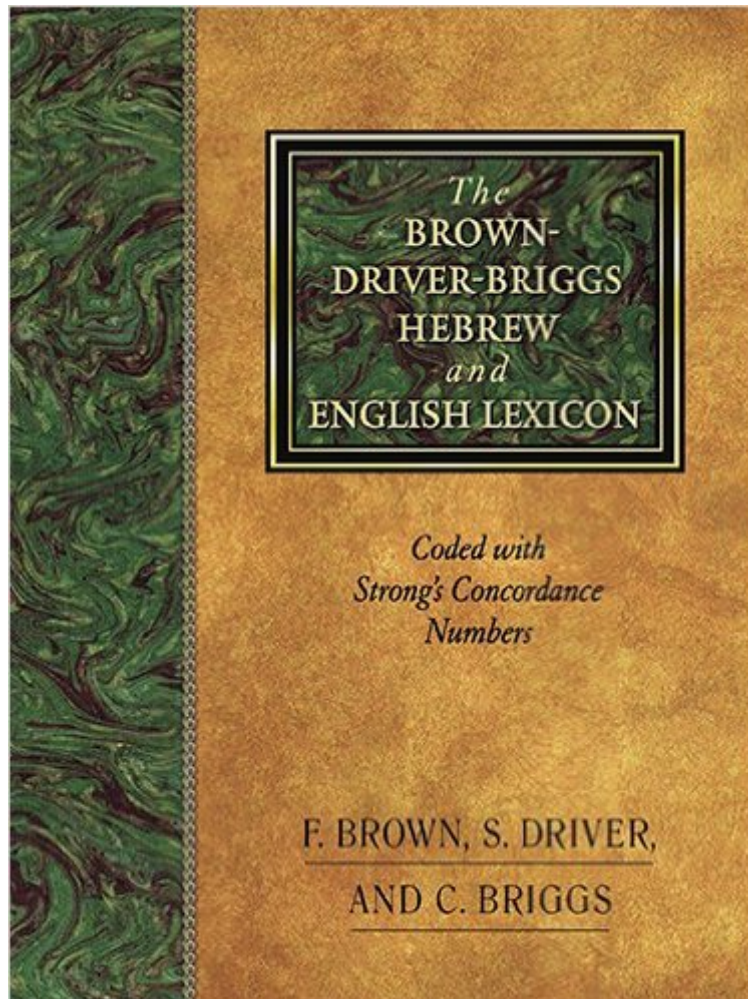


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The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew And English Lexicon



Synopsis

A trio of eminent Old Testament scholars--Francis Brown, R. Driver, and Charles Briggs--spent over twenty years researching, writing, and preparing "The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon." Since it first appeared in the early part of the twentieth century, BDB has been considered the finest and most comprehensive Hebrew lexicon available to the English-speaking student. Based upon the classic work of Wilhelm Gesenius, the "father of modern Hebrew lexicography," BDB gives not only dictionary definitions for each word, but relates each word to its Old Testament usage and categorizes its nuances of meaning. BDB's exhaustive coverage of Old Testament Hebrew words, as well as its unparalleled usage of cognate languages and the wealth of background sources consulted and quoted, render BDB an invaluable resource for all students of the Bible.

Book Information

Hardcover: 1216 pages

Publisher: Hendrickson Publishers; Complete and Unabridged, fully searchable, with Strong Numbers and interactive Index edition (September 1, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1565632060

ISBN-13: 978-1565632066

Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 1.9 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (151 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This lexicon is probably the most commonly used tool for Hebrew students. While dated, being based on an original work from the middle of the last century, it provides in one relatively cheap volume a handy reference guide for beginning Hebrew students. One of the highlights for beginning students was the added index at the back of the 1979 edition which alphabetically listed Hebrew words and provided their corresponding Strong's number and the BDB page where they are discussed. For some reason the most recent edition has removed this useful feature, leaving only

the Strong's numbers, which are of little practical value for a novice student trying to find a word for the first time. Serious students should be aware of D.J.A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield, 6 volumes), and beginners could find K. Feyerabend's *Langenscheidt's Pocket Hebrew Dictionary* more portable and easier to use, though much less thorough.

