Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Scroll

By: Jeff A. Benner

Books, as we know them today, are a fairly recent invention. Before the invention of books, codexes were used. Codexes are similar to books but are square or rectangular sheets of papyrus or animal skin, with hand written text, which are stacked on top of each other and stitched on one side and usually included a wooden cover and back. Prior to Codexes, scrolls were used. Scrolls are long sheets of papyrus or animal skin, with hand written text, which is rolled up for storage. The Hebrew word for a scroll is ספר (*seypher*, Strong's #5612) and is also the Modern Hebrew word for a book.

The word *seypher* comes from the verbal root ספר (*S.Ph.R*, Strong's #5608) meaning "to count."

> *He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to **count** them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."* (NRS, Genesis 15:5)

Hebrew verbs are able to express variations of the meaning of a verb by changing the mood and voice of the verb. The qal (active voice and simple mood) form meaning of the verb ספר is to "count," but the hiphil (active voice and causative mood) form means to "give an account" (note the word "count" in the word "account") or to "tell."

> *Consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels; that you may **tell** the next generation* (RSV: Psalm 48:13)

The participle form of the verb ספר is סופר (sopher) and can mean "counting," "telling" or "one who counts or tells," a scribe.

> *And Sheva was **scribe**: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:* (KJV: 2 Samuel 20:25)

From this verb comes the noun ספר (*seypher*), a scroll, which is used for recording counts or accounts and is written by a סופר (*sopher*), the scribe. Another noun derived from the root is מספר (*mispar*, Strong's #5457) meaning a "number."

> *None shall cast her young or be barren in your land; I will fulfil the number of your days.* (RSV: Exodus 23:26)

Another noun derived from this root is ספיר (*saphiyr*, Strong's #5457), meaning "Sapphire" and is also the origin of the word "Sapphire." The connection between the Sapphire stone and the other words related to it, such as counting, scribe and numbers, may be that the Sapphire is something that is counted.

Modern Word of the Month - Synagogue

By: Jeff A. Benner

The word synagogue is a Greek word meaning "a gathering together." The Modern Hebrew word for a "synagogue" is בית-כנסת (beyt-keneset) which literally means "house of the assembly." The word בית (*beyt*, Strong's #1004) is a Biblical Hebrew word meaning "house," but the word כנסת (keneset) is not. However, it's verbal root כנס (*K.N.S*, Strong's #3664), is found in the Hebrew Bible and means "to bunch up together"

or simply, "to assemble." The word כנסת (keneset) is also used in Modern Hebrew for the "Israeli Parliment."

Name of the Month - Enosh

By: Jeff A. Benner

In our next series of names, we will be examining the names of Genesis chapter 5. In previous issues we have already examined [Adam](#), [Seth](#), [Methuselah](#), [Noah](#) and [Shem](#).

And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. (KJV: Genesis 5:9-11)

Enosh is the son of Seth and the grandson of Adam. Enosh lived 90 years and gave birth to Cainan and lived a total of 905 years. The name in Hebrew is אנוש (*enosh*, Strong's #583), meaning "man." This word/name comes from the root אנש (*A.N.Sh*, Strong's #605) meaning "mortal" in the sense of weak and sick. The word/name *enosh* is closely related to the Hebrew word איש (*iysh*, Strong's #376) also meaning "man."

Question of the Month – A Serpent?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: Is the serpent of Genesis 3 a real serpent?

A: In Hebrew thought, the action or character of something is much more important than its actual appearance. In our culture, and forms of thought, it is either a serpent or it's not. But in Hebrew, the word *nahhash* (the word translated as serpent) is something that is serpent-like. This can be an actual serpent or something that acts like a serpent. Many times the authors of the Hebrew text do not make the distinction as we would. Such is the case here, we are not told if it is an actual serpent or someone or something that acts like a serpent. Our Greek thinking mind needs to know which it is, but the Hebrew thinking mind doesn't care. A good example of this is the Hebrew word *ayil*. This word literally means a "buck." But it is used in the Hebrew text for anything that is "buck-like," such as

an oak tree, fence post, or a chief, all of which have the characteristics of being strong and authoritative.

There is one other piece to this puzzle that opens up another possibility for the identity of the serpent.

> *In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent (nahhash), Leviathan the twisting serpent (nahhash), and he will slay the dragon (tanin) that is in the sea.* (RSV: Isaiah 27:1)

In this verse, Leviathon is called a *nahhash*. So, it is possible that the serpent in Genesis 3 is Leviathon.

