



Commentary on the Torah

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Genesis 1:1 / Word Study

Summit

The word *reshiyt* comes from the root **רש** (*rosh*), a noun meaning *head*, and may be used for the head of a man (Genesis 3:15) or an animal (Exodus 29:10), the summit of a mountain (Genesis 8:5) or it may be used for a person of importance such as the leader of a family (Numbers 1:4) or tribe (Numbers 30:1).

The Hebrew language uses the same words for space and time (Interestingly, scientists today have determined that space and time are very similar). As an example, the Hebrew word קֶדֶם (*qedem*) can mean *east* (space) or *ancient* (time). The word *rosh* may also be used for the *head* of a time, such as the *beginning* of a month (Exodus 12:2).

The word *reshiyt* has a similar meaning in that it may refer to the *head* of a time, such as the *beginning* of a year (Deuteronomy 11:12), but may also be used for someone or something of importance, the *head* or *summit* of a group. An example of this can be found in Exodus 23:19 where the word *reshiyt* is used for the *best* or *choicest* of their firstfruit offerings.

The *beginning* in Genesis 1:1 is not just the *beginning* of a time, but *summit* of time, the most important event in history.

Elohiym

In order to understand the full Hebraic meaning of the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (*elohiym*), we will need to look at the roots that it is derived from. The parent root אֵל (*el*) is a “strong leader.” Derived from this parent root is the child root אָלָה “*hla*” (*alah*), meaning an “oath,” or more hebraically, a binding yoke that binds the “strong leader” to another in an agreement. The word אָלָה (*alah*) is found in the following verse.

and they said, we surely see that Yhwh existed with you and we said, please, an oath will exist between us and you and we will cut a covenant with you, (Genesis 26:28, RMT)

The word אֱלֹהָה (*eloah*) is derived out of the child root אָלָה (*alah*) and refers to the “strong leader” that one is “bound” too.

"Behold, happy is the man whom God reproves; therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty. (Job 5:17, RSV)

The plural form of אֱלֹהָה (*eloah*) is אֱלֹהִים (*elohiym*) and means the “strong leaders that the people are bound too” and can be found in the following passages.

“You shall have no other gods before me”. (Exodus 20:3, RSV)

“Then his master shall bring him unto the judges”. (Exodus 21:6, KJV)


This plural word is also used for the Creator of the heavens and the earth and is the most common word translated as “God” in the Bible.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. (Genesis 1:1, NIV)

The God who created the heavens and the earth is not just a god, but the all-powerful God, mightier than any other god.

"For the LORD your God (אלהים), he is God (אלהים) of the gods (אלהים), and Lord of lords, a great God (אל)" (Deuteronomy 10:17, RSV)

Filled

This parent root was written as  in the ancient pictographic Hebrew script. The first letter (reading from right to left) is the picture of a tent floor plan and means "house" or "family". The second letter is the head of a man and means "head". When combined these two letters mean "family of heads" and is the Hebrew word for "grain". Grains consist of a head with a cluster of seeds and grains consist of a variety of species including barley, wheat, etc. – families of heads.

The Hebrew word "BaR" literally means "grain" as previously mentioned but its meaning can also be extended to mean "soap" or "clean". As will be shown in more detail later, grains are fed to livestock to make them fat. The fat of animals is used to make soap. The soap is of course used to make one clean. It is this word BaR that is also translated as "pure" – "He that hath clean hands, and a pure (BaR) heart (Ps 24:4).

The Hebrews understood a "pure heart" as a "clean heart". You must also understand that "guilt" was seen as dirt. In order to remove the dirt from the heart you must clean it. Hopefully this will cause you to begin viewing the Bible from a different perspective, the perspective of its original authors. Next week we will look at a few other words that are derived from this parent root.

A common means of forming an additional noun out of a two letter word is to double the word. The word ברבר (pronounced "barbur") is a fowl as seen in the following verse.

Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl. (1Ki 4:23, KJV)

Again we can easily see the connection between the word "BaR" and the idea of being "fattened".

This word is also used in the Aramaic language to mean "field" as a place for growing grains as well as "son" probably through the idea of offspring in connection with the seeds of the grain.

The Hebrew root ברה (BaRaH) is a child root formed out of the parent by adding the letter ה. This root has the meaning of "eat" as seen in the following verse.

And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David swore, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. (2 Samuel 3:35, KJV)

The noun הביר is formed by adding the letter י and has the meaning of "meat", or what is eaten. When meat was eaten by the Hebrews it was the choicest and fattest of the stock. For this reason the word BaRaH can also mean "choice" or "to choose."

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. (1 Sam 17:8, KJV)

Another word derived from the root ברה (BaRaH) is the word ברית (BaRaH). This word literally means "meat" but is always translated in most English translations as covenant. In the times of the Ancient Hebrews a covenant was consummated by choosing a choice and fat animal from the herd or flock and sacrificing it. This may also be the meaning behind the English word "consummate" as in "consume" a sacrifice. In most English Bibles is the phrase "make a covenant". The Hebrew word translated as "make" is the word "karat" which actually means "cut" hence "karat beriyt" is literally "cut the meat". The sacrifice was literally cut into two pieces and each party of the covenant would pass through the pieces. This signified the idea that if either party violated the covenant, the other party had the right to cut them into two pieces. This imagery of the cutting of pieces can be seen in Genesis 15. Interestingly Israel, who did violate the covenant, was divided into two nations - Israel and Judah.

The Hebrew root ברא (BaRa) is a child root formed out of the parent by adding the letter ברא. As a verb this word is used 46 times in the Hebrew Bible. Below are just a couple of these occurrences in the KJV translation (the underlined word is the translation of the word ברא).

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1, KJV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Ps 51:10, KJV)

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; (Ecc 12:1, KJV)

The word "create" is an abstract word and as the Ancient Hebrew did not think in abstract terms, we need to find the concrete meaning of the Hebrew verb *bara*. The following verse uses the exact same verb *bara* but is translated with its concrete meaning (the underlined word).

Why then look with greedy eye at my sacrifices and my offerings which I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves upon the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' (1 Samuel 2:29, RSV)

If you "fatten" something up, you are making it "full" and this is the idea behind the word *bara* in Genesis 1:1. Throughout this chapter we see Elohiym "filling" the water with fish, the sky with the birds, and the land with plants and animals. Now let's examine the etymology of the verb *bara*. This word is derived from the parent root *bar* meaning grain, which is used to feed animals that are to be "fattened" for the slaughter or a sacrifice. The noun בריא *b'riy* is derived from the verb *bara* and means "fat" as seen in the following verse.

And the gaunt and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. (Genesis 41:4, RSV)

Now let's see how this meaning applies to the other verses listed. In Genesis 1:1 it does not say that God "created" the heavens and the earth, instead he "fattened" them or "filled" them. Notice that the remaining chapter is about this "filling" of the heavens with sun, moon, birds and and the "filling" of the earth with animals, plants and man.

The "Create in me a clean heart" of Psalms 51:10 would better be translated as "fill me with a clean heart".

The passage in Ecc 12:1 translates this verb (which is in the participle form meaning "one that fattens/fills") as "Creator" but the truth is that this word is in the plural form and they should have at least translated it as "Creators". This is often a problem when relying on a translation as the translator will often "fix" the text so that it makes more sense. But as this word means to fatten or fill, this should be understood as "fatteners" or "fillers". I believe this verse is speaking about the "teachers" (ones who fill you with knowledge) of your youth.

The untranslatable Hebrew Word

The most common word in the Hebrew Bible is the word אַת (et) and is never translated as there is no equivalent word in the English language. The first letter is the א, called an aleph, and is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The second letter in the word אַת (et) is the ת, called a tav, and is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. These two letters are the "first and the last," the "beginning and the end" and the "Aleph and the Tav" (which is translated as "the alpha and the omega," the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, in the book of Revelation).

*Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say,
"I am a warrior." (Joel 3:10, RSV)*

The word "plowshares," in the passage above, is the Hebrew word אַת (et). A plowshare is the metal point of the plow which digs into the soil creating a furrow for planting seeds. When we examine the original pictographic script used in ancient times to write Hebrew, we can see a clear connection between the letters of this word and its meaning.

The modern Hebrew form of the letter aleph is א, but is an evolved form of the original pictograph א, a picture of an ox head. The ancient pictographic form of the letter ת is ת, a picture of two crossed sticks which are used as a marker. When these two pictographs are combined we have the meaning "an ox toward the mark." Fields were plowed with a plow pulled behind an ox (or pair of oxen). In order to keep the furrows straight the driver of the ox would aim toward a mark, such as a tree or rock outcropping in the far distance. As we can see, this meaning of driving the ox toward a mark, can be seen in the letters of the Hebrew word אַת (et)

The word אַת is also used very frequently (over 7,000 times) in the Hebrew language such as can be seen in the very first verse of the Bible.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

Because the word אֵת has no equivalent in the English language, it is not translated, but to demonstrate its meaning in this verse I will translate Genesis 1:1 into English, but retain the word אֵת in its correct position.

In the beginning Elohiym filled אֵת the sky and אֵת the land

The word אֵת is used as a grammatical tool to identify the definite object of the verb. In the example of Genesis 1:1 the verb is the Hebrew word בָּרָא (bara), meaning "to fill," and the definite objects, the ones receiving the action of the verb, are the sky and the land. Just as the "ox" moved toward the "mark" when plowing, the word אֵת (the plowshare) plows the path from the verb of a sentence (the ox) to the definite object (the mark).

Just as the phrase "heaven and earth" is an idiomatic expression meaning "all of creation," the phrase "aleph and tav" is an idiomatic expression meaning "the whole of the alephbet."

Skies

The first thing to keep in mind is that in Ancient Hebrew thought there is no separation between the physical and non-physical, they are the one and the same. An example of this is in Psalm 24:4 where "clean hands" and "pure heart" is one and the same thing. A common form of Hebrew poetry the "and" connects two phrases as one and the same thing. Clean hands are a sign of a pure hearth and visa versa.

The heavens are the physical skies and it is also the place of God, one and the same thing. It is the western Greco-Roman thinking that separates the two realms. We often see the "spirit" as spirtual and the "body" as physical but in Hebrew thought they are one and the same thing. Without the spirit (actually breath in Hebrew) the body cannot survive and with the body the spirit cannot survive.

In Hebrew, the word שָׁמַיִם shamayim (Strong's #8064) is written in the plural form (identified by the "yim" suffix). This word is always written in the plural. You may see "heaven" or "heavens" in your Bible but they are both the word shamayim. There are several Hebrew words that are always written in the plural including מַיִם mayim, meaning water, and פָּנִים panim, meaning face. Personally, I prefer to translate the Hebrew word shamayim as "skies". This eliminates any confusion between heaven, heavens and sky.

From an Ancient Hebrew's perspective, who knows nothing about gas giants, such as the sun or stars, they saw the "heavens" as a "sheet" that covers the earth just like the Hebrews nomadic tent that covers the family. In fact, from the inside of a nomadic tent the cover looks just like the night sky, stars and all.

I believe the connection that the Hebrews made between God and his "host" is that they can see the "sheet" of the skies but they cannot see beyond it, neither can they see or even speculate on what is beyond that sheet. The Ancient Hebrew mind did not concern itself with things they could not see, hear, feel, smell or touch. It is Greek thinking that delves into the philosophy of the unknown. The Hebrew word עוֹלָם "olam" is usually translated as "eternity" or "forever". This word literally means "what is beyond the horizon" or "hidden". To the Hebrews God is olam, not eternal but "unknown" or "hidden".

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 שמם 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.

Land

The Hebrew word often translated as “earth” is ארץ *erets* ^[H:776] but is more frequently translated as “land” which is the more literal meaning of the word. The word *erets* may refer to land in general or a specific piece of land, or region, such as in the “land of Israel.”

This word comes from the root רץ *rats* ^[H:7518] meaning “fragment.” When a clay pot is broken it is not wasted. The broken fragments, called ostrakon, are commonly used for writing letters, receipts, messages, etc.

Did the Ancients view the earth as “fragments” in the sense of regions, or did they have the knowledge that the land of the earth was divided up into fragments, known to us as tectonic plates?

Genesis 1:2 / Empty and Unfilled

The phrase תהו ובהו (*tohu v'bohu*) employs two different and common styles of Hebrew poetry. The first is the use of similar sounding words together. While the phrase "The painter painted a painting with paint," would be poor English, it is a perfect example of Hebrew poetry. The second is the use of parallelisms where multiple words are used to express one idea. The two words *tohu* and *bohu* are not expressing two different states of the earth, but instead are expressing one state, but with two different words that have the same basic meaning.

Genesis 1:3 / Light

In the beginning the heavens and the earth were in darkness and chaos, so God's first act was to shed some light on the subject to bring about some order. The Hebrew word אור (*or*) means *light* and comes from the verbal root אור (*or*) meaning *to illuminate*. The opposite of darkness is light and the opposite of chaos is order. The Hebraic idea of *light* encompasses both of these aspects, light and order. If a solution to a problem escapes us we are in chaos, but when that solution is discovered we have been enlightened. This imagery can be found in Psalm 19:8 where the verbal root *or* is translated as *enlightening*, "...The directions of Yahweh are pure, *enlightening* the eyes."

Genesis 1:4 / Light and Darkness

It is generally understood that the creation account of Genesis chapter one is a chronological order of events. It should be understood that Hebrew writers were not as concerned about chronology as we are in our modern culture. To prove that the seven days of creation are not written in chronological order, we can compare day one with day four.

On day one God divided the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:4). On day four God made the sun and the moon and placed them in the firmament to "divide the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:18). If God separated the light from the darkness on day one, how can he do the same thing on day four? The reason is that day one and day four are the same event.

Genesis 1:5 / Day

In the ancient Hebrew pictographic alphabet, the letter י (*yud*) is a picture of an arm and hand and represents the idea of working, throwing or making. The letter מ (*mem*) is a picture of the ripples of water. When these two letters are combined they form the parent root word מ' (*yam*), meaning *working water* and is the Hebrew word for the *sea*, a large body of water, where the waves and storms are its work.

By placing the letter ו (*waw*) in between the two letters of the parent root, the child root מו' (*yom*) is formed and means *day*. The Hebrew day ends when the sun sets in the west, the direction of the Mediterranean Sea. *Yom* then literally means, "The time of the setting sun over the sea".

Genesis 1:6 / Firmament

The word רקיע (*raqiya*) is derived from the verb רקע (*R.Q.Ah*), which can be found in several passages including Isaiah 40:19;

The sculpture is poured by the craftsman and he **overlays** the cast with gold and castings of silver chains.

Raqa is the process of hammering out a piece of gold or other metal into thin plates which was then applied to a carved or casted image such as we read in Numbers 16:39;

And El'azar the priest took the copper censers, which they brought near and were burned and they were hammered out into plates for the altar.

Here, the phrase “hammered out” is again the verb root **רקע** *raqa* ^[H:7554]. The word **רקיע** *raqiya* ^[H:7549], as found in Genesis 1:6 is literally a “hammered out sheet”. There are some scientists who have speculated that before the flood there was a thick sheet of water surrounding the earth high in the atmosphere. It is then possible that the opening of the windows of heaven which brought down the floodwaters (see Genesis 7:11) is the collapse of this “hammered out sheet” of water. It is also theorized that the sheet of water would have filtered out harmful sun rays and contributed to the longevity of life on the earth prior to the flood.

Genesis 1:9 / Say

The second most common Hebrew word in the Bible, the first being the word **את** (*et*), is the verb **אמר** (A.M.R, Strong's #559), meaning “to say,” and is found 5,379 times (5,308 in the Hebrew text and 71 times in the Aramaic text) in the Hebrew Bible.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (Genesis 1:3, ASV)

This verbal root is a child root, where the letter **א** (*aleph*) has been added to the two –letter parent root, which would appear to be **מר** (MR). However, the parent root **מר**, a root meaning “bitter,” is not the parent root of **אמר**, **מל** (ML), a parent root meaning “word” or “comment” is its root. Over time, words evolve and letters are often interchanged with other letters which are formed in the same region of the mouth. While there are countless examples of this in English, let’s just look at the English words “pedal” (a device on a bicycle for the foot) and “pedestrian” (a person on foot). These two words come from the Greek word “ped” meaning “foot.” The English word “foot” is an evolved form of the word “ped” through the exchange of the “p” with the “f” and the “d” with the “t.” Therefore, the original spelling of the verb **אמר** is **אמל**.

While the parent root **מל** (ML) is not found in the Biblical text, its feminine form, **מלה** (*milah*, Strong's #4405), is and it is used 38 times, most frequently in the book of Job.

Thy words have upholden him that was falling, And thou hast made firm the feeble knees. (Job 4:4, ASV)

Genesis 1:10 / Miqveh

Many will recognize this word as the ritual immersion, similar to baptism, as practiced in Judaism. However, unlike in Christianity, the ritual of miqveh is performed many times, such as before holy days. In Hebrew, this word is written as מקוה (miq'veh) and does appear in the Hebrew Bible, but not in the same context.

God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:10, RSV)

In this verse, the phrase "gathered together," is the Hebrew noun מקוה (miq'veh, Strong's #4723). In the Bible, this word means a pool or collection of water and is also found in the following verse.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'". (Exodus 7:19, RSV)

While the word מקוה (miqveh) means "pool" in Biblical Hebrew, the modern Hebrew word for a pool is בריכה (beriykhah), which comes from the verb ברך meaning "to kneel," in the sense of kneeling down to a pool of water to get a drink.

Genesis 1:11 / Fruit

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. (Gen 1:11, KJV)

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)
- קיווי (pronounced qiwi)
- מלון (pronounced melon)
- לימון (pronounced limon)
- אבוקדו (pronounced avoqado)

Etymology, the study of word origins, is a very interesting area of language study. Throughout our life we use thousands of words never stopping to ponder their origins or relationships to other words. Words can often be traced back through time and other languages to discover their origins and original meanings. Our purpose here is show a common relationship between Hebrew and English words and their meanings. This area of study is what has become called "Edenics."

All languages are based on a root system where a common set of letters can be found in different words of similar meaning. For example the English words FoLiage, FLora and FLower all have a similar meaning and are derived from an ancient FL root which probably meant "plant."

The Hebrew word for "fruit" is פרי (periy) which is derived from the parent root פר (PR). Many of the English words for different types of fruit come from this PR Hebrew root including PeaR, aPRicot, PRune and PeRsimmon. Over time words evolve as they are transferred from one language or culture to another. One type of evolutionary change is the reversal of letters such as in the word gRaPe which is another fruit word from the PR root. Another type of evolutionary change is the exchange of one letter sound for a different similar sounding word. One common exchange of sounds is the R sound for the L sound such as we see in the fruit words apPLe and PLum which have evolved from the PR root. Another is the P to B or F giving us BeRry and the word FRuit, both evolved forms of the PR root.

The Hebrew word for "grain" is בר (BR - bar). In English we have the words BaRley (a type of grain), BaRn (a place for storing grain) and BeeR (made from grains).

Genesis 1:20 / Living Being

Living

The Hebrew word ח (chy) is pronounced like the English greeting "Hi" but the "H" is pronounced hard like the "ch" in the name "Bach" (hence I use the transliteration of "hh" for this letter while most use "ch"). The word "hhy" is usually translated as "life" in the English Translations.

The idea of "life" is an abstract thought meaning that the concept of "life" cannot be seen, heard, smelled, tasted or felt. As the Hebrew language does express abstract thought it is always through concrete ideas. In order to demonstrate this process of concrete and abstract thought let us examine the concept of "heart". The Hebrew word for "heart" is לב (lev). The heart is the concrete and physical "heart", the organ in the chest. But, this same word also represents the abstract idea of "emotion" as

the ancient Hebrews understood the "heart" as the seat of emotion (much like we see thinking being associated with the brain).

Now when we come to the word 'ח (chy) we understand the abstract concept behind the word as awareness, existence, etc. but what was the concrete background to the word. The following passage (quoted from the KJV) can help us unravel this mystery.

"Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions" (Job 38:39, KJV)

The word "appetite" in this verse is the translator's translation of the word "hhy". An "appetite" is again an abstract word and was probably chosen for the translation as it best fits with the idea of "life". But, if we instead replace appetite with "stomach", a more concrete Hebraic concept, we find that the verse makes much more sense.

"Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? Or fill the stomach of the young lions"

Just as the heart is the seat of emotion, the stomach is, according to Hebrew thought, the seat of life. If we think about this we can easily understand why. We must first remember that the Hebrews were nomads who traveled from pasture to pasture with their flocks in search of food and water. This was their primary goal in "life". If food and water were in plenty, life was good, if it was not, life was very bad.

Being

What is the soul? Webster' Dictionary gives the following definition. "The spiritual nature of humans, regarded as immortal, separable from the body at death, and susceptible to happiness or misery in a future state." In most cases people will understand the soul through this definition. But, as I have so often stated, our interpretation of Biblical words should be from a Hebraic perspective, not a modern western perspective such as English.

The Hebrew word translated as "soul" is the word נפש (*nephesh*, Strong's #5315). If we look at the various ways in which this word is translated in an English translation, such as the KJV, we will see a wide variation in its interpretation. Some of these translations include; *soul, life, person, mind, heart, creature, body, dead, desire, man, appetite, lust, thing, self, beast, pleasure, ghost, breath* and *will*. What exactly does this word mean?

I had always assumed that only humans had a soul but, it was during a study of the word "soul" that I discovered that translations often influence how we interpret Biblical concepts. In Genesis 2:7 we find that man is a "living soul" and in Genesis 1:21 we find that animals are "living creatures". When I first started using a concordance to look up the original Hebrew words I was amazed to find out that these two phrases were the identical Hebrew phrases - *nephesh chayah*. Why would the translators translate *nephesh chayah* as "living soul" in one place and "living creatures" in another? It was this discovery that prompted me to learn the Hebrew language.

In the Hebrew mind we are composed of three entities; body, breath and mind. In future issues we will examine each of these but for now let us simply make some general definitions for them. The body is the flesh, bones and blood, the vessel. The mind is ones thoughts and emotions. The breath is ones character, what makes a person who they are.

The soul is the whole of the person, the unity of the body, breath and mind. It is not some immaterial spiritual entity it is you, all of you, your whole being or self.

Genesis 1:26 / Likeness

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... (Genesis 1:26, KJV)

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

Genesis 1:27 / The filling of man

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them". Genesis 1:27 (KJV)

While the above is a common translation for this verse, there are two words within it, that when translated from a Hebraic perspective, illuminate the passage in a new light. The first word is ברא (bara), which in this verse cannot mean, "create something from nothing", as another verse would contradict this translation.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7 (KJV)

God did not create the man out of nothing; instead he formed him out of the ground. With our new understanding of the word ברא, discussed previously, he filled him with his image, which brings us to the next word.

The word צלם (tselem), translated as "image" above, is also translated in other passages as an "idol", which is an "image" of a god. A more Hebraic understanding of the word would be a "shadow". An idol is meant to be a "shadow" of the original, a representation, just as a "shadow" is the image of the original. We can now read the above passage as:

"So God filled the man with his shadow, with the shadow of God he filled him; male and female he filled them". Genesis 1:27

Man was formed from the dust of the ground, but unlike the other animals, man was filled with the shadow of God. All that God is, we were made to duplicate, just as a shadow duplicates the original. Genesis 2:7, quoted above, states that man was filled with God's breath. From an ancient Hebrew perspective, the breath is the character of the person; therefore, the shadow of God is the same as his character. God filled the man with his own breath, his own character.

Genesis 1:28 / Subdue

And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28, RSV)

The word subdue in Genesis 1:28 is the Hebrew verb "kavash" meaning to subdue but, it is important to have the "full" picture of a Hebrew word as "subdue" is very limited in its ability to describe the Hebrew. The noun form of this word is "kevesh" and means "a footstool," a place where one places the foot. The verb kavash literally means to place your foot on the neck of your conquered enemy signifying a submission of the enemy to his defeater. Figuratively this verb means to bring a people or nation into submission (Num 32:29). This word can also mean to bring into control (Mic 7:19). Incidentally, this is the same word we use today such as in "put the kabash on it" meaning to make an end of something or to "subdue" it.

The Hebrew verb "radah," meaning "have dominion," is used in parallel with "kavash." Our normal understanding of "having dominion" over another is to rule over them but this idea is found in the Hebrew verb malak. The Hebrew verb radah is related to other words which have the meanings of descend, go down, wander and spread. This verb literally means to rule by going down and walking among the subjects as an equal.

The use of the two Hebrew verbs "kavash" and "radah" imply that that man is to rule over the animals as his subjects, not as a dictator but a benevolent leader. Man is also to walk among and have a relationship with his subjects so that they can provide for man and that man can "learn" from them.

Genesis 2:3 / Poetry of the Creation Account

As Hebrew poetry is written much differently than our own Western style of poetry, many do not recognize the poetry which can cause problems when translating or interpreting these passages.

Approximately 75% of the Tenach (Old Testament) is poetry. All of Psalms and Proverbs are Hebrew poetry. Even the book of Genesis is full of Poetry. There are several reasons the Hebrews used poetry,

much of the Torah was sung and was easier to sing too, poetry and songs are easier to memorize than straight texts, Parallel poetry (as in Genesis 1) emphasizes something of great importance, as the creation story is. The rabbis believed that if something is worth saying, it is worth saying beautifully." There is much more poetry in the Bible than most realize because most people do not understand it.

Parallelism is most commonly found in the book of Psalms and Proverbs but is found throughout the whole of the Hebrew Bible. Parallelism is the expression of one idea in two or more different ways.

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path". (Psalms 119:105, RSV)

The above example of a simple parallel and can be written in this manner;

Your word is;

1. a lamp to my feet
2. a light for my path

Here we see that the words "lamp" and "light" are paralleled as well as the words "my feet" and "my path". Below is another example of this style of poetry.

*"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments."
(Proverbs 3:1)*

In this verse the words "my teachings" is paralleled with "my commands" and "you shall not forget" is paralleled with "your heart shall guard" and can be written as follows.

My son;

1. do not forget my teaching
2. let your heart keep my commandments

Below is Psalm 15:1-3 broken down into its poetic sequences. In this example each thought is represented by the letters A, B, C and D. Each expression of a thought is represented by the numbers 1 and 2.

- A1. Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?
- A2. Who may live on your holy hill?
- B1. He whose walk is blameless.
- B2. and who does what is righteous.
- C1. who speaks the truth from his ear.
- C2. and has no slander on his tongue.
- D1. who does his neighbor no wrong.
- D2. and casts no slur on his fellow man.

In the following example from Isaiah 6:10, three thoughts are given, each using a part of the body, then the same three thoughts are repeated, but in reverse order.

- A1. Make the *heart* of this people fat,
- B1. and make their *ears* heavy,
- C1. and shut their *eyes*;
- C2. lest they see with their *eyes*,
- B2. and hear with their *ears*,
- A2. and understand with their *heart*, and return, and be healed."

Another common form of parallelism is the use of negatives where two opposing ideas are stated as we see in Proverbs 11:19-20.

- A1. Righteousness brings one to life
- B1. Pursuit of evil brings one to his death
- B2. a twisted heart is an abomination of YHWH
- A2. a mature path is his pleasure

The Creation account of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 is written in this very same style of Hebrew Poetry.

