

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

Biblical Hebrew E-Magazine

February, 2013

Issue #065



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Biblical Word of the Month - Tanniyn

By: Jeff A. Benner

In Exodus 7:10 Aaron casts Moses' staff down and it turns into a תַּנְיִן (*tanniyn*, Strong's #8577). According to most English translations the staff turned into a "serpent." However, this Hebrew word is translated a variety of different ways in different Bible translations including; whales (KJV, Genesis 1:21), dragons (KJV, Deuteronomy 32:33), jackals (RSV, Job 30:29) and monsters (ASV, Jeremiah 51:34).

What kind of animal did Moses' staff turn into? A serpent, whale, jackal or some kind of "monster?" According to several passages, the tanniyn lives in the sea and the rivers (Genesis 1:21, Psalm 74:13, Isaiah 27:1, Ezekiel 29:3, Ezekiel 32:2). There are also

passages that show that the tanniyn lived on the land (Psalm 91:13, Isaiah 13:22, Isaiah 34:13, Isaiah 43:20, Jeremiah 51:37). The animal of the Near East that best fits with this type of creature is the crocodile, which in the Modern Hebrew language is a tanniyn.

However, according to a few passages, the tanniyn has venom (Deuteronomy 32:33) and breasts (Lamentations 4:3) and makes wailing sounds (Micah 1:8), which does not describe a crocodile, or any other known creature. It is possible that different authors of the Bible called different creatures a tanniyn. One author may have called a crocodile a tanniyn, while another author may have called the jackal a tanniyn.

Modern Word of the Month - USA

By: Jeff A. Benner

The "United States of America" is written in Hebrew as ארצות הברית של אמריקה (*artsot haberiyt shel america*). The noun ארצות (*artsot*) is the plural form of the word ארץ (*erets*, Strong's #776) meaning "land." The word הברית (*haberiyt*) is the noun ברית (*beriyt*, Strong's #1285) meaning "covenant" with the prefix ה (*ha*) meaning "the." The word של (*shel*) means "of." And the word אמריקה (*ameriqah*) is of course a Hebrew transliteration of the English word "America." When put together, this phrase literally reads, "the covenant lands of America."

Name of the Month - Judas

By: Jeff A. Benner

Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. (KJV, Matthew 10:4)

The word Iscariot is not Judas' last name; it is a description of who he is. There are several theories for the meaning of this identifier, one being that it is from the Hebrew איש קריות (*ish qri'yot*) meaning "man of Kerioth." Another possibility is that Judas was a part of the sect of the sicarii, a group of assassins among the Jewish rebels that carried a dagger called a sicae.

The name Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Judah, in Hebrew יהודה (*ye-hu-dah*, Strong's #3063). Most Hebrew dictionaries will define this name as "praise," but as this English word is an abstract word it falls short of its true Hebraic meaning. The parent root of this word is יד (*yad*, Strong's #3027) meaning "hand". The child root ידה (*Y.D.H*, Strong's #3034) is derived from *yad* and means "to throw or stretch out the hand" and is the base root in the name Yehudah. If you were standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon

for the first time you might throw your hands out and say "Wow, will you look at that". This is the Hebraic understanding of "praise" and the name Yehudah.

Question of the Month – Religion?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: What is the Hebrew word for "religion?"

A: The concept of "religion" is a purely Greco-Roman (Western) concept as it divides a person's life into two aspects, a religious aspect and a secular aspect. This form of dualism is foreign to the Ancient Hebrew mind, which instead sees all aspects of life as one and the same. Prayer is considered just as important as eating and worship just as important as work. In the Modern Hebrew language, which is just as Western as the English language is, uses the Biblical Hebrew word דת (*dat*, Strong's #1881) for the concept of "religion," but this Biblical Hebrew word originally meant "edict" or "decree" in Biblical Hebrew.

Verse of the Month – Genesis 2:25

By: Jeff A. Benner

The next verse in this series is Genesis 2:24, but this verse was explained in a [previous issue](#).

וַיְהִיו שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (ASV)

וַיְהִיו (vai-yih-yu)

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 and the suffix ו identifies the verb tense as imperfect - will exist - and the subject of the verb as third person, masculine, plural - they will exist. The prefix ו means "and" but also reverses the tense of the verb – and they existed.

שְׁנֵיהֶם (she-ney-hem)

The base word is שנים (sheh-nah-yim) meaning "two." The suffix הם (hem) is the third person plural possessive pronoun "them" (the final ם is dropped from the plural suffix when a pronoun is suffixed to the plural noun). This word means "two of them."

עָרוּמִים (a-ru-meem)

The base word is the word עָרוּם (arum) meaning "naked." As this word is being used as an adjective to describe two persons (the man and his woman), the dual plural suffix יָם (iyim) is added as a suffix.

הָאָדָם (ha-a-dam)

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

וְאִשְׁתּוֹ (ve-ish-to)

The base word is the noun אִשָּׁה (ee-shah) meaning "woman." The suffix ו (o) is the masculine possessive pronoun meaning "his" (When a feminine noun, ending with the letter ה (h), is suffixed with a pronoun, the ה (h) is dropped). The prefix ו (ve) means "and." When combined, this word means "and his woman" (There is no Biblical Hebrew word for "wife," instead, "his woman" is used).

