

# Ancient Hebrew Research Center

## Biblical Hebrew E-Magazine

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### ***Biblical Word of the Month - Voice***

By: Jeff A. Benner

The word "QoL" (Strong's #6963) can be translated as; voice, noise, sound or thunder. In the Hebrew mind each of these are its "voice".

"and Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky and Yahweh sent thunder [qol]..." (Exodus 9:23) - Thunder is the voice of the sky.

"when you hear the sound [qol] of the trumpet" (Joshua 6:5) - the sound of the trumpet is its voice.

Before looking at the original meaning of this word let's look at some other word that are related.

QahaL (Strong's #6951): This word is usually translated as assembly, congregation or community but is better understood as a flock; "and Moses spoke into the ears of the flock" (Deuteronomy 31:30).

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maQ'heL (Strong's #4721): This word is the pasture; "In the pasture they will bless Yahweh God..." (Psalm 68:27) - When the "ma" is added to a word it usually means "the place of.". In this case it will be "the place of the flock".

ma'QeL (Strong's #4731): "with sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand..." (Exodus 12:11)

Can you see a common theme in these words; voice, flock, pasture and staff? They are all related to the shepherd. The voice of the shepherd calls the flock to the pasture and he uses his staff to direct and protect them.

When the original more Hebraic understanding of words are known, Biblical passages come to life as in the following.

"These are the words Yahweh spoke to all the flock on the mountain in the middle of the cloud of fire and thick darkness with a great voice..." (Deuteronomy 5:22). In this passage the Hebraic imagery is that God is the shepherd who calls his flock to the pasture.

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### ***Name of the Month - Shinar***

By: Jeff A. Benner

The origin of this word is not Hebrew but as it is in the Hebrew text and its etymology is interesting I thought it would be worthy of investigation.

"And they set out from the east and they found a valley in the land of Shinar and they settled there." (Genesis 11:2). This is the land of Babylon also called "Mesopotamia" (Greek meaning "between the rivers", meso as in Meso-America or Central America as in between North and South America and potamia as in the "Potomoc", A river in North America).

When the names of places are transferred from one language to another it is common for the sounds of the name to be mixed up a bit. We see this in names like Yerushalem in Hebrew to Jerusalem in English and "Amorah" in Hebrew and "Gomorraah" in English.

Sounds formed in the same region of the mouth are sometimes exchanged one for another. Some common examples are a "b" and "p", "r" and "l", "m" and "n" and "s" and "sh". When the "sh" in Shinar is changed to a "s" and the "n" is changed to a "m" you have Samar which is "Samaria" another common name for Mesopotamia.

## ***Question of the Month – Heavens?***

By: Jeff A. Benner

**Q:** Is there a difference between heaven and heavens? Is one spiritual and the other physical?

**A:** The first thing to keep in mind is that in Ancient Hebrew thought there is no separation between the physical and non-physical, they are the one and the same. An example of this is in Psalm 24:4 where "clean hands" and "pure heart" are one and the same thing. A common form of Hebrew poetry the "and" connects two phrases as one and the same thing. Clean hands are a sign of a pure hearth and visa versa.

The heavens is the physical skies and it is also the place of God, one and the same thing. It is the western (i.e.: Greek) thinking that separates the two realms. We often see the "spirit" as spiritual and the "body" as physical but in Hebrew thought they are one and the same thing. Without the spirit (actually breath in Hebrew) the body cannot survive and with the body the spirit cannot survive.

In Hebrew the word shamayim (Strong's #8064) is in the plural (the "yim" ending is the plural suffix). This word is always written in the plural. You may see "heaven" or "heavens" in your Bible but they are both the word shamayim. There are several Hebrew words that are always written in the plural - water is mayim and face is paniym (yim and iym are both plural endings). Personally, I prefer to translate the Hebrew word shamayim as "skies". This eliminates any confusion between heaven, heavens and sky.

From a Ancient Hebrew perspective, who know nothing about gas giants which, we call the sun and stars, millions or billions of miles away called the sun or stars or the vast expanse of space. They saw the "heavens" as a "sheet" that covers the earth just like the Hebrews nomadic tent that covers the family. In fact, from the inside of a nomadic tent the cover looks just like the night sky, stars and all.