A. Elohiym filled the sky and the land because it was empty and it was all in chaos so the wind of Elohiym settled upon the water (1:1 to 1:2)

A1. Day 1 - Elohiym separates (1:3 to 1:5, Day one)

- a. light
- b. dark

A2. Day 2 - Elohiym separates (1:6 to 1:8, Day two)

- a. water
- b. sky

A3. Day 3 - Elohiym separates (1:9 to 1:13, Day three)

- a. land
- b. Plants spring up from the land

B1. Day 4 - Elohiym fills (1:14 to 1:19, Day four)

- a. the light with the sun
- b. the dark with the moon

B2. Day 5 - Elohiym fills (1:20 to 1:23, Day five)

- a. fills the water with fish
- b. fills the sky with birds

B3. Day 6 - Elohiym fills (1:24 to 1:31, Day six)

- a. the land with animals and man
- b. Plants are given as food

B. Elohiym Finishes his separating and filling of the sky and the land and respects the seventh day because in it he did his occupation (2:1 to 2:3, Day seven)

Genesis 2:5 / Serve

The Hebrew word translated as serve is the Hebrew verb עָבַד (*Ah.B.D*). The participle form of this verb, meaning “serving,” is pronounced *oved* and may possibly be the origin of the English word “obey,” as the “servant” is one who “obeys” the master. This is more evident in the word “obedience,” which begins with “obed,” very similar to the Hebrew word *oved*. The noun form of this verb is עֶבֶד (*eved*) and is usually translated as “servant.” Derived from this noun is the name Obadiah (*ovad'yah* in Hebrew) meaning “servant of Yah” or, “the one who obeys Yah.”

While the verb עָבַד (*Ah.B.D*) is most frequently translated as “serve,” it more literally means to perform labor or work on behalf of another. The first use of this verb is found in the following passage.

*when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up
-- for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to
till the ground (RSV, Genesis 2:5)*

In this passage the verb עָבַד (*Ah.B.D*) is translated as “till,” but if we apply the full meaning of this word in this passage, it says, “and there was no man to work on behalf of the ground.” According to Genesis 1:28 man is to “subdue” the land, but here we see that man is to “serve” the land. Man’s relationship with the land is symbiotic. While the land serves man, man is also to serve the land.

Genesis 2:7 / Fire and Man

*And the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his
nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7, KJV)*

The Hebrew word for fire is אֵשׁ (*esh*). Derived from this two letter parent root is the three letter child root אִישׁ (*iysh*) meaning “man”. Not only are these two words related by their letters, they are also related in meaning. To re- discover this relationship between fire and man let us begin by seeing the “creation” of fire from the ancient Hebrews perspective.

In ancient times before the invention of lighters and matches, fire was made with a “bow drill” and tinder. The tinder is any fine organic material such as dried grass or inner bark fibers. The bow drill consisted of four parts, the fireboard, bow and string, rod and handle. The fireboard was made of a flat board with a v-shaped cut at the edge of the board. The bow and string is constructed similar to an archers bow. The rod is a round stick pointed at one end and rounded at the other. The handle is a flat round board. The Fine tinder is compressed into a ball and layed on the ground.

The fireboard is placed on top of the tinder with the v-shape cut over the tinder. The string of the bow is wrapped once around the rod and the pointed end of the rod is set on the fireboard over the v-shaped cut. The handle is placed on top of the rod. One hand holds the handle while the other hand moves the

bow back and forth in a sawing motion. This action causes the rod to spin back and forth on the fireboard.

As the rod spins on the fireboard fine wood dust is shaved off the rod and deposited in the v-shape cut on top of the tinder. The friction of the two woods rubbing also created heat causing the dust to become very hot. After a short time working the fire drill smoke will begin to rise from the heated dust. The fireboard is carefully removed leaving the pile of smoldering dust on the tinder. The Tinder is picked up and enclosed around the dust and the fire maker blows on the dust increasing the heat. The dust then ignites the tinder creating fire.

Let us now look at passage in Genesis 2:7 in light of the ancient form of making fire.

And the fire maker formed a man of dust on the tinder and he blew into the tinder the breath of life and the man became a living fire.

Genesis 2:9 / Good and bad

Very few sermons in our Western synagogues and churches would include the passage "I [God] form the light and create darkness, I make peace and I create evil, I am the LORD who does all of these" (Isaiah 45:7) as our Western mind sees these two forces as opposing opposites while the Eastern mind sees them both as equals and necessary for perfect balance. In the Western mind, God is only good and therefore unable to create evil. The Eastern mind sees God as a perfect balance of all things including good (tov in Hebrew) and evil (ra in Hebrew).

It should be noted that the English word "evil" has no Ancient Hebrew equivalent, while most English translations will use the word "evil" it is usually the Hebrew word "ra" which simply means "bad". In the Ancient Hebrew mind there is no such thing as an "evil" person or thing. To understand the words "good" and "bad" from a more Hebraic understanding these words should be understood as "functional" and "dysfunctional". God is both functional (such as seen in the Creation story of Genesis one) as well as dysfunctional (such as the destruction of the flood).

Our western mind classifies all things in two categories, either it is "good" or it is "bad". One is to be sought, cherished and protected, the other is to be rejected, spurned and discarded. Let us take light and darkness as an example. We see light as good and darkness as bad. The idea of light brings to mind such things as God, truth and love. Darkness on the other hand invokes Satan, lies and hate. To the Orientals, including the Hebrews, both are equally necessary as one cannot exist without the other. In the Bible God is seen as a God of light as well as darkness "And the people stood at a distance and Moses approached the heavy darkness where God was." (Exodus 20:21). If you stare at the sun, which is pure light, what happens? You become blind. If you are standing in a sealed room with no light, what happens? You are again blind. Therefore, both light and darkness are bad and yet, both are good. In order to see we must block out some of the light as well as some of the darkness.

The two poles of a magnet are north and south. These two poles create balance, they are not morally good or bad, but necessary ingredients of physics that complement each other. Good and bad are more like the north and south poles of a magnet than our Western conception of good and bad.

Can good exist without the bad? Absolutely not, how could you judge something to be good if you cannot compare it to something bad? The same is true for all other concepts. Cold cannot exist without heat, or short without tall, far without near, or large without small. Our western mind usually ignores these extremes and seeks to always find the "good" or the "bad". The Eastern mind is continually seeking both the "good" and the "bad" in order to find the balance between the two. Even Solomon recognized this when he said "Do not be overly righteous" (Ecclesiastes 7:16).

Throughout the scriptures this search for balance is found, yet ignored by Westerners who do not understand the significance of balance.

Genesis 2:11 / Name

The Hebrew word נשמה (neshemah) is formed by adding the letter ה (h) to the adopted נשם (nasham) which comes from the parent root שם (shem). This word is used in Genesis 2:7 and means "breath".

And the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and he blew in his nostrils the breath (נשמה) of life and the man became a living soul.

While the Western mind simply sees "breath" as the exchange of air within the lungs, the ancient Hebrew mind understood the "breath" in an entirely different way as can be seen in Job 32:8:

The wind within man and the breath (נשמה) of the Almighty teach them.

Our Western understanding of the breath does not easily grasp the concept that a breath can teach. While our Western understanding can easily associate thoughts and emotions as the function of the "mind", the Easterner sees the same function in the "breath". The "breath" of both men and God has the ability to carry thought and emotion.

Skies

The next word that we will examine is the child root שמה (shamah) meaning "heaven", "sky" or "the place of the winds". It is always used in the plural form שמים (shamayim).

In the beginning God created the skies (שמים) and the land. (Genesis 1:1)

The Hebrew mind sees נשמה (neshemah) and שמה (shamah) as synonyms. The נשמה is the breath/wind of a man, and the שמה is the breath/wind of the skies. Just as we saw above where the נשמה can teach, so also the שמים (shamayim) can also speak.

The skies (שמים) proclaim his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. (Psalms 97:6)

Dry Wind

The root word שםם (shamam) is formed by doubling the second letter of the parent root. By adding the letter ה (h) to the end, the word שממה (shememah) is formed. Both words mean, “desolate” and are used in the following passage.

Many shepherds will ruin my vineyards, they will trample my fields, they will turn the fields of my delight into a desert of desolation (שממה). And it will be made into desolation (שממה), parched and desolate (שםם) before me, all the land will be desolate (שםם) because there is no man to care for it. (Jeremiah 12:10,11)

When the dry winds blow through the desert, any moisture in the ground or air is removed causing the desert to become dry and parched. שםם (shamam) and שממה (shememah) are dry and desolate places formed by a dry wind.

Another child root ישם (yasham), with the same meaning as שםם (shamam), a dry desolating wind, can be seen in the following verse.

All your resting places of the cities will become dry, and the high places will be desolate (ישם). (Ezekiel 6:6)

Shem

By gathering together all the words derived from the parent root שם (shem), and looking for the common thread that each have in common, we can discover the original Hebraic meaning of the parent root. Each of the words has the basic meaning of a “wind” within them. נשמה (neshemah) is the wind, or breath, of man, שמים (shamayim) is the wind of the skies, שםם (shamam), שממה (shememah) and ישם (yasham) is the desolation caused by a dry wind. From this we can conclude that the ancient Hebraic meaning of שם is “breath”.

The שם of a man is his breath, which in the Hebraic Eastern mind is the essence or character of the individual. The actions of the individual will always be related to his character. From this we understand that the שם, the breath, is the place of origin of all the actions of the individual. The following are a few passages that demonstrate this Hebraic understanding of שם.

O God, in your name (שם) save me; and in your strength rescue me. Psalms 54:1

A very common form of Hebrew poetry is called parallelism, where one idea is stated in two different ways. By studying these forms of poetry we can see into the Hebrew mind by observing how he paralleled one word with another. In the verse above, the phrase “in your name save me”, is paralleled with the phrase “in your strength rescue me”. From this passage we see that the Hebrews equated one's “name” with his “strength”, an attribute of character.

"O LORD, your name (שם) is forever; O LORD, your fame is from generation to generation". Psalms 135:13

In this passage, שם is paralleled with "fame". The Hebrew word for "fame" is זכר (zakar) which literally means "remembrance". The "fame" of the LORD are his "actions" that will be remembered throughout the generations. Through the poetic imagery of this verse, we see that the psalmist equated the שם of the LORD with his actions.

"I will declare your [the LORD's] name (שם) to my brothers; within the assembly I will praise you". Psalms 22:22

In this passage, the phrase "I will declare your name" is parallel with "I will praise you", paralleling the שם (shem) of the LORD with "you", the LORD himself.

Your [David's] God will make the name (שם) of Solomon more beautiful than your name (שם) and his throne greater than your throne. 1 Kings 1:47

The poetry of this passage parallels the name of Solomon with his throne, a difficult concept for a Western thinker to grasp. Let us remember that the throne is not to be thought of in terms of physical description, but in function. The function of the throne is "authority", a characteristic of the king. The שם of Solomon is his "authority".

Names and Titles

A common mistake in Biblical interpretation is to make a distinction between a name and a title. For example, "King David", is often understood as containing the "name" "David" (an identifier) and his "title" "King". The Hebrew word dwd (david) literally means; "beloved", or "one who loves" and is descriptive of David's character. The Hebrew word \$lm (melek) literally means "ruler" or "one who rules", also descriptive of David's character. As we can see, both of these words are descriptive of David's character. The Hebrews made no such distinction between a name and a title. The phrase "King David" is Hebraically understood as "the one who *rules* is the one who *loves*", a very fitting title for the great benevolent king of Israel and the friend of God.

Genesis 2:18 / Help Meet

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. (Genesis 2:18, KJV)

While the KJV translates the Hebrew phrase עזר כנגדו (ezer kenegedo) as "help meet for him," other translations provide additional translations including; "a helper fit for him" (RSV), "a helper as his partner" (NRS), "a helper comparable to him" (NKJ) and "an helper as his counterpart" (YLT). What exactly does this Hebrew phrase mean?

The first word in the phrase, עֶזֶר (ezer), is simple and means "helper." The second word, כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (kenegedo) is a little more complex. The base word is the word נֶגֶד (neged), which will be discussed shortly, with the prefix כ (k) meaning "like," and the suffix ו (o) meaning "of him" or "his."

The word נֶגֶד (neged) comes from the verbal root כִּנְגַד (N.G.D) meaning "to be face to face." This verb is always used in the causative form where it would literally be translated as "to make to be face to face," and is always used to mean "to tell" in the sense of causing another to come face to face in order to tell them something.

The noun form, נֶגֶד (neged), is often used for something that is face to face with something else. An example can be found in Genesis 21:16 where Hagar went and sat down "opposite" her son. Even though she and her son are a distance away, they are sitting "face to face."

Putting all of this together, the phrase עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (ezer kenegedo) literally means "a helper like his opposite." In my opinion this means that Eve was to be his "other half," like him, but with the opposite attributes.

In Genesis 1:27 we read that Elohiym filled the Adam (a Hebrew word meaning human) with his shadow, meaning he placed a representation of himself in the man. We also read in this verse that Elohiym filled them, male and female, meaning that he placed within each his attributes, his male attributes to the man and his female attributes to the woman. We do not normally think of Elohiym as having male and female attributes, but there are many passages in the Bible reflecting this idea.

Genesis 2:23 / Bone of bones

In Genesis 2:23 the phrase "this is now" is an attempt at a translation of the Hebrew phrase "zot hapa'am." The word "zot" does mean "this" but the word hapa'am is a little more difficult. This is the word pa'am prefixed by the "ha" meaning "the." The word pa'am is literally a repetitive beat such as from a drum. It can also mean a stroke of time or to repeat something such as seen in Genesis 33:3; "He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times (pa'am)." Using this understanding of the word, Genesis 2:23 could be translated as, "This time is bone from my bones" and is implying that the previous times were not "bone from my bones." Three verses prior to this it states "The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him." In this context we see that the "first times" were unsuccessful in finding a helper for Adam, but with Eve, this time it worked.

Genesis 2:24 / One

The Hebrew word אֶחָד (ehhad) is derived from the parent root אֶחָד (hhad), which was written in the ancient pictographic script as אֶחָד. The first letter in this word is א (hh), representing a tent wall, such as

that which divides the male from the female sides, and means to separate or divide. The second letter, ד (d), represents a door or entrance, such as that which allows passage between the two sides of the tent, and means to enter. Our parent root דא (hhad) has the pictographic meaning of “a wall with a door” or “a wall for entering”. The Hebraic idea being expressed in this word is that one thing, or person, serves more than one function. Just as the wall separates the two sides, the door in the wall unites them. This Hebraic imagery can be clearly seen in the following passage:

“And you son of man, the sons of your people are speaking about you next to the walls and in the doors of the houses; and one (dx) speaks at one (dxa) man and at his brother saying please come and hear what the word of the one coming from the LORD is saying. And they come to you like they are coming of a people, and my people sit before you. And they listen to your words but they do not practice it; adoration is in their mouths but their hearts walk after their greed”. Ezekiel 33:30,31.

In this passage we see the two opposite actions of the people. While they go to hear from the LORD, they practice evil in their hearts, “one” individual with two opposite manifestations. It is also interesting to note that Ezekiel shows that these people are speaking about him at the walls and doors, a direct connection to the word דא, whose pictographs are of a wall and a door.

Another word derived from the parent root דא (hhad), is דוד (hhud) and has the meaning of a riddle.

“Son of man, give a riddle (דוד - hhud) of a riddle (הידה - hhiydah, the feminine form of hhud); and give a parable of a parable to the house of Israel”. (Ezekiel 17:2)

From the Hebrew poetry of this verse we can see that the word דוד (hhud) is similar to a parable. A riddle or parable presents a story to an audience, using events and people familiar to the listeners. Then, the one giving the parable presents a twist that cannot be understood easily. Keeping in mind the pictographs of the word דא (hhad), this “twist” in the story is the wall that separates the listener from the meaning of the parable. When the speaker explains the parable, the door is opened and the listeners are united with the meaning.

The word דא, keeping with our foundational meaning in the parent root, means those that are separated come together in unity. While this word is often translated as “one”, where the actual Hebraism is lost, it is better translated as a “unity”.

The Western mind sees “one” as a singular, void of any connection to something else. For instance, “one” man is an individual entity to himself, just as “one” tree is an entity to itself. To the ancient Hebrew Eastern mind, nothing is “one”; all things are dependent upon something else. A man is not “one”, but a unity of body, mind and breath that is expressed in the Hebrew word נפש (nephesh). The man is also in unity with his wife and family as well as with the larger community. Even a tree is a unity of roots, trunk, branches and leaves, which is also in unity with the surrounding landscape. “One” year is a unity of seasons. The first use of דא (ehhad) is found in Genesis 1:5 where “evening” and morning”, two states of opposite function, are united to form “one” day.

“And there was evening and there was morning, one day”

With all of this said, we do find the Hebrew word “ehhad” meaning “one” in the sense of individuality.

*And Elohiym said, the waters under the sky will be gathered to **one** (ehhad) place...
Genesis 1:9*

Genesis 3:1 / Serpent

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. (Isaiah 27:1, RSV)

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

Genesis 3:6 / Man

The word *iysh* is derived from the root אָנַשׁ *anash* ^[H:605], meaning weak and frail. When the writer of the text wishes to refer to “man” from the perspective of “humankind,” in the sense of being related by blood, he chooses the word *adam* because of its roots being in the word דָּם *dam* ^[H:1818] meaning blood. On the other hand, if he wishes to refer to “man” and his mortality, then he would chose *iysh* because of its roots being in the word *anash* meaning weak and frail (mortal).

Just as the English word “woman” contains the word “man” within it, the Hebrew word for woman, אִשָּׁה *iyshah* ^[H:802], contains the Hebrew word אִישׁ “because” she was taken out of *iysh*.

Genesis 3:15 / Bruising the head and heel

Genesis 3:15 is a very interesting passage for many different reasons. Take a look at these three translations for this verse.

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed;
it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (KJV)*

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed;
they shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel. (JPS)*

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed:
he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (ASV)*

Notice that each version translates one pronoun in three different ways. The King James Version uses “it,” the Jerusalem Publication Society uses “they” and the American Standard Version uses “he.” In the Hebrew, the word that is found here is הוּא (hu) and is the masculine singular pronoun-he. Other than this issue, all three say pretty much the same thing.

Now, let us examine the Hebrew behind the last part of the verse according to the ASV.

“he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel”

The following is the Hebrew for this phrase.

הוא ישופך ראש ואתה תשופנו עקב (hu yeshuph'kha rosh v'atah teshuphenu eqev)

Let's examine each of these words very carefully. The first word is the pronoun הוּא (hu), which we previously discussed meaning “he.” The second word is ישופך (yeshuph'kha). This verb includes the letter yud (י) as a prefix and identifies the subject of the verb, which is the word הוּא (hu), as masculine singular. The letter yud also identifies the verb as imperfect (similar to our future tense). Following the letter yud is the actual verb, which is שוף (shuph) and means to fall upon another in an attack, or to strike. Following the verb is letter kaph (ך) and identifies the object of the verb as second person masculine singular (you). The entire verb ישופך then means “he will strike you.” The third word is ראש (rosh) and is generally translated as “head.” These first three words would literally be translated as “he will strike you head.” As you can see this really doesn't make a lot of sense and this is why the translators chose to translate this as “he will strike your head.” However, if this is what was meant by the author, it would have read, הוא ישוף ראשך (hu yeshuph rosh'kha), but I will come back to this later.

The next word is ואתה, which is the word אתה meaning “you,” with the prefixed letter vav (ו) meaning “and.” The next word is תשופנו (teshuphenu). This verb includes the letter tav (ת) as a prefix and identifies the subject of the verb, which is the previous word אתה (atah), as second person masculine plural (you). The letter tav also identifies the verb as imperfect (similar to our future tense). Following the letter tav is the actual verb, which is again the word שוף (shuph) meaning to strike. Following the

verb is suffix נו (nu) and identifies the object of the verb as third person masculine singular (him). The entire verb תשופנו then means “you will strike him.” The next word is אקב (eqev) and is generally translated as “heel.” Putting these three words together we have a literal translation of “and you will strike him heel,” but again, this does not make sense, so the translators chose to ignore the grammar and translated it as “you will strike his heel.” If this is what was meant by the author, then it would have read, ואתה תשוף אקבו (v’atah teshuph eqevo).

Now let’s put all of this together.

He will strike you head, and you will strike him heel.

The head of the body is at the top of the body and the Hebrew word ראש (rosh-head) can mean “first.” Likewise, the heel is at the bottom of the body and the Hebrew word אקב (eqev-heel) can mean “last.” With this understanding, we can now translate this phrase as follows.

He will strike you first, and you will strike him last.

Genesis 3:19 / Bread

With the sweat of your brow you will eat bread (lehhem)... Genesis 3:19

Bread dough is placed on a table and is kneaded by hitting it with the fists, rolling it back and forth, picking it up and turning it over, and... Kind of sounds like a fight, doesn't it? Actually, the Hebrew noun לחם *lehhem* ^[H:3899], meaning "bread," comes from the verbal root לחם *lahham* ^[H:3898] meaning to “fight.”

Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight (lahham) against us, and so get them up out of the land. (Exodus 1:10, KJV)

Could this also be because we have to fight the ground to bring up the crop, fight the grain to remove the husk from the seeds, fight the seeds to turn them into flour, and fight the dough to make the bread?

Genesis 3:24 / East

As I have pointed out many times, the Hebrew language and thought works very differently from our own Western language and thought and this word is a good example. In the Hebrew mind space and time are seen as the same, they both have the present such as the present place you are sitting and the present time you at now and they both have distance, as a distant place or a distant time (past or

future). For this reason the same Hebrew words are used for space and time. The Hebrew word קדם *qedem* can mean “East” or it can mean the “ancient past.”

He drove out the man; and at the east (קדם) of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim. (Genesis 3:24, RSV)

I consider the days of old, I remember the years long ago (קדם). (Psalm 77:5, ASV)

One of my favorite Hebrew words is עולם *olam* because of its unique ability to demonstrate how the Hebrew language works. While this word is frequently translated as everlasting or eternal (concepts which are foreign to Hebrew thought) it means a “distant time,” either in the past or future such as seen in the following verses.

I consider the days of old (עולם), I remember the years long ago. (Psalm 77:5, ASV)

This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future (עולם) generations. (Genesis 9:12, RSV)

The word *olam* comes from the root *alam* meaning "to be hidden" and is often used in the sense of hiding to a place where one cannot be seen. Because Hebrew words for time are also used for space we can say that *olam* literally means “a place hidden beyond the horizon” or “a time hidden beyond the distant time.”

Genesis 4:2 / Cain and Abel

The name Cain is derived from the word קין (*qayin*), meaning to acquire or possess something. This is why Eve (*chavah* in Hebrew) said "I have gotten/acquired (*qanah*) a man" (Gen 4:1). The name Abel is derived from the word חבל (*hhevel*), meaning to be empty and is often translated as vain or vanity in the sense of being empty of substance.

In Hebrew thought one's name (*Shem* in Hebrew literally meaning breath or character) is reflective of one's character. The Hebraic meanings of the names of "Cain and Abel" are windows into their characters. Cain is a possessor, one who has substance while Abel is empty of substance.

Another interesting fact about these two that is often overlooked is that Cain and Abel are the first twins. In normal Hebraic accounting of multiple births the conception then birth of each child is mentioned such as in Genesis 29:32,33.

And Leah conceived and bore a son... She conceived again and bore a son...

But notice how it is worded in Genesis 4:1,2.

She conceived and bore Cain... And again, she bore his brother Abel.

There is only one conception but two births. The Hebrew word for "again" is "asaph" meaning to add something, in this case the birthing of Abel was added to the birthing of Cain. Cain and Abel were not just brothers, they were twins.

Genesis 4:3 / Offering

The most frequent Hebrew word translated as "offering" is מנחה (*minhhah*, Strong's #4503). This noun is most likely derived from the root verb ינח (*Y.N.Hh*, Strong's #3240), which means to deposit in place, especially for safekeeping or as a pledge. From this perspective, a *minhhah* (offering) is something that is given as a pledge.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: (Genesis 4:3, KJV)

Maybe the difference between Cain and Abel's offering wasn't the offering itself, but the pledge or action behind the offering.

Genesis 4:7 / His Desire

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (KJV, Genesis 4:7)

In this verse God is speaking to Cain and most people interpret the "his" and "him" to be "sin." However, this is not possible as the Hebrew word sin, which is חַטָּאת (*hhatat*), is a feminine noun. The words "his" and "him" must be referring to someone or something that has a masculine gender. The only masculine gender noun in this verse is the door, but this does not make any sense within the context, so it must be another masculine noun found in a nearby verse.

Another verse that will help with the interpretation of this verse is Genesis 3:16.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (KJV, Genesis 3:16)

Compare this verse with Genesis 4:7.

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (KJV, Genesis 4:7)

A literal rendering of the underlined portions of these two verses from the Hebrew is as follows

Genesis 3:16 - and to your man is your desire and he will rule in you.

Genesis 4:7 - and to you is his desire and you will rule in him.

With the exception of the pronouns, these two passages are identical. Because Genesis 3:16 is referring to Adam and Eve, it makes sense that Genesis 4:7 is referring to Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:10 / Ground

And Yahweh Elohiym formed the human of dust from the ground (adamah)... (Genesis 2:7)

The Hebrew behind the word “ground” is אֲדָמָה *adamah* ^[H:127] and is related to the Hebrew word אָדָם *adam* ^[H:120], which is also found in the sentence above where it is translated as “human.” Hebrew authors loved to use similar sounding words together such as seen in the sentence above. Here is another example.

And he said, what did you do? The voice of the blood (dam) of your brother is crying out to me from the ground (adamah). (Genesis 4:10)

Genesis 4:15 / Mark

The Modern Hebrew word for a “letter” (as in the letters of the alphabet) is אוֹת (*ot*, Strong's #226, the plural form is אוֹתוֹת / *otot*). This word can be found in the following passage.

Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. (Genesis 4:15, KJV)

Is it possible that the “mark,” the אוֹת, was an actual “letter” of the Semitic alphabet? Let’s take a look at another passage that uses the word “mark.”

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. (Ezekiel 9:4, KJV)

Again we have Yahweh placing a “mark” on a person, but this time it is not the Hebrew word אוֹת, but instead the word תָּ (tav, Strong's #8420). This is another Hebrew word that means “mark,” but it is also the 22nd and last “letter” of the Hebrew alphabet, which in Modern Hebrew is written as ת, and as ⴌ in ancient times. Is it possible that the אוֹת (mark) Yahweh placed on Cain is the letter ⴌ?

Genesis 4:26 / Call upon the Name

What does it mean to “call upon the name of YHWH?” The Hebrew word translated as “call” is the verb קרא (Q.R.A), which can mean “to call,” but this same word can also mean “to meet.” Also, the Hebrew word שם (shem) often means “name,” but it can also mean “character.” Therefore, this phrase could also be translated as “meet with the character of YHWH.”

O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people. (KJV, Psalm 105:1)

In this passage, the phrase “call upon his name” is a poetical parallel with “make known his deeds.” When we meet with the “character” of YHWH, we are meeting his “deeds” and by making these deeds know to others, we are literally causing them to “meet the character of YHWH.”

