

I will conclude this section by noting that, although the discussion above focuses almost exclusively on the differing pronunciation of a few consonants, pronunciation is certainly broader than that. Pronunciation includes the vowels, accentuation, the way words are connected in phrases—in other words, the entire speaking process. Pronunciation is important enough to receive additional comments here and there in these notes on resources.

The Biblical Text

Although the *complete* contents of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (biblical text, critical notes, Masora, and other annotations) is only available in the printed edition from the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, the biblical *text* (from the Leningrad Codex) is readily available in print, online, and in Bible study apps (in its own separate section on p. 16).¹⁵

The biblical text in print

Leaving aside editions of the Bible intended primarily for Jewish readers (which also generally use the text of the Leningrad Codex), there are two editions that have lexical notes at the bottom of the pages of the biblical text. These glosses enable you to read quickly through the text without looking up words that occur fewer than seventy or so times in the Bible. Unless you need the text critical notes or the Masoretic notes, these editions can save you invaluable time in reading:

Brown, A. Philip, II, and Bryan W. Smith, eds. *A Reader's Hebrew Bible*. Zondervan, 2008.

This edition has a faux leather binding, which I find less sturdy than the hard-bound volume listed next. However, this edition is now available in hardback, combined in one volume together with the Greek New Testament, as A. Philip Brown II, Bryan W. Smith, Richard J. Goodrich, and Albert L. Lukaszewski, eds., *A Reader's Hebrew and Greek Bible*, 2nd ed. (Zondervan, 2020).

Vance, Donald, George Athas, and Yael Avrahami, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: A Reader's Edition*. Hendrickson, 2015.

This reader's edition is hardback, so for the sake of longevity you may prefer this edition over the previous one. On the other hand, this edition indicates grammatical forms using a system of abbreviations that is not self-evident, but must be learned.

Adam Howell, part of the “Daily Dose of Hebrew” team (and coauthor of *Hebrew for Life*), has produced a video on “Hebrew & Greek Reader's Editions Reviews” that includes these two volumes: <https://dailydoseofhebrew.com/scripture-passage/hebrew-greek-readers-editions-reviews/>.

¹⁵ There are occasional *minor* differences between different printed texts and between printed and electronic texts (see discussion on p. 17). I am completely ignoring these differences for the purpose of this section, considering them all equivalent biblical texts.

The biblical text online

An internet connection provides many opportunities to access the text of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament in Hebrew.

The biblical text online: Hebrew Old Testament

Here is a sampling of sites offering the text of the Hebrew Old Testament. What you gain in some of the sites over a print version of the text is the ability to display the text in various ways: with or without vowels, with or without cantillation marks, with Masoretic spelling or with full spelling of all words. Some also provide simple (and sometimes more advanced) search tools. You can also use most of these to copy and paste the biblical text quickly and easily (and accurately) into a word processing document.

Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, “Online Bibles: Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS),” <https://www.die-bibel.de/en/bible/BHS/GEN.1>.

“The Hebrew Bible in XML,” www.tanakhml.org, <https://www.tanakhml.org>.

“Mechon Mamre,” <https://www.mechon-mamre.org>.

You can choose the precise presentation of the text that you wish from the drop-down menu on the top left; click “Bible” then “Version.”

“תורה נביאים וכתובים,” Kirjasilta, <http://www.kirjasilta.net/tanakh/index.html>.

“Tanach - תנ״ך,” <https://tanach.us/>.

“Tanakh,” Sefaria, <https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Tanakh>.

As noted briefly above, and more fully on page 17), there *may* slight differences between these websites and the print resources.

The biblical text online: Hebrew New Testament—Franz Delitzsch

Franz Delitzsch is probably best known among Lutheran seminary students as the Delitzsch of the Keil–Delitzsch commentary on the Old Testament. He is also known for a translation of the New Testament into Hebrew, first published in 1877. The idiom of the translation was biblical Hebrew, since Hebrew had not yet been revived as a spoken language. (Eliezer Ben-Yehuda did not immigrate to Palestine until 1881; Ben-Yehuda raised his son, Itamar Ben-Avi (אִיתָמָר בֶּן־אַבְיָ), born in 1882, entirely in Hebrew, making him the first native speaker of Hebrew in modern times.) Here are several sources of Delitzsch’s translation (a few more can be found in the Wikipedia article on Franz Delitzsch):

“ספרי הברית החדשה,” FaithOfGod.net, <https://faithofgod.net/Hebrew/berith/>.
Edition not indicated; unpointed text only.

