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Biblical Word of the Month - Shalom

By: Jeff A. Benner

The word shalom is commonly used in Hebrew today as a greeting in the same way we use the word hello. It is also commonly used when departing in the same way we use the word good bye. This word is usually translated as peace but does not adequately define this Hebrew word.

The root of this word is shalam and by looking at the context this word is used in the Biblical text we can get a better understanding of its meaning.

Exodus 21:35,36 - When one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the price of it; and the dead beast also they shall divide. *Or if it is known that the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall <u>pay</u> ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his (RSV).*

In this passage the word shalam is used to express the idea of "replacing" or "restoring" one dead ox for a live one because of negligence. The verb shalam literally means "to

make whole". The word shalom has the same basic meaning but in the noun form as can be seen in the following verse.

Genesis 43:28 - *They said, "Your servant our father is <u>well</u>, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance"*. (RSV)

In this passage the word "well" implies "wholeness" of the person in health and prosperity.

The word shalom is not only used as a greeting in modern Hebrew but in Biblical Hebrew as well.

Genesis 43:23 - *And he said, <u>Peace be to you</u>, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.*

The next time you greet someone with the word "shalom" recognize that you are not just saying "peace" or "hello", you are wishing complete wholeness on that person.

Name of the Month - Michael

By: Jeff A. Benner

A very common name today yet a very old Hebrew name which can be found in Numbers 13:13. The Hebrew pronunciation is "me-khah-eyl" (The "kh" is pronounced hard like the "ch" in the name Bach) and is composed of three parts. The first is the word "mee" meaning "who". The second is the "khah" meaning "like." The third is the word "eyl" literally meaning one of power or authority but commonly translated as "God". When put together these mean "Who is like God?"

This same question is asked in Psalm 113:5.

Who is like Yahweh our God, the one who dwells on high?

The name Miykha'el is a short form of the phrase above "Who is like Yahweh our God" which is "<u>miy</u> <u>kha</u>mokha yahweh <u>el</u>oheynu".

Question of the Month – Oldest Book?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: What is the oldest book of the Bible?

A: The books of the Bible are not arranged in a chronological order. The books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are, by tradition, believed to be written by Moses and are usually believed to be the oldest books of the Bible. But this is not the case. The book of Job is the oldest book, some even believing it was originally written before the flood. The most compelling evidence for the antiquity of the book of job is its use of Hebrew words. In many cases the more ancient, concrete meaning of a word is found in the book of Job. As an example the Hebrew word "pachad" is used to mean fear or awe an abstract concept but is used in its concrete form only in Job 4:14 - "dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones <u>shake</u>".

Verse of the Month – Exodus 20:2

By: Jeff A. Benner

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אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

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I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (ASV)

אָנֹכִי **(ah-no-khee)**
This is the first person pronoun - I.

יְהוָה **(YHWH)**
The name of God commonly pronounced as Yahweh but always represented by "LORD" in most English Bibles.

אֱלֹהֶיךָ **(eh-lo-hey-kha)**
The base word is אלוה (elo'ah) meaning "One of power or Authority" and usually translated as "God". The suffix ךָ (kha) is the second person pronoun you and is connected to the first word in the possessive case "God of you" but translated as "your God". The base word also has the suffix ים (iym) indicating a plural noun, אלהים. Whenever a plural noun is used in the possessive case such as we have here, the ם (M) is dropped.

אֲשֶׁר **(ah-sher)**
This is a common Hebrew word meaning "which" or "who".

הֹוצֵאתִיךָ (ho-tsey-tiy-kha)

The base word is the verb יצא - "go out". The prefix ה (h) identifies the verb as a hiphil verb or "causative" verb - "to make go out". Whenever a Hebrew word begins with the letter י (y) and is prefixed by another letter, such as the ה (h) in this word, the י (y) is changed to a ו (o). Suffixed to the word is תי (tiy) indicating the subject of the verb is first person imperfect tense - "I will make go out". Also suffixed to the word is ך (kha) identifying the object of the verb as second person - "I will make you go out".

מֵאֶרֶץ (mey-eh-rets)

The base word is ארץ (erets) meaning "land" and is prefixed by מ (m) meaning "from". Combined these mean "from the land".

מִצְרַיִם (meets-rah-yeem)

Miytsrayim was the son of Hham, the son of Noah. Miytsrayim is also the Biblical name for the land of "Egypt".

מִבֵּית (mee-beyt)

The base word is בית (beyt) meaning "house" and is prefixed by מ (m) meaning "from". Combined these mean "from the house".

עֲבָדִים (ah-vah-deem)

This is a plural word meaning "slavery" or "bondage".

Note: The phrases "from the land of mitsrayim" and "from the house of bondage" are parallels, a common form of Hebrew poetry.

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

I am YHWH your one of authority, I will make you go out from the land of Mitsrayim, from the house of slavery.