Ancient Hebrew Research Center

Biblical Hebrew E-Magazine

May, 2006   Issue #027

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Issue Index

Biblical Word of the Month - Wise

By: Jeff A. Benner

The Hebrew verb חכם (hhakham) is usually translated as wise. But, the word wise is an abstract (Greek thought) and we will need to take a closer look at this word to find its original concrete (Hebrew thought) meaning. In order to do this we will begin by looking at the parent root חם (hham) or 𐤌𐤘 as it would appear in its original pictographic script. The first letter, 𐤘, is a picture of a tent wall and represents the idea of separating. The second letter, 𐤌, is a picture of water. Combined these mean "separate water." The picture represented by these two words is the process of making cheese (curds) from milk by separating out the water (called whey). The noun המאה (hhemah) is derived from this parent root and means "curds."

By placing the consonant כ (kh) in the middle of the parent root the adopted root חכם (hhakham) is formed. While translated as wise the more appropriate meaning is the ability to separate out or distinguish between good and bad. The noun חכמה (hhakhmah) is derived from this adopted root and is usually translated as wisdom but in the sense of

craftsmanship such as seen in Exodus 28:3; "(KJV) And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom (translated as ability in the RSV), and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." A craftsman is one who is able to distinguish between good work and bad work or, one who is "wise."

As we have seen the connection between "curds" and "wisdom" is the separating out of something but interestingly there is another connection between these as found in Isaiah 7:15; "He will eat curds and honey (or possibly dates) to know to refuse evil and to choose good." There appears to be a physical connection between curds (hhemah) and wisdom (hhakhmah) as this passage indicates that eating curds can bring about wisdom.

Name of the Month - Aharon

By: Jeff A. Benner

The Hebrew name Aharon (pronounced ah-ha-rown but usually written as Aaron) is a difficult name to determine its etymology or roots making it difficult to determine its meaning. Many different possibilities have been proposed in many different dictionaries, some of which are, lofty, mountaineer, mountain of strength, illuminator, light bringer and teacher. There are two possible parent roots that this name can come from, אר (ar) and הר (har). The parent root אר (ar) is the root of the word אור (owr) meaning "light" hence, the possibilities of illuminator, light bringer and teacher (as one who illuminates). The parent root הר (har) is the Hebrew word for hill, mountain and lofty. While we cannot say for certainty which root is the origin of the name, its first occurrence in the Bible may provide a clue. "Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, 'Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well; and behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart'" (RSV Exodus 4:14). It is possible that the ideas of "speaking well" and "glad in the heart" could be indicative of Aaron's character as "bright."

Question of the Month – Subdue?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: I recently read an article by Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis. He said that the Hebrew word translated "subdue" in Gen. 1:28 really means to "study and understand" the earth, not conquer it. I cannot find this given as a meaning in any of our Hebrew reference materials. Can you help me? Is this a legitimate meaning? I don't have a problem with the idea; in fact, I rather like it. But I want to know if it is TRUE!

A: Genesis 1:28 (RSV) And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The word subdue in Genesis 1:28 is the Hebrew verb "kavash" meaning to subdue but, it is important to have the "full" picture of a Hebrew word as "subdue" is very limited in its ability to describe the Hebrew. The noun form of this word is "kevesh" and means "a footstool," a place where one places the foot. The verb kavash literally means to place your foot on the neck of your conquered enemy signifying a submission of the enemy to his defeater. Figuratively this verb means to bring a people or nation into submission (Num 32:29). This word can also mean to bring into control (Mic 7:19). Incidentally, this is the same word we use today such as in "put the kabash on it" meaning to make an end of something or to "subdue" it.

While the word kavash means to subdue there is another word used that may help explain Ken Ham's explanation. The words "have dominion" is the Hebrew verb "radah." Our normal understanding of "having dominion" over another is to rule over them but this idea is found in the Hebrew verb malak. The Hebrew verb radah is related to other words which have the meanings of descend, go down, wander and spread. This verb literally means to rule by going down and walking among the subjects as an equal.

The use of the two Hebrew verbs "kavash" and "radah" imply that that man is to rule over the animals as his subjects, not as a dictator but a benevolent leader. Man is also to walk among and have a relationship with his subjects so that they can provide for man and that man can "learn" from them.

Verse of the Month – Genesis 22:8

By: Jeff A. Benner

$$\text{וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה־לּוֹ הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:}$$

And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son. So they went both of them together. (ASV)

וַיֹּאמֶר (vay-yo-mer)
The base word is the verb אמר (a-mar) meaning to say or speak. The prefix י (y) identifies the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular, imperfect tense (he will say). The prefix ו (v) means "and" and will also reverse the tense of the verb from imperfect to perfect (and he said).

אַבְרָהָם (av-ra-ham)

The name Abraham and is the subject of the verb (and Abraham said).

אֱלֹהִים (e-lo-hiym)

The base word is אלה (e-lo-ah) and is usually translated as "God" or "god" but more literally means the one of power and authority. The ים (iym) suffix identifies this noun as plural (Hebrew verbs can be quantitatively plural - more than one, or qualitatively plural - great or large).

