

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Nehhoshet

By: Jeff A. Benner

The Hebrew word nehoshet is translated as copper one time (Ezra 8:27) in the King James Version. Copper is a pure mineral meaning that it is not mixed with any other minerals. The King James Version translates this same word as brass one hundred and three times. Brass is an alloy (mixture) of copper and nickel (another pure mineral). Other translations translate nehoshet as brass or bronze. Bronze is alloy of copper and tin (another pure mineral). It would appear that the translators are not certain of the meaning of the word nehoshet as no consensus can be made on how to translate this word.

Jewish Hebrew dictionaries and Jewish translations of the Bible always translate this word as "copper." Why would Christian translations and dictionaries commonly translate nehoshet as brass or bronze while Jewish dictionaries and translations use "copper?" Which is more accurate? At first glance it may seem like an insignificant problem but on further examination it becomes evident that a proper translation is essential.

In Leviticus 19:19 we find three commands;

- You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind
- you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed
- nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff

Throughout the Torah God is demonstrating that mixtures are not appropriate. This would especially hold true for the items in the tabernacle. The altar was made of acacia wood and overlaid with nehhoshet. Is this nehhoshet brass, bronze or copper? Both brass and bronze are alloys, mixtures of pure minerals, only copper is a pure mineral. Would God call for an alloy, a mixture of different "pure" metals such as brass or bronze in the tabernacle? I doubt it.

Copper is the meaning of nehhoshet so whenever you see the word brass or bronze in your English translation make a mental note that this should be copper.

Name of the Month – Ishma'el

By: Jeff A. Benner

This name is composed of three parts - י (yi), שמע (sh'ma) and אל (el). The word שמע (sh'ma) is a verb literally meaning to listen but can also mean to obey or more correctly to respond. This word is the title of the "sh'ma," the Jewish affirmation of faith as found in Deuteronomy 6:4 states "sh'ma yisrael YHWH eloheynu YHWH echad" or as it is normally translated "Hear, O, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The use of the word sh'ma in this verse is stating "hear and respond" to Yahweh. When the letter י (yi) is prefixed to a verb, it identifies the subject of the verb as the third person, masculine and singular or "he." Therefore, the phrase ישמע (yishma) would mean "he listens." The final word is אל (el) meaning "mighty one" or as it is usually translated "God." In Hebrew sentence structure the noun following the verb is the subject of the verb or in this case the "he" of "he listens." When these three components are combined into the sentence אל ישמע (yishma el) the sentence means "God listens."

Question of the Month – Bone of bones?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: If Eve was taken from the bones of Adam why does it say "this is now bone of my bones?"

A: In Genesis 2:23 the phrase "this is now" is an attempt at a translation of the Hebrew phrase "zot hapa'am." The word "zot" does mean "this" but the word hapa'am is a little

more difficult. This is the word pa'am prefixed by the "ha" meaning "the." The word pa'am is literally a repetitive beat such as from a drum. It can also mean a stroke of time or to repeat something such as seen in Genesis 33:3; "He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times (pa'am)." Using this understanding of the word, Genesis 2:23 could be translated as, "This time is bone from my bones" and is implying that the previous times were not "bone from my bones." Three verses prior to this it states "The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him." In this context we see that the "first times" were unsuccessful in finding a helper for Adam, but with Eve, this time it worked.

Verse of the Month – Leviticus 10:10

By: Jeff A. Benner

וְלַהֲבַדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֵל וּבֵין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר:
and that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and
between the unclean and the clean; (ASV)

וְלַהֲבַדִּיל (u-la-hav-diyl)

The base word is the verb בָּדַל (badal) meaning to separate. This verb is written in the hiphil form and identified by the ה (ha) in front of the verb and the י (iy) in the middle. A hiphil verb identifies the action of the verb as causative. While the verb badal means to separate the hiphil form means "to make separate." The prefix ו (u) means "and" and the prefix ל (la) means "to" or "for." The word וְלַהֲבַדִּיל (ulahavdiyl) means "and to make a separation."

בֵּין (beyn)

This word means "between" and is commonly used to distinguish between two separate things.