Verse of the Month – Genesis 2:7

By: Jeff A. Benner

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וַיִּיצֶר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן הָאֲדָמָה
וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

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And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the
ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man
became a living soul. (ASV)

וַיִּיצֶר (vai-yiy-tser)
The verb is יצר (Y.Ts.R) meaning to "press" in the sense of forming clay into a shape. The prefix י identifies the verb tense as imperfect - will press - and the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular - he will press. The prefix ו means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb – and he pressed.

יְהֹוָה (YHWH)
This is the name Yahweh, and is the subject of the previous verb – YHWH pressed.

אֱלֹהִים (eh-lo-hiym)
This is the word frequently translated as "God" but literally means "Powers." While this is a plural word (as identified by the "iym" suffix), it is usually used in a singular context.

אֶת (et)
This word preceeds and identifies the definite object of the previous verb.

הָאָדָם (ha-a-dam)
This is the word אדם (adam) meaning "human" with the prefix ה meaning "the."

עָפָר (a-phar)
This word means "dust" or "powder."

מִן (miyn)
This word means "from."

הָאֲדָמָה (ha-a-da-mah)
This is the word אדמה (adamah) meaning "ground" with the prefix ה meaning "the."

וַיִּפַּח (vai-yi-phahh)
The verb is נפח (N.P.Hh) meaning to "blow." A root beginning with the letter נ (N) drops this letter from the word when it is conjugated. The prefix י identifies the verb tense as imperfect - will blow - and the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular - he will blow. The prefix ו means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb – and he blew.

בְּאַפָּיו (be-a-pahv)
This base word is אף (aph) meaning nose, but is written in the plural form – אפים (aphiym), which means "nostrils." The suffix ו means "of him" and because of this word is in the construct state (nostrils OF him) the ם is dropped from the word אפים. The prefix ב means "in." All combined, this word means "in his nostrils."

נִשְׁמַת (nish-mat)
This is the word נשמה (neshamah) meaning "breath." The word is in the construct state (breath of...) so the ה (H) is changed to ת (T).

חַיִּים (hhai-yim)
This is the word חי (hhai) meaning "living," but in the plural form, which means "life."

וַיְהִי (vai-hiy)
The verb is היה (H.Y.H) meaning to "exist." A root ending with the letter ה (H) drops this letter from the word when it is conjugated. The prefix י identifies the verb tense as imperfect - will exist - and the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular - he

will exist. The prefix ו means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb – and he existed.

הָאָדָם (ha-a-dam)

This is the word אדם (adam) meaning "human" with the prefix ה meaning "the."

לְנֶפֶשׁ (le-ne-phesh)

This is the word נפש (nephesh) meaning "being" (the whole essence of a person), with the prefix ל meaning "to" or "for."

חַיָּה (hhai-yah)

This is again, the word חי (hhai) meaning "living," but here being used as an adjective. The masculine form of this adjective is חי (hhai) while the feminine form is חיה (hhai-yah).

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

> And YHWH of Elohiym pressed into shape the human of dust from the ground, and he blew in his nostrils the breath of life, and the human existed for a living being.

In following issues we will continue with this chapter.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 6:1-8

1 and it came to pass that the human began to increase in number upon the face of the ground and caused to bring forth daughters for them, **2** and the sons of the "Elohiym [Powers]" saw the daughters of the human that they were functional and took for them the women from which they chose, **3** and "YHWH [He exists]" said my wind will not moderate in the human to a distant time whereas he is flesh and his days will exist a hundred and ten years, **4** the "Nephilim [Fallen ones]" existed in the land in the days of them and also afterward, when the sons of the "Elohiym [Powers]" come to the daughters of the human and they brought forth to them, they are the courageous ones which are from a distant time, men of the title, **5** and "YHWH [He exists]" saw that the dysfunctions of the human in the land was abundant and all of the thought of inventions of his heart was only dysfunctional all of the day, **6** and "YHWH [He exists]" was comforted given that he made the human in the land and he distressed himself to his heart, **7** and "YHWH [He exists]" said, I will wipe away the human which I fattened from upon the face of the ground, from the human as well as the beast as well as the treader and also the flyer of the sky given that I was comforted given that I made them, **8** and "No'ahh [Rest]" found beauty in the eyes of "YHWH [He exists]",

AHRC Website Excerpt – Yeshua's Teaching Style

"And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes." (Mark 1:22)

While portions of the Gospels of the New Testament are written in chronological order, this is not true for entire books of the Gospel. Because the New Testament was written by Jewish authors of the first century CE, their method of recording the life and events of Yeshua follows a more Hebraic format. In "step logic," events are recorded in a chronological order such as we would expect to see on a timeline. However, this method of logic is Greek and since the author's of the Gospels were Hebrews, they would follow an Hebraic form of logic called "block logic," which is more related to circular thought than linear. Block logic records the life and events of Yeshua according to their types. Using the book of Matthew as an example, we find most of his healings are recorded in chapters 8,9 and 12. Most of his encounters with the Pharisees and officials are found in chapters 15, 16 and 22. Many of Yeshua's teachings to his students are found in chapters 18 and 24. And finally, most of Yeshua's parables are found in chapters 13 and 25.

