

# Ancient Hebrew Research Center

## Biblical Hebrew E-Magazine

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### ***Biblical Word of the Month - Stone***

By: Jeff A. Benner

The vocabulary of the English language has only two dimensions, meaning that each word within the English language has one definition, the first dimension, but can be used in a variety of applications, the second dimension. As an example, the definition of the word “train” is “a procession traveling together.” A line of railroad cars is called a train because they travel together in procession. The trailing part of a wedding dress is called a train because it travels in procession with the bride. The verb “train” means to “teach,” but in the sense of causing the student to follow in procession with the teacher.

The Hebrew language however, is multi-dimensional. Like in English, each Hebrew word has a literal meaning as well as extended meanings. However, unlike English, Hebrew

words are derived out of a specific root whose meaning is closely related to the word and this root may have other words derived out of it, also with a similar meaning to that root. Many of these roots are also derived out of another root, which may have multiple roots derived out of it.

Let's use the Hebrew word אבן (*even*, Strong's #68) to demonstrate. This word literally means a "stone," such as you might find in a creek or field, but can also be a "weight" used in a balance scale, as it is made from a stone or a block within a building that is made of hewn stones.

This Hebrew word is derived out of the parent root בן (*ben*, Strong's #1121). In the original Hebrew alphabet, this word was written as בִּן. The first picture (on the right) is a picture of a tent, our house. The second picture is a germinating seed, but can also mean to "continue" as a seed continues the next generation. When combined these letters mean "continue the house" and is the Hebrew word for a "son," the one who continues the line of the house.

From the parent root בן (*ben*) come several other roots, and the words derived out of them. These roots and words are closely related to the concept of "continuing the house."

בנין (*B-N-N*): *beniyn*—a building

אבן (*A-B-N*): *even*—a stone; *ovehn*—a stool (made from stone)

הבן (*H-B-N*): *hovehn*—ebony (a hardwood used in building)

בהן (*B-H-N*): *bohen*—thumb (called "the builder" as it is needed for building)

בנה (*B-N-H*): *banah*—to build; *beniyah*—a building; *mavenah*—structure

בון (*B-W-N*): *tevunah*—intelligence (needed to build)

בין (*B-Y-N*): *beyn*—understanding (needed to build)

לבן (*L-B-N*): *lavan*—a brick (as used like stone to build)

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### **Modern Word of the Month - Fruit**

By: Jeff A. Benner

The Modern Hebrew word for fruit is the word פרי (*periy*, Strong's #6529) and is, as is the case with many Modern Hebrew words, has its origins in Biblical Hebrew.

*And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. (KJV, Gen 1:11)*

Fruits native to Israel use the same word found in Biblical Hebrew for Modern Hebrew. Below are a few examples.

תפוח (*tapu'ahh*, Strong's #8598): Apple  
רימון (*rimon*, Strong's #8598): Pomegranate  
תאנה (*te'eynah*, Strong's #8598): Fig  
זית (*zayit*, Strong's #8598): Olive  
ענב (*eynav*, Strong's #8598): Grape

Fruits that are not native to Israel have no Biblical Hebrew origin, so Hebrew has adopted their names from other cultures. Below are a few Hebrew words for different fruits that you might recognize.

בננה (pronounced bananah)  
קיוי (pronounced qiwi)  
מלון (pronounced melon)  
לימון (pronounced limon)  
אבוקדו (pronounced avoqado)

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## **Name of the Month - Thomas**

By: Jeff A. Benner

*Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; (KJV, Matthew 10:3)*

The name Thomas is derived from the Hebrew word תאום (*ta'om*, Strong's #8380) meaning “twin.” His name in Hebrew would then be “Ta’om.” In the 4<sup>th</sup> C. AD Aramaic Peshitta of the New Testament, this name is written as תאומא (Toma). When this Aramaic name is Hellenized (made into a Greek name), an “s” is added to the end of the name, as is done with all male names, and becomes Tomas or Thomas.

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## **Question of the Month – Alone?**

By: Jeff A. Benner

**Q:** I was doing a study on the word “alone” found in Genesis 2:18 and found that it is the Hebrew word לבדו (*le'vahdo*), but am unable to find the meaning of this word.

