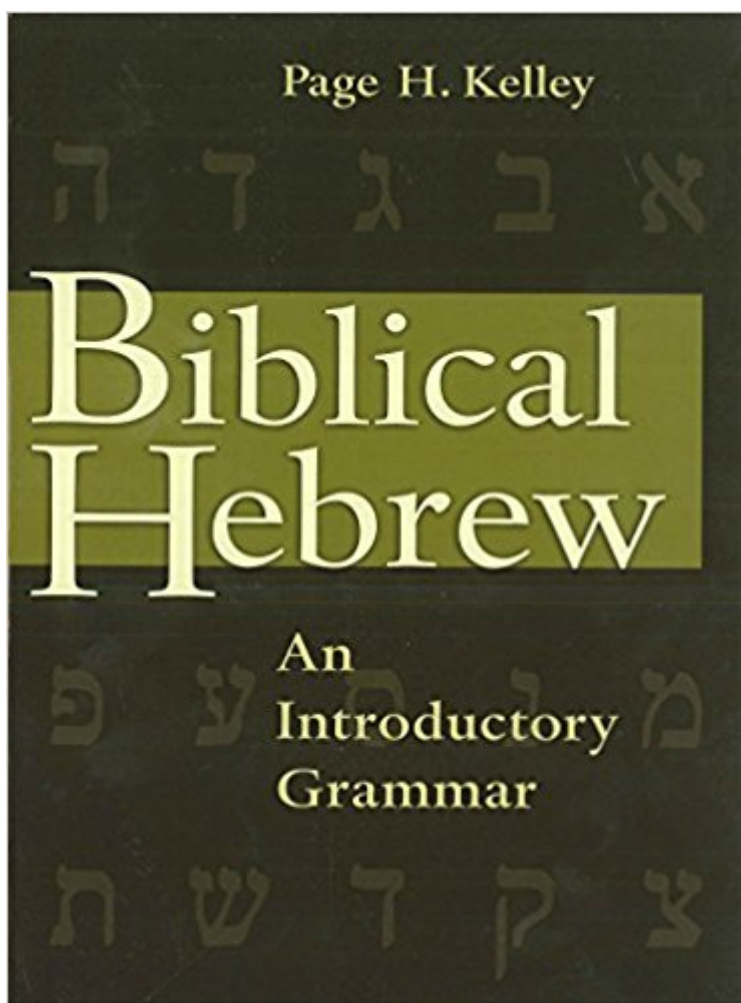


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# Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar



## Synopsis

Comprehensive in scope, this carefully crafted introductory grammar of Biblical Hebrew offers easy-to-understand explanations, numerous biblical illustrations, and a wide range of imaginative, biblically based exercises. According to Page Kelley, his book is "designed not so much for seasoned travelers as for those who are just starting out on a strange and wonderful journey." The book consists of thirty-one lessons arranged as follows: the nonverbal aspects of the language (lessons 1-10); the verb forms and their functions, with special attention to the strong verbs (lessons 11-20); the coordinate relationship of verbs, a topic alluded to but seldom developed in other grammars (lesson 21); and a comprehensive introduction to each of the ten classes of weak verbs (lessons 22-31). The grammar is accompanied by eleven complete verb charts, an extensive vocabulary list, a glossary of grammatical terms, and a subject index. Kelley employs a method that one reviewer has described as a cross between a straight presentation of grammatical principles and rules and a semi-inductive presentation of concepts through the exercises. Each lesson first presents new grammatical concepts, with biblical examples, and then provides reinforcing exercises that Kelley has judiciously selected from the biblical text (the exercises do not presuppose vocabulary and grammar not already covered). Deriving from the author's forty years of experience in teaching Biblical Hebrew to seminary students, and enthusiastically employed in its developing stages by instructors at a variety of colleges and seminaries, Kelley's *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* promises to be an excellent teaching tool with high potential as a textbook. Kelly has designed it for use in either a one-semester or a two-semester course.

## Book Information

Paperback: 453 pages

Publisher: Eerdmans (April 24, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802805981

ISBN-13: 978-0802805980

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1.1 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 42 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #39,605 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Language Studies](#) #7491 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality](#)

## Customer Reviews

Critical Review of Books in Religion "It is a pleasure to recommend Kelley's effort, tested in forty years (a biblical generation) of classroom teaching. It represents a solid beginning for the Hebrew novice to wander the map of the Hebrew Bible with confidence and surety."

Page H. Kelley (1924-1997) was professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Timothy G. Crawford is dean and professor of Old Testament and Hebrew in the College of Christian Studies, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, Texas. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

This well written and the explanations are clear. If I was taking Hebrew in a class, this book and its accompanying workbook