I believe the connection that the Hebrews made between God and his "host" is that they can see the "sheet" of the skies but they cannot see beyond it, neither can they see or even speculate on what is beyond that sheet. The Ancient Hebrew mind did not concern itself with things they could not see, hear, feel, smell or touch. It is Greek thinking that delves into the philosophy of the unknown. The Hebrew word "olam" is usually translated as "eternity" or "forever". This word literally means "what is beyond the horizon" or "hidden". To the Hebrews God is olam, not eternal but "unknown" or "hidden".

**Verse of the Month – Genesis 2:24**

By: Jeff A. Benner

עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ  
לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (ASV)

**עַל (al)**

A common word that we have looked at many times before meaning "upon", "on" or "above".

**כֵּן (keyn)**

The original meaning of this word is a base as a firm support and is used to mean "so" and is the Modern Hebrew word for "yes" in the sense of "it is so" or "it will be firm". When the words "על כן" are used together they mean "upon so" or "therefore".

**יַעֲזֹב (ya-a-zav)**

The verb עזב means "to leave". The י prefixed to the verb identifies the verb as masculine, singular, imperfect tense. The perfect tense means completed action and is similar to our past tense. This verb is translated as "he will leave" where the "he" is the subject of the verb.

**אִישׁ (iysh)**

This word means "man" and is the subject of the verb. In Hebrew the subject of the verb follows the verb rather than precede it as is done in English.

**אֶת (et)**

Another word we have looked at before which indicates that a direct object of the verb follows.

**אָבִיו (a-vav)**

The word אב means "father". The suffix יו, pronounced "av", is the pronoun "him". Combined these mean "father of him" or "his father". Normally the suffix י, pronounced "o", is used for the pronoun but do to grammatical reasons the suffix יו is used.

**וְאֶת (v-et)**

The prefix ו means "and" and again we have the word את.

### אִמּוֹ (iy-mo)

The word אִמּוֹ means "mother" and the suffix ו means "him". When combined they mean "mother of him" or "his mother".

### וְדָבַק (v-da-vaq)

The verb דָּבַק means "to adhere" and is identified as masculine, singular, imperfect tense. The imperfect tense means incomplete action and is similar to the English present or future tense. When the ו is prefixed to a verb it means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb. Therefore, the word דָּבַק means "he adhered" but, וְדָבַק means "and he will adhere".

### בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ (b-iysh-to)

The prefix to this word is ב meaning "in" or "with". The suffix to this word is ו, the pronoun meaning "him". The root word is אִשָּׁה, pronounced "iyshah" (but the original spelling of this word is אִישָׁה) and means "woman". This is the same word as the one above, אִישׁ meaning "man", but written in the feminine form by adding the ה. Wherever a feminine word ending with the ה is used in the construct state, the ה is changed to a ת. The full meaning of this word is "in woman of him" or "in his woman". There is no Biblical Hebrew word for "wife" instead it is "his woman", "my woman", etc.

### וְהָיוּ (v-hay-u)

The root word here is הָיָה meaning "to exist" and is commonly translated with the English verb "to be" or one of its conjugations such as is, was, are, etc. The verb הָיוּ (hay-u) identifies the verb as masculine, plural, perfect tense and would be translated as "they were". Even though the subject of the verb is "masculine plural" it is referring to the man and his woman. When a plural is of both genders the masculine takes precedence. Because the ו is prefixed, the tense is reversed to imperfect and is therefore translated as "they will be". You may also notice that the last letter, ה, from the root הָיָה is missing. When a verb root ending with a ה is conjugated, the ה is dropped.

### לְבָשָׁר (l-va-sar)

The prefix ל means "to" or "for" and the word בָּשָׂר means "flesh" and is idiomatically used for a "person".

### אֶחָד (e-hhad)

This word is commonly translated as "one" but, the idea of "one" is an individual, single entity. This word actually means "a unit" or "unified", a combined entity. We think of "one tree" as a single entity but, in the Ancient Hebrew mind it is a unit of many parts; roots, trunk, branches and leaves.

The following is a literal rendering of this verse from its Hebraic meaning.

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Therefore, a man will leave his father and his mother and he will adhere to his woman and they will become a unified person

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