וְלֹא (ve-lo)

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

יִתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ (yit-bo-sha-shu)

The base word is the verb בּוֹשׁ (but written as בִּשַׁשׁ) meaning "to be ashamed." The prefix י and the suffix ו identifies the subject of the verb (the man and his woman) as plural – they were not ashamed. The prefix הִת (heet, but the ה (h) is dropped because of the י prefix) identifies the verb form as hitpa'el, the reflexive form of the verb - "they themselves were ashamed." Because this verb is preceded by the negative participle (not) this will be translated as "they themselves were not ashamed."

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

And the two of them existed naked, the human and his woman, and they themselves were not ashamed.

In following issues we will continue with this the next chapter.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 12:10-20

10 and a hunger existed in the land and "Avram [*Father raised*]" went down unto "Mitsrayim [*Troubles*]" to sojourn there given that the hunger was heavy in the land, **11** and it came to pass just as he come near to come unto "Mitsrayim [*Troubles*]" and he said to "Sarai [*Princess*]" his woman, please look, I know that you are a woman of beautiful appearance, **12** and it will come to pass that the ones of "Mitsrayim [*Troubles*]" will see you and they will say this is his woman and they will kill me and they will keep you alive, **13** please say you are my sister so that it will go well for me

so that you and my being will live on account of you, **14** and it came to pass as “Avram [*Father raised*]” was coming unto “Mitsrayim [*Troubles*]” and the ones of “Mitsrayim [*Troubles*]” saw the woman given that she was much beautiful, **15** and the nobles of “Paroh [*Great house*]” saw her and they commended her to “Paroh [*Great house*]” and took the woman to the house of “Paroh [*Great house*]”, **16** and to “Avram [*Father raised*]” it was made well on account of her and flocks existed for him and cattle and donkeys and servants and maids and she donkeys and camels, **17** and “YHWH [*He exists*]” touched “Paroh [*Great house*]” and his house with great plagues because of “Sarai [*Princess*]” the woman of “Avram [*Father raised*]”, **18** and “Paroh [*Great house*]” called out to “Avram [*Father raised*]” and he said, what is this you did to me, why did you not tell to me that she is your woman, **19** why did you say she is my sister and I took her for me for a woman and now look, take your woman and walk, **20** and “Paroh [*Great house*]” directed men upon him and they much sent him and his woman and all of the ones which are to him,

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

AHRC Website Excerpt – Word Studies

My first word studies

By Jeff A. Benner

When I first began studying the Bible I loved to do word studies. I would select a word and study its uses and contexts in as many verses as I could find them. One of these studies was with the word "heart" and I would look up verses such as these below.

1. **Genesis 6:5** *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*
2. **Exodus 7:3** *And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.*
3. **Exodus 23:9** *And a sojourner shalt thou not oppress: for ye know the heart of a sojourner, seeing ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt*
4. **Proverbs 2:2** *So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom, And apply thy heart to understanding;*
5. **Psalms 40:8** *I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea, thy law is within my heart.*

6. **Psalm 55:4** My heart is sore pained within me: And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

However, I was soon to discover that there was a flaw in this type of word study. I purchased a Concordance, a book with a complete list of all the words in a particular translation, which would cross reference any word in the translation with Strong's Dictionary. This would give you the Hebrew word behind the English translation as well as a definition of that word.

With this tool I discovered that the English translation was not very consistent on how it translated Hebrew words. For instance, in the examples I gave above, the word heart is a translation of three different Hebrew words. The Hebrew word Lev, which is the Hebrew word for "heart," is translated as "heart" in verse #1, #2, #4 and #6 above. The word nephesh, which is usually translated as soul, is translated as "heart" in verse #3. Me'ah, which is literally the intestines, is translated as "heart" in verse #5. Each of these Hebrew words has a specific meaning but the translators chose to ignore this and just translate all three as "heart."

The use of the concordance also revealed that the Hebrew word lev (heart), was translated with other English words as you can see in the verses below.

1. **Genesis 31:20** And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. (A literal translation of the Hebrew is "And Jacob stole the heart of Laban the Aramean because he did not tell him that he fled.")
2. **Exodus 9:21** And he that regarded not the word of Jehovah left his servants and his cattle in the field.
3. **Numbers 16:28** And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that Jehovah hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind.
4. **Job 36:5** Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: He is mighty in strength of understanding.
5. **Psalm 83:5** For they have consulted together with one consent: Against thee do they make a covenant:
6. **Proverbs 19:8** He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: He that keepeth understanding shall find good.

All of this playing with words in the English translations did not settle well with me. How was a person to properly interpret the Bible if there was no consistency

in how the Hebrew was translated? If one is given the proper translations and definitions some interesting revelations appear.

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?*

I had previously thought, based on the above verse, that the heart (in the sense of emotion) was deceitful but the mind was logical and trustworthy. After discovering that the heart to the Hebrews was the mind, I realized that Jeremiah was saying that the "mind" was deceitful. In other studies I discovered that emotion, which we consider to be the heart, is actually the kidneys to the Hebrews.

I should point out that this is not an isolated case by any means, in fact, I have seen this same scenario played out time after time with many different words and in all translations. Anyone desiring to do a serious word study can never rely on an English translation alone, at a minimum a concordance and dictionary are going to be essential.

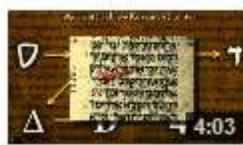
This is an excerpt from an article that is located on the web site at http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/1_about.html

AHRC Update

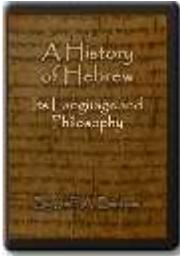
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by Jeff A. Benner

(NEW)

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