“ספרי הברית החדשה,” Kirjasilta, <http://www.kirjasilta.net/ha-berit/index.html>.

Edition not indicated; both pointed and unpointed text.

Delitz.fr, <https://delitz.fr/>.

Pointed text of both the 12th ed. (1901) and the “Negev Version,” based on the 8th ed. (1885).

The biblical text online: Hebrew New Testament—New Translation

The Bible Society in Israel produced a new translation (into modern Hebrew) of the New Testament in 1976, with the most recent edition from 1991. This translation is available at the following website, in both a pointed and an unpointed version:

“ספרי הברית החדשה,” Kirjasilta, <http://www.kirjasilta.net/hadash/index.html>.

Audio recordings of the Bible

In this section, we look at two free recordings of the entire Hebrew Bible (and one of a substantial portion of the Bible), as well as two recordings for purchase—although one of those has the same content as one of the free recordings.

A very good, free recording of the entire Hebrew Bible is available for streaming from the following three websites, and available for downloading from Mechon Mamre. You can also download the chapters through “Tanakh Read Along” (p. 13). The pronunciation is Sephardic-style modern Hebrew (see the paragraph on page 9):

“Audio Bible in Hebrew,” Torah Class, <https://www.torahclass.com/further-study/hebrew-audio-bible/>.

Select the book and chapter, then press “Go” to stream the chapter.

Mechon Mamre, “Chapter-by-Chapter MP3 Recordings of the Hebrew Bible,” <https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/ptmp3prq.htm>.

Click on the number of a particular chapter to stream the audio; follow directions to download the chapter file.

“Talking Bibles,” <https://www.talkingbibles.org>.

Click on the “Listen Now!” button (you may need to scroll down to find it), select “Hebrew Letteris” in the drop-down Language menu, book and chapter as desired, then “Listen.”

The reader in these recordings is Abraham Shmuelof. “Abraham Shmuelof was born in 1913 in the *Meah Shearim* section of Jerusalem to a large Bucharan Ultra-orthodox Jewish family which had migrated from Persia at the end of the 19th century. He would become a legendary figure in Jerusalem, journeying from being an Ultraorthodox Jew to Roman Catholicism, Trappist monk, Benedictine, returning to the Trappists and finally to serving in the Greek-Catholic Church in Galilee.

“... He was ordained priest by Archbishop Hakim in Nazareth in 1956 and

served the Melkite community as a parish priest at Gush Chalav (he spoke perfect Arabic as well as his native Hebrew), and helped the bishop as secretary for Jewish affairs. As he encountered more and more difficulties in serving the Palestinian community, he found his true place at 'La Maison d'Isaïe' in Jerusalem founded by the French Dominicans, where he collaborated on developing a Hebrew Liturgy with Fr. Jacques Fontaine. It was at this time [perhaps the 1960s?] that Fr. Abraham took on the task of recording the entire Tanak in Hebrew." ("Abraham Shmuelof,"

<http://individual.utoronto.ca/mfkolarcik/AbrahamShmuelof.html>)

The authors of *Hebrew for Life* write that "as a result of [Shmuelof's] upbringing, his reading of the text sounds delightfully liturgical."¹⁶

In addition to (or instead of) downloading the audio recordings easily and freely to be played on any media player, you can use an invaluable app that allows you to follow the text that Fr. Shmuelof is reading: "Tanakh Read Along." This app is available on both the Apple platform (for iOS devices, as well as the new M-series Mac desktops with Apple Silicon) and the Android platform. Jorge Murillo, the developer, describes the app this way on the Apple App Store: "Artificial Intelligence made it possible to sync Text and audio so 'Tanakh Read Along' can play a recording of the Hebrew Text from the Bible while displaying the Text, Phonetics, and/or Translation using a karaoke-like animation." Murillo gives a brief example of the app in this brief video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sEoQN_futw. The Hebrew Study Group offers a more extensive (and actually more useful) overview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkn7HintwX4>.