([http://www..com/Handbook-Biblical-Hebrew-Introductory-Grammar/dp/080280828X/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1460874091&sr=8-2&keywords=biblical+hebrew+kelly](http://www..com/Handbook-Biblical-Hebrew-Introductory-Grammar/dp/080280828X/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1460874091&sr=8-2&keywords=biblical+hebrew+kelly)) would work well. However, my Hebrew studies are almost entirely self-taught. I much preferred "Basics of Biblical Hebrew" series of books by Gary Pratico and Miles Van Pelt. Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Workbook, 2nd Edition to this book. Both the Kelley and Van Pelt books are clearly written, but the "Basics of Biblical Hebrew" series of books have more materials available with it for the student who is learning at home. These include video lectures done by Van Pelt, flash cards, charts, CD's so that you can learn the vocabulary in the car, etc. So you feel more confident that you have things right with the Basics of Biblical Hebrew series than with Kelley's grammars. At the very minimum, if your going to use Page H. Kelley to learn Hebrew, I would recommend also getting "English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew". English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew If your like me, it was more than a few years since I took English. Kelley assumes you know what he means when he mentions various parts of speech. I found myself needing a quick reminder to what some of the various parts of speech were. I mostly slept through English classes and only remembered the basics such as nouns and verbs. Bottom line, I started with the Page Kelley books to learn to read Hebrew with comprehension, but I actually accomplished learning to read Hebrew with the Pratico & Van Pelt series.

After over a year with this book, I am glad to say I've finished it! Advantages of Kelley's book: I love how he combed through the Bible and found actual verses for the exercises in each chapter. It gives a feeling of authenticity to the book, and the joy of working through the Bible rather than fabricated

textbook examples. Each chapter has a LOT of helpful exercises of many different kinds, particularly verb identification. There is also an answer key (sold separately) which makes this book ideal for self-study. Disadvantages: I thought the way he handled weak verbs was unhelpful. His book is very step-by-step: he teaches almost everything about nouns, then moves into verbs, then weak verbs. So there are 10 chapters at the end of the book that focus on weak verbs alone. Some of these chapters were unnecessary, such as certain types of weak verbs that don't lose any of their root consonants - only the vowels change, but one can intuit these pretty easily. Other chapters he overcomplicated immensely, focusing on intricate phonological rules that don't seem necessary to understand biblical Hebrew. Given the verbs are the most difficult thing about Hebrew morphology, I feel he should have introduced them from the get-go, introducing individual weak verbs along the way and treating them as special irregular cases. Then one is dealing with strong and weak verbs while learning everything else rather than slapping them all at the end of the textbook.

Note that one needs to get the companion "Handbook" volume to go with this "Introductory Grammar." The explanations are very clear, as are those in the competing Van Pelt / Pratico textbook. This volume is unusual in its treatment of the verbs. Instead of covering all forms (strong and weak) of a given stem (Qal, Nifal, Hifil, etc.) in one chapter, it instead approaches verbs by dealing first with all the strong forms, and then by each of the weak forms, with all stems viewed under a given form. I find it easier to learn the verb forms that way, but your experience may differ.

This book by Kelley is extremely detailed without being overwhelming. Learning any language can be overwhelming, but if one takes this book lesson by lesson, they will do well. I find that this makes a great companion text to "Biblical Hebrew" by Kittel et al (see my review on this book for more information). Kelley provides what Kittel does not, and vice versa. Kittel presents great lessons without getting into a mass of details that aren't yet necessary, and as a workbook, it moves you along confidently and quickly. But with learning anything, many like to know, and will definitely need to know fairly early on, not simply how something is done, but WHY, and what nuances are caused by the details. Kelley does just that by explaining point by point why things work the way they do in Hebrew. For example, this would include how vowel pointing changes and why. Kittel deals with vowel pointing, of course, and how it works grammatically, but leaves one without answers in many cases as to the systematic rules of how vowel pointing works. Also, Kittel's book does a nice job in presenting participles, but doesn't really give enough detail to help the beginner with the related nuances of participial grammar that even the beginner needs to know (e.g., what's the difference in

translation between participles as adjective, as verbs, and as nouns?). Kelley explains in detail what Kittel presents generally. He gives all the answers that Kittel does not. Kittel gives a more workable workbook than does Kelley. With Kittel, you feel like you're moving along faster and so it is more encouraging (I personally went through the first half of Kittel's book thoroughly in only 2 1/2 months, along with working on a number of chapters later in the book at the same time; I could never do that with Kelley's book). Because of its great detail, it may have a somewhat discouraging effect by not allowing the student to move very quickly. What I recommend for any truly serious student of Hebrew is to invest in both Kittel's and Kelley's books. Use Kittel's book as the main course, and use Kelley's as a main supplement (you will definitely need something to go with Kittel's book). After you've gotten about half way through Kittel's book, it would then be good to look at Kelley's book systematically and find the reasons for why Hebrew is the way it is. Ultimately, Kelley's book will have to become your main text if you really plan to learn Hebrew effectively. Kelley by far gives many more exercises to hone your skills. Also, I use Kelley's book sort of like an encyclopedia to turn to for more information as I study a chapter in Kittel's workbook. I can't recommend this combination of books enough, for it truly gives many positive facets to studying Hebrew. For under \$100, the serious student can be set for a long time with these two books. And one can still keep it under a hundred dollars by investing in what I believe to be the best student's vocabulary book out there for the price, "A Student's Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic," by Larry Mitchel, which covers all Hebrew words used 10 times or more in the OT, and all Aramaic words if you should choose to delve into that. Kelley's book, considering its detail, is quite sufficiently systematic and also simple in its explanations. If you really want to learn, this book will give you what you need without being cumbersome.

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