If you pulled up this title you probably have some interest in studying Biblical Hebrew. If you plan on buying only one reference tool for those studies, this should be it. The contextual references and translations (although somewhat dated) are extensive and detailed. The lexicography is the standard used or referenced by all of the other works in the field. The historical information is extremely useful if you plan on doing comparative work or focused etymologies. This is the single masterwork reference for Biblical Hebrew; and, if you are a seminary student, you will probably have to buy it anyway.

As other reviewers have commented, this is an essential book for study of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) in the English-speaking world. However, I'd add that it's also perhaps overlooked as a useful tool for anyone seriously engaged with later/modern Hebrew, simply because (unlike the majority of other dictionaries) words are listed by *shoresh* (root) rather than purely in alphabetical order, and in each case the full range of biblical usages is listed. I live in Israel, and it's unbelievable the number of times that my BDB has been fetched mid-conversation to check the meaning of the root of a word. Geeky, maybe, but nonetheless extremely worthwhile.

Without a doubt the most complete study of Biblical Hebrew I have run across in my 18 years of study. Complete, concise and clear definitions with references to scripture search as well. Cross references with Strong's Concordance so even if you don't know Hebrew you can find your word or passage in Strong's and then look for Strong's reference number at the back of BDB Lexicon to find the page for your word within the Lexicon. Will open a entire new world of study for the serious student of Hebrew.

Without a doubt Brown Driver and Briggs (BDB) is a phenomenally useful lexicon, and once one works how to work round the root-order, is more useful than alphabetically-ordered books. The price of this edition too is unbeatable. BUT BDB is a hundred years old, and scholarship has moved on. The current standard reference in English is the 3rd ed. of Koehler and Baumgartner's 'Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament' (HALOT). I would recommend students to start with BDB but

to check contentious words with Koehler and Baumgartner, and get a copy when they can afford to (it does cost \$150-\$180 in the 'economical' 2-volume study edition). Clines 'Dictionary of Classical Hebrew' at over \$700 so far, with 3 or 4 volumes to be published, is for libraries only. I have to say that I use the Oxford edition more than the Hendrickson edition (which seems a straight reprint of the Oxford with Strong's numbers added), but recently I ordered the latter from for use in Italy where I was living (due to its amazing price, it was cheaper to order it from America than to get my own copy out of store in England), and was very pleased with the quality. Though it has Strong's reference numbers in the margins which are of no interest to me, those margins are slightly larger than the OUP edition, and so one has a little more space to scribble (both editions could do with more margin, tho'). On djdjdjdjdjdj9's allusion to the hishtaph'el interpretation of hishtaHawe, I must point out that by no means the whole of scholarly opinion holds with it. I do, as it happens, but there's not a consensus.

The Brown-Driver-Briggs (BDB) Hebrew and English Lexicon is a very special dictionary for Biblical Hebrew (and there's a little section at the end for Biblical Aramaic). This is how it works, or at least how I use it. When there is a (Hebrew) word in the Tanakh you don't know or you're not clear about, you page through to it in the BDB. The BDB tells you what type of word it is, whether it's a proper name, noun, verb, etc; it may give you the root in cognate languages such as Akkadian, Arabic, Ethiopic, etc.; and it gives you the various meanings of the word in some of the contexts it is used (with sources and biblical references; it often gives you all the references for the word so that you can use it as a sort-of concordance). The book was first published in 1906 so it is a classic. It seems that there are more modern lexicons available. If I'm not mistaken (and I stand to be corrected), one modern version I considered seemed very expensive. But the BDB is great value for money. It has about 1200 pages, (mine) is hard-cover (and the cover is nice-looking). It is detailed and clear, and I find it very easy to use. It is also coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers (which I don't use). It's a pity that the great scholars that gave us this Lexicon devoted so much of their keen minds to the unfortunate documentary hypothesis of higher criticism, whose J's, E's, D's, and P's show their ugly faces in this book, albeit rarely; fortunately, they also gave us BDB, and it is no surprise that it has come to be an essential book for the study of the Tanakh for so many.

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