⌘ Biblical Hebrew Grammar for Beginners

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Prepositions

Prepositions indicate a variety of relationships between a noun and other parts of the sentence.

Hebrew prepositions appear either independently before a noun or a noun-like form (e.g., an

infinitive), or are attached to a noun or a noun-like form as a prefixes.

Individual prepositions may convey more than one kind of relationships, primarily special or

temporal. The most versatile among Hebrew prepositions is the prefixed ב , which, depending

on the circumstances, can be understood as *in, at, upon, among, within, by the means of, at the*

time that, like, and so on. Likewise, the prefixed preposition ל can be understood as *to, for, at,*

during, until, as, and so on.

In many instances, a preposition is combined with a pronominal suffix rather than a noun.

Prepositions like ב , ל , עִם *with*, and בֵּין *between*, take the following set of suffixes:

to me	לִי	יִ
to you (m sg)	לְךָ	ךָ
to you (f sg)	לָךְ	ךָ
to him	לוֹ	וֹ
to her	לָהּ	הָ
to us	לָנוּ	נוּ
to you (m pl)	לָכֶם	כֶם
to you (f pl)	לָכֶן	כֶן
to them (m)	לָהֶם	הֶם
to them (f)	לָהֶן	הֶן

A different set of suffixes containing a *yod* is used with prepositions such as עַל *upon*, אַחַר *after*, לִפְנֵי *before*, and אֶל *toward*:

upon me	עָלַי	יַ
upon you (m sg)	עָלֶיךָ	ֶיךָ
upon you (f sg)	עָלַיִךְ	ַיִךְ
upon him	עָלָיו	ָיו
upon her	עָלֶיהָ	ֶיהָ
upon us	עָלֵינוּ	ֵינוּ
upon you (m pl)	עֲלֵיכֶם	ֵיכֶם
upon you (f pl)	עֲלֵיכֶן	ֵיכֶן
upon them (m)	עֲלֵיהֶם	ֵיהֶם
upon them (f)	עֲלֵיהֶן	ֵיהֶן

These suffixes, identical to possessive suffixes used with <u>nouns</u>, point to nouns as origins of many prepositions.

The vowel of a prefixed preposition may change depending on the word to which it is prefixed. Likewise, some variance may be observed in certain suffixes (e.g., בָּם and בָּהֶם).

A number of prepositions are highlighted in the text below, an excerpt from Genesis 1.   This passage has ל *to*, ב *in*, כ *like*, and עַל *upon*, and also לָהֶם, לָכֶם, and בּוֹ that are prepositions with pronominal suffixes.

כד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֵמָה וָרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיְתוֹ-
אֶרֶץ לְמִינָהּ ; וַיְהִי-כֵן. כה וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת-

הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֵת כָּל-רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ ; וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-
טוֹב. **כו** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ ; וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת
הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-
הָאָרֶץ. **כז** וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא
אֹתוֹ ; זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם. **כח** וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְכִבְשֻׁהָ ; וּרְדוּ בִּדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל-הָאָרֶץ. **כט** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי
לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב זֹרֵעַ זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ
אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְרִי-עֵץ זֹרֵעַ זָרַע ; לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאָכְלָה. **ל** וּלְכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ
וּלְכָל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל רוֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת-כָּל-
יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאָכְלָה ; וַיְהִי-כֵן.

24 And God said: "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle, creatures that crawl upon the earth, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the cattle according to their kinds, and all the crawling creatures of the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that crawl upon the ground." 27 So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living creature that crawls upon the ground." 29 Then God said, "Behold, I have given to you every seed-bearing plant that is upon the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be of yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and to all the birds of the heavens and to all the creatures that crawl on the ground, and to everything that has the breath of life in it I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

Want to Know More?

[The Definite Article and Prepositions](#): The definite article merges with the prefixed prepositions "in" ב and "to" ל to form a single prefix.