הַקֹּדֶשׁ (ha-qo-desh)

The base word is קָדַשׁ (qodesh) and is usually translated as "holy" but more literally means "to set apart for a special purpose." An example of something קָדַשׁ (qodesh) would be the menorah (candlestick) in the tabernacle which was used only in the tabernacle and nowhere else. The ה (ha) is the prefix meaning "the."

וּבֵין (u-veyn)

This is again the word beyn but with the prefix ו (u) meaning "and."

החל (ha-hhol)

The base word חל (hhol) is usually translated as "common" or "profane" but more literally means "general purpose" or something that has many different purposes. An example of something חל (hhol) would be a menorah which could be used in one's own tent, taken outside or used anywhere. The ה (ha) is the prefix meaning "the."

וַיָּבִין (u-veyyn)

The word uveyyn again.

הַטָּמֵא (ha-ta-mey)

The base word is טמא (tamey) and means contaminated. This would be like filling a glass of water from a rain puddle on the ground where the water is brown. This word is commonly used for animals that are not fit for food or practices that violate the Torah such as making idols or images of other gods. The ה (ha) is the prefix meaning "the."

וַיָּבִין (u-veyyn)

The word uveyyn again.

הַטָּהוֹר (ha-ta-hor)

The base word is טהור (tahor) and means pure. This would be like filling a glass of water with rain from the sky which has not been polluted by the ground and would appear clear. This word is commonly used for animals which are fit for food or practices that cause one to follow the Torah. The ה (ha) is the prefix meaning "the."

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

and to make a separation between what is set apart for a special purpose and what is used for any purpose and between what is contaminated by impurities and what is clean from any impurities.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt – Genesis 17:1-11

1 and it came to pass Avram was a son of ninety nine years and YHWH appeared to Avram and he said to him I am a mighty one of the breast walk yourself to my face and exist whole **2** and I will give my covenant between me and you and I will make you a very great increase **3** and Avram fell upon his face and the powers spoke with him saying **4** look I am here, my covenant is with you and you will exist for a father of a multitude of nations **5** and your character will not be called out yet again as Avram and your character will exist as Avraham given that a father of a multitude of nations I gave you **6** and I will make you reproduce very greatly and I will give you for nations and kings will go out from you **7** and I will make my covenant rise between me and you and your seed after

you for their generations for a covenant of an ancient time to exist for you for powers and for your seed after you **8** and I will give to you and to your seed after you a land of pilgrimage, all the land of Kena'an for a holdings of an ancient time and I will exist for them for powers **9** and the powers said to Avraham and you, you will guard my covenant, you and your seed after you for their generations **10** this is my covenant which you will guard between me and you and your seed after you, all your males be circumcised **11** and you will cut off the flesh of your foreskin and he will exist for a sign of the covenant between me and you

For details on this new translation see the web site at
<http://www.mechanical-translation.org>

AHRC Website Excerpt – Hair Tent

The tent was divided into two parts. The main section, behind the tent door, is the men's section. The other section is the women's section, with a wall dividing the two parts. The only person allowed into the women's section, is the father of the tent. Notice the similarity to the Pictographic Hebrew letter "beyt" - . The word "beyt" is not only the name of a letter but is also a common Hebrew word meaning, "home." This letter is a representation of the floor plan of the tent, the "home" of the nomadic Hebrews.

The entrance to the tent is covered by a curtain which hung down from the top of the entrance. The Hebrew word "dal" means "hang down" and is the root for the word "dalet" meaning "door." This word is also the name of another Hebrew letter - , a representation of the tent door. The door of the tent is the most important part of the tent, not because of its appearance, but is function as the entrance into the tent. "He [Abraham] was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot" (Genesis 18:1). The door of the tent can be equated with the throne of a king. In the Hebrew culture, the father of the family is the "king," the one who holds full authority over the family. The father will often sit at his door much like a king will sit on a throne. All family legal matters were performed at the tent. Here he will watch over his household as well as watch for passing travelers. The nomadic rules of hospitality are very strict and complex.

This article is located on the web site at
http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/33_tent.html

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