
CHUMASH FUNDAMENTALS FOR ADULTS

Answers to the review questions

A reference sheet from the book.

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Chapter 1

1. That you can sound out vowelised Hebrew, slowly, with a finger on the page. Nothing else.
2. A translation tells you what a verse says. Reading the text means the Hebrew itself is carrying the meaning to you, which is a different experience, and the one the book aims at.
3. Part Three assumes the color coding, the six prefixes and the endings are already familiar. Without Part Two it becomes a slow exercise in looking things up.

Chapter 2

1. The shoresh supplies the area of meaning. The vowels and the affixes supply the grammar: who did it, to whom, when, and whether the word is functioning as a verb, a noun or something else.
2. 41.75% of all words in the Chumash.
3. 149 of the 268, well over half.
4. It means nothing in the perek is exotic. Every shoresh you learn here is one you will meet again constantly, so the effort of learning it is repaid across the whole Chumash.

Chapter 3

1. Because it is an abstraction rather than a word. The connectors say “these three letters as a set”, and a final-form letter would imply that the root ends a real word, which it never does.
2. The idea of building. A house is a built thing; a son is glossed “son, builder” because he builds the family line.
3. A milah is a word that is not built on three letters, אָב, אֶחָ, אֵשׁ, יָם, שְׂבָעִים. The test is mechanical: count the letters of the root. Three is a shoresh; anything else is a milah, and there is nothing to take apart.

4. Work from the outside in: peel any prefixes off the front, peel any ending off the back, and what is left is the shresh wearing its vowels.

Chapter 4

1. *and; to, for; the; in, with, by; from; like, as.*
2. The prefix meaning *to, for.*
3. 11.09%, the single most frequent item in the whole Chumash.
4. Because Hebrew uses one prefix for a range of relations that English splits across three words. Which one fits is decided by what follows: a place gives *in*, an instrument gives *with* or *by*.

Chapter 5

1. It carries the possessor. English needs *my, your, his* as separate words; Hebrew puts them on the end of the noun, or on the end of a preposition.
2. Gender. One addresses a man, the other a woman, which is why the first is all over pasuk 1, where Hashem speaks to Avram, and the second appears in pesukim 12 and 13, where Avram speaks to Sarai.
3. Because it is the directional hei, not a possessive ending. On a place-word it means *toward*, and Hebrew needs no preposition at all.
4. The ending meaning *their*, once, in pasuk 5.

Chapter 6

1. Peel any prefixes off the front, outermost first; peel any ending off the back; read what remains as the stem and find its shresh; then reassemble the English from the back of the Hebrew word forward.
2. Because the prefixes and endings are a closed, short list you can recognize instantly, whereas the shresh is only visible once they are out of the way.
3. The beis at the front is the preposition *in*; the stem in the middle is the verb, an infinitive construct on the shresh meaning to go out; the ending is *his*. Literally *in his going out*, that is, *when he left*.

Chapter 7

1. Yud, vav, nun and hei.
2. It collapses into the following letter, which then carries a dagesh, the dot inside the letter marks the place the nun went.
3. Two: the lamed and the kaf. The yud of the shoresh has dropped.
4. Because reading does not require deriving forms. The useful habit is recognition: a word that looks two letters short is almost always a shoresh you already know with an unstable letter hidden.

Chapter 8

1. The binyan decides what kind of action it is, simple, intensive, causative, passive. The shoresh decides what the action is about.
2. Qal: *to see*. Hifil: *to show*, that is, to cause to see. Nifal: *to be seen*, rendered *appeared*.
3. A vav placed on the front of an imperfect, which flips it into the past and moves the narrative forward one step. Narrative Hebrew uses it because it chains events: and he went, and he took, and he built.
4. Aspect, not time. The perfect presents an action as completed; the imperfect presents it as not completed. English usually renders them past and future, but that is a translation convenience rather than what the Hebrew says.