Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Knowledge

By: Jeff A. Benner

Proverbs 2:6 (RSV) For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding

In last month's issue we examined the connection between wisdom, knowledge and understanding and how they come from the "Spirit of the Lord" and the "Fear of the Lord." Two months ago we examined the word "wisdom," in this issue we will examine knowledge and in next month's issue we will examine understanding, all from ancient Hebrew perspective.

The Hebrew word for knowledge is דעת (da'at), a noun derived from the verb ידע (yada) meaning "to know." The idea of "knowing" in Ancient Hebrew thought is similar to our understanding of knowing but is more personal and intimate. We may say that we "know" someone but simply mean we "know" of his or her existence but, in Hebrew thought one can only "know" someone if they have a personal and intimate relationship.

In Genesis 18:19 God says about Abraham "I know him" meaning he has a very close relationship with Abraham. In Genesis 4:1 it says that Adam "knew Eve his wife" implying a very intimate sexual relationship.

Knowledge is the intimate ability to perform a specific task or function. This can be seen in Exodus chapter 31 where God had given men the ability to build the various furnishings of the tabernacle.

Name of the Month - Satan

By: Jeff A. Benner

The Hebrew word "satan" means "adversary" as one who stands against another as seen in 1 Kings 11:14.

(RSV) And the LORD raised up an <u>adversary</u> against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal house in Edom.

At other times this name is translated as a proper name such as in the book of Job.

(RSV) Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

The Hebrew for Satan is הסטן (hasatan). The prefix ה (ha) means "the" which identifies the noun סטן (satan) is a noun and not a proper name and should therefore be translated as "the adversary." However, there is one verse where the word satan could be translated as a proper name.

(RSV) 1 Chronicles 21:1 Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to number Israel.

In this verse the word satan does not include the prefix "ha" and could be translated as a proper name but upon further investigation we find that this verse is also recorded in 2 Samuel 24:1 where the "adversary" is identified as Yahweh.

(RSV) Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

Question of the Month – Science?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: Did the Ancient Hebrews study science?

A: Yes and no. As agriculturalists and nomads many aspects of science are studied when related to crops, weather, seasons, biology, and husbandry. Even geometry and mathematics are applied through some aspects of their life. For instance, a flint rock must be struck at a 120 degree angle in order to flake off flakes for making knives, spears and arrowheads. However, there are other aspects of science that would not be pursued by the Ancient Hebrews. Because the Ancient Hebrew mind only focuses on what is perceived by the five senses, there is no search for the unknown. Questions like "Where does matter comes from" and "What is beyond the stars" are common Greek type questions but not Hebraic.

Verse of the Month – Exodus 20:4

By: Jeff A. Benner

This is an ongoing look at the 20th chapter of Exodus. Last month we did verse 1. In Issue #019 we looked at verse 2 and in issue #25 we looked at verse 3. We are now going to look at verse 4.

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ פֶסֶל l וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם l מִמַּעַל וַאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת וַאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם l מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ :

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness *of any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (ASV)

לֹא (lo)
Negates the action of the following verb - no or not.

תַעֲשֶׂה (ta-a-seh)
The base word is עשה (a-sah), a common verb meaning to "do" often in the context of to "make." The prefix ת (ta) identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine, singualar and the tense of the verb as imperfect. This word would be translated as "you will do" or "you will make." Because of the word לֹא preceding this verb it would be translated as "you will not do," or "you will not make."

לְךָ (le-kha)
The ל (le) is the prefix meaning "to" or "for." The ךָ (kha) is the suffix meaning "you." When combined these meaning "to you" or "for you."

פֶּסֶל (pe-sel)

This noun is derived from the verb pasal (same spelling) meaning to "hew" in the sense cutting and carving to create a shape. This noun is what is carved into shape or an idol.

וְכָל (ve-khol)

The word כל (khol) means "all." The prefix ו (ve) means "and."

תְּמוּנָה (te-mu-nah)

This noun means a "representation," something that resembles something else.

אֲשֶׁר (a-sher)

This word means "which" or "who."

בַּשָּׁמַיִם (ba-sha-ma-yim)

The noun שמים (sha-ma-yim) means "skies." The prefix ב (ba) means "in the" or "with the."

מִמַּעַל (me-ma-al)

The base word מעל (ma-al) is a noun meaning "above," "on top" or "upper." The prefix מ (me) means "from."

וַאֲשֶׁר (va-a-sher)

The word אשר (a-sher) means "which" or "who." The prefix ו (va) means "and."

בָּאָרֶץ (ba-a-rets)

The word ארץ (e-rets) means "land." The prefix ב (ba) means "in the" or "with the."

מִתַּחַת (me-ta-hhat)

The base word תחת (ta-hhat) is a noun meaning "under," "below" or "lower." The prefix מ (me) means "from."

וַאֲשֶׁר (va-a-sher)

The word אשר (a-sher) means "which" or "who." The prefix ו (va) means "and."

בַּמַּיִם (ba-ma-yim)

The noun מים (ma-yim) means "water." The prefix ב (ba) means "in the" or "with the."

מִתַּחַת (me-ta-hhat)

The base word תחת (ta-hhat) is a noun meaning "under," "below" or "lower." The prefix מ (me) means "from."

לָאָרֶץ (la-a-rets)

The word ארץ (e-rets) means "land." The prefix ל (la) means "to the" or "for the."

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

> You will not make for yourself a carved idol and all representations which are above the skies and which are under the land and which are under the water below the land

In following issues we will continue with this chapter.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 11:1-9

1 and all the land existed as one lip and units of words **2** and it came to pass in their journey from the east and they found a level valley in the land of Shinar and they settled there **3** and they said each to his companion, supply, we will make bricks and we will greatly cremate and the brick existed to them for stone and the tar was to them for mortar **4** and they said, supply, we will build for us a city and a tower and his head will be in the sky and we will make for us a character otherwise we will scatter abroad upon the face of all the land **5** and YHWH went down to see the city and the tower which the sons of the human built **6** and YHWH said though the people are a unit and one lip for all of them and this is what they will pierce to do and now nothing will be fenced in from them, all which they will plot to do **7** supply, we will go down and we will mix there their lip that they will not listen to each lip of his companion **8** and YHWH scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the land and they terminated to build the city **9** therefore he called out her character Bavel given that there YHWH mixed the lip of all the land and from there YHWH made them scatter abroad upon the face of all the land

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

AHRC Website Excerpt – Righteous

What is a righteous person? The word righteous is an abstract word and in order to understand this word from an Hebraic mindset we must uncover its original concrete meaning. One of the best ways to determine the original concrete meaning of a word is to find it being used in a sentence where its concrete meaning can be seen. For example the word yashar is usually translated as upright or righteous (abstracts) but is also translated as "straight". From this we can conclude that a "yashar" is one who walks a straight line. The problem with the word tsadiyq, and its verb form tsadaq, is that there are no uses of this word in its concrete meaning. The next method is to compare how the word in question is paralleled with other Hebrew words as commonly found in the poetical

passages of the Bible. Sometimes these parallels will be synonyms and other times antonyms. When we look at the word tsadiyq we find that it is commonly paralleled with the word "rasha". Rasha is usually translated as "wicked" but has a concrete meaning of "to depart from the path and become lost". From this we can conclude that a tsadiyq is one who remains of the path. The path is the course through life which God has outlined for us in his word.

This entry is part of the Ancient Hebrew word studies found at http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/27_home.html