**A:** The base word is בד (*bahd/vahd*) meaning a “stick.” The ל (*le*) is a prefix meaning “to” and the ו (*o*) is a suffix meaning “his.” So לבדו means “to his stick.” A stick is a

piece of a tree that is separated from the tree. The phrase “to his stick” is a Hebrew idiom meaning to be “alone.”

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### **Verse of the Month – Genesis 2:21**

By: Jeff A. Benner

וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תַּרְדֵּמָה עַל הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת  
מִצְלָעֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֹּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה:

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (ASV)

#### **וַיִּפֹּל (vai-yah-peyl)**

The base word is נפל (naphal) meaning "to fall". When a verb begins with the letter נ (n), the נ is dropped from the word when conjugated. The prefix י (y) identifies the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular and the tense of the verb as imperfect-"he fall." The prefix ו (v) means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb from imperfect to perfect-"and he fell." The "ey" vowel between the P and L identify the verb as a hiphil (causative) verb-"and he caused to fall."

#### **יְהוָה (YHWH)**

This is the Tetragramaton, the four letter name of the God of the Hebrews, usually pronounced Yahweh. There are many theories as to the origin and meaning of this name but most likely comes from the verb HWH (hawah) meaning to exist. The yud added to the beginning identifies the object of the verb as first person, masculine, singular, imperfect tense or "he exists".

#### **אֱלֹהִים (eh-lo-hiym)**

The base word is אלוה (e-lo-ah), which is commonly translated as "God" or "god," but more literally means "one of power and authority." The suffix ים (iym) is the masculine plural so this word means “gods” or “ones of power and authority.” However, this plural noun is often used as a name for YHWH. Because this is being used as a name, it should be transliterated as “Elohiym” rather than translating it with the English word “God.” YHWH Elohiym is the subject of previous verb, the “he” in “he caused to fall.”

#### **תַּרְדֵּמָה (tar-dey-mah)**

This is a noun meaning "trance," a state of partly suspended animation or inability to function. A deep sleep or unconsciousness. This is the object (what was caused to be fallen) of the previous verb.

#### **עַל (al)**

This word means "over" or "upon."

### הָאָדָם (ha-ah-dam)

The base word is אָדָם (adam) meaning "human." The prefix הָ means "the" – the human.

### וַיִּישָׁן (vai-yiy-shan)

The verb is יָשָׁן (Y.Sh.N) meaning to "sleep." The prefix יָ identifies the verb tense as imperfect - will sleep - and the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular - he will sleep. The prefix וַ means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb – and he slept.

### וַיִּקַּח (vai-yi-qahh)

The base word is the verb קָח (L.Q.Hh) meaning "to take." The prefix יָ (yud) identifies the verb tense as imperfect – will take, and also identifies the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular – he will take. The prefix וַ (vav) means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb from imperfect to perfect – and he took. Also note that the letter ל (lamed) is dropped once the verb is conjugated, but this is the only verb that drops this letter.

### אֶחָד (ah-hhat)

This word is commonly translated as "one" but, the idea of "one" is an individual, single entity. This word actually means "a unit" or "unified", a combined entity. We think of "one tree" as a single entity but, in the Ancient Hebrew mind it is a unit of many parts; roots, trunk, branches and leaves.

### מִצַּלְעָתָיו (mi-tsal-o-taw)

The base word is the feminine noun צַלְעָה (tseylah) meaning "rib," or anything "rib" shaped such as a ridge. The prefix מִ means "from" – from a rib. This word includes the feminine plural suffix ת (ot)-"from the ribs." The suffix יו (aw) is the third person, singular possessive pronoun-"from his ribs."

### וַיִּסְגָּר (vai-yis-gor)

The base word is the verb סָרַר (S.G.R) meaning "shut" or "close." The prefix יָ (yud) identifies the verb tense as imperfect – will close, and also identifies the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, singular – he will close. The prefix וַ (vav) means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb from imperfect to perfect – and he closed.

### בָּשָׂר (ba-sar)

This feminine noun means "flesh."

### תַּחְתָּנָה (tahh-teh-nah)

The base word is the preposition תַּחַת (tahhat) meaning "under," with the feminine singular possessive suffix נָה (nah) meaning "her."

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

And YHWH Elohiym caused a trance to fall upon the human, and he slept, and he took one from his ribs and he closed the flesh under her.

