

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Image

By: Jeff A. Benner

There are four different Hebrew words that can be translated as image or likeness; מלוא (tselem as in Genesis 1:26), דמו (demut as in Genesis 1:26), לֹפֶסֶל (pesel as in Exodus 20:4) and חַנּוּמַת (temunah as in Exodus 20:4)

צלם (tselem)

This word is derived from the parent root צל (tsal) meaning a shadow. Tselem is the outline or shape of a shadow.

דמות (demut)

The parent root דם (dam) is blood. One descended from the "blood" of another often resembles the one descended from. Derived from the parent root דם the child root דמה (damah) meaning "to resemble" The word דמות (demut) means a resemblance or to be like something else in action or appearance.

פסל (pesel)

This word comes from the root פסל (pasal) meaning "to carve" and is usually used in the context of carving out a statue. A pesel is a carved image, usually something that is worshiped.

תמונה (temunah)

This word comes from the root מין (miyn) meaning a species. Because all animals of the same species look alike the word temunah, derived from miyn, means a likeness.

Exodus 20:4 (RSV) You shall not make for yourself a graven image [pesel], or any likeness [temunah] of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

Does this command prohibit the making of statues, paintings, figurines, photographs, etc.? If so, how could God instruct Moses to make an image of a serpent (Numbers 21:8) or Cherubiym (Exodus 25:18) on the cover of the ark? The key is the next verse which does not prohibit the forming of the images but forming them and bowing down and serving them.

Exodus 20:5 (RSV) you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me

Name of the Month - Job

By: Kathy Nickols

"Persecuted" "Held as an enemy"

This name is derived from the root  (AYB, AHLB - 1002 M) meaning to hate. According to the *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible* this root includes the meanings Hostile (action), Spear (concrete) and Enemy (abstract) with the extended definition; "The tent pole is pointed at one end and doubles as a spear which can be used against an enemy to defend (also a support of) the family.

Job meaning "persecuted" was the patriarch famous for his patience – or patient endurance. An enemy is one who closes in with pressure. A narrow tight place or situation.

Job 13:24 *why do you hide your face, and hold me as your enemy?*

In this verse God is hiding His face from Job and is the same as holding Job as His enemy! It appeared the favour of God was gone by everything that happened to Job thus his friends assumed he had done something terribly wrong and wasn't owning up to it.

James 5:10,11 *Look, we regard those who persevered as blessed. You have heard of the perseverance of Job, and you know what the purpose of God was, that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.*

It was the circumstances that were bad, not Job. In Job 1:1 we are told clearly that he was an upright, god-fearing man who shunned evil. The Lord allowed him to be tested through all his losses and trials. The parent root of his name is אב (AB) meaning "Father" and he certainly is the father of patient endurance even though he was treated as the enemy of God for a while. He received a change in his circumstances when he prayed for his friends who had been part of the cause of his inner turmoil. The Lord had carried Job away into a metaphorical captivity but then restored him with twice what he had before.

Question of the Month – Vav vs. Waw?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: In your learn Hebrew lessons it is the letter "Vav" while in others I noticed it as "waw".

A: In the Modern Hebrew alphabet the 6th letter is the vav and has a "v" sound. But, evidence suggests that in ancient times this letter had a "w" sound and was called the waw instead of the vav. In Arabic, a related language to Hebrew, this letter is called a waw and has a "w" sound. This letter was also used in ancient times to represent the vowel sounds "ow" and "uw." These two sounds are closely related to the sound "w" also suggesting an original "w" sound. This is similar to the letter Yud which can be the consonant "y" or the vowel "iy."

Verse of the Month – Exodus 20:5

By: Jeff A. Benner

לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְיָ
קָנָא פִקְדָּ עֲוֹן אָבֹת עַל־בְּנֵים עַל־שְׂלִשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים
לְשָׁנָאִי :

Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, (ASV)

לא (lo)

This word means "no" or "not" and is used to negate the action of the following verb.

תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (tish-tahh-veh)

The base word is the verb שָׁחָה (shahhah) meaning to bow down to the ground. The prefix ת (t) identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine and singular - you and the tense of the verb as imperfect. This verb is written in the hitpa'el form meaning that it is reflexive (the action of the verb is imparted on the subject of the verb). This form is usually identified with the prefix תה (heet) but this word uses a unique spelling where the ה (h) is dropped and the ת (t) is placed after the letter ש (sh). The ו (ve) is also a unique spelling of this word. The whole word would be translated as "you will bow yourself down" but because of the previous word it would be translated as "you will not bow yourself down."

לָהֶם (la-hem)

The ל (l) is a prefix meaning "to" or "for." The הם (hem) is a suffix meaning "them." Combined this means "to them."

