

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Heaven

By: Jeff A. Benner

The Hebrew word for “heaven” is שמים shamayim. There is some debate over the origins and meanings of this word but, there are a few common theories.

1. Derived from the unused root שמה shamah possibly meaning lofty. The plural form of this word would be שמים shamayim.
2. Derived from the root שמום shamam meaning Desolate, in the sense of a dry wind blowing over the land drying it out. The plural form of this word would also be שמים shamayim.
3. The word shamayim may be the Hebrew word מים mayim, meaning water, and the prefix ש sh meaning like. Combined, the word שמים shamayim would mean “like water.”

Aside from the debate over the origins of the word it is clear that the word is commonly used in the Biblical text for “sky.” It is frequently used in conjunction with the word ארץ

erets, meaning land (see Gen 1:1, 2:1 and 14:19), representing the whole of creation and the domain of God.

In the New Testament this word was used as a Euphemism (one word used in place of another) for God. This can be seen in some of the parables where the book of Luke (written for Gentiles) uses the phrase "Kingdom of God" whereas Matthew (written to Jews) uses "Kingdom of Heaven." In this context, heaven is meant to represent God, not a place.

Name of the Month - Zebulun

By: Jeff A. Benner

Note: At the request of one subscriber we will be doing a series on the sons of Jacob.

The root for the name Zebulun is זבול *zaval* meaning to reside, to dwell. This is seen in Leah's reason for naming him this name.

And Leah said, God hath endowed me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell (zaval) with me, because I have borne him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. (Genesis 30:20)

The noun derivative זבול *zevul* means residence and is used in 1 Kings 8:13; *I have surely built a house for you for a residence.*

Question of the Month – Reversing Vav?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: I have read that the letter י y prefixed to a verb represents "he" in the Imperfect Tense but, in all English Bibles why is וירא *vayar* and ויקרא *vayiqra* translated in the perfect tense?

A: It is correct that the prefix י y (the letter yud) identifies the subject of the verb as masculine singular and in the imperfect tense. But, most of the time, when the letter ו v (the letter vav), meaning and, is prefixed to the imperfect verb, it reverses the tense of the verb. For instance the word ויקרא *yiqra* means "he will call" while ויקרא *vayiqra* means "and he called." In the reverse, the verb וקרא *qara* means "he called" while וקרא *veqra* means "and he will call."

Verse of the Month – Exodus 20:9

By: Jeff A. Benner

This is an ongoing look at the 20th chapter of Exodus and the "Ten Commandments" or more literally "ten of the orders."

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלַאכְתֶּךָ :
Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; (ASV)

שֵׁשֶׁת (shey-shet)

The base word is ששה *shishah* meaning six but is written in the construct - six of...; so the letter ה is changed to a ת.

יָמִים (yah-meem)

The base word is יום *yom* meaning day with the plural suffix ים *ym*.

תַּעֲבֹד (tah-ah-vod)

The verb is עבד *'b.d* meaning to serve. The prefix ת identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine singular and the tense of the verb as imperfect - you will serve.

וְעָשִׂיתָ (ve-ah-siy-tah)

The verb is עשה *'s.h* meaning to work. The suffix ת identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine singular and the tense of the verb as perfect - you worked. The prefix ו means and but also reverses the tense of the verb - and you will work.

כָּל (kol)

A word meaning all.

מְלַאכְתֶּךָ (me-lakh-teh-kha)

The base word is the noun מלאכה *melakhah* meaning work. The suffix means ך is the possessive pronoun your (masculine singular)- your work.

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

Six of the days you will serve and you will work all your work

In following issues we will continue with this chapter.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 2:11-19

11 the title of the one is “Pishon [Scatter]”, the one going around all of the land of the “Hhawilah [Twisting]” which there is the gold, **12** and the gold of that land is functional, there is the amber and the stone of the shoham, **13** and the title of the second river is “Giyhhon [Burst]”, he is the one going around all of the land of “Kush [Black]”, **14** and the title of the third river is “Hhideqel [Rapid]”, he is the one walking eastward of “Ashur [Step]” and the fourth river he is “Perat [Break]”, **15** and “YHWH [He exists]” of “Elohiym [Powers]” took the human and he caused him to be deposited in the garden of “Eden [Pleasure]” to serve her and to guard her, **16** and “YHWH [He exists]” of “Elohiym [Powers]” directed upon the human saying, from all of the trees of the garden an eating you will eat, **17** and from the tree of the discernment of function and dysfunction you will not eat from him given that in the day you eat from him a dying you will die, **18** and “YHWH [He exists]” of “Elohiym [Powers]” said, it is not functional for the human existing by himself, I will make for him a helper like his opposite, **19** and “YHWH [He exists]” of “Elohiym [Powers]” molded from the ground all of the living ones of the field and all of the flyers of the sky and he made come to the human to see what he will call out for him and all of which the human will call out to him a being of life he was his title,

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

AHRC Website Excerpt – Hebrew Culture

Several videos on the Ancient Hebrew Culture are available here - http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/38_audiovisual.html.

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