

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

Biblical Hebrew E-Magazine

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Issue #006

[E-Zine Home Page](#)

Issue Index

[Biblical Word of the Month](#) – Bar (cont.)

[Name of the Month](#) – Elijah

[Question of the Month](#) – 1st C. Hebrew?

[Copyright](#)

Biblical Word of the Month – Bar (cont.)

By: Jeff A. Benner

In this issue we are continuing the study of the Parent Root בר and the roots and words which are derived from it.

The Hebrew word “BaR” literally means “grain” as previously mentioned but its meaning can also be extended to mean “soap” or “clean”. As will be shown in more detail later, grains are fed to livestock to make them fat. The fat of animals is used to make soap. The soap is of course used to make one clean. It is this word BaR that is also translated as “pure” – “He that hath clean hands, and a pure (BaR) heart (Ps 24:4).

The Hebrews understood a “pure heart” as a “clean heart”. You must also understand that “guilt” was seen as dirt. In order to remove the dirt from the heart you must clean it. Hopefully this will cause you to begin viewing the Bible from a different perspective, the perspective of its original authors. Next week we will look at a few other words that are derived from this parent root.

A common means of forming an additional noun out of a two letter word is to double the word. The word ברבר (pronounced "barbur") is a fowl as seen in the following verse; *Ten*

fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl (1Ki 4:23). Again we can easily see the connection between the word "BaR" and the idea of being "fattened".

This word is also used in the Aramaic language to mean "field" as a place for growing grains as well as "son" probably through the idea of offspring in connection with the seeds of the grain.

Name of the Month - Elijah

By: Jeff A. Benner

This name is written two different ways - אליה, pronounced as "eliy-yah" or אליהו, pronounced as "eliy-yahu". There are three components to this name. The first is אל (el) the Hebrew word for "power" and "authority" and is commonly translated as God or god. The ם is a letter added to the end of a noun to mean "my" hence אלי means "my God". The ם also doubles as the first letter of the next part of the name - יה (Yah) or יהו (yahu). Both "yah" and "yahu" are two different forms of the tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH), the name of God. The root of YHWH as well as Yah and Yahu is היה literally meaning "to breathe".

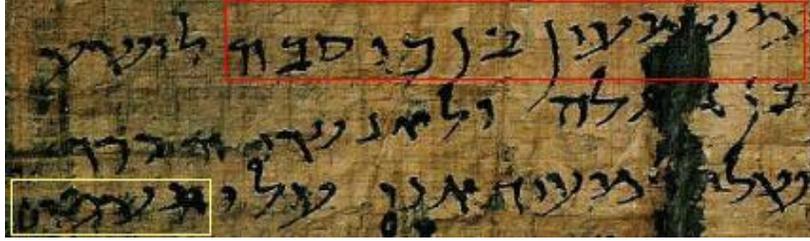
To the ancient Hebrews, only that which can be perceived through the senses (sight, feeling, hearing, smell or taste) is believed to exist. This is why the ancients usually erected statues of a god. When Moses asked God "who should I tell them has sent me?" God said, tell them "ehyeh asher ehyeh" has sent you. While this phrase is commonly translated as "I am who I am" it is better understood as "I breathe and I have breath". In the Hebrew mind that which "exists" has breath, this can be a god, man, animal or even a mountain. The breath (often translated as spirit) is the character of an individual or object. God may not be seen but he is breath and does exist.

When each of these components are combined the name means "my God is Yah". But as the word אל (el) means power and authority יהוה means "to have breath", we can see the meaning "My authority is the one who has breath".

Question of the Month – 1st C. Hebrew?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: Was Hebrew a common language in Israel in the first century CE?



A: One of the best arguments for proving that Hebrew was a commonly used language in Israel during the first century CE (AD) is through the evidence discovered in the archeological record. Above is a picture of a letter written by Shimon Ben Kosba (Simon Bar Kockba). His name appears in the red box at the beginning of the letter. This letter was written during the second Jewish revolt of 130-135 CE and is written in Hebrew, not Aramaic or Greek. What is also interesting about this letter is that it uses contractions, which can only come from a spoken language. We consistently use contractions such as "I'm" for "I am" or "wouldn't" for "would not". The word in the yellow box is "tashmayim" a contraction for "et hashamayim" (the heavens).

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