

# Hebrew Nouns

# Hebrew Nouns

- All Hebrew nouns have gender:
  - Masculine
  - Feminine
- It does not matter if a noun is an inanimate object or a living creature; Hebrew nouns themselves are either masculine or feminine.
  - Female people and animals will have feminine nouns.

# Hebrew Nouns

- Hebrew nouns have number; they are:
  - Singular
  - Plural
  
- Some nouns have dual forms:
  - Meaning “two”
  - Usually used for things that come in pairs

# Hebrew Nouns

- A noun's gender and number can sometimes be determined by the ending of the noun but this is not always the case.

# Hebrew Nouns

- **Masculine singular nouns do not have special endings:**

- בֶּן son
- יוֹם day
- מֶלֶךְ king
- אָב father
- בַּיִת house
- דָּבָר word, matter, thing
- עַם people, nation

# Hebrew Nouns

- **Some feminine nouns are ending-less too:**

- אֶרֶץ land
- יָד hand
- עִיר city
- חֶצֶר court

# Hebrew Nouns

- Many feminine singular nouns end with **תָּה** as in:

- שָׁנָה year
- אִשָּׁה woman
- מִלְחָמָה war
- מִשְׁפָּחָה (extended) family; clan
- עֹלָה burnt offering
- אֲדָמָה ground
- נַחֲלָה inheritance
- תּוֹרָה teaching, law

# Hebrew Nouns

- Some feminine singular nouns end with ת, as in:
  - בַּת daughter
  - חַטָּאת sin, sin offering
  - בְּרִית covenant
  - עֵת time
  - אָחוֹת sister
- Not all nouns that end in ת are feminine; sometimes they are masculine.



# Hebrew Nouns

- The lexical (dictionary) form for any noun is the singular form.
- Consulting a lexicon is the only absolute way to confirm the gender of a noun.

# Hebrew Nouns

- Masculine plural nouns usually end in **ים** :

• Singular	Plural	Meaning
• אֵל	אֱלֹהִים	God; gods
• פָּנָה	פָּנִים	face(s)
• מוֹעֵד	מוֹעֲדִים	seasons, appointed times
• סֵפֶר	סִפְרִים	books, scrolls
• גִּבּוֹר	גִּבּוֹרִים	mighty warriors
• אֶבֶן	אֲבָנִים	stones

# Hebrew Nouns

- The **feminine plural ending** **ות** is sometimes spelled with holem ( ם ) instead of holem vav ( ם ).
- The feminine plural form for **תורה** is:
  - **תורות** (full or plene spelling) or
  - **תורת** (short or defective spelling).
- With the short form, there is no change in pronunciation or translation.

# Hebrew Nouns

- Examples of feminine plural nouns:

• Singular	Plural	Meaning
• מִלְחָמָה	מִלְחָמוֹת	wars
• מִשְׁפָּחָה	מִשְׁפָּחוֹת	(extended) families
• עֹלָה	עֹלוֹת	burnt offerings
• נְחִלָּה	נְחִלּוֹת	the inheritances
• תּוֹרָה	תּוֹרוֹת	teaching, law

# Nouns

- Some plural nouns have irregular forms:

• Singular	Plural	Meaning
• אִישׁ	אֲנָשִׁים	men
• אִשָּׁה	נָשִׁים	women
• בֶּן	בָּנִים	sons
• בַּת	בָּנוֹת	daughters
• עִיר	עָרִים	cities
• יוֹם	יָמִים	days

# Nouns

- The endings of some plural nouns are not always what is expected; some have gender flips, or they have both masculine and feminine endings:

• Singular	Plural	Meaning
• שְׁנָה	שָׁנִים , שְׁנוֹת	years (f)
• לֵב	לְבָבוֹת	hearts (f)
• עִיר	עָרִים	cities (f)
• דּוֹר	דּוֹרִים , דּוֹרוֹת	generations (m)
• אִשָּׁה	נָשִׁים	women (f)

# Hebrew Nouns

- When some singular nouns become plural, vowel changes may or may not occur.
- Two syllable words that are accented on the 2<sup>nd</sup> syllable and have a long vowel in the first syllable will reduce to a sheva or a hatuph vowel in the first syllable (propretonic reduction).

• דָּבָר	דְּבָרִים	words
• עָנָן	עֲנָנִים	clouds
• לֵבָב	לְבָבוֹת	hearts

# Hebrew Nouns

- Dual forms of nouns are for nouns that occur in pairs; these are typically body parts whose nouns are usually feminine:

• Singular	Dual	Meaning (a pair of)
• אָזָן	אָזָנִים	ears
• יָד	יָדַיִם	hands
• עֵינַיִן	עֵינַיִם	eyes
• קַרְנָן	קַרְנַיִם	horns
• רַגְלָן	רַגְלַיִם	legs



# Hebrew Nouns

- There are some nouns that have a dual ending for no apparent reason:
- מַיִם water
- שָׁמַיִם sky, heavens
- יְרוּשָׁלַיִם Jerusalem
- מִצְרַיִם Egypt

# Hebrew Nouns

- **Segholate** nouns are nouns with 2 syllables in which the first syllable is accented.
- The vowel pattern of the singular form may vary but the plural form has a vocal sheva or hatuph form in the first syllable and a qamets in the second syllable.

• Singular	Plural	Meaning
• בֶּקֶר	בְּקָרִים	mornings
• חֶרֶב	חַרְבוֹת	swords
• נֶעָר	נְעָרִים	boys
• נַפְשׁ	נַפְשׁוֹת	souls

# Hebrew Nouns

- **Geminate nouns** are nouns with bi-consonantal roots which may have originally had 2 identical letters (twins ~ gemini).
  - In the plural form, the geminate letter reappears in the form of a dagesh forte:
- | • Singular | Plural  | Meaning  |
|------------|---------|----------|
| • עַם      | עַמִּים | peoples  |
| • חֵק      | חֻקִּים | statutes |

# Hebrew Nouns

- Not all bi-consonantal roots are geminates (the plural form does not have dagesh forte).

• Singular	Plural	Meaning
• אָב	אָבוֹת	fathers (m)
• בֶּן	בָּנִים	sons (m)
• שֵׁם	שֵׁמוֹת	names (m)

# Hebrew Nouns

## Noun Endings

	Singular	Plural	Dual
Masculine	---	יםִיְ-	יםִיְ-
Feminine	הַיְ- , -- , ת-	ותִ- , ת-	יםִיְתִיְ- , יםִיְ-


# Hebrew Nouns

## Summary of Noun Endings

	Singular	Plural	Dual
Masculine (horse)	סוּם	סוּסִים	סוּסַיִם
Feminine (mare)	סוּסָה	סוּסוֹת	סוּסָתַיִם

# Hebrew Nouns

- *Biblical Hebrew A Compact Guide*, Miles Van Pelt, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, copyright 2012.
- *Biblical Hebrew An Introductory Grammar*, Page H. Kelly, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, copyright 1992.



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