A second free recording of the entire Bible in Hebrew (both Old and New Testament) provides a notable alternative to Shmuelof's reading. This is the online audio recording at <https://HaKtuvim.co.il>, produced by the Bible Society in Israel. Select a book and chapter from the drop-down menu on the upper left (Genesis 1 should be the default). In a drop-down menu on the upper right, you can select "With music" (a reading with music and sound effects) or "Without music" (a reading of the text alone). Playback controls are to the left of this drop-down menu, and just below it you can select the playback speed. The audio files are available only for streaming with an internet connection; they cannot be downloaded (see below [p. 14] about purchasing the files from the Bible Society in Israel or obtaining them from Faith Comes by Hearing). The reading (whether with or without music) is a dramatized reading not by one person only, but by as many different persons as needed to represent all the speakers in the text. This makes it possible to recognize different speakers by the timbre of their voices, not just by introductory words in the text. The text itself is also displayed on the web page (but, alas, without the karaoke-style presentation of the Tanakh Read Along).

Finally, a third free recording of the Bible is worth mentioning: "Tanakh audio recording by Rabbi Dan Be'eri - book by book" (available from the Internet Archive at <https://archive.org/details/TanakhAudioRecordingByRabbiDanBeeri->

¹⁶ Howell et al., *Hebrew for Life*, 60.

BookByBook). This is a collection of the reading or chanting of various books by Rabbi Be'eri. The advantage of this collection is that Rabbi Be'eri reads more slowly than Shmuelof, and slightly slower than the Bible Society in Israel recordings. There are several disadvantages to this collection: (1) Some books are not represented; about one-third of the Hebrew Bible is missing. (2) Some books are chanted, not read; in addition, the “cantillation is according to the musical tradition of the Jews of Aleppo, as taught by Rabbi Mordecai Attiya” according to the compiler of the collection. The chant tones do not match very closely with the chanting we do—but it gives you a another view into the varieties of Jewish synagogue chanting.

Here are two audio recordings of the Bible available for purchase (although there are undoubtedly more). The first is a recording by Shlomo Bertonov (“Israel’s best Bible reader”), available at a cost of \$69.95. The two free recordings above probably make this one redundant, but I include it for your information. The pronunciation is modern Israeli Hebrew (or probably more specifically Sephardic-style modern Hebrew—see note on Fr. Shmuelof above). If my guess above for the 1960s as the period in which Shmuelof recorded his readings, Bertonov’s readings are roughly in the same period. He lived from 1925 to 1977, so he would not have been recording long after Shmuelof did. The recording is available from at least the following websites:

“The Whole Bible Narrated in Hebrew,” Hebrew World, <https://www.hebrewworld.com/SpeakingBible.html>.

“Audio Tanakh,” Hebrew for Christians, https://hebrew4christians.com/Online_Store/Audio/Bertonov/bertonov.html.

A selection of recordings is also available for purchase from The Bible Society in Israel. These are the same recordings as the audio files that are streamed on the HaKtuvim website. You can find the recordings for purchase by clicking on the “Shop” button at the top of the page at <https://HaKtuvim.co.il>—or you can go directly to the society’s website at <https://www.biblesocietyinisrael.com/shop>. Click on the plus sign beside “Audio & Video” in the left-hand sidebar, then click on “MP3.” Although the description is “Hebrew Audio Bible – available in CD/USB,” as of 10 September 2023 only the USB memory stick (flash drive) is available. Choose that option under “Format.” Then choose the “Recording” (Old Testament or New Testament, with or without music).

The website notes in the description: “Great for listening while you drive, work, or play. Also a valuable tool for learning Hebrew”—to which I would add, “indeed,” if the free recording by Shmuelof does not meet your needs. An alternative source of these recordings is from Faith Comes by Hearing (<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com>). There you can download the New Testament (dramatized or nondramatized) or the Old Testament (dramatized only). You can download the mp3 files freely. Formerly, a donation was requested—which I think is still a good idea that can be honored by North American Christians.