Genesis 5:1 / The Generations of Adam

Adam

We are all familiar with the name “Adam” as found in the book of Genesis, but what does it really mean? Let us begin by looking at its roots. This word/name is a child root derived from the parent root דם (dam) meaning, “blood”. By placing the letter א in front of the parent root, the child root דאם(adam) is formed and is related in meaning to דם (blood).

By examining a few other words derived from the child root דאם we can see a common meaning in them all. The Hebrew word אדמה (adamah) is the feminine form of דאם meaning “ground” (see Genesis 2:7). The word/name אדום (Edom) means “red”. Each of these words have the common meaning of “red”. Dam is the “red” blood, adamah is the “red” ground, edom is the color “red” and adam is the “red” man. There is one other connection between “adam” and “adamah” as seen in Genesis 2:7 which states that “the adam” was formed out of the “adamah”.

In the ancient Hebrew world, a person’s name was not simply an identifier but descriptive of one’s character. As Adam was formed out of the ground, his name identifies his origins.

Seth

Seth is the third son of Adam. This name is pronounced “sheyt” and is a root word meaning “to set something in place”. Adam’s family was continued through his son Seth as Abel (hevel) was killed and Cain (qayin) expelled from the family. This idea of “continuing” is often expressed as “established” in English translations and concepts but is understood and “setting something in place” in Hebrew thought. If I establish a business, I am setting in place. But, there is another possibility to the meaning of the name Sheyt (Seth). The more literal meaning of the word “sheyt” is “buttocks”, the place where you sit. This possess an interesting question. Did Adam name this portion of the body after his son or did he name his son after this body part? Could this be a clue into the personality of Seth? This was meant

more as fun than actual literalness but I am always reminded of what one Rabbi once said, "If you are studying the Bible and not laughing, you are doing something wrong". In my studies with friends we often get some real good laughs and I believe this help in Biblical learning as it helps you to remember things as well as enjoy it.

Enosh

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."

Cainan

The name Cainan in Hebrew is קינן (*qeynan*, Strong's #7018). This is not the same name Canaan, the son of Hham, which is כנען (*kena'an*, Strong's #3667). The name Qeynan comes from the verbal root קנן (*qanan*, Strong's #7077), literally meaning "to make a nest" This verbal root is derived from the parent root קן (*qeyn*, Strong's #7064) meaning a "nest."

Mahalaleel

In Hebrew, this name is written as מהללאל (*ma-ha-la-lei-eyl*, Strong's #4111) and is a combination of two words, מהלל and אל. The root of מהלל is הלל (*ha-lal*, Strong's #1984) and means "to shine." This can be the shining of a light such as from a flame or the moon, but figuratively the shining of a person's character such as his fame or pride. From this root comes the word מהלל (*ma-ha-lal*, Strong's #4110) meaning "shining" or "one who shines."

The second word is אל (*eyl*, Strong's #410), which literally means "mighty one," but is often transliterated as "El." The meaning of the name מהללאל can be "The shining of El or "The shining one of El."

Jared

The Hebrew name ירד (*yered*, Strong's #3382), Latinized as Jared, comes from the verbal root ירד (*Y-R-D*, Strong's #3381) meaning "to go down." The name ירד (*yered*) means "descent," a going down

Enoch

And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: (KJV, Genesis 5:18)

The name חנוך (*hhanokh*, Strong's #2585) means "dedicated" and is derived from the verb root חנך (*Hh.N.Kh*, Strong's #2596) meaning "to dedicate."

Genesis chapter five is the only place in the Tenach (Old Testament) where Enoch is mentioned. However, the New Testament mentions him three times (Luke 3:37, Hebrews 11:5 and Jude 1:14). In Jude we read;

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, (KJV, Jude 1:14)

This prophecy of Enoch is not found in the Tenach, but is found in "The Book of Enoch," a work that had been lost long ago, but only recently discovered in the 17th century.

Methuselah

This name is pronounced "meh-tu-sheh-lahh" (the "hh" is pronounced hard like the "ch" in the name "Bach") in Hebrew. This name is a combination of two words - metu and shelahh. Strong's dictionary states that this name means "man of the dart". According to Strong, the root for "metu" is the word "mat" (#4962) which means "man" and the word "shelach" (#7973) means a weapon or missile (hence the translation of dart).

But, there is another possible meaning for this name. The word "metu" may be derived from the word "mot" meaning death and the "u" is a suffix that means "their" - "their death". There is no way to know for certain if the final vowel in "metu" was an "o" or an "u" as the vowel pointings that make that distinction are of fairly recent origin. If it was originally an "o" then the suffix would change to "his" - "his death".

The word shelach (missile or weapon) is the noun form of the verb shalach meaning "to send" (a missile or weapon that is sent). Shelach has the more literal meaning of "to send something".

We know have the possible meaning of "their death sends" or "his death sends". Sounds like an incomplete sentence doesn't it? Well, it is interesting to note that the year Methuselah died, something very big was sent - the flood. Methuselah's name may be a prophecy that on the day of his death "his death will send" the flood.

Lamech

This is one of the names in the Bible that is very difficult to translate as the root of this word, למך, is not used anywhere in the Biblical text and therefore the meaning of this root/word/name is impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy. One possible interpretation is that this name is the verb מוך (mok, Strong's #4134) meaning "low" and prefixed by the letter ל meaning "to" – "to be low." Other suggested meanings for this root/word/name are powerful, robust and priest.

Noah

The name Noah (pronounced Noach where the "ch" is pronounced hard as in the name Bach) comes from the verbal form of the word "nuach" meaning "rest" as we see in Genesis 5:28.

"This one (Noach) will bring us rest (nuach) from our work and from the toil of our hands, from the ground which YHWH had cursed."

What is the type of rest that Noah will bring? Often our English words lack the true meaning of Hebrew words (actually they always do). Sometimes they are completely opposite. Our English understanding of rest is not the same as the ancient Hebrews.

A related word Nuchah can help shed some light on the meaning of nuach. Nachah is usually translated as "guide" or "lead" (again the English does not fully convey the Hebrew essence of nachah) as in the following verses.

Exodus 13:21 "YHWH went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead (nachah) them on the way."

Exodus 32:34 "Now go, lead (nachah) the people (Israel) to the place I spoke of". God will lead (nachah) them to the land of promise which is a place of rest (nuach).

Since nachah is etymologically related to nuach and noach, it is related in meaning also. Nachah has the broader meaning of "to lead to a rest" as we see in God's promise that he would lead Israel into the land.

The role which Noah played prior to the flood was as a leader, one who will guide others to a rest, a rest from the toils and troubles of the days prior to the flood.

Shem

We are not given much history of Shem or what type of person he was but his name does provide us with a clue. Unlike our names, a Hebrew's name was a word with meaning. This meaning was a reflection of the person himself and his character. The Hebrew word "shem" is most often translated as "name" and the name of Shem in English is Name.

The word shem means much more than just a name. A related word in Hebrew is the word "neshemah" meaning "breath". In the Hebrew mind the breath is much more than the exchange of air in the lungs but was the seat of one's character. The word "shem" is also used in the manner as seen in the passage below where the word "fame" is the Hebrew "shem".

For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the nations round about. (1 Kings 4:31 RSV)

This is similar to our desire to "have a good name". This has nothing to do the actual name but the character of the one with the name.

As Shem's name means character we can conclude that he was a man of character and this is what we see in the one story about him. Shem and his brother Japheth (yaphet) go backwards into the tent of his father with a robe to cover the nakedness of his father after it had been exposed by Ham. It should also

be noted that "the uncovered nakedness of the father" is not the nakedness of the father but is an idiom for sexual relations with the mother as mentioned in Leviticus 18:8.

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

It had always bothered me that Ham was the one who uncovered the nakedness of his father, but it was his son Canaan that was cursed for it. That is until I discovered that Canaan was the product of the union between Ham and his mother. This demonstrates how a simple reading of the text does not always reveal what the text is actually stating.

Genesis 6:5 / Heart

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. Below is a sampling of verses from the King James Version that include the word "heart."

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.

Exodus 7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

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

Proverbs 2:2 So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom, And apply thy heart to understanding;

Psalms 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea, thy law is within my heart.

Psalms 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, also from the King James Version.

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.")

Exodus 9:21 And he that regarded not the word of Jehovah left his servants and his cattle in the field.

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.

Job 36:5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: He is mighty in strength of understanding.

Psalms 83:5 For they have consulted together with one consent; Against thee do they make a covenant:

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.

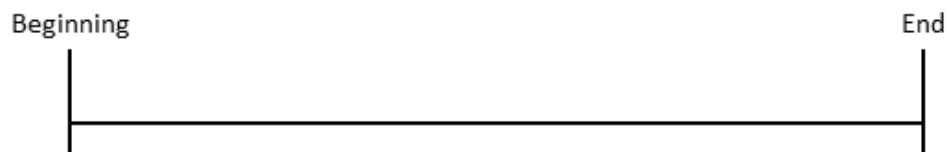
Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?

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 another study, I discovered that emotion, which we consider to be the heart, is actually the kidneys to the Hebrews.

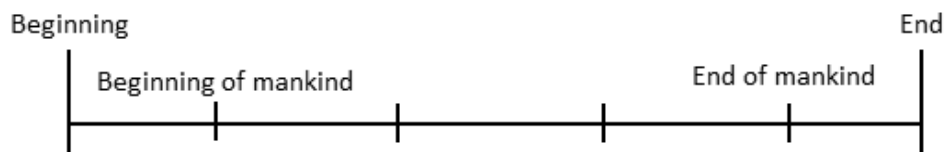
I should point out that this is not an isolated case by any means, in fact, I have seen this same scenario played out time after time with many different words and in all translations. Anyone desiring to do a serious word study can never rely on an English translation alone, at a minimum a concordance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

Genesis 6:7 / Circular Time

The modern western mind views time as linear with a beginning and end. Whether you ascribe to the theory of evolution, creation or another theory to the origin of all things, the timeline for planet earth is the same, a beginning and an end. The creationist views this span of time in the thousands of years, with the beginning being the creation of all things by the hand of God and its end being the destruction of all things also by the hand of God. The evolutionist views this span in the billions of years, with the beginning being the creation of all things through a cataclysmic event called the Big Bang and its future destruction through another cataclysmic event.



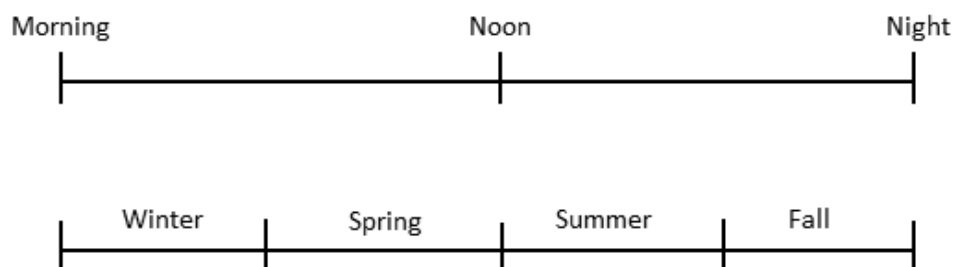
Within this timeline both creationists and evolutionists see the introduction and eventual destruction of mankind. The creationist sees a matter of days between the beginning and the introduction of man and days between the destruction of man and the end. The evolutionist sees billions of years between the beginning and the introduction of man and an unknown period of time between the destruction of man and the end.



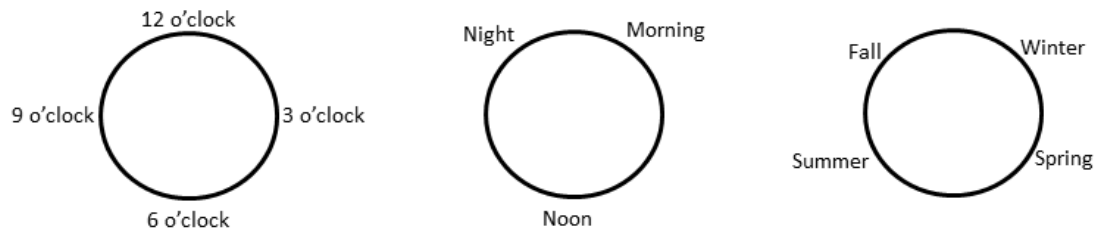
The span of time between the introduction and destruction of mankind includes the advancement of man through the various ages. Again, the creationist and evolutionist ascribe different lengths of time between each segment, but agree on the degree of advancement.



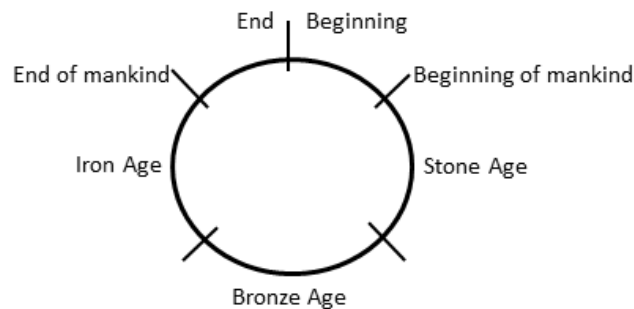
Time spans of days and years can also be represented on a similar timeline with a beginning and end.



Time is not linear it is circular. A clock is not a timeline but a circle for the simple reason that time does not begin or stop, it continues without beginning or end. In the same fashion days and years are also circular.



If the timeline above for the span of the earth and man is bent back onto itself we create a circle of time. With a circular view of time our perspective on the beginning and end of the earth and man change. No longer is the beginning the beginning and the end the end, but a continual cycle of beginnings and endings. While this view of time is contrary to our western way of thinking, it is consistent with other views from other cultures. The ancient Hebrews of the Bible and the people of the orient have always understood time, the past, present and future, as circular.



How many of these cycles, or eras, have existed in the earth and man's past? In the Biblical text there are actually five cycles.

1. Genesis 1:1-2 suggests that something existed prior to Genesis 1:1.
2. The creation of Genesis 1:3 to the fall of man in Genesis
3. From the expulsion of man from the Garden of Eden, to Genesis 6 and the Flood.
4. Genesis 10 with Noah and proceeding to beyond the modern time.
5. The "New Heavens and New Earth" as prophesied by the prophets.

In each of these cycles we see a common theme. The creation or restructuring of the earth, the advent of man who populates and advances on the earth, the eventual downfall of man through his evil inclination and the destruction of the earth.

Beyond these five we can speculate on previous eras of man based on physical, textual and geological evidence. Physical evidence of man's achievements have, on a limited basis, been preserved in the archeological record. Textual evidence, which has been handed down from generation to generation, has been preserved through oral and written accounts of man's history. Geological evidence is

preserved within the earth providing us with catastrophic events that have restructured the earth on numerous occasions.

Genesis 6:9 / Generation

The Hebrew word דור (dor) is used 167 times in the Hebrew Bible and is usually translated as "generation". While this Hebrew word and the English word "generation" are similar in meaning, it is important to understand the differences in order to have a clearer picture of the authors understanding of the word, which may impact how the passage is understood.

A generation is time from one birth to the birth of the next generation. The word דור also has this meaning, there are differences between the Hebrew and English words. In our Greco-Roman culture we see time as a line with a beginning and an end, while the Eastern mind sees time as a continuous circle. While we may see a generation as a time line with a beginning and an end, the Hebrews saw a generation as one circle with the next generation as a continuation of the circle. There is no beginning and no end.

The word דור is a child root derived from the parent root דר, also meaning generation. In the ancient pictographic script this word is written as דור. The ד is a picture of a tent door and has the meaning of an "in and out" or "back and forth" movement. The ר is the head of a man, meaning man. When combined these mean "the movement of man", a generation is the movement through the circle of one man while the next generation is the movement of man through the following circle.

In the ancient Hebrew mind the circle is a symbol for "order", which coincidentally includes the parent root דר or DR. There are three Hebrew roots that have the meaning of order. Within each of these is the DR parent root meaning "order" or "circle".

Seder

The word סדר (seder) is found in Job 10:22 "A land of darkness is like a darkness of death and without order, and the light is like darkness". This imagery is reminiscent of Genesis 1 where the heavens and the earth were in total darkness, a state of chaos. The creative power of God then "ordered" (through words as in an order and in action through the arranging of the creation) the world into a state of "order".

Derived from this root is סדרה (sederah). The word sederah means a "row", an ordered arrangement of something such as the boards of a fence. Again we see this work in the creation narrative where all of the plants, animals, water, sky, sun, moon, etc. are placed in their proper arrangement.

There are a couple of common modern Hebrew words that are derived from the root סדר. The first is the Passover "Seder". The meal served on Passover is called a "seder", literally meaning an "ordered arrangement". The entire Passover meal is like a symphony of many parts making one harmonious

sound. The second is the "sidur". This word is often translated as "prayer book" but is literally an "ordered arrangement" of prayers.

Eder

Another Hebrew word derived from the DR parent root is the root עדר (eder).

"And as for all the hills which used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of briers and thorns; but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where sheep tread" (Isaiah 7:25)

In this passage the "to be hoed" is the Hebrew verb עדר meaning to "hoe", "rake" or "dig. The concept behind this word is the cultivating of a field, the removal of the weeds so that a crop can grow. This action is seen as bringing the field into order. The noun מעדר (m'ader) is formed by placing the letter מ in front of the root. Generally, a noun that is created by adding the letter מ to the root has the meaning of something that does the action of that root). In this case it means "what hoes, rakes or digs" and can be any implement used in hoeing, raking or digging.

Removing what is unnecessary brings about order. In the case of a field it is the removal of the briers and thorns. In the case of a battle it is the removal of fear which is seen in I Chronicles 12:33.

Of Zebulun, such as were able to go out in the host, that could set the battle in array, with all manner of instruments of war, fifty thousand, and that could order the battle array, and were not of double heart.

In this passage the word עדר is translated as "order the battle array". The phrase "not of double heart" is a translation of the Hebrew phrase that literally translates as "with no heart and heart." If a person enters a battle with one heart concentrating on the battle and another heart concentrating on his life and home, he would not be able to totally focus on the battle, he has a double heart. A person with a single heart is able to remove all thoughts that could hinder him from the coming battle.

This concept of removing what is unnecessary in order to bring about order can also be seen in the Flood account. The world was full of sin and in order to bring about order again, the flood came to "weed out" the bad and begin again with a new crop, Noah and his family.

Genesis 6:15 / Function

Hebrew thought is more concerned with function whereas our Greco-Roman thought is more concerned with appearance.

How would you describe a wooden pencil? You would probably describe it as "long and yellow with a pointed end." Notice that we like to use adjectives to describe objects. However, in Hebrew thought,

verbs are used much more commonly, and a pencil would be described as something you write with, a description of its function rather than its appearance.

When we read the Biblical text we are constantly creating a mental image of what the text is describing. However, the original author is not describing an image of appearance—but an image of function.

And this is how you are to make it, the length of the vessel is three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. (RSV, Genesis 6:15)

Is this description telling us what the ark looked like? Not at all; it is describing the function by telling us this ark is very large and capable of transporting a very large load of animals.

Genesis 6:18 / Covenant

While the Hebrew word ברית (*beriyt*) means “covenant,” the roots of the word and its cultural background are helpful in understanding its fuller meaning. This word comes from the root ברה (*barah*) meaning “to select the choicest meat.” This meaning is also found in other nouns derived from this root. The word ברות (*berut*) means “meat” and ברי (*beriy*) means “fat” in the sense of choicest.

The word ברית (*beriyt*) is literally the choicest, fattest, animal that is slaughtered for the covenant ceremony.

Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. Genesis 31:44 (KJV)

The phrase “make a covenant” is found thirteen times in the Hebrew Bible where the word “make” is the Hebrew word כרת (*karat*) meaning “to cut.” Literally, the phrase “make a covenant” means, “cut the choice pieces of meat.” When a covenant is made, the fattened animal is cut into two pieces and laid out on the ground; each party of the covenant then passes through the pieces. This symbolic act signifies to both parties that if one of the parties fails to meet the agreement, then the other has the right to do to the other what they did to the animal.

And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof, The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. Jeremiah 34:18-20 (KJV)

While the nation of Israel was encamped at Mount Sinai, God entered a covenant with them wherein Israel promised to obey the commands of God and God promised to protect and watch over Israel. Countless times over the years following the institution of this covenant, Israel failed to abide by the

covenantal agreement. Just as the animal of the sacrifice was cut in two pieces, Israel was also cut in two because of their unfaithfulness to the covenant by being cut into two nations—Israel and Judah.

Genesis 7:1 / Righteous and Wicked

The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry. (Psalm 34:15 RSV, verse 16 in the Hebrew Bible)

Who are the righteous and what is righteousness? As our verse above indicates, God sees and listens to the righteous, so it would be in our best interest to know for sure what righteousness is. Every Hebrew word in the mind of the Ancient Hebrews paints a picture of action. By doing a little investigation this picture can be found.

The first step in finding a more concrete meaning to a word is to find it used in a concrete context. For example, the word *barak* is almost always translated as "bless," but being an abstract word, we need to find it being used in a more concrete manner, which we do in Genesis 24:11 where it means "to kneel". This gives us a more concrete picture of the word. The problem with the word *tsadiq*, the word that is often translated as righteous, is that it is never used in a concrete manner.

The next method is to compare its use in Hebrew poetry where words are commonly paralleled with similar meaning words. A common form of Hebrew poetry is the expression of one idea in two different ways as we can see in the passage below where the word righteous is paralleled with the word upright.

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! (Psalm 32:11 RSV)

The Hebrew words *tsadiq* (righteous) and *yashar* (upright) are paralleled many times in the Bible, indicating that in the Hebrew mind these two words were similar in meaning. While the word "upright" can be understood as a concrete word meaning "straight up," but the Hebrew word more literally means "straight," as in a straight path, as can be seen in the following passage.

I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble (KJV Jeremiah 31:9)

Another common form of Hebrew poetry is to use opposites in parallel, such as in the following verse.

For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; but the LORD upholds the righteous. (Psalm 37:17 RSV)

Here we find the word *rasha* (wicked) being used as an antonym (opposite in meaning) to the word *tsadiq* (righteous). These two words are also commonly used together in the Bible, indicating the

Hebrews saw these two words as opposites. While the word “wicked” is an abstract, we can find its concrete meaning in the verb form, which is found in the following passage.

*For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.
(KJV Psalm 18:21)*

The verb form means to “depart” and the noun form means “one who has departed.”

We now have a few clues into the meaning of a *tsadiyq*. He is one who is straight and does not depart from the way of God. The next step is to understand these concepts from the Ancient Hebraic culture, lifestyle and thought.

The Ancient Hebrews were a nomadic people who often traveled the same paths to pastures and campsites. Anyone leaving these straight paths can become lost and wander in the wilderness. A wicked person is seen as one lost on a crooked path while a righteous person is one who remains on the straight path.

The next question is how do we know what the path is in our lives as we attempt to remain on God's path?

And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law (Torah, meaning teachings) which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:8 RSV)

The teachings of God is the path. When we remember to show love, honor and respect to others and their property we are on the path of righteousness, but when we forget the ways of God we are leaving the path and if we do not get back onto that path we are in danger of becoming lost.

*For Yhwh knows the path of the ones who follow the path (*tsadiyq*), but the path of the ones who depart from the path (*rasha*) will perish. (Psalm 1:6)*

Genesis 9:21 / Tent

The Hebrew word for a tent is אהל (*ohel*) and is derived from the parent root הל (*hal*) meaning a distant shining light or a star used to navigate by. After a hike through the woods where I lived I made it back to my car, which was parked high over a large valley. Down in that valley, I could see a campfire about five miles away. It really amazed me how that small light could be so visible at such a distance. A nomad that has been out with his flock all day could use the campfire near the family tent as his guide for returning home.

Genesis 9:22 / Nakedness of the Father

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. (KJV, Genesis 9:22-25)

There have always been two problems I had with this passage. First, why is it wrong for a son to see his father naked? Secondly, why was Canaan, the son of Ham cursed for this act? It was not until I stumbled across the following passage that everything made sense.

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. (RSV, Leviticus 18:7)

Uncovering the nakedness of your father is a Hebrew idiom meaning to have a sexual union with your mother. Ham did not see his father's nakedness, instead he had a sexual union with his mother and evidently, the product of that union was his son Canaan.

Genesis 10:2 / Languages

Genesis 10 is the genealogy of No'ah's sons and says that they were divided into their perspective lands and tongues. However, Genesis 11:1 says that the whole earth was with one language and speech. How can they be speaking different languages in chapter 11 before the incident of the Tower of Babel in chapter 11?

One of the problems we encounter when we read the Bible is that we are not aware that the Ancient Hebrews wrote differently than we do. When we write an accounting of events, we always write the events in the order they occurred. However, the Ancient Hebrews did not. They were not as concerned about keeping events in chronological order, but instead they used what is called "block logic," which means that events can be listed in order of significance or relationship rather than by chronology. While the account of the genealogies of No'ah are found "before" the events at Babel, they occurred both before "and after" the events at Babel. As an example, Genesis 10:2 lists the sons of Japheth which were born prior to the events at Babel. But in verse 3 we have the sons of Gomer (the son of Japheth) which were most likely born after the events of Babel.

We know that Noah's sons were born prior to Babel because all of their names are of Semitic (Hebrew) origin, but some of Noah's grandchildren have names that are non-Semitic showing, a change in the languages.

Genesis 10:9 / Nimrod

The name nimrod is not Hebrew but it is a Semitic name and is therefore closely related to Hebrew. The name comes from the Semitic root מרד (MRD) meaning "to rebel". In the Ancient Hebrew/Semitic cultures a person's name was closely related to their character and therefore Nimrod's name fits well with his personality.

Nimrod is only mentioned in Genesis 10:8 & 9 but these two passages speak volumes about the character of Nimrod. The standard translation for verse 9 is something like *"He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD'".* It would appear that there is nothing out of the ordinary about Nimrod. So, why is he so often seen as such an evil person?

Only two persons in the Bible are identified as "hunters", Nimrod and Esav, the twin brother of Ya'acov. From the story of Esav and Ya'acov we know that Esav was not the most respectful person. Not only did he despise his birthright but to spite his parents married foreign women. From this we can conclude that from an Hebraic perspective hunters are seen in a negative light. In verse 8 it states *"he was the first on earth to be a mighty man"*. The Hebrew phrase may also be translated as "He made a profaning by being a mighty one in the land". To add to this verse 9 states that he was a "mighty hunter 'before' Yahweh". The word for "before" in Hebrew is "liph'ney" and literally means "to the face of" and in this case "to the face of Yahweh" and can mean that he was a mighty hunter in place of Yahweh implying that he, rather than Yahweh is the provider of the people.

One final clue into the character into the personality of Nimrod is how the Semitic root MRD has been used even into our own time. The Ancient Semitic root MRD (marad) is the origin of our words MaRauDer and MuRDer.

Genesis 10:10 / Shinar

"And they set out from the east and they found a valley in the land of Shinar and they settled there." (Genesis 11:2).

When the names of places are transferred from one language to another it is common for the sounds of the name to be mixed up a bit. We see this in names like the Hebrew name Yerushalem, which becomes Jerusalem in English, and the Hebrew name *Amorah*, which becomes Gomorrah in English.