יִרְאֶה (yir-eh)

The base word is the verb ראה (ra-ah) meaning to see. The prefix י (y) identifies the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular, imperfect tense (he will see).

לֹו (lo)

The letter ל (l) is a prefix meaning "to" or "for." The letter ו (o) is a suffix meaning "him." Combined, these two letters mean "to him" or "for him" but can also mean "for himself."

הַשֶּׂה (ha-seh)

The base word שה (seh) is a noun meaning a lamb, the prefix h (ha) means "the."

לְעֹלָה (le-o-lah)

The base word עלה (o-lah) is a noun meaning an ascent (a going up) but is often used for a burnt sacrifice from the rising of the smoke. The prefix ל (le) means "to" or "for."

בְּנִי (beyn-iy)

The base word בן (beyn) is a noun meaning a son. The suffix י (iy) is the first person possessive pronoun "of me." This word means "son of me" or "my son."

וַיֵּלְכוּ (vay-yel-khu)

The base word is הלך (halakh), a verb meaning to walk. The prefix י (y) and the suffix ו (u) identify the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, plural, imperfect tense (they will walk). If the first letter of a verb is a ה (h), it is dropped when it is conjugated. The prefix ו (v) means "and" and will also reverse the tense of the verb from imperfect to perfect (and they walked).

שְׁנֵיהֶם (she-ney-hem)

The base word is שנים (sheh-nah-yim) meaning "two." The suffix הם (hem) is the third person plural possessive pronoun "of them." This word means "two of them."

יַחְדָּו (yahh-dav)

This word means together.

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

And Abraham said, "The one of power and authority will see for himself the lamb for an ascent my son," and the two of them walked together.

An alternative translation of this verse is possible.

The word יראה (yireh) means "he will see" as pointed out above. In verse 14 Abraham names this place yahweh yireh. The word yireh here is the same word in verse 8 and it is spelled and pronounced the same. The KJV transliterates this as Jehovajireh, other versions translate it as "The LORD will provide" but literally means "Yahweh will see". But verse 14 also says "as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided'." The phrase "it shall be provided is the word יראה but pronounced yera'eh due to the vowel pointings in the Masoretic text. These vowel sounds are provided by the nikudot (vowel pointings) added to the text by the Masorites and are not part of the original text. The word yera'eh is the niphal, third person, masculine, singular, imperfect tense and would be literally translated as "he will be seen" or "he will appear". Since the word yera'eh is spelled the same as yireh in verse 8 and in the name "Yahweh yireh" in verse 14 it is possible that the word יראה may have originally been yera'eh and yireh. In this case verse 8 would be translated as "and Abraham said, 'The one of power and authority will appear for himself the lamb for an ascent my son,' and the two of them walked together" and in verse 14 we would have "Yahweh will appear."

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 18:1-8

1 and Yhwh appeared to him in the great trees of Mamre and he was settling in the opening of the tent in the heat of the day **2** and he lifted up his eyes and he saw and look here, three men were being erect upon him and he saw and he ran from the opening of the tent to meet them he bent himself down unto the land **3** and he said my lord please if I find beauty in your eyes please do not cross over from upon your servant **4** Please, a small amount of water will be taken and wash your feet and lean under the tree **5** and I will take a fragment of bread and hold up your heart, afterward you may cross over since you crossed over upon your servant and they said you will do so just as you said **6** and Avraham much hurried unto the tent to Sarah and he said hurry knead three se'ahs of grain flour and make bread cakes **7** and Avraham ran to the cattle and he took a son of the cattle, tender and functional and he gave it to the young man and he much hurried to make him **8** and he took cheese and fat and a son of the cattle which he did and he gave it before them and he was standing upon them under the tree and they ate

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

AHRC Website Excerpt – Learning

There are several Hebrew words which can be translated as "learn" into English. When we read the English text we will often come across words like learn, teach, instruct, discipline and chastise, but as we will see, these words do not give us an accurate meaning of these words from a Hebraic perspective and some of the meaning is "lost in the translation". The Hebrew language is centered around the life of desert dwellers who live their lives as shepherds and farmers. In order to really understand the Hebrew words for learning, we will be looking at them as they did 4000 years ago.

Alaph

Oxen were very important to desert dwellers as a source of power, much as the tractor is to the modern farmer today. The Hebrew word for an ox is "eleph". A closely related word is "alaph" meaning; "to yoke together." When two oxen were placed together in a yoke for plowing, an older more experienced ox is placed alongside a younger inexperienced ox. The younger would then learn by association and example from the older. Hence, the word eleph can also mean "to associate with" or "to learn by example." A man yoked to another will learn by example from the other. A child will also learn from his parents only by observing the actions of the parent. This can be either in a positive or in a negative way.

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn [alaph] his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. (Proverbs 22:24,25)

Article continues at http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/12_learning.html

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