

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Dor

By: Jeff A. Benner

This Hebrew word is used 167 times in the Hebrew Bible and usually translated as "generation". While the Hebrew word דור and the English word "generation" are similar in meaning, it is important to understand the differences in order to have a clearer picture of the authors understanding of the word which may impact how the passage is understood.

A generation is time from one birth to the birth of the next generation. While the word דור has the same meaning, there are differences. In our Greco-Roman culture we see time as a line with a beginning and an end while the Eastern mind sees time as a continuous circle. While we may see a generation as a time line with a beginning and an end, the Hebrews saw a generation as one circle with the next generation as a continuation of the circle. There is no beginning and no end.

The word דור is a child root derived from the parent root דר (meaning generation in Aramaic). In the ancient pictographic script this word is written as דר. The ד is a picture of a tent door and has the meaning of an in and out or back and forth movement. The ר is the head of a man meaning man. When combined these mean "the movement of

man", a generation is the movement through the circle of one man while the next generation is the movement of man through the following circle.

In the ancient Hebrew mind the circle is the symbol for "order". Note the possibility of the ancient Semitic word DOR in the word orDER. This circular order can also be seen in the creation/destruction of the world. In our Greco-Roman mind we see the creation as the beginning of a time line and its destruction as the end of that timeline. But remember the ancient Hebrews see time as a circle. Genesis 1:1 says "in a beginning" (bereshiyt means in "a" beginning, not "the" beginning). This world was destroyed at the fall of man (a full circle). The world begins a-new with the new order of things and is destroyed again at the flood, another circle. The world begins a-new and will be destroyed again (as prophesied by the prophets). Were there circles of time prior to Genesis 1:1 and circles of time after the destruction to come?

There are three Hebrew roots (each are adopted roots) that have the meaning of order. Within each of these is the DR parent root meaning "order" or "circle". In the following issues we will examine each of these words.

Name of the Month - Adam

By: Jeff A. Benner

We are all familiar with the name "Adam" as found in the book of Genesis, but what does it really mean? Let us begin by looking at its roots. This word/name is a child root derived from the parent אד meaning, "blood". By placing the letter מ in front of the parent root, the child root אדם is formed and is related in meaning to אד (blood).

By examining a few other words derived from the child root אדם we can see a common meaning in them all. The Hebrew word אדמה (adamah) is the feminine form of אדם meaning "ground" (see Genesis 2:7). The word/name אדום (Edom) means "red". Each of these words have the common meaning of "red". Dam is the "red" blood, adamah is the "red" ground, edom is the color "red" and adam is the "red" man. There is one other connection between "adam" and "adamah" as seen in Genesis 2:7 which states that "the adam" was formed out of the "adamah".

In the ancient Hebrew world, a person's name was not simply an identifier but descriptive of one's character. As Adam was formed out of the ground, his name identifies his origins.

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