Sounds formed in the same region of the mouth are sometimes exchanged one for another. Some common examples are a "b" and "p", "r" and "l", "m" and "n" and "s" and "sh". When the "sh" in Shinar is changed to a "s" and the "n" is changed to a "m" you have Samar which is "Samaria" another common name for Mesopotamia (Greek meaning "between the rivers").

Genesis 10:21 / Eber

Abraham is the first person called a Hebrew (Genesis 14:13) in the Biblical text. What does the name Hebrew mean and where does it come from? Abraham's G,G,G,G,G Grandfather was Ever (or Eber).

And Arpachshad bore Shalach who bore Ever (Genesis 10:24).

The Hebrew spelling of the word Hebrew is עברי (eevriy) and the Hebrew spelling of Ever is עבר. When the letter ' (y) is placed after a name it means "one belonging to the family of ..." and in this case a Hebrew is one who belongs to the family of Ever. By definition, a Hebrew is one who is descended from Ever and this would include Abraham as well as his brothers Nahor and Haran. While the lineage's of Nahor and Haran seem to disappear, probably being absorbed into other cultural groups, only Abraham and his descendents remain Hebrews to this day.

The root עבר means to "cross over" or "pass through". As names play a very significant role of the ancient peoples of the Near East, this name and its meaning is indicative of Abraham and his descendents. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were nomads who by definition are ones who travel or pass through many lands on their nomadic journey.

*"And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh.
And the Canaanite was then in the land." Genesis 12:6 (KJV)*

The phrase "passed through" is the Hebrew verb עבר (the same word as the noun/name Ever).

Genesis 11:1 / One Language

Why are the plural words דברים אחדים (devarim ehhadim) in Genesis 11:1 translated as a singular "one speech?" The first thing that we have to recognize is the types of words in this phrase. The word דברים (devariym) is the plural form of דבר (davar) meaning a "word," the plural form, דברים, therefore means "words." The second word is אחדים (ehhadiym), the plural form of אחד (ehhad), which is frequently translated as "one." But what we must also recognize is that אחדים is an adjective, a word that modifies the word before it - דברים. In Hebrew, every adjective must match the number (singular or plural) of the noun it is modifying. So grammatically, if דברים is plural, the word אחד must also be plural - אחדים. The word אחד does not always mean "one" but also "unified." So now we can translate דברים אחדים as "unified words," which is a way of describing "a common language" or speech. Therefore, "one speech" is a fair translation of this Hebrew phrase.

Genesis 11:9 / Babel

To most people the name Babel (or Babel) is only known to us as the name of the city where God confounded the languages.

Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:9)

Whenever a Hebrew name is given in the text and followed by the word "because", the text is providing the connection between the name and the reason for the name. In this case the word "confused" is the Hebrew word בלל (balal) meaning to be mixed up and it was here that God "mixed up" the languages. Interestingly the name בבל (babel) is a mixing up of the letters from the word בלל (balal).

While we may only be familiar with this place name as Babel as found in Genesis, this name is used 262 times throughout the Biblical text. But, instead of translating this name the same way all the time, the translators have chosen to translate it as "Babylon" in all its other occurrences. Yes, Babel and Babylon are one and the same place; Babylon is the place of confusion.

In our English language we also have the word babble meaning "To utter a meaningless confusion of words or sounds", a clear connection between Hebrew and English.

Genesis 12:2 / Kneeling

Each Hebrew verb may be written in specific ways to express varying nuances of a verb. These different verb "forms" are always related to the meaning of the original verb. Below are a few examples to demonstrate this.

Simple	Passive	Causative	Intensive
Take	Be taken	Cause to take	Steal
Hear	Be heard	Cause to hear	Summon
Speak	Talk	Command	Promise
Know	Be known	Make known	Understand
Turn	Be turned	Make turn	Turn away
Cut	Be cut	Cause to cut	Hack
Sit	Be set down	Cause to sit	Set in place
Eat	Be eaten	Cause to eat	Devour
Die	Be dead	Kill	Destroy
Send	Be sent	Send away	Dismiss

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. Genesis 12:2 (KJV)

The word "bless" in the above passage is the intensive form of the verb בָּרַךְ (B.R.K). The simple form of this verb means "kneel down" as can be seen in the following passage.

And he made his camels to kneel down... Genesis 24:11 (KJV)

We can easily recognize that the English words "kneel" and "bless" have no relationship to each other, and therefore "bless" is can not be a valid translation for the Hebrew verb בָּרַךְ (B.R.K). Instead, we need to define the intensive form of the verb בָּרַךְ (B.R.K) as it relates to the idea of "kneeling."

The Passive form of this verb would be to "be knelt down." The Causative form would be to "cause to kneel down." The Intensive form would then have a meaning related to the idea of kneeling down. The intensive form of this verb is always used in the context showing respect to someone else as can be seen in Genesis 12:2 above.

Before we determine the intensive meaning of this verb, let's look at the word "gift." The Hebrew word is the noun בְּרָכָה (*berakah*, Strong's #1293), which is derived from the verb בָּרַךְ (B.R.K). While the KJV often translates this noun as "blessing," the KJV also translates it as "present" as found in the following passage.

And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; 1 Samuel 30:26 (KJV)

A *berakah* is a present or gift. This noun is related to the verb בָּרַךְ (B.R.K), meaning to "kneel," in the sense of presenting a gift to another on bended knee. This is a sign of "respect" and it is this word that I believe the intensive form of בָּרַךְ (B.R.K) means, but with the fuller concrete meaning of "to kneel down before another in respect" (note that this does not have to mean a literal kneeling down as the Hebrew often uses concrete terms in a figurative sense).

And I will make you great nation, and I will respect you and I will make your name great and it will be a gift. (Genesis 12:2)

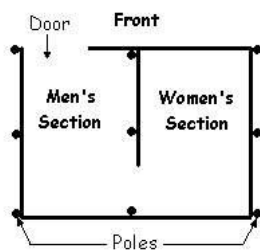
Many people will say, "YHWH will never bow before a man, literally or figuratively." If we think of YHWH as a Supreme Ruler sitting high upon a throne, then I would agree, YHWH could never kneel before another. However, this is not the YHWH I read about in the Bible. The YHWH that I read about walks among his people like a father does with his children, and when a child looks up at his father with a question or comment, wouldn't father kneel down before his child and get eye to eye with him and talk with him? This is a father that shows respect to his children. Kneeling before another is not a sign of submission, but instead a sign of respect, which we could say is a blessing to his children.

Genesis 12:7 / Verb Forms

Hebrew verbs have seven different forms - qal (simple active), niphal (simple passive), hiphil (causative active), hophal (causative passive), hitpa'el (simple reflexive), piel (intensive active) and pual (intensive passive). Each form slightly changes the application of the verb as will be demonstrated with the verb "to cut." The qal form is simply "cut". The niphal form would be "was cut". The hiphil form would be "made cut". The hophal is "was made cut". The piel is "slashed". The pual is "was slashed".

The Hebrew verb ראה (ra'ah) is identified in Strong's dictionary as number 7200 and states that this word can mean "see" or "appear," but this is a little misleading and is one of the weaknesses of Strong's dictionary as it does not differentiate between the different forms of the verbs. The word ראה (ra'ah) means "to see" but when used in the niphal form it would be "was seen" which we can translate as "appear".

Genesis 12:8 / Tents



The tent was divided into two parts. The main section, behind the tent door, is the men's section. The other section is the women's section, with a wall dividing the two parts. The only person allowed into the women's section, is the father of the tent and children. Notice the similarity to the pictographic Hebrew letter "beyt" - ב. The word "beyt" is not only the name of a letter, but is also a common Hebrew word meaning, "home". This letter is a representation of the floorplan of the tent, the "home" of the nomadic

Hebrews.

The entrance to the tent is covered by a curtain which hung down from the top of the entrance. The Hebrew word "dal" means "hang down" and is the root for the word "dalet" meaning "door". This word is also the name of another Hebrew letter - ד, a representation of the tent door. The door of the tent is the most important part of the tent, not because of its appearance, but its function as the entrance into the tent.

He [Abraham] was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot (Genesis 18:1)

The door of the tent can be equated with the throne of a king. In the Hebrew culture, the father of the family is the "king", the one who holds full authority over the family. The father will often sit at his door much like a king will sit on a throne. All family legal matters were performed at the tent. Here he will watch over his household as well as watch for passing travelers. The nomadic rules of hospitality are very strict and complex.

Tents are constructed of black goat hair.

Dark am I....dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. (Song of Solomon 1:5)

The hair is spun into strands which are then woven together forming panels approximately 2 feet wide and the length of the tent. Over time, the panels begin to bleach from exposure to the sun and are periodically replaced. Very little is discarded as much work is invested in their materials including the tent. The pieces of the tent which are removed are recycled into walls or mats.

Another Hebrew letter derived from the tent itself is the letter "hhet", a word meaning "wall". This letter in the ancient pictographic script is א, a picture of a wall as can be seen in the above picture.

The size of the tent will depend on the size and wealth of the family. As the family grows, additional panels are added to increase the size of the tent.

Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. (Isaiah 54:2)

The goat hair tent is unique in that it is perfectly suited for the desert regions of the Near East. A tent provided shade from the sun. During the strong heat of the day, the father would often sit at his door watching his family, livestock and the road for travelers (Genesis 18.1,2) The walls of the tent could be lifted to allow the breeze to pass through the tent. The black tent absorbs heat keeping the tent warm. A fire is also built just inside the door for warmth.

Like any other cloth, there is space between the hair fabric. Light coming through the black roof appear as stars in the night sky.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. (Isaiah 40.2)

When the hair fibers get wet from the rains, the fibers expand, forming a watertight roof.

Strong ropes, secured by pegs driven into the ground, supported the poles which held up the tent.

I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will be a seat of honor for the house of his father. (Isaiah 22.23)

The word "firm" in the previous passage is the Hebrew word "aman" and is often translated as "believe". The walls of the tent are laid on the top of the ropes allowing the wind to pass over the tent. The Hebrew letter "vav" (or waw) - ו, is a representation of the pegs used to secure the tent. The word "vav" is also a word in the Hebrew language meaning "peg".

The Nomadic family consisted of the beyt (house, family), mishpechah (clan) and matteh (tribe). The family, children, parents and grandparents, all resided in one tent. The clan consisted of the extended family, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc, all residing in one camp and may contain as many as 50 to 100 tents laid out in a circular pattern. When the clan becomes too large for one area to support, the

tribe splits into two clans (see Genesis 13). All the clans (all being descended from one ancestor) may cover hundreds of square miles making up the tribe. As an example, the house of Moses, of the clan of Levi, of the tribe of Israel.

Chanan is a Hebrew word often translated as "grace" but is Hebraicly understood as a "camp". The camp is a place of beauty, love, warmth and comfort.

Genesis 12:9 / Nomads

Many Biblical characters, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David and others, lived a nomadic lifestyle. A nomad lived in tents and traveled from location to location in search of water and pastures for their livestock.

The Wilderness

The home of the nomad was the wilderness often dry and arid but with an occasional oasis, river, water basin and pastures. The nomad was at much home in the wilderness as we are in our own environment. He also knew the area which he traveled in very well. He knew where all the water sources were, where pastures were located at different times of the year and all the landmarks which directed him on his travels.

Rain is the most important element to the nomad as without it, he, his family, his flocks and herds cannot survive. Each area received rain at different times of the year and in different locations. It was the chief's responsibility to ensure that they were at the right places at the right times. The rains may be locale providing water and pasture but may also be very distant. These distant rains would flood the rivers causing them to overflow and watering the grounds near the rivers within their area of travels.

Possessions

The nomad lived a very simple life and because of their constant travels they could not carry a great amount of supplies and equipment. His major possession is the tent made of goat hair, the poles, stakes and ropes for supporting the tent, a curtain to divide the tent into two parts (male and female sides) and a carpet for the floor. The nomad's wealth was measured by the size of his flocks and herds which supplied him with most of his needs including milk, meat, skin, hair for tents, horns for trumpets and liquid containers and many other odds and ends.

His cooking supplies and equipment consisted of bags made of skins for carrying food reserves such as grains and dried fruits, a few utensils such as spoons, knives and bowls and a grinding mill for making flour out of grains. He also carried some harvesting supplies such as sickles and mattocks to gather crops when available. For defense he also carried weapons such as the bow and arrow, spears and knives. Many of his weapons were used for other purposes such as butchering knives, mattocks and the tent poles which were sharp at one end for spears.

Family

A nomadic camp consisted of about 25 to 50 members. Any less and it would be difficult to protect the family and any more would be difficult to feed. Usually the oldest member of the family was the head, or chief, of the clan. The remainder of the clan would consist of his brothers, sons, nephews and grandsons as well as their wives. Each clan was an independent entity with the chief as judge and ruler. He had the ultimate authority in all matters including where they go, discipline, management of the flocks and herds and the daily tasks of the camp.

When a clan became too large to support it was divided and separated with all of the clans belonging to one tribe. The name of the tribe was generally that of the original family patriarch and each clan carried the name of its original patriarch.

Foods and Medicines

The nomad's diet consisted of breads, fruits (when available), milk and cheese and meat. Grains, such as barley and wheat, were gathered and ground into flour and mixed with water and placed on hot rocks to make bread. Some of the fruits available were grapes, pomegranates, olives and dates. These were often dried for later use and sometimes mixed with flour for cake type bread. Milk was taken from the sheep and goats and also used to make cheese. Animals from the flock were occasionally butchered especially for special events such as when guests arrive but, not on a regular basis.

Olives were not only used as a food source but for medicinal purposes as well. It was drunk for stomach and intestinal problems and applied to wounds as an antiseptic. The fat of animals was made into soap for washing.

Social Activities

The men would often gather together, usually at meal times, to discuss past events, needs, locations and other details of operating the camp. The women gathered together to prepare foods, make clothing and make tent repairs. Storytelling was probably one of the most important forms of entertainment. The older members of the clan would tell the stories of their history to the children in order to pass on the experiences of the tribe and clans to the next generation.

One of the major responsibilities of the clan is to provide hospitality to anyone who comes to them. This may be a member of a related clan or even an enemy of another tribe. In both cases it was the responsibility of the clan to provide food, shelter and protection as long as they were within their camp.

Religion

The religion of the nomads is very different from our understanding of religion. The whole of the nomad's life was his religion. As his very existence was dependent upon rain he understood that his life was in God's hands at all times. The nomad saw the power, justice, love and mercy of God in all things and coversly all of his activities, from eating to making shelter, were seen as a service to God. The nomad lived in harmony with his surroundings and understood as being one with God who created all things. In short, his life was one long prayer to God.

Genesis 12:10 / Egypt

In almost every case, a name in the Bible is a transliteration of the Hebrew. For instance the English Jerusalem is from the Hebrew Yerushalem, Israel from Yisrael, and Methuselah from Metushelach. This is not the case with Egypt. The Hebrew word for Egypt is מצרים (mitsrayim / meets-rah-yeem). The first occurrence of this name is in Genesis 10:6.

And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim (mitsrayim), and Phut, and Canaan. (KJV)

Mizraim is the grandson of Noah and evidently settled in the land that came to be known as Mitsrayim to the Hebrews and Egypt to us today.

The root to this name is צר (tsar) meaning "pressed in" and can be translated several different ways; "enemy" as one who presses in; "trouble" as a pressing in; "strait" as a canyon with the walls pressing. A common method of forming nouns is to add the letter "mem" to the front of a root. In this case the "mem" is placed before the root forming the noun מצר (metsar). The prefixed "mem" can be understood as "what is...", hence metsar means "what is pressed in" and is usually translated as trouble or straits. The ים (yim) at the end of the word is the double plural suffix.

The name mitsrayim can be interpreted many different ways; two straits (possibly referring to the two sides of the Nile river), double straits, two enemies, double pressing, or even double trouble. While we cannot determine for certain what this name originally meant, we can see some interesting parallels between Egypt and their relationship with the nation of Israel.

Genesis 12:15 / Praise

To begin this study we need to examine how this word was written in its original pictographic script - ללץ. This word is derived from the parent root לץ by doubling the second letter ל. The letter צ is a picture of a man with his arms raised up looking and pointing at an amazing sight. The letter ל is a shepherd staff that is used to move the flock toward a direction. When combined these two letters mean to "look toward a sight".

This word, written as הל in the modern Hebrew script, is an ancient word meaning "look toward". It is commonly used in Biblical Hebrew, in its shortened form - ה, and is the definite article (the) that is prefixed to a noun. For instance the word הבית (habeyt) means "the house" and would have originally been written as two words - הל בית (hal beyt). By using the prefix ה the author is causing the reader to "look toward" a specific house.

I believe that the original meaning of the word הל is the "North Star". This star is always in the same location in the night sky every night and is used as a guide to the traveler. It is a light that is "looked toward" to find direction.

The verb הלל (halal) means to "shine" as seen in Isaiah 13:10.

And the moon shall not cause its light to shine.

This same word is also translated as "praise" as in Psalm 117:1.

Praise Yahweh, all you nations! Extol him, all you peoples!"

The full meaning of this verse is that all people are to look to God as the light of their journey that will guide and lead them on life's journey. Throughout the Tenach/Old Testament our life is seen as a journey.

and you shall teach them the decrees and the Torahs, and make them know the path in which they must walk and what they must do. (Exodus 18:20)

Just as the North Star is the shining light that guides the traveler, God is the shining light that guides us on our journey.

Genesis 14:5 / Ashterot Qarnayim

The place name *Ashterot Qarnayim* only appears once in the Hebrew Bible, in this verse. The root of Ashterot (ash-te-rot) is Ashter meaning "the young one of the flock." The "ot" is the feminine plural suffix and therefore means "young ones of the flock." Ashterot is the name of the Canaanite goddess mentioned in Judges 2:13 and is Ishtar in the Babylonian mythology and is the origin of the word "Easter".

The root of Qarnayim (qar-nah-yim) is qeren, a noun meaning horn and is the origin of our English word crown. In ancient times a crown was made of "horns" and the pointed tips of the crowns we are familiar with today represent those horns. The yim suffix identifies this noun as a double plural and therefore means "two horns."

When the two words Ashterot Qarnayim are combined we have the meaning "the young ones of the flock of the two horns."

Genesis 14:13 / Tell

There are two common Hebrew verbs that are used to convey the idea that someone is about to speak. These are אמר (A.M.R), usually translated as "say" and דבר (D.B.R), usually translated as "speak." There is one other verb that is used in a similar way, but is not as common a verb as the other two.

And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: (ASV, Genesis 14:13)

The Hebrew verb behind the English “told,” is the verb נגד (*N.G.D*), but this verb does not mean to “tell,” but literally means “to be face to face.”

Hebrew verbs can be written in different forms. The three most common are the qal (simple form), niphil (passive form) and hiphil (causative form). As an example, the qal form of the verb ידע (*Y.D.Ah*) means to “know.” The niphil form is the passive and means to “be known” or to “reveal.” The hiphil is the causative form and means to “cause to be known” or to “declare.” Notice that the meaning of each of these verbs is all related to the idea of “knowing,” but with slight nuances.

The verb נגד (*N.G.D*), is never written in the qal or niphil form, but only in the hiphil form, to “cause to be face to face.” The hiphil form of this verb is always used in the context of “telling,” in the sense of causing another to be face to face in order to “tell” them something.

Genesis 14:19 / Possessor of Heaven and Earth

The phrase קנה שמים וארץ (*qoneh shamayim va'arets*) is usually translated as “possessor (or maker) of heaven and earth.” The Hebrew verb קנה (*qoneh*) comes from the parent root קן (*qeyn*) meaning *nest*. The verb קנה (*qoneh*) literally means “building a nest” and with this understanding placed within the verse, the phrase means “Elohiym” has gathered all the materials together to build a nest, home, for his children, us.

Genesis 15:4 / Gut

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. (KJV, Psalm 40:8)

The word translated “heart” in this verse is not the Hebrew word לב (*lev*), which means “heart,” but מעה (*meyah*), which means “gut” or “abdomen.” When King David wrote ותורתך בתוך מעי (*v'torat'kha betokh mey'ai* / your torah is within my guts) he was expressing a very concrete perception of God’s torah (a Hebrew word meaning “teachings,” not “law”). Have you ever been so excited about something that your guts moved or churned? David was so excited about God’s torah that it caused his guts to move. This is the feeling that Job had when he said “*My guts boiled*” (Job 30:27). Do our guts churn when we hear the teachings of God like David did?

We often use the expression “I had a gut feeling,” which refers to a thought that does not come from the mind, but from deep down in our subconscious, the gut. I am of the opinion that these “gut” feelings are sometimes God speaking to us, but our heart and mind (actually in Hebraic thought the mind is in the heart, not the brain) are our own thoughts that cloud over what God is speaking.

Genesis 15:6 / Believe

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. Genesis 15:6 (KJV)

What does one mean when saying, “I believe in God”? The dictionary defines “believe” as “To accept as true or real.” Does a belief in God simply mean a knowing that God exists? The Hebrew behind this word has absolutely nothing to do with the English definition given above. Instead, it is a very concrete concept that can be experienced through the senses and not the mind.

The Hebrew word behind the translation “believe” is the verb אמן (A.M.N). Just a simple cursory look at the various ways this word has been translated indicates that there is much more to this word than just knowing that something exists. The King James Version uses the following translations for the verb *aman*: believe, assurance, faithful, sure, established, trust, verified, steadfast, continuance, father, bring up, nurse, be nursed, surely, stand fast, and trusty.

The basic meaning behind the Hebrew word *aman* is “to support” as can be seen in the following passages.

And bring your younger brother to me and he will be a support (aman) for your words and you will not die and they did this. Genesis 42:20

And Naomi took the child and placed him in her bosom and she was for him for a supporter (aman - as a nurse). Ruth 4:16

And your house will be supported (aman) forever and your kingdom will be before you for an eternity, your throne will be firm for an eternity. 2 Samuel 7:16

My mercy will guard him forever and my covenant will support (aman) him. Psalm 89:28

And I will thrust him like a tent peg in a place of support (aman)... Isaiah 22:23

This last passage is an excellent illustration of the concrete understanding of this word. Firm ground is chosen as the site for setting up a tent so when the tent pegs are driven into the soil, the firm ground will “support” the tent even in a strong wind. In this same way, Abram “supported God.”

Now, let’s look at Genesis 15:6 in its context.

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed (aman) in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. Genesis 15:5,6 (KJV)

At first glance, and from a Greek perspective, it appears that the word “believe” is referring to Abram’s knowledge that God will follow through with his promise to provide him many descendants, but as we shall see this is not what is meant by Abram’s “belief.”

God’s promise to Abram, that he would have many descendants, was repeated to Abram’s son Isaac.

And I will make your descendants numerous like the stars of heaven and I will give to your seed all these lands and all the nations of the land will be blessed through your seed because Abraham heard (shama) my voice and obeyed my charge and my commands and my decrees and my teachings. Genesis 26:4,5

The verb שמע (shama) means “to hear.” When the Bible speaks of “hearing” the voice of God, it means “pay attention to what is spoken and respond.”

The word *shama* is a synonym of *aman* as can be seen in the following passage.

And Moses answered and he said, "They will not support (aman) me and they will not hear (shama) my voice..." Exodus 4:1

Why did God promise to give Abram many descendants? Because Abram was obedient to the voice of God, as indicated in Genesis 26, and Abram supported God as indicated in Genesis 15.

Will you “support” God through your actions (a Hebraic perspective) or only through your mind (a Greek perspective)?

Genesis 15:13 / 400 Years

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. (KJV)

From the above passage, it is assumed by most that this means that the people of Israel would be in the land of Egypt for four hundred years. However, this creates a problem as according to the Biblical text they were in the land of Egypt for only three generations (Levi - Kohath - Amram - Moses).

Note that the prophecy of Genesis 15:13 does not specifically say that his seed would be in "Egypt" for four hundred years, instead it says that they will be in a land that does not belong to them for four hundred years. Abram and his children would not have a land that belonged to them until they entered the land of Canaan, which became known as the land of Israel. How long did Abram's children live before entering the land of Israel?

If we call the year of Ishma'el's birth "0," as he is Abram's first seed, we can then use various passages to calculate how many years there were from Ishmael's birth until the nation of Israel entered the land of Canaan.

Birth of Isaac: Abraham is 100 (Gen 17:17; 21:5) and Ishmael is 13 the year before Isaac's birth (Gen 17:25)

Birth of Jacob: Isaac is 60 (Gen 25:26)

Birth of Joseph: Jacob is 91 - Jacob was 130 when entering Egypt (Gen 47:9); Joseph was 30 when entering Pharaoh's service (Gen 41:46); 7 years of plenty (Gen 41:53,54) and 2 years of famine when Jacob came to Egypt (Gen 45:6); Joseph was 39 (30+7+2) when Jacob entered Egypt; Jacob was 91 at birth of Joseph (130-39)

Birth of Levi: Jacob is 87 - Jacob is 91 at birth of Joseph who was born in the 14 year of service to Laban (Gen 30:25,26); Jacob is 77 when arrives at Laban's (91-14); Jacob serves 7 years and receives Leah (Gen 29:27) who bears Levi, her third son approximately 3 years after being with Jacob. Jacob is approximately 87 at birth of Levi (77+7+3).

The Children of Israel enter the land of Egypt 17 years before the death of Jacob (Gen 47:28) and when Levi is 87 years old.

Birth of Kohath: Levi is ~35 - Levi was younger than 40 when Kohath was born as Levi was 43 when he went to Egypt with his 3 sons (Gen 46:8,11); if this is correct Kohath would be 8 when entering Egypt.

Birth of Amram: Kohath is ~40 (an average generation)

Birth of Moses: Amram is ~40 (an average generation)

Israel leaves Egypt when Moses is 80 years old.

The children of Israel enter the land of Israel after the 40 years of wandering, which is 400 years after the birth of Ishmael.

Genesis 16:11 / Ishmael

The name Ishmael, written in Hebrew as **יִשְׁמָעֵאל** (yish-ma-el) is composed of three parts - **י** (yi), **שמע** (sh'ma) and **אל** (el). The word **שמע** (sh'ma) is a verb literally meaning to listen but can also mean to obey or more correctly to respond. This word is the title of the "sh'ma," the Jewish affirmation of faith as found in Deuteronomy 6:4 states "sh'ma yisrael YHWH eloheynu YHWH echad" or as it is normally translated "Hear, O, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The use of the word sh'ma in this verse is stating "hear and respond" to Yahweh. When the letter **י** (yi) is prefixed to a verb, it identifies the subject of the verb as the third person, masculine and singular or "he." Therefore, the phrase **יִשְׁמָע** (yishma) would mean "he listens." The final word is **אל** (el) meaning "mighty one," or as it is usually translated "God." In Hebrew sentence structure the noun following the verb is the subject of the verb, or in this case, the "he" of "he listens." When these three components are combined into the sentence **יִשְׁמָעֵאל** (yishma el) the sentence means "God listens."

Genesis 17:1 / El Shaddai

And when Abram was ninety nine years old and the LORD appeared to Abram, and he said to him, I am El Shaddai, walk before me, and be perfect. Genesis 17:1

The Hebrew word אל (el) means “mighty one” as can be seen in the following passage.