Yeshua was what is known as an itinerate Rabbi, meaning that he was not the Rabbi of a community, but instead traveled the land with his students and teaching in the countryside and towns. We can assume that Yeshua healed, met with the Pharisees and taught his students throughout his ministry. However, when the authors of the Gospels recorded their recollections of the events, they did not record them in linear chronological order, but in blocks according to their relativity.

Dr. Robert L. Lindsey, the founder of the Synoptic Gospel Researchers, discovered Yeshua's method of teaching his students. In his book Jesus Rabbi and Lord: The Hebrew Story of Jesus Behind Our Gospels, he proposes that as Yeshua traveled across the country side an event would occur, he would then give a teaching to his students that related to the event and would then tell them two parables to demonstrate his teaching. While the event, teaching and the two parables occurred at one time, they were recorded in various places in the Gospels, and sometimes in different Gospel accounts.

Dr. Lindsey did provide an example of this teaching style of Yeshua, However I had loaned out my copy of the book which was never returned to me, and could not recall the example he gave. So, I began my own search for examples of this unique style of Yeshua's teachings. I was able to find two examples which I am providing below.

Worry

Incident - Luke 10:38-42
Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Teaching - Matthew 6:25-34
"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, `What shall we eat?' or `What shall we drink?' or `What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

Parable #1 - Luke 12:16-21
And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, `What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, `I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, `Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Parable #2 - Luke 16:19-31
"There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, `Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, `Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like

manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, `Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, `They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, `No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, `If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

The full article is located on the web site at
http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/50_style.html

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What's New

We are always adding new material to the AHRC and Mechanical Translation websites.

We have added Smith's Bible Dictionary to the website. This is an excellent tool for studying the people, places and things of the Bible.

We have added a few new archeological discoveries that have been made recently, including the discovery of a very old Hebrew inscription, a water tunnel in Israel and a gold earring.

On the Mechanical Translation website we have added a blog and several new articles including "Redefining Biblical Words," "About the Mechanical Translation" and a sample chapter from "A Mechanical Translation of the Book of Exodus."

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Editorials

Do you have a comment or personal insight into the articles in this issue of the E-Zine? If so, let us know.

Israel Cohen comments on the name Manasseh;

> According to the oral tradition, MeNaSHeH was the interpreter (haMeiLiTZ) between Joseph (who pretended to not understand Hebrew) and his brothers when they arrived in Egypt.

When Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt, they did not recognize Joseph. One reason is that he spoke with them through an interpreter (Hebrew haMa:LiTZ). This word occurs only one time in Tanakh, in this story. So the question is: what is the relationship between haMaLiTZ and its meaning (to interpret). I think the answer is based on the fact that the Egyptian language was written with hieroglyphics (Hebrew TZeLeM = picture; in Israeli Hebrew, maTZLeMah = camera). To translate from Egyptian script to any other language is to un-picture, hence the reversal of TZeLeM to Ma:LiTZ.

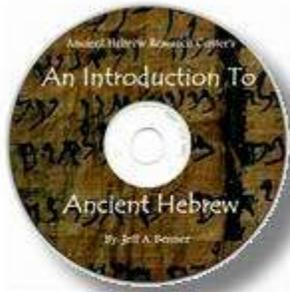Alexander Kuvshinov comments on the word miqveh;

I just found it interesting that the same word has meaning of "hope." Specially MIQVEH ISRAEL in Jer 17:13 that has "living waters" in the same verse.

Dick Brown has also done a more in-depth study of the word miqveh. We have included his notes on our website.

Corrections

Did you find any errors needing correction in the articles in this issue of the E-Zine? If so, let us know.

Advertisements

Introduction to Ancient Hebrew
Power Point Slide Presentation
by Jeff A. Benner

This is an audio and visual slide show (a viewer program is included in the CD) introducing you to the Ancient Hebrew Language of the Bible. The Biblical Hebrew language of the Bible is a root oriented system of letters, roots and words. In this introductory presentation the meaning of the letters of the original pictographic script to write Hebrew is explained as well as how roots and words are formed out of these letters. Proper interpretation of the Bible can only come through a correct understanding of Hebrew thought and word definition. In this CD the viewer is introduced to the differences between Hebrew (eastern) and Greek (western) thought as well as a study of several words and how proper interpretation reveals a more Hebraic meaning within the text.

Additional information and ordering details are available through the bookstore.
(http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/bookstore/cd_iah.html)