In following issues we will continue with this chapter.

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### ***Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 10:24-32***

**24** and “Arpakhshad [I will fail the breast]” had brought forth “Shelahh [Sent]” and “Shelahh [Sent]” had brought forth “Ever [Cross over]”, **25** and to “Ever [Cross over]” were brought forth two sons, the title of the one was “Peleg [Half]” given that in his day the land was split and the title of his brother was “Yaqthan [He is small]”, **26** and “Yaqthan [He is small]” had brought forth “Almodad [El of measure]” and “Sheleph [Pull]” and “Hhatsarmawet [Yard of death]” and “Yerahh [Moon]”, **27** and “Hadoram [Honor]” and “Uzal [Waver]” and “Diqlah [Palm grove]”, **28** and “Uval [Round]” and “Aviyma'el [My father is from El]” and “Sheva [Seven]”, **29** and “Ophir [Reduced to ashes]” and “Hhawilah [Twisting]” and “Yovav [Howler]”, all of these are the sons of “Yaqthan [He is small]”, **30** and their settling existed from “Mesha [Storm]” as you come unto “Sephar [Numbering]”, the hill of the east, **31** these are the sons of “Shem [Character]”, to their families, to their tongue, in their lands, to their nations, **32** these are the families of the sons of “No'ahh [Rest]”, to their birthings, in their nations and from these the nations were divided apart in the land after the flood,

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

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### ***AHRC Website Excerpt – Ugarit***



Many tablets containing cuneiform (Latin for "wedge shaped") texts have been found throughout the Near East and used to write many different languages including Sumerian, Akkadian and Eblaite. This cuneiform writing was a logogram style of writing where one cuneiform sign represented one word, similar to modern day Chinese. It was found that the cuneiform writing developed out of an older "pictographic" writing. Each pictograph was a picture of what that logogram represented such as in ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs. Over time the pictures were replaced by the cuneiform.

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In 1928 French Archeologists discovered a large collection of cuneiform tablets with a script unlike the previously discovered cuneiform writing. This discovery was made at a site known as "Ras Shamra" near the Mediterranean coast in modern day Syria. The site was later discovered to be the ancient Canaanite city of Ugarit. It was later discovered that the Ugarit cuneiform was a phonogram, or alphabetic, where each cuneiform sign represented one letter of an alphabet. The Ugarit Alphabet was Semitic, the same as Hebrew. Some have even called the writing system of Ugarit "Hebrew cuneiform". Not only is the Ugarit alphabet Semitic, the Ugarit language was also Semitic and almost identical to Hebrew. This was a great discovery for Biblical Hebrew scholars as the Ugarit language was able to shed some light on some Hebrew words of uncertain meaning.

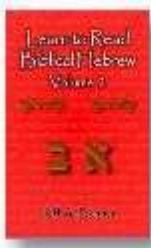
The city of Ugarit was occupied from pre-historic times to about 1200 BCE when it was mysteriously deserted. The tablets with the Ugarit cuneiform were written in its later life (about 1300 to 1200 BCE). It was discovered through the writings of the tablets that the people of the city were worshipers of the same Canaanite gods as their surrounding neighbors including deities as El, Baal, Asherah and even Yahweh. The culture, lifestyles and literary writings were found to be very similar to the Israelites and can also shed much light on the Biblical text.

The origins of the Ugarit cuneiform script is not known but can be assumed that it was derived out of the same Pictographic script used to write Hebrew, just as the Sumerian cuneiform evolved out of a pictographic script. This theory adds to the evidence that the Semitic/Hebrew script is older than previously thought.

This article is located on the web site at  
[http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/22\\_history.html](http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/22_history.html)

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prefixes and suffixes of each word. This book will be a valuable tool for anyone interested in learning how to read the Hebrew Bible in its original language.

Additional information and ordering details are available through the bookstore.

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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](#).

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## ***Corrections***

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

Thanks to Kenny Cartwright for pointing out that in the AHRC excerpt the Hebrew word meaning “raven” is misspelled as עובר and should be עורב.

Thanks to Kristóf Gergely who found that the word “names” is missing in the Verse of the month. The correct translation of this verse should be, “And the human called out names to all of the livestock and to the flyers of the skies and to all the living ones of the field, and he did not find a helper like his opposite.”

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