I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; (Ezekiel 31:11, KJV)

Most Bible translations translate the word שׁדַּי (Shaddai) as “Almighty.” Many times a translator will not translate a Hebrew word literally because the literal meaning would mean nothing to the Western mind, and in some cases would actually be offensive to the Western reader. Such is the case with the word *Shaddai*. The use of the word “Almighty” by the translator is his attempt at translating the text in a manner that will make sense to the Western reader as well as retain some of the meaning of the original Hebrew word.

The root for this word is שׁד (shad), which in its original pictographic script appeared as שׁד. The שׁ (sh) is a picture of the two front teeth and has the meaning “sharp” or “press” (as from chewing) as well as “two.” The ד (d) is a picture of a tent door meaning to “hang” or “dangle,” as the fabric or skin of the door hangs or dangles down from the top of the tent.

The combined meanings of these two letters would be “two dangles.” The goat was a very common animal within the herds of the Hebrews. It produces milk within the udder and is extracted by the goat kid by squeezing and sucking on the “two” teats “dangling” below the udder. The function of these teats is to provide all the necessary nourishment for the kids, as they would die without it. The Hebrew word *shaddai* also has the meaning of a “teat.” Just as the goat provides nourishment to its kids through the milk, God nourishes his children through his milk and provides all the necessities of life. This imagery can be observed in the following passage.

“And I will come down to snatch him [Israel] from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring him up from that land to a functional and wide land to a land flowing with milk and honey.” Exodus 3:8

The word *shaddai*, meaning teats, is often coupled with the word *el*, meaning mighty one, creating the phrase *el shaddai*, literally meaning the “mighty teat.” Hence we can see the translator's reluctance to literally translate this phrase in this manner and instead using the more “sanitized” God Almighty.

Genesis 17:5 / Abraham

In the ancient world it was custom for the lord to name those who are under him. Such is the case in Daniel chapter one where the chief official of King Nebuchadnezzar (identified as lord in 1:10) changes the names of four Hebrew slaves.

“Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego”. (NIV, Daniel 1:6,7)

Several other times names are changed such as, Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 17:5,15) and Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32:28). The most common reason given for the change in a name is a change in character of the individual, since, as we have seen, one's character is reflected in his name.

In the case of Abraham, this is not true for reasons that I will detail here. Abraham's original name is אַבְרָם (Abram) formed by combining the two words, אב (abh) and רם (ram). God then changed this name to אַבְרָהָם (Abraham), also formed by combining two words, אב (abh) and רַהֵם (raham). The word אב (abh) means “father” and is the first part of both names. The difference between the two names is the second syllable, from רם (ram) to רַהֵם (raham). The word רם (ram) means “high”, “lifted up” or “exalted”. The word רַהֵם (raham) is not found in the Bible except in this name only.

While no one is certain of the meaning of the second part to the name אַבְרָהָם (Abraham), scholars have proposed the meaning of “father of a great multitude” supposedly from combining the two words רב (rabh), meaning “many” or “great”, and הַם (ham), meaning “multitude”. To shorten רב הַם (rabh ham) into the word רַהֵם (raham) is very unlikely as dropping a consonant, such as the ב (b), completely removes the original meaning of the word and is not a practice in Hebrew word construction.

A more plausible explanation is that the word רַהֵם (raham) is the original word, being a child root from the word רם (ram). Several other child roots are derived from רם including; אַרָם (aram), רֵאֵם (ra'am), הָרָם (haram), רוֹם (rum) and יָרָם (yaram), all of which also mean “high” or “lifted up”. From this we can conclude that the child root רַהֵם (raham) would have the same meaning of “high” or “lifted up”.

If אַבְרָם (Abram) and אַבְרָהָם (Abraham) both mean “father lifted up”, the reason for the change in the name is not due to a change in the character of Abraham. What then would be the reason for the change in name?

In Genesis chapter one, God, the lord over all creation gives the names to the creation including: the day and night (1:5), the sky (1:8) and the land and seas (1:10). In Genesis Chapter two, Adam (A Hebrew word meaning man) gives names to all of the animals, birds and beasts (2:21,22) and we are told that Adam will rule over these animals, birds and beasts (1:26, 28). Adam also names his wife (2:23) and we are told that he is to rule over her as well (3:16). From this we discover that in the Hebraic mind, the one who gives the name is the lord over the one has been given the name. This same scenario is repeated throughout the scriptures. The founder, or lord, of a city gives the name of the city, the father, lord of the family, gives names to his children, even the gods created by men are named by the men in the

hopes of having lordship over the gods. We also see this in our original discussion of the change of the Hebrew slaves named by the chief official of King Nebuchadnezzar who now has lordship over them.

Abram was given his name by Terah, his father and lord. It is not until after the death of Terah that God changes Abram's name to Abraham, not because of a change of character in Abram, but because of a change in lordship. God is now claiming lordship over Abraham. Abraham does not name his son, but God himself (Genesis 17:19) does, showing that God was the lord of Isaac from birth. Interestingly, out of the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Isaac is the only one named by God from birth and whose lifespan is the longest. Jacob was named by his father Isaac, but changed by God (Genesis 32:28 and 35:10), to Israel after the death of his father.

Genesis 17:15 / Sarah

The Hebrew word שר (sar) is translated various ways including; prince, captain, chief, ruler, governor, keeper, principal, general, lord and master. The word "sar" is a parent root that literally means "to turn the head". In the original pictographic script the "s" is the letter sin, a picture of a thorn (𐤑). When traveling and coming across a thorn thicket one must "turn" directions. The "r" is the letter resh and is a picture of the head of a man (𐤕). A prince, captain, master, etc. is one who turns the head of the people. The word "sarah" is the feminine form of the word "sar."

Did Sarah "turn the head" of the people? Yes, but not in the same sense as a captain or master. In Genesis 12:14 we read,

When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman (Sarah) was very beautiful.

Sarah turned the head of the people because of her beauty not her commands.

Genesis 18:1 / Resources

The early Hebrews were a nomadic people, living in tents traveling from pasture to pasture with their flocks and herds. Their flocks provided much of their needs. The hair of their goats, black in color, was spun into panels for making tents. Their tents, being black in color, kept the air inside the tent cool. It was constructed with a very low profile because of the strong desert winds. The meat from the goats and sheep were used for food and was always served when visitors came to the tent. Milk from the goats and sheep was commonly drank and also made into cheese. The skins of the livestock were turned into leather and were used for various things such as water bags, sandals, bags, etc. The wool from the sheep was used for clothing and blankets. Grains were also a large staple of the Hebrews. They would often stay in one area long enough to plant grains which was made into breads. Other foods harvested

included grapes, dates, pomegranates, and melons. One of the best passages in the Bible showing the life of the nomadic Hebrew is found in Genesis 18:1-8.

Genesis 18:2 / Three Men

And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. (Genesis 18:1, ASV)

The word "appeared" in this passage is a translation of the niphal form of the verb ראה (to see) and literally means "was seen," and because Yahweh can be "seen" he evidently had physical form. The text does not specifically state who was Yahweh seen by, but by context we can conclude it was Abraham.

And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth. (Genesis 18:2, ASV)

Abraham sees "three men." At this point we can only speculate that Yahweh was one of the three men, but the important thing here is that they are identified as "men." It should also be noted that Abraham "bowed" toward them. The Hebrew word behind "bowed" is שחח (*shahhah*) which literally means to prostrate oneself before another and this is the very same verb often translated as "worship." In verses 3 through 9 Abraham has a meal prepared for these men and they ask him where his wife is.

And he said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. (Genesis 18:10, ASV)

One of the men informs Abraham that he will have a son, something that neither Abraham nor Sarah knew, telling us that these men have extra-ordinary power to be able to foretell the future. In verses 11 and 12 Sarah overhears the conversation and Sarah laughs.

And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? (Genesis 18:13, ASV)

In the context of this passage, one of the three men is speaking to Abraham about his son, and then in this verse it states that Yahweh is speaking to Abraham. Again it is still speculation that Yahweh is one of the three men, but it is looking more and more like it is. Verses 14 and 15 continue with a dialogue between Yahweh and Sarah.

And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. (Genesis 18:16, ASV)

This verse says, "the men" rose up to leave, but it does not say specifically how many.

And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do. (Genesis 18:17, ASV)

Yahweh is now speaking to "the men." Verses 18 through 20 continue the dialogue between Yahweh and the men.

I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. (Genesis 18:21, ASV)

Yahweh states that he is going to go to Sodom to check things out.

And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. (Genesis 18:22, ASV)

This passage does not specifically state how many of the men left for Sodom. Either it was all three and Yahweh, who remains with Abraham, is not a part of three, or Yahweh is a part of the three and only two leave for Sodom. Verses 23 through 32 continue with a dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham about the number of righteous men in Sodom.

And Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place. (Genesis 18:33, ASV)

At this point Yahweh goes on his way and Abraham returns home.

And the two angels came to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. (Genesis 19:1, ASV)

While this translation uses "angel," the Hebrew word is *malakhiym* meaning messengers. Based on the context, we can conclude that these "messengers," who have arrived at Sodom, are the very same "men" that left Abraham heading for Sodom, but notice that there are only two. This confirms that the third one was Yahweh who remained behind with Abraham. Also note that just as Abraham bowed down (worshiped) to the men when they arrived, so does Lot. Verses 2 through 10 detail the events of the two men coming to Lot's house and the incident with the men of the city.

And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door. (Genesis 19:11, ASV)

Again we see that these "men" are not ordinary men as we see that they have extra-ordinary power to strike the men of the city with blindness. In verses 12 through 23 the men/messengers explain to Lot what is about to happen and they work out their escape plan.

Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven. (Genesis 19:24, ASV)

Back in verse 18:33, Yahweh leaves Abraham to go to Sodom, and it appears from this verse that Yahweh has arrived. But what is more interesting is that Yahweh, who appears to be standing before Sodom and Gomorrah, is raining down brimstone and fire from Yahweh who is in the sky. Two Yahwehs? More on that later. Verses 25 through 28 narrates Lot's escape from Sodom.

And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt. (Genesis 19:29, ASV)

According to this verse *Elohim* sent Lot out from the city, but it was not Yahweh who sent Lot out, it was the other two messengers, who are now being identified as *Elohim* (plural, as in the two men/messengers).

Genesis 18:12 / Lie

A man's wife comes to him and asks "How do you like the new dress I just made?" He can see from her expression that she loves the dress and is proud of her work but personally does not like it. How does he answer her? Most of us would agree that he is in a catch twenty-two situation. If he says "I don't like it" he will crush her and if he says "I love it" he is lying and guilty of sinning. We have all been faced with such dilemmas and are often unsure on the correct course of action. Believe it or not God himself was faced with the same dilemma as recorded in Genesis 18:12, 13. Let's first take a look at this passage from the Revised Standard Version.

So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'

From this translation we do not see a problem, Sarah laughed because she admitted that she was "old". When God goes to Abraham he asks him why Sarah laughed and said she was "old". This is again the translators' way of removing what appears to be a problem with the text. In verse 12 the phrase "grown old" is the Hebrew word *balah* and means to wither away. The word "old" in verses 12 and 13 is *zaqen* meaning "old".

We now see that Sarah laughed because she admitted she was "withered" and her husband was "old". When God goes to Abraham he asks him why Sarah laughed and said "she" was "old". Sarah never said she was "old". Did God "lie"? It would appear so but, in Numbers 23:19 we read "God is not a man and lied". God cannot lie yet we see him lying in Genesis 18.

The problem is not with the text but with our view of a lie. The Hebrew word for "lied" in Numbers 23:19 is *kazav*. By looking at another verse using this same word we will see that this word does not literally mean "lie".

You shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Isaiah 58:11

The word "fail" is the same word *kazav*. The original meaning of *kazav* is vain words spoken to deceive, cause failure or disappoint; what does not function within its intended capacity. A spring that does not flow is a "lying" spring because it does not function properly. One who gives vain words is a "liar" and one who causes disappointment in another through his words is also a "liar".

God did not intend to "deceive" Abraham, but instead chose to "change" the words of Sarah in order to prevent a rift between Abraham and Sarah.

Genesis 18:19 / The Way

A common theme throughout the Old Testament is "the way of Yahweh."

I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to guard the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice (Genesis 18:19).

The word "way" is the Hebrew word דרך (*derekh*) literally meaning a road or path. Israel's journey on the path of Yahweh is frequently addressed, but often hidden behind the English translations.

Pointing out the road

From the root ירה (*y.r.h*) comes the verb ירה (*yarah*) meaning to cast or throw as seen in the following passages.

Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea. Exodus 15:4

And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it. 1 Samuel 20:20

This same verb can also be translated as "teach" in the sense of throwing the finger, or pointing, in a particular direction the one who is being taught is to walk

Teach me your way (Psalm 86:11)

This last verse could be translated literally as *Point me in the direction of your path.*

Derived from the root ירה (*y.r.h*) is the noun תורה (*torah*), meaning "the direction that is pointed out" or a "teaching" as in Proverbs 1:8.

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching.

This same word is used throughout the Old Testament for the "teachings" of God our father.

but his delight is in the teachings of Yahweh, and on his teaching he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:2).

The Nomadic migration through the wilderness

The Hebrew language is composed of a series of roots. The most basic roots, parent roots, are formed by combining two letters together. In some cases, parent roots sharing a common letter are related in meaning such as in the roots אצ, צו and צי which are all related to the nomadic migration. When a third letter is added to the parent root a child root is formed and the definition of this child root is going to be closely related to the parent.

The migration

The parent root אצ (ts.a) represents the migration of the nomad from one location to another. The child root יצא (y.ts.a) also has the definition of the migration. The verb יצא (yatsa), derived from this child root can be found in Exodus 20:2.

I am Yahweh your God, who migrated you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

This is the beginning of Israel's migration from Egypt to the land he has promised them.

The directions

The parent root צו (ts.w) represents the directions the nomad takes on his migration. This same meaning is applied to the child root צוה (ts.w.h) and its verbal form, צוה (tsawah), can be seen in Deuteronomy 1:19.

And we set out from Horeb... as Yahweh our God directed us.

God provides Israel with their directions during their migration toward the land he has promised them.

The directions can be directions for a physical journey through a land or a journey through life. The noun מצוה (mitswah), derived from the child root צוה (ts.w.h) by adding the letter מ (m), is used for this journey through life as seen in Deuteronomy 6:25.

And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this direction before the LORD our God.

The verb צוה (tsawah) is commonly translated as a command but this definition does not reflect the Hebraic background to the word. When we read about the "commands" of God in the Bible we have this image of a General giving his commands to his troops. But, the Hebraic concept behind these "commands" is the directions from God's for our journey through life so that we will not get lost from the correct path.

The wilderness

The parent root צ' (ts.y) represents the place of the nomads journey, the wilderness. From this parent root is derived the noun, "צ' (tsiyiy), meaning a wilderness as in Psalm 72:9.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; And his enemies shall lick the dust.

The wilderness is filled with landmarks which the nomad follows to guide their way. The noun ציון (tsiyuwn), derived out of the parent root צ' (ts.y) by adding the letters ון (ow.n) means a landmark as seen in Jeremiah 31:21.

Set up Landmarks for yourself, make yourself guideposts; consider well the highway, the road by which you went.

God has given Israel their directions to take them from landmark to landmark. As an example God directed Israel to rest on the seventh day, the seventh day is not the direction; it is the landmark to guide them on their journey through life from one Shabbat to the next. Each of the feasts was given as landmarks and the Torah provides the directions to recognize and find these landmarks. Just as there are many different kinds of landmarks in the wilderness such as, mountains, rock outcroppings, wadis and rivers, God has placed a wide variety of landmarks to guide Israel on their journey such as, a person in need or a lost animal. The Torah provided the directions to these landmarks as well as what direction to take once one has arrived at the landmark.

Zion

Zion is another name for Jerusalem but is more specifically the mountain within the city (Isaiah 2:3). The Hebrew word for Zion is ציון (tsiyown), the very same word as above meaning "landmark" with just a slight change in pronunciation. Zion is not just a mountain it is the central landmark for Israel. Three times a year all of Israel was to travel to the landmark where God has placed his name (Exodus 23:17, Deuteronomy 16:16), this landmark is Zion (Isaiah 18:7).

On the path and lost from the path

When traveling the wilderness it is important to stay on course in order to find the next landmark as well as the pastures and water sources. If one was to lose their way they will become lost and may die if they do not return to the proper route. The idea of being on course and lost from the course is found in two Hebrew words, צדיק (tsadiyq) and רשע (rasha). The word tsadiyq literally means to stay on course, to remain on the path while rasha means to be lost from the path. Tsadiyq is usually translated as righteous and rasha as wicked but, these English words do not convey the original meaning behind the Hebrew very well.

One who is tsadiyq remains on the road, following God's directions but on the other hand, one who is rasha is lost and is in jeopardy of death. Consider Proverbs 10:11 which states,

The mouth of the tsadiyq is a source of life but the violence covers the mouth of the rasha.

Once one realizes that he has become lost (rasha) his goal is to turn around and return to the correct path. This idea is expressed in the Hebrew verb שוב (shuv). This same verb is used in the context of repenting (returning to the path) from wrongdoing (lost from the path) and returning to the commands (directions) of God,

And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day or, from a more Hebraic perspective - and you will return to the path and you will listen to the voice of Yahweh and you will follow all his directions which I have pointed out to you today (Deuteronomy 30:8).

The guiding light

In ancient times the stars would guide one on their journey. The Hebrew verb הלל (halal) is the shining light of these stars.

For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light. (Isaiah 13:10)

This same word is also translated as "praise" but Hebraically means to "look toward another as a shining light." When the Psalms say, *Praise Yah (halelu-Yah)*, as in Psalm 135:3, it is literally saying "Look to Yah as the light that will guide you on your journey."

Conclusion

Our life is supposed to be a migratory journey on God's road. The Bible is the 'map' that shows us the directions, paths and landmarks which he has pointed out to us. The Bible is also the guide to show us how to stay on the path and how to find it again if we become lost on our way. If we are not reading (a.k.a. studying) this book how can we expect to find our way to the road of Yahweh?

Genesis 19:15 / Iniquity

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters that are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. (ASV, Genesis 19:15)

Our modern Greco-Roman languages commonly use abstract terms, like iniquity. But as Hebrew is a concrete language, rarely using abstracts, we must understand the word "iniquity" from its Hebraic concrete meaning. The Hebrew word for "iniquity" is עוון (*ah-von*), which is derived from the verbal root עוה (*Ah.W.H*). This verbal root is found in the following passages.

He hath walled up my ways with hewn stone; he hath made my paths crooked. (ASV, Lamentations 3:9)

Behold, the LORD will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. (RSV, Isaiah 24:1)

Already we are beginning to see the “concrete” meaning in the Hebrew word that lies behind the English word “iniquity,” it is something crooked or twisted. The first letter in this word is the letter א (ayin). This single letter was originally two different letters when Hebrew was written with a pictographic alphabet; the ע (ayin) and the ח (ghayin). The ghayin is a picture of a twisted cord and is clearly the original letter in this word.

As we have demonstrated, the verb עוה (Ah.W.H) means “to be crooked” or “to be twisted,” therefore the noun עוון (ah-von), derived from this verb, then means “crookedness” or “twistedness.” Let’s return to our original passage and read this from a more concrete perspective.

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters that are here, lest thou be consumed in the twistedness of the city. (ASV, Genesis 19:15)

This same noun is also found in the following passage.

And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. (KJV, Genesis 4:13)

Why the translators chose the word “punishment” for this word is a mystery because this translation implies that Cain was saddened by the punishment. The truth is, this word means twistedness, and he was instead saddened by his “actions.”

Genesis 19:35 / Moab

This name is pronounced "mo-ahv" in Hebrew. The base word is "ahv" meaning "father." The prefix "mo" means "from". Combined these mean "from father." Mo'av was the son of Lot's oldest daughter and Lot himself (Genesis 19:35), the product of an incest relationship.

According to the Torah, no descendent of Mo'av is allowed in the assembly of Israel (Deuteronomy 23:3). Why does God not allow this? Character traits are passed down from generation to generation and the Moabites had passed down the character trait of incest, strictly forbidden in Torah, through its generations.

If no Moabite is allowed into the assembly, why was Ruth, a Moabitess, allowed in the assembly of Israel?

An Ancient Hebraic understanding of what a "descendent" is, is important for understanding this apparent contradiction. While a descendent is one who is physically descended from a group of people it can also be used for one who holds the character of a group of people. In Jeremiah 23:14, God saw Israel as Sodom and Gomorrah, not because they were physically descended from the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, but because their actions were the same as those in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Ruth was a Moabitess but was allowed in the assembly of Israel because she was no longer considered a Moabitess. Her character had been changed to become like Israel when she said "your God will be my God and your people will be my people." Ruth had become an Israelite through her actions leaving behind the character of the Moabites.

Genesis 20:11 / Fear

The Hebrew word ירא (*yara*) is used in the two passages below.

And he said, I heard your voice in the garden and I feared because I was naked and I hid myself. Genesis 3:10

You will revere Yahweh your Elohiym and you will serve him and in his name you will swear. Deuteronomy 6:13

Many would conclude from these two passages that this Hebrew word has two different meanings, fear and reverence. This assumption is made with many Hebrew words, but this is caused by an understanding of the Hebrew vocabulary from a non-Hebraic perspective. Each Hebrew word has only one meaning but can have different applications. The literal concrete meaning of *yara* is a "flowing of the gut," which can be applied to "fear" or "reverence." Have you ever been so scared or been in the presence of something so amazing that you could feel it in your gut? This "feeling" is the meaning of this word. The Hebrews were a very emotional people, and in many cases their words are describing a "feeling," rather than an "action."

In the following verse the word "fear" is the noun יראה (*yirah*), which is derived from the verb *yara*.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Proverbs 9:10 (KJV)

The common understanding of this verse is if one is afraid of, or in great awe of, Yahweh, he will have wisdom, but as we shall see, this is not consistent with its use in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew for "fear of the LORD" (as found in the verse above) is written with two nouns, יראת יהוה (*yirat Yahweh*). When a noun precedes another noun, the first noun is in the construct state, meaning it is connected to the second noun—two words together forming one concept. An example of a construct noun can be found in the phrase מלכות אלהים (*malkut elohiym*), which means "kingdom of God." Notice the first noun, "kingdom," belongs to the second noun, "God."

Below is a complete list of construct phrases from the book of Genesis where the second word in the construct is “Yahweh.”

- The Word of Yahweh (Genesis 15:1)
- The Voice of Yahweh (Genesis 3:8)
- The Face of Yahweh (Genesis 4:16)
- The Name of Yahweh (Genesis 4:26)
- The Eyes of Yahweh (Genesis 6:8)
- The Garden of Yahweh (Genesis 13:10)
- The Angel of Yahweh (Genesis 16:7)
- The Way of Yahweh (Genesis 18:19)
- The Mount of Yahweh (Genesis 22:14)

You will notice in every instance the first word in the construct (word, voice, etc) belongs to the second word of the construct (Yahweh). So, why do we think the word “fear” in the construct phrase “fear of Yahweh” is “our” fear and not Yahweh’s? We know God cannot “fear,” but as pointed out previously, the Hebrew verb *yara* literally means “to flow out of the gut.” Now the question becomes, “What flows out of the gut of Yahweh?”

Let’s look at two other constructs, which will shed some light on what “the fear of Yahweh” might be. The first is found in Psalm 1:2.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
(KJV)

The Hebrew for “the law of the LORD” is תורת יהיה (*torat Yahweh*). The word תורת means teachings and is derived from the verb ירה (*yarah*) meaning “to throw” (in the sense of flowing) and is closely related to the verb *yara* which we have previously examined above. Not only are they related in the sense that both are from the same parent root, יר (*yar*), but they are also related by definition.

The second construct is found in Judges 3:10.

And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him... (RSV)

In the construct רוח יהוה (*ru’ahh Yahweh*) we find the word *ru’ahh*, meaning wind (another type of “flowing”), which can also mean the character of an individual.

What flows out of the gut of Yahweh? His teachings and his character. Now, let’s take another look at the beginning of Proverbs 9:10, but this time from a Hebrew perspective.

The flowings (the teachings and the character) of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom.

Genesis 20:13 / God or gods

In Genesis 1:1, we read, “In the beginning God created...” The word for “God” is *elohim*, a plural noun, and many might ask why this verse isn’t translated as, “In the beginning gods created?” The word *elohim* is the subject of the verb “created.” In Hebrew most verbs identify the number (singular or plural) of the subject. In this case, the verb “*bara*” (translated as created) identifies the subject as singular. Therefore, the grammar of the verse dictates that the word *elohim*, be understood as a singular (God) and not a plural (gods).

When the verb identifies the subject as a plural, then the noun is grammatically identified as a plural. An example can be seen in 2 Kings 19:12 which reads in the KJV, “Have the gods (*elohim*) of the nations delivered them.” The word “delivered” identifies the subject as plural and therefore the word *elohim* must be translated as a plural (gods).

In most cases the translators correctly translate such grammatical occurrences, however, at other times they ignore it, especially when the correct grammatical translation does not align with the monotheistic belief system of the translators. An example of this can be found in Genesis 20:13 which in the KJV reads, “God (*elohim*) caused me to wander from my father's house.” In this verse the verb wander identifies the subject as plural and should be correctly translated as, “the gods caused me to wander from my father’s house.” Because this translation supports a view that is contradictory to monotheism, the translators “fix” the text for the reader. This is not an isolated case; here are a few others where the verb in the Hebrew identifies the subject as plural.

Genesis 35:7

- King James Version: God appeared unto him
- Literal Translation: gods appeared unto him

2 Samuel 7:23

- King James Version: God went to redeem for a people to himself
- Literal Translation: gods went to redeem for a people for him

Psalms 58:11

- King James Version: he is a God that judgeth in the earth
- Literal Translation: there are gods that judge in the earth

Genesis 20:17 / Bare

The Hebrew word for “boy” is *יָלֵד* (*yeled*) and the feminine form of this word is *יָלֵדָה* (*yal’dah*) meaning “girl.” Both of these words come from the verbal root *יָלַד* (Y.L.D) meaning “to bring forth” and is usually used in the context of bearing children, such as in the passage below.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth (yalad) children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Genesis 3:16 (KJV)

This same verbal root is found in Genesis 20:17 and is usually translated in the same manner.

So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. (KJV)

While the Hebrew word behind the word “bare” is the verb root word יָלַד (Y.L.D), the translators added the word “children,” which does not exist in the Hebrew text. Because of the translator’s insertion of this word, the reader assumes Abimelech’s punishment by God was that his women could not “bear children.” However, there is another interpretation of this verse. First note that the above passage states that God healed Abimelech as well as his wife and maidservants. If this affliction only affected the women from bearing children, why would Abimelech need healing? Also note the following passage.

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. Genesis 20:3 (KJV)

Here God tells Abimelech, because of his sin, he is a dead man, and evidently the punishment is something that causes death and the inability to bear children does not cause death. Now, let’s look at verse 17 again but this time with a literal translation from the Hebrew text.

And Abraham interceded to Elohiym and Elohiym healed Abimelech and his woman and his maid servants and they brought forth.

It is my opinion that the illness God gave to Abimelech and his people was constipation.