וְלֹא (ve-lo)

The prefix ו (ve) means "and" and again the word לא (lo) meaning "no" or "not."

תִּעֲבֹדֵם (ta-av-dem)

The base word is the verb עָבַד (avad) meaning to "serve." The prefix ת (t) identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine and singular - you and the tense of the verb as imperfect. The suffix ם (m) identifies the object of the verb as third person, masculine and plural - them. The whole word means "you will serve them" but because of the previous word it would be translated as "you will not serve them."

כִּי (kiy)

This word means "because."

אֲנִי (ah-no-kiy)

This word means "I."

יְהוָה (YHWH)

This is the Tetragramaton (meaning four letters) and is name of God usually transliterated as Yahweh, Yihweh, Yahu'eh, etc.

אֱלֹהֶיךָ (eh-lo-hey-kha)

The base word is the noun אֱלֹהִים (elo'ah) and is usually translated as God, god or judge but more literally means "powerful one of authority." This noun is written in the plural form - אֱלֹהִים (elohiym) but because it is in the construct state (God of...) the ם (m) is dropped. The suffix ך (kha) is the second person, masculine and singular pronoun - you. The whole word means "powerful one of authority of you" or "your powerful one of authority."

אֵל (eyl)

This noun is usually translated as God, god or mighty. It literally means a "mighty one."

קָנָא (qana)

This noun means zealous, jealous or envious.

פָּקַד (po-qeyd)

This verb means to visit and is written in the participle form - visiting.

עֲוֹן (ah-von)

This noun means iniquity.

אֲבוֹת (ah-vot)

The base word is אָב (av) meaning "father" and the suffix ת (ot) is the plural suffix. The standard masculine plural suffix is ים (iym) and the feminine plural is ת (ot) but, some masculine nouns, such as this one, use the ת (ot) suffix.

עַל (al)

This word means "upon."

בָּנִים (bah-niym)

This is the word בֶּן (ben) meaning son with the masculine suffix ים (iym).

עַל (al)

Again the word meaning "upon."

שְׁלִישִׁים (shi-ley-shiym)

The base word is שְׁלֵשׁ (shelesh) meaning "third" or "third one." The masculine plural suffix ים (iym) changes the word to "third ones."

וְעַל (ve-al)

The prefix ו (ve) means "and" and again the word meaning "upon."

רְבִיעִים (riy-bey-iyim)

The base word is רבַע (ribayah) meaning "fourth" or "fourth one." The masculine plural suffix ים (iyim) changes the word to "fourth ones."

לְשׂוֹנְאִי (le-shon-ai)

The base word is the verb שָׂנֵא (shaney) meaning to "hate" and is written in the participle form - hating. The prefix לְ (le) means "to." The suffix י (i) is the first person and singular pronoun - me. The whole word means "to hating me."

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

You will not bow yourself down to them and you will not serve them because I am Yahweh your power and authority, a mighty zealous one, visiting iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third ones and upon the fourth ones to ones hating me.

In following issues we will continue with this chapter.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 1:1-8

1 in a beginning the powers fattened the sky and the land **2** and the land had existed in confusion and was unfilled and darkness was upon the face of the deep sea and the wind of the powers was much fluttering upon the face of the water **3** and the powers said, light exist and light existed **4** and the powers saw the light given that it was functional and the powers made a separation between the light and the darkness **5** and the powers called out to the light day and to the darkness he called out night and evening existed and morning existed one day **6** and the powers said a sheet will exist in the midst of the water and he existed making a separation between water to water **7** and the powers did the sheet and he made a separation between water which is from under for the sheet and the water which is from upon for the sheet and he existed so **8** and the powers called out to the sheet sky and evening existed and morning existed a second day

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

AHRC Website Excerpt – Ancient ABCs

In the 10th century B.C., in the hill country south of Jerusalem, a scribe carved his A B C's on a limestone boulder - actually, his aleph-beth-gimel's, for the string of letters appears to be an early rendering of the emergent Hebrew alphabet.

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Archaeologists digging in July at the site, Tel Zayit, found the inscribed stone in the wall of an ancient building. After an analysis of the layers of ruins, the discoverers concluded that this was the earliest known specimen of the Hebrew alphabet and an important benchmark in the history of writing, they said this week.

If they are right, the stone bears the oldest reliably dated example of an abecedary - the letters of the alphabet written out in their traditional sequence. Several scholars who have examined the inscription tend to support that view.

Experts in ancient writing said the find showed that at this stage the Hebrew alphabet was still in transition from its Phoenician roots, but recognizably Hebrew. The Phoenicians lived on the coast north of Israel, in today's Lebanon, and are considered the originators of alphabetic writing, several centuries earlier.

The full article can be found on the web site at
http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/21_abc.html.

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