Genesis 21:18 / Forgive

Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand. For I will make him a great nation. (Genesis 21:18)

The Hebrew word behind "lift up" is נָשָׂא (nasa) and means to take hold of something and lift it up, either to move or remove it. This very same Hebrew word is also used in the following verse.

Consider mine affliction and my travail; And forgive all my sins. (ASV, Psalm 25:18)

From a Hebraic perspective, the forgiveness of sins is the same as lifting it off and removing it just as we see in Micah 7:19.

He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (ASV)

Another word translated as forgive is the Hebrew word סָלַח (salahh) and is used in the following verse where the forgiveness of iniquity is being paralleled with the healing (or lifting up) of diseases.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases. (RSV, Psalm 103:2,3)

By investigating other words that are related to סָלַח (salahh) we can see that this word has a very similar meaning to נָשָׂא (nasa).

- סָלַח (salad, Strong's #5539) means "to leap up."
- סָלַע (sala, Strong's #5553) is a "cliff" (a wall that is lifted up).
- סָלַק (salaq, Strong's #5559) means "to ascend."

Genesis 24:27 / Truth

The Hebrew word for "truth" is אֱמֶת (emet) and is derived from the verbal root word אָמַן (A.M.N), a word often translated as "believe," but more literally means "support," which can be seen in the following verse.

I will drive him like a peg in a place of support..." Isaiah 22:23

A belief in Elohiym is not a mental exercise of knowing that Elohiym exists but rather our responsibility to show him our support. The word "emet" has the similar meaning of firmness, something that is firmly set in place. Psalms 119:142 states that the "Torah" (the teachings of Elohiym) is "emet" (set firmly in place).

Genesis 24:67 / Sarah's Tent

And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. (KJV, Genesis 24:67)

I had always assumed, based on this verse, that Abraham and Sarah each had their own tent. However, while researching the modern day Bedouins of the Near East, whose culture and lifestyle is very similar to the Hebrews of Abraham's day, I found that the family tent belonged to the mother, not the father. This is also supported by the following passage.

And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. (KJV, Genesis 9:21)

And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. (KJV, Genesis 12:8)

And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; (KJV, Genesis 13:3)

And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. (KJV, Genesis 35:21)

In each of these verses is the phrase “his tent.” The Hebrew word for “tent” is אוהל (ohel) and “his tent” would be אוהלו (ohelo), but that is not what is in each of these verses. Instead it is אוהלה (ohelah), which means “her tent.”

Genesis 25:13 / Firstborn

The firstborn of the father receives a double portion of the inheritance as well as being the leader of his brothers. However, if a son other than the firstborn receives this inheritance, he is called the "firstborn." Interestingly, this is a very common occurrence within the Biblical text such as we see with Esau (the one born first) and Jacob (the one called the firstborn) and Manasseh (the one born first) and Ephraim (the one called the firstborn). This is an excellent example of how the Hebrew language will use words in both a literal and figurative sense.

Genesis 25:20 / Years old

The nomadic tent was constructed by weaving black goat's hair into panels about three feet wide and the length of the tent. If the tent was required to be made larger, they would sew in additional panels. As each panel aged and began to break down from exposure to the sun, it was replaced with a new panel. As a general rule, one panel was replaced each year.

Many similarities exist between these panels of the tent and the family members themselves.

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; Isaiah 54:1,2 (KJV)

The phrases underlined in the passage above literally describe what happens when the family size becomes larger by the addition of children. Just as new members are added to the family to increase its size; new panels are also added to the tent to increase its size.

The new tent panels are black in color, just like the hair on the children. The hair on the head of older members turns white after many years, just as the panels of the tent begin to turn white over the years from exposure in the sunlight.

Just as the older members of the family die and are replaced with newborns, the older strips of the tent are removed and replaced with new panels.

Because the tent is continually being renewed, year after year, with the addition of new panels as needed, the tent literally lasts forever and in the same way, the lineage of the family residing within the tent continues generation after generation.

And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife... Genesis 25:20

The phrase “forty years old” is an English translation of the Hebrew phrase בן ארבעים שנה (*ben arba’iyim shanah*) which is literally translated as “a son of forty years.” Because of the many similarities between the tent panel and the sons of the family, it appears that the Hebrew word בן (*ben*) meaning “son” may also be the Hebrew word for the tent panel. If this is true, then the Hebrew phrase *ben arba’iyim shanah* could be translated as “forty years of tent panels” and as one panel was replaced each year, it could serve as a type of calendar.

Genesis 26:5 / The Eternal Torah

Was the Torah given to Israel at Mount Sinai a new Torah from God? Or a reminder of his Torah which was given to man before Israel? Is it possible that this Torah was given previously to Abraham, Noah or possibly Adam? We can look at the book of Genesis and say that did exist Torah prior to Israel and that Adam, Noah and Abraham followed it.

*I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements (*mishmeret*), my commands (*mitzvot*), my decrees (*hukah*) and my Torah. (Genesis 26:4,5)*

We can see that even Abraham kept God's Torah over 400 years before Israel came to Mount Sinai. In the passage above, three words are used paralleling the word Torah, *mishmeret*, *mitzvot* and *hukah*. These are the same words used through the rest of scripture to describe the Torah of God. According to this passage Abraham kept the same type of Torah which God gave Israel.

Throughout the Book of Genesis we see example after example of God's commands being kept and broken. These same commands can be found in the Torah given to Israel. In most cases, we read of an

individual keeping or breaking a command, but the command itself is not recorded. With this in mind, we cannot say for certainty when the command was given, just that it did exist.

Let us look at some of the commands found within the Torah then look at cases in the book of Genesis where they are obeyed or disobeyed.

Murder

You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)

This command is first given at Mount Sinai with the giving of the 10 commandments. This command was broken in Genesis;

While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. (Genesis 4:8)

You cannot condemn a man for an action unless that action has been determined to be wrong and the command not to do that action is communicated to the people. If my son takes a piece of candy from a store without paying for it, I cannot punish him unless I have not previously taught him that this is a wrong action.

In order for God to punish Cain for taking the life of his brother, he had to have been taught at one point by either God or his father Adam (who would have been instructed by God) that murder is a sin.

Altars

"Make an Altar of earth for me and Sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you. If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it. And do not go up to my altar on steps, lest your nakedness be exposed on it." (Exodus 20:24,26)

This is the first command given in the Bible for the construction and regulations concerning altars. Compare the similarities with the above passage and the ones below from the book of Genesis.

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. (Genesis 8:20)

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west of Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. (Genesis 12:7,8)

That night the LORD appeared to [Isaac] and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you..." Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. (Genesis 26:24,25)

Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." (Genesis 35:1)

Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. (Exodus 17:15)

Here we have five incidents where in each case we can see a portion of the command in Exodus 20 being observed; Sacrifices of burnt offerings are placed on the altar, altars are erected where the name of God is honored, and erected where the presence of God and his blessings appear.

Tithes

I give to the Levites (the priests of Israel) as their inheritance the tithes (a tenth) that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD. (Numbers 18:21)

Now let us look at this command in the book of Genesis

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram...Then Abram gave him a tenth (tithe) of everything. (Genesis 14:18,20)

This stone that I (Jacob) have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth. (Genesis 28:22)

Abraham and Jacob understood the command to tithe their possessions to God and his priests just as God commanded Israel in the Torah.

Sacrifices and Offerings

When you sacrifice a thank offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. (Leviticus 22:29)

[Jacob] offered a sacrifice there in the hill country. (Genesis 31:54)

When [Jacob] reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. (Genesis 46:1)

Animal offerings

"All the firstborn are mine.... whether man or animal. They are to be mine, I am the LORD." (Numbers 3:13)

If he offers an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, he is to offer a male or female without defectAll the fat is the LORD's. (Leviticus 3:6,16)

Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. (Genesis 4:4)

Abel's offering must have been done in obedience because it was accepted by God as stated in verse 4; "The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering".

Food offerings

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. (Leviticus 27:30)

Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. (Genesis 4:3)

Evidently Cain's offering was done in disobedience because verse 5 tells us; "but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor".

The Bible does not explain why he looked with favor on one but not the other. If God did not outline the requirements for the giving of offerings prior to this, he could not have held either of them accountable for their offerings. Therefore, Cain and Abel must have known what the requirements were for the offerings. Prior to the giving of the commands concerning sacrifices and offerings to Israel at Mount Sinai, there is no mention of sacrificial requirements. We can assume that, since Cain was held accountable for his disobedient sacrifice, the requirements were known prior to Mount Sinai but were not recorded in the book of Genesis.

Clean and Unclean

"These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves in the water and every creature that moves about on the ground. You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten." (Leviticus 11:46,47)

Leviticus chapter 11 is a complete list of all the clean and unclean animals. Although this is the first time the distinction is made between the clean and the unclean, it is not the first time they are mentioned;

The LORD said to Noah..."Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate." (Genesis 7:1,2)

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. (Genesis 8:20)

Blood

Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, "you must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off." (Leviticus 17:13,14)

Compare this with the following passage.

"But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it." (Genesis 9:4)

Sabbath

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work. (Exodus 20:8-10)

The Sabbath command is first found here, but it was observed prior to Mount Sinai. The Sabbath command and its observance prior to the giving of the Torah will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. But, I will mention that the Sabbath day of rest is recorded as being observed on two occasions prior to the giving of the Torah. One occurrence is recorded in Exodus 16. Here we see that Israel observed the Sabbath day during their journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai. The other is when God himself rested from his work on the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:2).

Summary

In all the passages above we can see evidence that the commands concerning; murder, altars, tithes, sacrifices and offerings, clean and unclean animals, abstaining from the eating blood and the Sabbath were in existence long before Israel arrived at Mount Sinai. The observance of Torah commands in the book of Genesis are few compared to great number of commands found in the Torah. But we can see hints of Torah keeping also in the book of Genesis, such as; Honor your Father and Mother, do not steal, do not worship false gods, and many others. There is no way of saying with certainty just how many commands and requirements of the Torah were kept during the time of the book of Genesis, but it is not impossible that all of the Torah was given to man long before the nation of Israel ever existed. We did see that Abraham kept all of God's Torah, is it not also possible that Adam and Noah also kept God's Torah?

"I remember your ancient laws" (Psalms 119:52)

*"Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever."
(Psalms 119:152)*

"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal." (Psalms 119:160)

Genesis 26:17 / Grace

Most theologians will define "grace" as "unmerited favor." But we must be careful not to interject a theological bias into the text. So first we need to understand what the English word "grace" means outside of theology. The dictionary provides two basic definitions for grace.

1. Elegance or beauty of form, manner, motion or action.
2. Mercy; clemency; pardon

Because the Hebrew language is vastly different from English, we need to examine the Hebrew meaning of this word to see if one or both English definitions are appropriate definitions for the Hebrew word translated as grace.

The Hebrew word translated as grace is חן (*hhen*) and is a two-letter parent root. In order to uncover the original meaning of this word it is important that we first examine each of the roots and words that are derived from this parent root.

From חן (*hhen*) comes the verbal root חנה (*Hh.N.H*), spelled exactly the same except with the addition of the letter ה (*h*) at the end. The following verse provides a good example of the meaning of this verb.

And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.
(KJV, Genesis 26:17)

This verb means “to pitch a tent” or “to camp.” The noun derived from this verb is מחנה (*mahhaneh*).

And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. (KJV, Exodus 14:20)

When we think of a camp we think of tents scattered about in a general area, but the camps of the Ancient Hebrews was a little different as the picture below demonstrates.

The tents were set up in a sort of circle and these tents serve as a “wall” separating the inside of the camp from the outside. At this point it would be helpful to examine the pictographic Hebrew script that was used to originally write the word חן (*hhen*). The first letter is the letter *hhet*, which was written as א and is a picture of a wall and having the meaning of “separation” as the wall separates the inside from the outside. The second letter is the letter *nun*, which was written as נ and is a picture of a sprouting seed having the meaning of “continue” as the seed continues a lineage to the next generation. When these two letters are combined they mean “the wall that continues.” The tents in the picture above are a wall that continues around the camp.

A second verbal root derived from the parent root חן (*hhen*) is חנן (*Hh.N.N*), spelled exactly the same except with the addition of the letter ן (*n*) at the end. This verb is often translated as “to be gracious” or “have mercy,” however these are abstract terms and do not help us understand the meaning of this verb from an Hebraic perspective, which always relates words to something concrete. One of the best tools to use to find the more concrete meaning of a word is to look at how that word is paralleled with other words in poetical passages. In the following verses the translation of the verb חנן (*Hh.N.N*) will be underlined and the word that it is paralleled with will be in bold.

Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.
(KJV, Psalm 6:2)

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. (KJV, Psalm 30:10)

But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. (KJV, Psalm 41:10)

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. (KJV, Psalm 57:1)

O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid. (KJV, Psalm 86:16)

Through this process we find that this Hebrew verb is paralleled with such ideas as healing, help, being lifted up, finding refuge, strength and salvation (literally rescue). From a concrete Hebraic perspective, חָנַן (*Hh.N.N*) means all of this, which we can sum up with “providing protection.” Where does one run to for protection? The camp, and now we see how חָנַן (*Hh.N.H*), the camp, and חָנַן (*Hh.N.N*), protection, are related. Now we need to see how these words are related to the parent root חָן (*hhen*).

A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it... (KJV, Proverbs 17:8)

In this verse, the Hebrew word חָן (*hhen*) is translated as “precious,” something of beauty and value.

A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches. (KJV, Proverbs 11:16)

In this verse the “grace,” or “beauty,” of the woman is contrasted with the strength of a man.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. (KJV, Proverbs 31:30)

Again, this Hebrew word is being paralleled with “beauty.” This “beauty” is something that is precious and graceful, which is exactly how the Hebrews would have seen the “camp of protection,” a graceful and precious place.”

Let us now return to our original definition of the English word “grace.”

1. Elegance or beauty of form, manner, motion or action.
2. Mercy; clemency; pardon

While these definitions do apply to the Hebrew word חָן (*hhen*), they do not completely convey the full emotion and spectrum of the Hebrew word. This is the problem with translating Hebrew into English. The English vocabulary is limited in how it can express the full meaning of a given Hebrew word.

Genesis 26:27 / Come

The verb בּוֹא (*bo*) is a good example to demonstrate the vast difference between Hebrew and English. In the examples below are two different English words with opposite meanings.

As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. (RSV, Genesis 15:15)

Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" (RSV, Genesis 26:27)

The English verb "go" generally means, to move from a position nearby to a position far away, while the verb "come" means, to move from a far position to a position nearby. An example would be, "I will go to the store then I will come home." The context of this phrase implies that I am making the statement from home about leaving home for the store and then returning home.

In the two verses above, the one Hebrew verb *awb* is being translated into two different English words in order to translate the context of its use.

The verb *awb* does not mean "come" or "go" in the sense of direction but to "enter a void in order to fill it" in the sense of purpose. Because there is no English word with this meaning the words "go" and "come" are used instead, but unfortunately this erases the more Hebraic meaning behind the word.

Genesis 27:45 / Anger

Greek thought views the world through the mind (abstract thought). Ancient Hebrew thought views the world through the senses (concrete thought).

Concrete thought is the expression of concepts and ideas in ways that can be seen, touched, smelled, tasted and/or heard. All five of the senses are used when speaking and hearing and writing and reading the Hebrew language. An example of this can be found in Psalms 1:3;

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither.

In this passage we have concrete words expressing abstract thoughts, such as a tree (one who is upright or righteous), streams of water (grace), fruit (good character) and a unwithered leaf (prosperity).

Abstract thought is the expression of concepts and ideas in ways that can not be seen, touched, smelled, tasted or heard. Hebrew never uses abstract thought as English does. Examples of Abstract thought can be found in Psalms 103:8;

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger, abounding in love".

As you may have noticed, I said that Hebrew uses concrete and not abstract thoughts, but here we have such abstract concepts as compassionate, gracious, anger, and love in a Hebrew passage. Actually these are abstract English words translating the original Hebrew concrete words. The translators often translate this way because the original Hebrew makes no sense when literally translated into English.

Let us take one of the abstract words above to demonstrate how this works. Anger, an abstract word, is actually the Hebrew word אף (awph) which literally means “nose”, a concrete word. When one is very angry, he begins to breathe hard and the nostrils begin to flare. A Hebrew sees anger as “the flaring of the nose (nostrils)”. If the translator literally translated the above passage “slow to nose”, it would make no sense to the English reader, so אף, a nose, is translated to “anger” in this passage.

Genesis 29:32 / Jacob’s Children

Reuben

The name Reuben means “behold a son” and is given to the first born of Jacob through Leah who gave his name “*Because the Yahweh has looked upon my affliction*” (Genesis 29:32).

The name is a combination of two Hebrew words ראו and בן. ראו is the imperative form of the verb ראה meaning “to see,” whereas the imperative means look, see or behold. The word בן means “son.”

Simeon

This name is derived from the Hebrew verb שמע (*shama*) meaning “to hear.”

In Deuteronomy 6:4, written above in the Modern Hebrew and Middle Semitic (paleo-Hebrew) scripts, the first word is sh’ma, the imperative form of the verb meaning “hear!” This word is kind of a motto to Israel.

In Genesis 29:33 Leah, the wife of Jacob, says, “*Because Yahweh has heard (shama) that I was hated and he gave me this one also*” and she gives him the name שמעון (*Shimon*), a Hebrew word meaning “heard.”

Levi

And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.
Genesis 29:34 (KJV)

The Hebrew verb לוא (*lavah*) means “to join” such as we can see in the verse above. This is the root of the name לוי (*leviy*), meaning “joined,” and is also found in the verse above. Both of these words are also found in the following verse.

And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. Numbers 18:2 (KJV)

Judah

This name is pronounced "ye-huw-dah" in Hebrew. Most Hebrew dictionaries will define this word 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) meaning "hand." Derived from this parent root is the child root ידה (Y.D.H) meaning "throw" and this child root is the root of the name "yehudah". The word "Yehudah" has the meaning "to throw your hands out". 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".

When Judah was born to Leah (Genesis 29:35) she said "I will "yadah" Yahweh. She was pointing to Yahweh and giving him the credit for the birth of her son. We frequently use the word "praise" in the context of worship to God. Our praise is not meant to be simply singing or praying to God, but acting upon our belief. Our function is to point to God so that others can see him. This pointing does not have to be a literal pointing but that our actions in all aspects of our life point to God and others will see him as well.

Dan

And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. Genesis 30:6 (KJV)

The Hebrew verb דן (D.Y.N) means "to judge" such as we can see in the verse above. This is the root of the name דן (dan), meaning a "judge," and is also found in the verse above. In Jacob's final words to Dan he also makes the connection between these two words.

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Genesis 49:16 (KJV)

Naphtali

And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali. Genesis 30:8 (KJV)

The Hebrew word translated as 'wrestlings' in the verse above is נפתול (naphtul) meaning 'to entwine' such as when twisting cords together to make a rope, or to be entwined together through wrestling. The name Naphtali is this same word with a ם (y) suffix meaning "my," so the name Naphtali means 'my wrestling.'

Gad

And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad. (KJV, Genesis 30:10,11)

The Hebrew translated as "a troop cometh" is בגד (begad) which is the word גד (gad) meaning "fortune" and the prefix ב (be) meaning "in." So, how does the King James Version get "a troop cometh" out of "in fortune?" First, the KJV translators created their translation almost 400 years ago and since that time much more of the Hebrew language has been learned through etymology and linguistics. Secondly, many translators believe that the word בגד (begad) is an error and was originally written as two words –

בא גַד (bo gad) meaning "fortune comes." Leah chose this word גַד (gad) for her son because of her good "fortune" of having been given another son.

I would also like to point out that the name of the Babylonian god of fortune is "gad." The language of Babylon was Aramaic, a sister language to Hebrew. The Hebrew vowel "a" is not pronounced like the "a" in bad (contrary to the way most of us pronounce this name) but like the "a" in father. Therefore, the Hebrew/Aramaic word/name "gad" is pronounced like our English word "god." It is very likely that our word "god" comes from the Hebrew/Aramaic word גַד (gad).

Asher

And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher. (KJV, Genesis 30:13)

Within this verse are three words, all from the same root. The first is the word אוֹשֶׁר (osher) meaning "happiness" and is translated as "happy" in the verse above. The second is the verb אָשַׁר (A.Sh.R) meaning "to be happy" but is translated as "blessed" above. The third is of course the name אָשֶׁר (asher), pronounced ah-sheyr in Hebrew.

However, Hebrew word definitions are not always so simple. In the following verse the same Hebrew verb אָשַׁר (A.Sh.R) is used where it is translated as "go."

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. (KJV, Proverbs 4:14)

The verb אָשַׁר (A.Sh.R) literally means "to go in a straight line." This can be a literal meaning, such as in Proverbs 4:14 where the image being given is one walking straight toward evil. It can also be used in a figurative way as in Genesis 30:13 in the sense that if you are being straight (doing what is right), you will be happy.

Issachar

And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. (KJV, Genesis 30:18)

The name יִשָּׁכָר (yis-sakhar, Strong's #3485) is one of the more difficult names from an etymological perspective. This name is written as יִשָּׁכָר in the Masoretic Hebrew text. The first ש (the letter shin) in this name includes the dot on the top left, indicating that it is pronounced with an "s" (if the dot were on the right it would be pronounced with a "sh"). There is also a dot inside this letter (called a dagesh) which doubles its sound. Therefore, the first two letters in this name is pronounced "yis-sa..." The second ש is a little problematic as it does not have a dot on top (The letter shin always carries the dot, either on the left or the right to indicate its pronunciation as "s" or "sh"). This unusual use of the letter shin is a mystery with no etymological answer. The standard pronunciation of the name is yis-sa-khar, and the second shin is simply ignored as if it was spelled יִשָּׁכָר.

The next problem with this name is its meaning. It may be a form of the Hebrew word יִשְׁכַּר (yis-kor) meaning "he will hire." However, this meaning ignores the second shin found in the name יִשְׁשֹׁכָר. We must also remember that the dots and dashes added above, below and inside Hebrew letters (called nikkud in the singular and nikkudot in the plural) are of fairly recent invention and were not included in the original spelling of Hebrew words. Therefore, if we take the name as it was written - יִשְׁשֹׁכָר, other possible interpretations are possible. The first is the combination of two words, יִשׁ and שֹׁכָר. The word יִשׁ (yeysh) means "there is." There are two possible translations of the word שֹׁכָר. One is "liquor" (sha-khar,) giving us the meaning of יִשְׁשֹׁכָר as "there is liquor." The other possibility is "wage" (sa-khar) giving us the meaning "there is a wage."

Zebulun

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

The Hebrew word זְבוּלוֹן (zeh-voo-loon) means a "resident" and comes from the root זָבַל (Z.B.L) meaning "to reside" and is translated as "dwell" in the passage above. Hebrew nouns are commonly formed by adding letters to the root. In this instance, the suffix וֹן (on) is added to the root זָבַל. Nouns with the וֹן ending generally mean "one who does the action of the root" and in this case, "one who dwells."

Joseph

And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son. (KJV, Genesis 30:24)

In the verse above is the Hebrew verb יָסַף (Y.S.P) meaning "to add." The participle form of a verb is created by adding the vowels "o" and "e" between the three letters of the verb root. So, the participle form of יָסַף (Y.S.P) is יוֹסֵף (yoseph). A participle is usually translated into English by adding the suffix "ing" to the meaning of the root. So, while יָסַף (Y.S.P) means "add," the participle form יוֹסֵף (yoseph) means "adding." This participle form is the name יוֹסֵף (yoseph, Strong's #3130), which of course means, adding.

Benjamin

And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. (ASV, Genesis 35:18)

The twelfth son of Jacob was first named בֶּן אוֹנִי (ben oni) by his mother Rachel. The name Ben-Oni is the word בֶּן (ben) meaning son and the word אוֹנִי is the word אוֹן (ohn or avon) meaning vanity, or more literally, effort that is put out with no results, with the suffix י (i) meaning "of me" or "my." The name בֶּן אוֹנִי then means "son of my vanity" and appears to be Rachel's final words, which implies that her son, who is brought forth through much effort, would bring her life to an end.

Jacob gave a different name to his son - בנימין (binyamin). This is again, the word בן (ben) meaning son, but combined with the word ימין (yamin) meaning "right hand." The name בנימין then means "son of the right hand." When a father blessed the eldest son, he would place his right hand upon his head when giving him his blessing (see Genesis 48:18). As Binyamin is Ya'akov's youngest son, it would seem strange to call him the "son of the right hand," unless he is to be treated as the firstborn son. When it came time to divide up the family estate among the sons, the father would give a "double portion" to the firstborn. In Genesis 43:34 we see Yoseph giving Binyamin a portion "five" times as much as his brothers.

Genesis 31:19 / Heal

The parent root רָפָה (*raph*) is the root to several Biblical Hebrew words related to health and sickness. The original pictographs for this word are the ר, representing man and פ, representing the mouth with the meaning open. Combined, the word רָפָה means an "open man" and is exactly what happens when one is cut or wounded. A common ancient medicine is the use of a poultice which is placed on an open wound. Hyssop was most likely used as a poultice because of its antibacterial properties. The Hebrew verb רוּץ (R.W.P), derived from רָפָה, means "to pulverize," which is what is done to plants when being made into a poultice. From רוּץ comes the noun רוּץ (*ruphah*) meaning "medicine." Another verb derived from רָפָה is the verbal root רָפָא (R.P.A) meaning "to heal." This verb is first used when Avraham intercedes on Avimelekh's behalf to heal him and his family from their illness (Genesis 20:17). When this verb is used in its participle form it can mean "healing" or "healer" (a physician). One other verbal root derived from רָפָה is רָפָה (R.P.H) meaning weak or feeble, as when someone is sick.

Now Laban was gone to shear his sheep: and Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's. Genesis 31:19 (ASV)

The word "teraphim" is a transliteration of the Hebrew תְּרָפִים (*teraphim*) in the verse above and is the plural form of the word תְּרָפָה (*tereph*). Until recently the meaning of this word was completely unknown, and this is why the older translations of the Bible simply transliterate it as teraphim. Ancient inscriptions discovered in Babylon assisted in defining this word as household gods and newer translations such as the RSV now translate it as household gods. It is also possible that the ancient people believed these household gods provided healing since the root of this is the parent root רָפָה.

Genesis 31:29 / Power and Authority

When we read the Bible we must read it from the mindset of the writer and not from our own way of thinking. The authors of the Bible lived in a culture that is very different from our own and they perceived the world from a different perspective. If we truly want to grasp what the authors were trying to say, then we must remove our westernized thinking caps and replace them with the thinking cap of one from the ancient Near East (Orient).

Have you ever heard that the ancient's considered their rulers as Gods? This is true for the Egyptians who saw the Pharaohs as gods, the Babylonians who saw the Kings as gods and the Romans who saw the Caesars as gods.

In the Biblical text the most basic word for a 'god' is אֱל (el). This Hebrew/Semitic word is found throughout the Near East and literally means “one of power and authority.” The Semitic people did not view a 'god' as strictly a supernatural deity as do but simply as “one of power and authority.” Even in the Biblical text the word אֱל is used for Laban in Genesis 31:29 - “אֱל is in my hand to do you harm.” Laban was the one in power and authority over Jacob and was by the true sense of the meaning of the word, an אֱל.

From the ancient perspective, a 'god' is anyone or anything that has power and authority over another. Who has power and authority over us? Our government, our government is our אֱל. In the same way Abram's אֱל was the King of Babylon which is why God had him leave and go to the wilderness where there was no king. Also, Moses' אֱל was the pharaoh of Egypt and God removed him from there and brought him into wilderness as well.

At this point most of you will be saying, “No, the God of the Bible is my אֱל.” Is that true? While I believe it is possible for this to be true in most cases it is not. Let's examine a scenario. Let's say that in one way or another you were prevented from worshiping God or praying to him and you are no longer able to read or study the Bible. While I do believe this will have a negative impact on you and society as a whole will it destroy you? No, you will continue to exist, you will still have grocery stores, gas stations, law enforcement and military for protection, electricity, garbage pick-up, etc. But let's change the scenario a little bit and say that our government, for one reason or another, no longer exists. Without a government we lose our entire monetary system, we lose our law enforcement and military. Without a monetary system there is no more grocery stores, gas stations, power houses, etc. In short, you are completely on your own. Could you survive? Most could not and within a few short weeks a major portion of our population would be dead. Now, which “power and authority” is more influential on your life today?

Genesis 32:1 / Messenger

What has always perplexed me is why the translators of the Bible see the need to translate one Hebrew word with two or more different English words when there is no grammatical or contextual need to do so. Note the different translations of the Hebrew word מַלְאָךְ (*malak*) in the following passage.

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. Genesis 32:1-3 (KJV)

According to the translation above, Jacob came upon a camp of angels and then sent messengers, presumably some of his own men, to his brother Esau. But according to the Hebrew text, these events should be interpreted slightly different as the word “angels” and “messengers” are the very same Hebrew word—*malak*. Either Jacob came upon a camp of men, who were messengers of God, and sent them to his brother Esau, or he came upon a camp of angels, which he then sent to his brother Esau.

In the verse above, the first use of the word *malak*, translated as angels in the King James Version, is translated in the Septuagint with the Greek word *aggelos*, which is the origin of the English word “angel.” The second use of the word *malak*, translated as messengers in the King James Version, is translated in the Septuagint with the Greek word *apostolos*, which is the origin of the English word “apostle.” It is clear that the King James, as well as most modern translators, were using the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew for their translation of the text.

Another example of the translator’s use of the Septuagint over the Hebrew can be found with the word “Manna,” the bread from heaven. The Hebrew for this word is simply מן (*man*), but the Septuagint uses the Greek *manna*. Because of this, we call it *manna*, from the Greek, rather than *man*, from the Hebrew.

Why do the translators “trust” the Greek more than the Hebrew? Why use a Greek translation of the Hebrew to make an English translation when the original Hebrew is available? Because the translators, and their readers, are Greek thinkers and are more comfortable with the Greek than the Hebrew.

What is a *malak*? Literally, the word means “one who is sent by another to do his business.” It is related to another Hebrew word, מלאכה (*melakah*), meaning business.

*And on the seventh day Elohiym finished his **business** (melakah)... Genesis 2:2*

Are the *malak* of God who perform the God’s business men or supernatural beings or both? Technically speaking, anyone doing the business of God is a *malak*. This can include men,

Then Haggai, the messenger (malak) of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, says the LORD. Haggai 1:13 (RSV)

As well as God himself,

...The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has led me all my life long to this day, the angel (malak) who has redeemed me from all evil... Genesis 48:15,16 (RSV)

Genesis 32:2 / Army

The Biblical and modern Hebrew word for "army" is צבא (*tsava*) and is derived from the verbal root צבא (*Ts.B.A*) meaning "to fight" or "wage war." The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) is the English translation of the Hebrew לְיִשְׂרָאֵל צְבָא (*tsava hahaganah l'yisrael*), which literally means "Army for the defense of

Israel," which is usually written with its acronym צה"ל (when the " is placed before the last letter in a word, it indicates that the word is an acronym).

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. Genesis 2:1 (KJV)

The word "host" in this passage is the Hebrew word *tsava*.

Genesis 32:28 / Israel

The name ישראל (yisra'el) has been translated several different ways including "he wrestles with God", "Prince of God", "he struggles with God", and several others. The name "Israel" is actually a complete sentence in one word. The name has three components – י (yi), שר (sr) and אל (el). The י (y) is a prefix meaning "he". The אל (el) is the Hebrew word for "God". The שר (sr) is the part that seems to cause most of the problems in translation.

The Hebrew word שר (sr) literally means "turn the head". It is often translated as "prince" or "ruler", one who turns the head of the people. Another word related to שר (sr) is ישר (yasar) meaning "discipline". When you discipline your children you are turning their head from a path of bad to a path of good.

Because the י (y) is in front of the word שר (sr) we know that this is a verb and not a noun (this is standard Hebrew grammar) and the name ישראל (yisra'el) can literally be translated as "he turns the head of God". The way I like to understand this, is that when Israel (either Jacob or his descendents) speaks to God, God, the father of Israel, stops what he is doing and turns to his son and says "What do you want my son".

Genesis 32:30 / Documentary Hypothesis

The documentary hypothesis of the Torah states that there were five authors of the Torah, each one with a unique style of writing. One of the authors is called the Elohist and he uses the word Elohiym, as seen throughout the first chapter of Genesis. Another of these authors is called the Yahwist and he uses the word Yahweh, as seen throughout the second chapter of Genesis.

The event where God gives Jacob the name Israel is recorded twice, one by one author who mentions that Jacob called the place of this event "Peniel" (Genesis 32:30) and another author who mentions that Jacob called the place of this event "Bethel" (Genesis 35:15).

Throughout the text, one author will continue to use Jacob, while another author will continue to use Israel. Here is an example where the first verse is written by one author who uses the name Israel, and the second verse is written by another author who uses the name Jacob.

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. Genesis 47:27

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. Genesis 47:28

Genesis 37:3 / Color

What many are not aware of is that about 20% of the meanings of Hebrew words in the Bible are not known. Some of them are completely unknown while the meanings of others are still obscure. Over time more and more word meanings are coming to light due to archeological discoveries. Sometimes older translations (such as the KJV) are less accurate because less is known about the words but newer translations have the advantage of recent discoveries. This is probably the case with the word צַד (pas). Originally it was guessed that this word meant diverse or many colors. But now it is known that this word has something to do with the palm and in this context probably means a "long sleeved" garment, which would be an uncommon and special garment at that time.

Genesis 37:35 / The Underworld

The word she'ol is often understood as hell, the place of the damned or the underworld. How did the Ancient Hebrews perceive she'ol? As I have said before, in order to better understand a word it is essential to look at its root and other related words.

The verbal root שאל (Sh.A.L) is used almost 200 times and is usually translated as "asked" such as in Genesis 24:7.

and I asked her and said...

Why do we ask questions? We are looking for information that is currently unknown to us. This word, "unknown," is the key to understanding the root שאל (Sh.A.L) and all the words derived from it.

The word שאלה (she'eylah) is a noun derived from שאל (Sh.A.L) and is found in Job 6:8 where it is translated as a request.

O that I might have my request, and that God would grant my desire" (RSV)

A request is to ask for something that is not possessed. As it is not possessed it is an unknown. How many times have we asked for something that we knew we needed but when we received it we found out it was not what we thought it would be. In other words, we thought we knew what we were missing but it turns out that what we were requesting, was an unknown.

The word שְׂאוֹל (she'ol), also derived from שָׂאֵל (Sh.A.L), was understood as the place where one goes when they die. The question is, did they understand this to be simply the grave one is buried in or another place one goes after they die? This is a difficult question to answer as the Hebrew Bible never really defines *she'ol*. There is evidence however that they understood it to be more than just the grave. First, the word qever is the Hebrew word meaning grave and therefore it is possible that *she'ol* was understood as something other than the grave. Second, most scriptures using the word *she'ol* imply a place other than the grave. An example is Genesis 37:35.

All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him (RSV).

In this account Jacob believed his son Joseph had been eaten by a wild beast. As Joseph's body could not possibly be in a grave, Jacob knew that he would be with him somewhere - *she'ol*.

The Ancient Hebrews did not know where or even what *she'ol* was. To them it was an unknown place hence, the use of a word related to שָׂאֵל (Sh.A.L), meaning "unknown." It should also be noted that the Ancient Hebrews never speculated on something unknown, it was simply not known and left at that. It is only the Greek mind that desires to know the unknown. It is our Greco-Roman western mindset that needs to know where and what *she'ol* is.

Genesis 41:51 / Manasseh

Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." (RSV, Genesis 41:51)



The name Manasseh is written as מְנַשֶּׁה (me'na'sheh). This name/word comes from the root נָשָׁה (N.Sh.H) meaning to "forget" and is the root of the name/word me'na'sheh meaning "forgotten."

Genesis 48:16 / Angel

The word מַלְאָךְ (mela'ak) is translated two different ways as can be seen in the following examples.

And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying.... Genesis 50:16 (KJV)

Behold, I [Yahweh] send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Exodus 23:20 (KJV)

The word מַלְאָךְ (mela'ak) is formed by adding a מ (m) in front of the child root לֵאכַךְ (la'ak). This child root is derived from the parent root לָךְ (lak), which is written in the ancient pictographic script as . The .

(l) is a staff, while the ש (k) is a picture of the palm of the hand. The parent root ש/ has an original Hebraic meaning of “staff in the palm” or “to walk”, as a staff was a common tool carried by the traveler. Another child root formed from the parent root לך is הלך (halak), also meaning “to walk.” The noun מלאך (mela'ak) is “one who walks for another”, a “messenger”. This can be one who walks for another man, and translated as “messenger” as seen in the first verse above. This word can also be one who walks for God, which is translated as “angel” in the second verse.

Genesis 49:8 / Neck

The Hebrew noun for the neck is עורף (*oreph*), which is derived out of the Hebrew verb ערף (*Ah.R.P*) meaning “to be necked,” as in “breaking the neck.”

Isaac Mozeson, the founder of the study of Edencis, has some very interesting things to say about this Hebrew word.

If you think the GIRAFFE is a strange animal, check out its weird (given) etymology. French girafe and Italian giraffa is said to be a corruption of Arabic zirafah, even though the term is meaningless in Arabic and [besides,] a G from a Z corruption is unnatural... The Hebrew for [the neck] is OReF, more correctly pronounced by Sephardim as KHoReF or GHoReF. Now we've got the perfect sound and sense for GiRaFFe, since GHoReF means the scruff of the neck. Like sCaRF and sCRuF [being] neck words whose initial S is non-historic.

Any word with more than 3 root letters in Hebrew, or any language, is carrying extra baggage around the root or roots. These CRF neck words come from Biblical Hebrew KHoReF (neck) just like the CRaVat (necktie). A related Gimel-Resh term, GaRoN (throat, neck) gives us other long-necked animals, like the CRaNe, eGRet and HeRoN, along with neckwear like the GoRGeous GoRGet, the throaty GRoaN of a CRooNer and the GaRGling of a GouRmet GaRGoyLe.

Genesis 49:24 / Mighty

The Hebrew word אביר (*aviyr*) is identified in Strong's dictionary with two different numbers, #46 and #47. In the Masoretic Hebrew text of the Bible, Strong's #46 is written as אֲבִיר (*aviyr*) and Strong's #47 is written as אַבִּיר (*abbiyr*). The nikkudot, (the vowel pointings appearing as dots and dashes) were invented by the Masorites and are not part of the original Hebrew text. If we remove these nikkudot we find that these two words are spelled identically – אביר (ABYR).

These nikkudot were added to aid in the pronunciation of Hebrew words, but I am also of the opinion that some nikkudot were added to separate out words to give the impression that they are two different words for reasons which will be apparent below.

The Hebrew word אביר (*aviyr/abbiyr*, Strong's #46/47) is translated in the KJV as bull, strong, mighty, stouthearted, valiant, angel and chiefest, but we must remember that the Hebrew language, being a concrete language, concentrates on the function or action of something rather than its appearance. This noun is not attempting to describe a specific entity, but an action that is common among different entities.

If you have ever watched an eagle soar and thought how majestic it is, you understand the meaning of the Hebrew word אביר (*aviyr/abbiyr*). The root of this word is the verb אבר (*A.B.R*, Strong's #82) meaning "soar" and is used in only once in the Hebrew Bible.

Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and spreads his wings toward the south? (RSV, Job 39:26)

My translation of the noun אביר (*aviyr/abbiyr*) is "valiant" and defined as, "Possessing or acting with bravery or boldness. The mighty power of a bird in flight. Anything or anyone of great mental or physical strength."

Strong's number #46 אָבִיר (*aviyr*) is always used in the context of YHWH being the "valiant one of Israel/Jacob."

...I am YHWH your rescuer and your redeemer, the valiant one of Jacob. (Isaiah 49:26)

Strong's #47 אַבִּיר (*abbiyr*) is used for any other "valiant" one.

Then the heels (hoofs) of horses will strike from the galloping, the galloping of his valiant ones. (Job 5:22)

Exodus 1:1 / Vav vs. Waw

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."

The letter waw (vav) is commonly used as a prefix to words and means "and." While English syntax (sentence structure) requires multiple sentences to be broken up with commas and periods, Hebrew does not. In fact, the entire first chapter of Genesis is one long sentence. Instead of breaking up sentences with commas and periods, the letter waw (vav) is used and is in fact used 101 times in the first chapter of Genesis.

Interestingly, Exodus 1:1 begins with a waw (vav) and therefore should begin with “and these are the names.” This suggests that Exodus 1:1 was originally a continuation of Genesis 50:26 and not a separate book.

Exodus 1:13 / Service

While the word מלאך (malak) is one who does business for another in the sense of an employee, the word עבד (eved) is one who serves another in the sense of a slave, and is derived from the verbal root עבד (Ah.B.D) meaning “to serve as a slave.” We understand a slave as one forced against his will to work for another such as we see with Israel in Egypt.

So they made the people of Israel serve (eved) with rigor, And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage (avodah)... Exodus 1:13,14 (RSV)

The noun עבודה (avodah) is another noun derived from the verbal root עבד (Ah.B.D).

There is another type of slave, what we might call a bondservant, one who is forced to work for another to pay off a debt owed or one who chooses to place himself under the authority of another in exchange for something, such as we see with Jacob who offers himself as payment for Laban’s daughter (Genesis 29:18).

And Moses, the slave (eved) of Yahweh, died there in the land of Moab according to the word of Yahweh. Deuteronomy 34:5

Moses was, in the truest sense of the word, a slave to Yahweh. From his first encounter with Yahweh at the burning bush until his death, he never walked away from God. Sure, he erred and made his mistakes, but he always served God in the best way he could. It is interesting to note that he is never called “a slave” until the time of his death, almost as if the only way he could prove his loyalty was to remain in the service of Yahweh until his death. Moses’ successor Joshua is also called “a slave of Yahweh” but again, not until after his death (Joshua 24:29). Only one other individual is called “a slave of Yahweh” in the Bible:

*...A Psalm of David, the **slave** (eved) of Yahweh... Psalm 18:1*

Exodus 2:5 / Pond

In the English language the word "pound" has two meanings. The first is something with weight (as in a "pound of salt") and the second is an enclosure (as in a "dog pound"). Etymology scholars agree that these are two different words from two different sources and this may very well be the case, but there is some very interesting evidence to suggest that there may actually be a connection between the two.

It is assumed that the word "ponder" is derived out of the word pound (weight), in the sense of giving weight to an idea or thought, "weighing the options" so to speak. However, the word "ponder" is also defined as "reflecting" on an idea or thought. A reflection is what is seen on the surface of water, such as a "reflecting pond." The word "pond" is derived from the word pound (enclosure) in the sense that a pond is enclosed by its banks. In Eastern cultures ponds are a very common place for meditating (reflecting/pondering).

In the Hebrew language, the idea of "pondering" is also closely related to bodies of water. Psalm 1:2-3 reads, "...He will ponder (meditate) on his teachings day and night, and he will be like a tree planted by a channel of water..." There are several Hebrew words meaning to meditate, one of these is the word שיח (si'ahh), which is closely related to the word שחה (sahhah) meaning to swim.

The purpose of meditation is to generate strength inside one's self. This strength may be manifested in an emotional or psychological response, such as in creating courage or confidence. The strength may also be revealed in a physical sense such as in creating the ability to stand up to an enemy, trouble or burden.

In addition, water is involved in most of the miracles of the Bible. Creation begins with the Wind of God hovering over the waters (Genesis 1:2). The destruction of all mankind, save Noah, was done with a flood (Genesis 6:17). The infant Moses is saved from Pharaoh's decree to kill all the children by being placed in the river of the Nile (Exodus 2:5). The water in Egypt was turned to blood (Exodus 4:9). Moses' parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21). Moses brought water to the thirsty Israelites by striking the rock (Exodus 17:6). Quail from the sea fed the Israelites (Numbers 11:31). Manna appeared on the ground after the dew dried up (Exodus 16:14). The stopping of the flow of the Jordan River (Joshua 3:13). Elijah drowns his offering with water and it still ignites (1 Kings 18:38). Naaman is healed of leprosy in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:14). Jonah was saved from drowning in the sea by a fish (Jonah 1:17).

Exodus 3:12 / Paragogic Nun

Hebrew verbs can have a variety of prefixes and/or suffixes added to the verb root. For instance, when the letter ת (tav) is added to the front of the verb עבד (*Ah.B.D*), the conjugated verb תעבד (*ta'aved*), meaning "you (masculine singular) serve," is formed. When the letter ו (vav) is then added to the end of this verb, it becomes תעבדו (*ta'av'du*), meaning "you (masculine plural) serve." On rare occasions one will find the letter ן (nun) added to the end of a verb conjugation, such as in תעבדון (*ta'av'dun*). This additional letter is called the "paragogic nun" and adds the idea of "must" or "certainly" to the verb. So while תעבדו (*ta'av'du*) means "you will serve," תעבדון (*ta'av'dun*) means "you must serve."

Exodus 3:14 / I am that I am

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? (KJV, Exodus 3:13)

In this verse, Moses is asking YHWH what his “name” is, so that he can tell the Israelites when they ask. Exodus 3:14 is YHWH’s response.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (KJV; Exodus 3:14)

YHWH first tells Moses, “I am that I am,” but we will come back to phrase. Then he tells him to tell the Israelites, “I am sent me to you.” From this, we can conclude that his “name” is “I am,” which in Hebrew is אהיה (ehyeh). All translations of the Bible translate this word, but never transliterate it. Contrast this with the following verse.

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. (KJV, Exodus 6:3)

In this verse YHWH gives his name as יהוה (YHWH) and most translations transliterate this word. While many will claim there is no “J” sound in Hebrew, but we must remember that when the King James Version was written, the letter “J” had a “Y” sound, and still does in some languages. It is my opinion that the word אהיה (ehyeh) in Exodus 3:14 should be transliterated as “Ehyeh” and simply translated as “I am.”

Because a person’s character is reflected in his name in Hebrew tradition, it is important then to know what אהיה (ehyeh) means. The word אהיה (ehyeh) is a conjugation of the verb היה (H.Y.H) and the following are the various conjugations of this verb.

Person	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation	Example
1 st person	אהיה	Ehyeh	I exist (I am)	Exodus 4:12
2 nd person	תהיה	Tihyeh	You exist (You are)	Exodus 4:16
3 rd person	יהיה	Yihyeh	He exists (He is)	Exodus 4:16

As you can see, the word אהיה (ehyeh) means “I exist.” There is another Hebrew verb that has the same basic meaning as the verb היה (H.Y.H) and that is הוה (H.W.H), which is conjugated in the same manner.

Person	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation	Example
1 st person	אהוה	Ehweh	I exist (I am)	Not used in the Bible
2 nd person	תהוה	Tihweh	You exist (You are)	Daniel 2:41

3rd person יהוה Yihweh He exists (He is) Not used in the Bible

Notice the third person form is יהוה, which is the name YHWH, and means "he exists." When YHWH told Moses his name he said אהיה, meaning "I exist," but then when Moses actually goes to Israel, he tells them that his name יהוה, meaning "he exists."

Now, let's get back to the phrase "I am that I am," which is found in Exodus 3:14. In the Hebrew text this is written as אהיה אשר אהיה. We have already examined the word אהיה, which appears twice. The other word אשר (asher) is the relative pronoun that, depending upon the context, can be translated as which, who, what, because, that, etc. If we chose to translate אהיה as "I am," then this phrase would be translated as "I am who I am." But if we chose to translate אהיה as "I exist," which I believe is a better translation, then this phrase would be translated as "I exist because I exist."

Exodus 3:16 / Appear

For those who do not know Hebrew, the only tool available for studying the Hebrew text of the Bible is Strong's Hebrew Dictionary. While this dictionary is a valuable resource, it has many limitations.

In the King James Version of Exodus 3:16 we read, "The LORD God of your fathers... appeared unto me..." A person might read this and ask, "How can the LORD 'appear' to someone when he has no form?" This person then takes out his Strong's Dictionary and looks up the word "appear" in this verse and finds the following entry.

H7200 ראה râ'âh

Translations - see 879, look 104, behold 83, shew 68, appear 66, consider 22, seer 12, spy 6, respect 5, perceive 5, provide 4, regard 4, enjoy 4, lo 3, foresee 2, heed 2, misc 74; 1313

The reader then sees that the Hebrew word ראה (ra'ah) means "see" and "look." Armed with this bit of "knowledge," the reader then retranslates this verse as, "And the LORD God of your fathers... looked unto me..." and then says, "ah-ha, the LORD didn't 'appear' to him, the LORD 'saw' him." But to confirm his theory, he goes back a few verses and reads Exodus 3:4, "And when the LORD saw that he turned aside..." Taking out his trusty Strong's Dictionary he looks up the word "saw" and finds the following entry.

H7200 ראה râ'âh

Translations - see 879, look 104, behold 83, shew 68, appear 66, consider 22, seer 12, spy 6, respect 5, perceive 5, provide 4, regard 4, enjoy 4, lo 3, foresee 2, heed 2, misc 74; 1313

He then says, "There it is, the Hebrew word translated as 'saw' is the very same Hebrew word ra'ah!"

Have you ever heard the expression, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing?" Well, this applies in this situation. What this reader is not aware of, is that Hebrew verbs can take on different forms and these forms are not identified in Strong's Dictionary. In Exodus 3:4 the Hebrew verb ra'ah is written וִירָא (vai'yar), which is the simple form of the verb and means "and he saw." But in Exodus 3:16 it is written as נִרְאָה (nir'ah), which is the passive form of the verb and means "and he was seen" or "and he appeared." According to the verb form of this Hebrew word in Exodus 3:16, the LORD is not the one "seeing," he is the one that "was seen."

All of the resources available for going into this depth of Hebrew study require the reader to have at least a basic knowledge of Hebrew, shutting out all those who wish to go deeper into the text, but are unable to do so. That is until now. The Mechanical Translation is designed to provide the reader who has no background in Hebrew the ability to study the Hebrew language at this depth.

The following is the Mechanical Translation of the word "see" in Exodus 3:4.

and~he~will~SEE

Now the Mechanical Translation of the word "appear" in Exodus 3:16.

he~did~be~SEE

The word "be" in this translation indicates to the reader that this verb is in the passive form and we discover that the phrase "be seen" means to "appear." In this same way, whenever a verb is written in the causative form, the word "make" will be there; and whenever a verb is written in the reflexive form, the word "self" will be there. Now the reader has the ability view the Hebrew text without even knowing how to read Hebrew.

Exodus 4:14 / Aaron

As we have seen the connection between "curds" and "wisdom" is the separating out of something but interestingly there is another connection between these as found in Isaiah 7:15; "He will eat curds and honey (or possibly dates) to know to refuse evil and to choose good." There appears to be a physical connection between curds (hhemah) and wisdom (hhakhmah) as this passage indicates that eating curds can bring about wisdom.

The Hebrew name Aharon (pronounced ah-ha-rown but usually written as Aaron) is a difficult name to determine its etymology or roots making it difficult to determine its meaning. Many different possibilities have been proposed in many different dictionaries, some of which are, lofty, mountaineer, mountain of strength, illuminator, light bringer and teacher. There are two possible parent roots that this name can come from, אר (ar) and הר (har). The parent root אר (ar) is the root of the word אור (owr)

meaning "light" hence, the possibilities of illuminator, light bringer and teacher (as one who illuminates). The parent root הר (har) is the Hebrew word for hill, mountain and lofty. While we cannot say for certainty which root is the origin of the name, its first occurrence in the Bible may provide a clue. "Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, 'Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well; and behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart'" (RSV Exodus 4:14). It is possible that the ideas of "speaking well" and "glad in the heart" could be indicative of Aaron's character as "bright."

Exodus 4:27 / Wilderness

The word דבר (davar) is commonly found in the Biblical text meaning "speak" as in the phrase "vayidaber YHWH el moshe l'mor" (and YHWH spoke to Moses saying). The ancient Hebrew understanding of "speaking" or a "speech" is an ordered arrangement of words. The feminine form of this word is דברה (devorah) and is the name Deborah, but also means "bee". A bee hive is a colony of insects that live in a perfectly ordered society.

Another common word derived from the root davar is מדבר (midvar) meaning a "wilderness". In the ancient Hebrew mind the wilderness, in contrast to the cities, is a place of order. Many people today live in the cities, a place of hurrying, rushing and busying ourselves with all the day-to-day tasks and high crime. The city can easily be seen as a place of chaos.

On the other hand, when we want to "get away from it all" and slow down and really rest we go out to the "wilderness" to camp. We take walks out into the woods or sit by a lake and feel the peace in these places. These are places of order where all of nature is in a perfect balance of harmony.

The word דבר (davar) may better be translated as "order" as in the phrase "And YHWH gave orders to Moses saying". A commanding officer does not speak to his troops, he has formulated his action plans and has determined the best means to have these plans carried out. Once all of this is determined, he gives his "orders" to his troops. These orders are "an ordered arrangement".

The phrase "Ten Commandments" does not actually appear in the Hebrew Bible, instead it is aseret hadevariym" and is literally translated as "ten orders". The "Ten Commandments" are our orders from God (the general). They are an ordered arrangement of ideas that if followed will bring about peace and harmony.

Exodus 7:1 / Who or what is "God?"

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1 KJV)

Then his master shall bring him unto the judges. (Exodus 21:6 KJV)

What do these two verses have in common? Simple, the both contain the Hebrew word “Elohiym.” One of my greatest frustrations when studying the Bible is the translators complete lack of ability to consistently translate words. If you are reading a translation you are being given the translators 'opinion' of what the Hebrew/Greek text is saying and not the original author's 'conviction.'

The Hebrew word translated as 'God' in Genesis 1:1 is 'Elohiym' and this same word is translated as 'judges' in Exodus 21:6. The word Elohiym is a plural form (as indicated by the 'iym' suffix) of the word elo'ah. Elo'ah means a judge, or one of power and authority. Therefore, elohiym means 'judges' as we see in Exodus 21:6. So, why isn't Elohiym translated as 'judges' in Genesis 1:1. First of all it can't. The verb translated as created is bara and identifies the subject of the verb (Elohiym) as a masculine singular - he (not they). So, Elohiym has to be understood as a proper name and a simple plural noun.

And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh. (Exodus 7:1 KJV)

The Hebrew word translated as 'god' is again the word Elohiym. Did God 'make' Moses 'judges.' That really does not make sense in English, nor does it make sense in Hebrew. Again we are looking at a translator's opinion. The word “made” is their translation of the Hebrew word natan which more literally means 'to give.' The LORD (more on this word in another article) 'gave' Moses Elohiym (someone, or something with a name meaning judges). As I mentioned the meaning behind Elohiym is 'power' and through the events of the plagues and Israel's wanderings through the wilderness we see Moses manifest this 'power.'

From this we can conclude the Moses is Elohiym, he has been given the quality and character of the Elohiym that created the heavens and the earth. This of course goes contrary to our understanding of what God is, after all, isn't God the old man sitting on the throne of heaven? I think not. The word Elohiym is not a reference to a person but a character trait.

Exodus 7:10 / Taniyn

In Exodus 7:10 Aaron casts Moses' staff down and it turns into a תנין (*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.

Exodus 9:16 / Declaring the name YHWH

While there are some people who claim that if you do not use the absolute correct pronunciation for the name YHWH, he will not hear you. This is based partially on Exodus 9:16 where it appears to be saying that we are to declare his name to all people and teach them how to correctly pronounce it.

And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. (KJV, Exodus 9:16)

However, as the Hebrew word שם (shem), translated as “name” in this verse, can also mean “character,” it is my opinion that this verse should be translated as, “and that my character may be declared throughout all the earth.” This verse is not speaking about how to pronounce the name, but teaching others about the character of YHWH.

Exodus 9:23 / Thunder

The word Hebrew word קול (qol) means “voice” as can be seen in the following passage.

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day... (KJV, Genesis 3:8)

While the KJV translates this word as “voice” in the passage, the RSV translates it as “sound.” The reason is, is that the word קול can also mean “sound” as can be seen in the following passage.

Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month... (KJV, Leviticus 25:9)

The noise made by the trumpet is the “voice” of the trumpet.

When the word קול is written in the plural form-קולות (qolot), it means “thunder.”

And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. (KJV, Exodus 9:23)

It is possible that the Hebrews believed that thunder was actually the "voice" YHWH.

Exodus 10:19 / Red Sea

After the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt they camped at the "Red Sea". When the chariots of Pharaoh arrived the waters of the "Red Sea" were parted and the Israelites crossed over into safety on the other side.

The "Red Sea" is actually a misnomer from the translation of the Hebrew. The Hebrew is יָם סוּף (yam suph). The Hebrew word יָם (yam) means "sea" and when used alone refers to the Mediterranean Sea. Another Hebrew word is derived from this word, it is the word יוֹם (yom) meaning day. In the Hebrew reckoning of time, the day begins at sunset. At sunset the sun sets in the west and into the Mediterranean Sea.

The word יָם (suph) literally means "edge". This can be the edge of a country (border), the lips as the edge of the mouth, or an outline of something. In the Biblical text this word is used for "reeds" which line the banks, or edge, of rivers. Hence, the "yam suph" is the "Sea of Reeds" or "Reed Sea". Somewhere in time the "Reed Sea" became the "Red Sea".

This same word, "suph", is used in Jewish theology in the term "eyen soph" (with just a vowel change). The word "eyn" means "without" and "soph" means "edge" or "definition" (as an outline). The phrase "eyn soph" means "without definition" and is used for God, the one who has no definition, outline or form.

Exodus 12:23 / The Destroyer

For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. Exodus 12:23

In this verse Yahweh prevents the destroyer from killing the firstborn of the house with the blood on the doorposts.

And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. Exodus 12:29

In this verse the destroyer is identified as Yahweh. Therefore, when Yahweh the preventer sees the blood on the doorpost he prevents Yahweh the destroyer from killing the firstborn.

Exodus 12:37 / How many came out of the exodus of Egypt

Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know of a surety that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years; Genesis 15:13 (RSV)

From this passage it would appear that the nation of Israel served at least 400 years in captivity in Egypt. The lineage of Levi as recorded in Exodus 6 and 1 Chronicles 6 indicates only 3 generations between Levi and Moses (Levi-Kohath-Amram-Moses). If the slavery began shortly after Yaacov his children and his grandchildren entered Egypt (the 70 in all), the maximum amount of time that this lineage could have existed in slavery is approximately 350 years (This is assuming the Kohath was at least an infant and part of the 70 entering Egypt and Amram was born to Kohath in the year of his death and Moses was born in the year of Amram's death plus the 80 years of Moses life before the exodus).

There are two possible ways of interpreting this passage. The first is that persons are missing in the lineage though there is no indication of this anywhere in the text. The second possibility is to interpret this passage with the four hundred years being between Abraham and the exodus such as Rabbinic Judaism interprets this including the Rabbi Shaul of the New Testament.

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many; but, referring to one, "And to your offspring," which is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. Galatians 3:16,17 (RSV)

In this passage Shaul is comparing the giving of the law with the promises given to Abraham, which he identifies as 430 years. With this interpretation, Genesis 15:13 is interpreted to mean that Abraham's seed will live in a strange land which, since Ishmael was born in a strange land (Canaan), would begin with the birth of Abraham's first seed. His decedents would also serve as slaves in a land not there own (Egypt).

Abram was 86 years old at the birth of Yishmael, his first seed to be born in a strange land. Abram was 100 years old at the birth of Yitsaac. 14 years between births. Yitsaac was 60 when he bore Esav and Yaacov. Assuming that each generation began at the father's age of 60, there are 300 years from the birth of Yitsaac and the birth of Moses. Moses lived 80 years before the exodus. Adding in the 14 years between the birth of Yishmael and Yitsaac, we have 396 years between the birth of Yishmael and the exodus. This is a very close approximation to the prophecy of Genesis 15:13.

This interpretation does have three problems. The first is that Shaul says 430 years, while the actual prophecy states 400 years. This is fairly easy to resolve by simply saying that one or both of these numbers are approximates. But, Shaul does take the number 430 from a passage in Tenach, which brings us to the second problem.

The time that the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. Exodus 12:40,41 (RSV)

This text indicates that Israel dwelt in Egypt for 430 years bringing us back to the problem of the lineage. This problem may easily be solved with the following observation. The text translated as "four hundred and thirty years" is "sheloshiym (thirty) shana (year) v'arbah (and four) me'ot (hundred) shanah (year)". It is possible that the original Hebrew was written as "sheloshiym (thirty) shana (year) v'me'ot (hundred) shanah (year)". This alternate reading would be translated as "one hundred and thirty years" placing the time of bondage shortly after Yaacov's entrance into the land of Egypt.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. Exodus 1:8 (RSV)

It has been assumed that this passage takes place after the death of Yoseph (Exodus 1:6) but many times the Hebrew text demonstrates that stories are not written chronologically. It is possible that this is the reign of the Hyskos who conquered Egypt that may have happened while Yoseph was still alive and they "did not know Yoseph".

A later scribe attempting to rectify Exodus 12:41 with Genesis 15:13 inserted the word "arbah", hence, the translation of "four hundred and thirty years". This may also explain the reason for the two different numbers given for the "slavery" of the nation of Israel in Egypt.

The third problem is the number of male descendents of Yaacov who came out of Egypt.

And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. Exodus 12:37 (RSV)

According to this passage 600,000 men descended from Yaacov left Egypt. If each man is married with the average of 5 children, this brings the entire population of Israel to 6,000,000. This is not including the mixed multitude that came out with them (Exodus 12:38) or the flocks and herds that they also brought out. This large number of people creates a few problems. The first is the size of this "army" (Exodus 12:41 - hosts meaning army. Also Exodus 12:37 where the men are called "gevoriym" or warriors) compared to the size of Pharaoh's army of 600 chariots (Exodus 14:7) which brought fear to the Israelites. How could 600 chariots be considered a threat to 600,000 warriors of Israel? Equally puzzling is the fear the Israelites felt at entering the promised land where each city probably contained no more than 5,000 warriors compared to their 600,000.

Another problem is the simple logistics to supply, feed, water and move such a large number. According to the Quartermaster General in the army, it would take 1,500 tons of food, 4,000 tons of wood as fuel

and 11,000,000 gallons of water each day to supply the basic needs of this group. Another problem is the location of the Latrine.

You shall have a place outside the camp and you shall go out to it; and you shall have a stick with your weapons; and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up your excrement. Deuteronomy 23:12,13 (RSV)

A camp of this size would be approximately five miles by five miles square assuming only 1,000 square feet per family. One located in the center of the camp would require a hike of 2.5 miles to use the restroom.

Another problem is the estimated population of the nation of Israel compared to the estimated population of Egypt at this time. It is estimated that the whole population of Egypt at the time of the exodus was between 2 and 5 million. According to the above estimates of the population of Israel, the people of Israel would be the population of Egypt.

Another problem is the large number of people is not possible with the number of generations available from Levi to the exodus. The average number of children born to the descendants of Yaacov is three to five. If we assume that the twelve children of Yaacov had 5 children, and the generation of Kohath, Amram and Moses each had 5 children, the maximum number of people (men, women and children) descended from Yaacov at the time of the exodus would be approximately 7500.

The Hebrew text of Exodus 12:41; "about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children" reads "c'shesh me'ot eleph rag'liy hagebaryim l'vad mitaph". This could also be translated as "about six hundred chiefs (eleph) on foot are the warriors apart from the children". We now have a group of warriors that would find the 600 chariots of Pharaoh a formidable army. If we also assume that each chief (head of the family) included a wife and 5 children we have 6,000 people correlating the previous calculation of descendants from Levi to the exodus.

By changing the translation of the word "eleph" to chiefs will also fit the census records of numbers.

The number of the tribe of Reuben was forty-six thousand five hundred. Numbers 1:21 (RSV)

The Hebrew of this passage could also be translated as; "The number for the tribe of Rueben is six and 40 (46) chiefs and 5 hundred". With this alternate translation we have 46 chiefs and 500 family members. When we apply this method to the remainder of the tribes we come to a total number of 598 chiefs and 5,550 others (The standard translation of the complete census is 603,550, if the 3 is changed to a five, a possible error we have 605,550 very close to the 598 (2 short of 600) chiefs and 5550 people. Note, the Septuagint (LXX) does have a change of 5 to a 4 so the error is not out of the realm of possibilities).

In summary, it would appear that the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt lasted 130 years and approximately 7,000 individuals traveled to Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 12:8 / Flesh

The Hebrew word בשר (basar) means “flesh,” the skin or meat of animals or man; and when used in the phrase “all flesh” it means “all mankind.” The verbal root of this word is בשר (B.S.R) and can be found in the following passage where it is translated as “proclaim the good news.”

*The spirit of Adonai Yahweh is upon me because Yahweh has anointed me to **proclaim the good news** (בשר)... Isaiah 61:1*

What does “flesh” have to do with “proclaiming good news”? Simple—when one proclaimed good news, such as the arrival of a new baby or visitors, or some other celebration, an animal was slaughtered and “flesh” was served.

Exodus 15:11 / Henotheism

Most of us are familiar with the terms polytheism (Latin for “belief in many gods”) and monotheism (Latin for “belief in one god”). But not too many are familiar with the term Henotheism, which also means “a belief in one god,” but refers to the worshiping of only one god, but recognizes the existence of other gods.

In the Biblical text we find references to all three belief systems. While polytheism is forbidden, it was practiced by some Hebrews. On numerous occasions we read in the Bible of the Hebrews worshipping Ba’al or Asherah alongside of Yahweh. Isaiah 43:10 is a clear monotheistic view which states “*before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*” Several passages in the book of Psalms imply a more Henotheistic view.

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty [El in Hebrew], he judgeth among the gods (KJV, Psalm 82:1)

Among the gods there is none like unto thee. (KJV, Psalm 86:8)

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. (KJV, Psalm 95:3)

The following passage appears to prove a monotheistic view in the Bible.

Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightiest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him. Deuteronomy 4:35

The key phrase here is “there is none else beside him,” which does state that YHWH is the one and only god, but this translation is a little misleading as the Hebrew simply says “without another by himself,” which could be interpreted as standing alone. If I said, “John is all by himself with no one else around,” would you assume I meant that John is the only human on the planet? I don’t think so. Therefore we

shouldn't apply the same logic in this verse. This same phrase is found in several other passages used by monotheists to support their position including Deuteronomy 4:39, 1 Kings 8:60, 2 Kings 19:15, Psalm 86:10, Isaiah 37:16 and Isaiah 37:20.

Exodus 15:18 / Eternity

When looking off into the far distance, it is difficult to make out any details and what is beyond the horizon cannot be seen. This is the concept behind the Hebrew verb עלם (*Ah.L.M*), meaning “to be beyond the horizon,” “to be beyond view” or “to hide.” The noun עולם (*olam*), derived from this verb, means the “horizon” or “out of sight.”

Before the mountains were brought forth and you formed the land and the world, from horizon (olam) to horizon (olam) you are God. Psalm 90:2

Hebrew words that are used for space, such as we see in the verse above, can also be used for time. In the verses below, the word עולם (*olam*) mean “beyond the horizon of time” or “a long time” in the past or the future.

...Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the river a long time ago (olam)... Joshua 24:2

I despise it, I will not live for a long time (olam) for my days are vanity. Job 7:16

The word *olam* is frequently translated as “eternity” or “forever” with the mistaken understanding that it means a continual span of time that never ends—forever. However, in the Hebrew mind, this word simply means “beyond the horizon,” “a very distant time.”

A common Hebrew phrase in the Bible is לעולם ועד (*l' olam va'ed*) which is translated as “for ever and ever” in the verse below.

The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. Exodus 15:18 (KJV)

More literally, from a Hebraic perspective, this phrase means “to the distant horizon and again.” When this translation is applied to the above verse, it can mean, “Yahweh will reign to the horizon and beyond” or “Yahweh will reign for a distant time and beyond” or even both.

Exodus 15:15 / Buck

Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Exodus 15:15 (KJV)

In this verse are two related Hebrew words, אלופ (aluph) and איל (ayil).

The word אַיִל (ayil) is translated as “mighty men” in the KJV, but is often translated in various ways including “buck” in Genesis 15:9 and “posts” in Ezekiel 40:14. Hebrew nouns are descriptive of character and to understand the character of the word אַיִל (ayil) we need to look at its root, the parent root אַל (el). While this word is frequently translated as God or god, it literally means “might,” “mighty” or “mighty one” as can be seen in the following passage.

*Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand.
Deuteronomy 28:32 (KJV)*

Based on the context of the use of the word אַיִל (ayil) in various passages, and the meaning of its root, we can conclude that this word literally means “one that stands tall in might,” like a buck, a post or a person of great authority.

The Hebrew word אֱלֹף (aluph), translated as “duke” in the KJV, but also translated as “chief,” “leader,” and “prince” in other translations, is derived from the verbal root אִלַּף (A.L.Ph), also derived from the parent root אַל (el), means “to train through experience.” Derived from אִלַּף (A.L.Ph) is the word אֵלֶף (eleph), meaning an ox. An אֱלֹף (aluph) is “one like an ox in strength and power.”

Exodus 15:26 / Commandment

The word command, as well as commandment, are used to translate the Hebrew word מִצְוָה (mits'vah), but command and commandment do not properly convey the meaning of this Hebrew word. The word command implies words of force or power as a General commands his troops. The word mits'vah is better understood as a directive. To see the picture painted by this word, it is helpful to look at a related word, צִיּוֹן (tsiyon, which is also the name Zion), meaning a desert or a landmark. The Ancient Hebrews were a nomadic people who traveled the deserts in search of green pastures for their flocks. A nomad uses the various rivers, mountains, rock outcroppings, etc as landmarks to give them their direction. The verbal root of *mits'vah* and *tsiyon* is צָוָה (tsavah) meaning to direct one on a journey. The *mits'vah* of the Bible are not commands, or rules and regulations, they are directives or landmarks that we look for to guide us.

Exodus 16:7 / Glory

And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD Exodus 16:7 (RSV)

What is the "glory" of YHWH? First we must recognize that the "glory" is something that will be seen, as stated in the passage above. Secondly, the word "glory" is an abstract word, but as Hebrew uses concrete words, we must search to find its concrete meaning.

The Hebrew word translated as "glory" is כָּבוֹד (kavod) and if we look at how this Hebrew word is paralleled with other words in poetical passages of the Bible, we can discover the original concrete meaning of this word. In Psalm 3:3 the *kavod* of Elohiym is paralleled with his shield and in Job 29:20, Job's kavod is paralleled with his bow.

Who is this king of the kavod, YHWH is strong and mighty, YHWH is mighty in battle. In Psalm 24:8

In the above passage, *kavod* is paralleled with strong and mighty in battle. The original concrete meaning of *kavod* is battle armaments. This meaning of "armament" fits with the literal meaning of the root of *kavod*, which is "heavy," as armaments are the heavy weapons and defenses of battle. In Exodus 16:7, Israel will "see" the "armament" of YHWH, the one who has done battle for them with the Egyptians.

Exodus 16:15 / Manna

The following article is the result of a survey I had taken which asked the question "What was the Hebrew name of the Bread-like substance God gave Israel in the wilderness."

It is a provable fact that translations of the Hebrew Bible relied more on the Greek Septuagint (a 2,000 year old Greek translation of the Tenach/Old Testament) than the Hebrew Bible itself, dramatically influencing how we read the Hebrew Bible. This is why we say Moses (Greek Septuagint) instead of Mosheh (Hebrew Bible), Aaron (Greek Septuagint) instead of Aharon (Hebrew Bible), Eve (Greek Septuagint) instead of Hava (Hebrew Bible) and why we say "manna" (the focus of the survey I had taken) instead of its proper Hebrew pronunciation.

In Exodus 16:15 most translations read "...they said one to another, 'What is it?'" The King James reads "...they said one to another, It is manna..." In the survey most people agreed the Hebrew name of the bread-like substance God gave Israel in the wilderness was "Manna" with many adding that it means "What is it." Some wrote that the Hebrew was "Man Na" identifying that it was two Hebrew words meaning "What [is] It." So, what does the Hebrew of Exodus 16:15 actually say? It says "Man Hu" which is the Hebrew words meaning "What is it." Manna (or Mannah or Man Na) does not occur in this verse, not does it occur in Exodus 16:31 which uses the Hebrew word "Man" alone. If the word Manna does not occur in the Hebrew bible, where does it come from? The only place this word is found is in the Greek Septuagint where the Hebrew word "Man" is written in Greek as "Manna."

What I have found really amazing is that while there is a heavy Greek influence on Christian translations, this influence has also entered into Judaism as well. Here is the Jewish Publications Societies (JPS, 1917) translation of Exodus 16:31 - "...Israel called the name thereof Manna..." Why is a Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible using the word found in the Greek Septuagint for the Hebrew word "Man?" What surprised me through the survey was that the large majority of the Jews who follow Judaism thought the Hebrew word for the bread-like substance was "Manna."

Exodus 17:12 / Faithful

But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. Exodus 17:12 (KJV)

The Hebrew word translated as “steady” in this verse is אֲמוּנָה (*emunah*) meaning “set firm in place” or “supported,” and clearly demonstrates the concreteness of the meaning of Hebrew words through an action. This word is a derivative of the verb אָמַן (*aman*), meaning “to support.”

This word is often translated as “faithful” or “faithfulness” which is defined in an English dictionary as; “Adhering firmly and devotedly, as to a person, cause, or idea; loyal.” In the following passage, replace the word “faithfulness” with “firmness” and the Hebraic context of the verse comes alive.

*I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness (*emunah*) to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness (*emunah*) shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness (*emunah*) also in the congregation of the saints. Psalm 89:1-5 (KJV)*

Exodus 17:14 / Rehearse it in the Ears

And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. (KJV, Exodus 17:14)

This verse is an excellent example to illustrate the concrete nature of the Hebrew language and how the translators remove that concreteness and replace it with abstracts. In this passage is the phrase “write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “Write this as a memorial in a scroll and place it in the ears of Joshua.” This passage is “literally saying to take the scroll and place it in Joshua’s ears.” Of course, this is meant to be taken figuratively and the spoken words of the scroll are to be heard by Joshua’s ears.

It has always been my opinion that the role of a Bible translator is to translate the text true to the Hebrew and not interpret the text for the reader. By doing so, the reader is given someone else’s interpretation and is oblivious to the fact that it is in fact an interpretation and not what the text actually states. In passages such as this, the translator could footnote the text to assist the reader with understanding the text.

Exodus 18:7 / Worship

Webster's Dictionary defines "worship" as;

1. The reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object.
2. The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed.

As I have stated many times, but is worth repeating, when we read the Old Testament/Tenach we must define our words from a Hebraic perspective, not English. Unfortunately, when we see the word "worship" in the Bible we automatically assume the above definition causing miss-interpretation of the Biblical text.

If I asked the average person, "Is it okay to worship a man?" The answer would be, "Absolutely not, we are only to worship God."

The first question we must ask is, "What is the Hebrew word behind the English word 'worship' and what does it mean?" Below are a couple of verses in English using the word "worship".

And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. Genesis 24:26

So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD. 1 Samuel 15:31

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Psalm 29:2

In each of these verses the Hebrew word behind the English word "worship" is שחח (shahhah). This Hebrew word appears 172 times in the Biblical text but is only translated as "worship" 99 times in the KJV. Below are some other translations of this same word.

Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Gen 27:29

In this passage other nations will bow down/worship the descendants of Jacob.

And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of [their] welfare; and they came into the tent. Exodus 18:7

In this passage Moses bowed down/worshiped his father-in-law.

So king Solomon sent, and they brought him [Adonijah] down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house. 1 Kings 1:53

In this passage Adonijah was found righteous when he bowed down/worshiped Solomon.

Whenever the Hebrew word *shahhah* is used as an action toward God, the translators translate this word as "worship". But, whenever this same Hebrew word is used as an action toward another man, the translators translate this word as "obeisance", "to bow" or "bow down". As you can see, the translators are preventing the reader from viewing the text in its proper Hebraic context. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word *shahhah* can be seen in Numbers 22:31.

And he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face".

Shahhah means to bow down with the face to the ground.

The concept of "worship" as defined by Webster's dictionary is not Hebraic in any way and is not found in the Bible. We would be better off to remove the idea of "worship" from our Biblical vocabulary and replace it with "bow down". The only true way to bow down/worship God or a man from a true Hebraic perspective is to bow down with the face to the ground. Of course, this concept of bowing is an eastern custom that is not practiced in our western culture.

Exodus 19:5 / Keeping and Breaking

The Bible often refers to the keeping and breaking of a covenant and it is usually interpreted as obedience or disobedience to the covenant. If disobedience were the meaning of "breaking", Israel would never have been able to remain in covenant relationship so long as they did because of their continual disobedience to the terms of the covenant. Let us examine these two words within their Hebraic context beginning with the word for "keep":

"Now, if you will intently listen to my voice and keep my covenant, they will be for me a treasured possession from all the people, for all the land is mine". Exodus 19:5

In the above passage, the Hebrew word behind the English word "keep" is the verb שמר (Sh.M.R). If we interpret this word as obedience, we can easily interpret this passage to mean, "obey the covenant". But as we shall see, this translation is not always suitable to the context of the passage.

"The LORD bless you and keep you". Numbers 6:24 (NIV)

Obviously, the word שמר (Sh.M.R), also translated as "keep" in this verse, cannot be interpreted as "obey", otherwise it would read, "The LORD bless you and obey you". We can clearly see that the word "obey" is a poor interpretation for the Hebrew word שמר (Sh.M.R).

The original use of this word is a corral constructed out of thorn bushes by the shepherd to protect his flock from predators during the night. The שמר (Sh.M.R) was built to "guard" the flock and we can see this same imagery in the passage above by interpreting it as "The LORD bless you and guard you". We now see that "keeping the covenant" is not strictly about obedience, but "guarding the covenant". The

individual's attitude toward the covenant is the issue, does he guard it as a shepherd does his flock, or does he "break" the covenant.

Just as the word "keep" has been misunderstood in the context of the original Hebraic meaning, the word "break" has also been misunderstood, as the word does not mean "disobedience".

"If you reject my decrees and if you cast away my judgments and you do not do all my commands, breaking my covenant, then, I will do this to you; I will bring upon you sudden terror, disease and fever". Leviticus 26:15,16

The Hebrew translated as "break" in the above passage is the verb פָּרַר (P.R.R). The original use of this word was the "treading" over grain. The harvested grain was thrown onto the threshing floor where oxen would trample over the grain breaking the hull open, releasing the edible seeds inside. The "breaking" of a covenant is the total disrespect for the covenant where one literally throws it to the ground and tramples on it. As we can see, the keeping and breaking of a covenant is the respect, or lack of, that one has for the covenant.

Exodus 19:11 / Mount Sinai

Mount Sinai is the mountain that Israel met with God upon leaving Egypt. The Hebrew word סיני (Sinai) means "thorn". This word comes from the parent root סן (Sin), also meaning "thorn." Another word derived from this parent root is סנה (seneh) meaning "thorn bush". The bush that Moses saw burning in Exodus 3:2 is a *seneh*. It was not just a burning bush, but a burning thorn bush.

Mount Sinai is also called Mount Horeb (hhorev - see Exodus 3:1). The Hebrew word חורב (hhorev) comes from the root חרב (Hh.R.B) meaning "to lay waste", "be dried up" as well as "to fight".

By definition the words *sinai* and *hhorev* are synonymous as a dry wasteland is often filled with thorn bushes. But there is also an interesting connection between the Garden of Eden and Mount Sinai.

When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, God placed a "flaming sword" at its entrance. The Hebrew word for "sword" is חרב (hherev) and is related to the word/name *hhorev* (Horeb). The burning thorn bush of Exodus is a picture of the flaming sword of Genesis.

Is it possible that the burning bush and the flaming sword are one and the same thing? Was Mount Sinai the entrance into the Garden of Eden?

Exodus 20:4 / Carved Images

The Hebrew word often translated as graven or carved images is the word 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 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 Cherubim (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

Exodus 20:7 / Vain

Take

The Hebrew verb behind this English word is נשא (nasa) and is a very generic verb used in a wide variety ways in the text. This word has been translated as lift, carry, accept, exalt, regard, obtain, respect and many other ways. In the context of this verse it is the "name" that is being "lifted up." One lifts up a name by making it known to others.

Name

In our modern western culture a name is nothing more than an identifier, really no different than being assigned a number. The Hebrew word for a name is שם (shem) But, in the Ancient Hebrews culture the "shem" is much more than just a name it is the "breath" of the individual. To the Hebrews the breath is more than just the exchange of air in the lungs it is his "character," the internal qualities of an individual that make him unique. This idea of the word shem meaning character can be seen in 1 Kings 4:31, "*and his fame was in all the nations round about.*" Here, the word fame is understood as his "character."

All Hebrew names are words with meaning and these words reflects their characters. For instance, Eve (Havah in Hebrew) means "life" because she is the mother of all the living (Hay, a related word to Havah, see Genesis 3:20). The names for God is no different. The name Yahweh means "he exists" and God (Elohim) means "one of power and authority." Some other names of God include "Jealous" (Exodus 34:14), "One" (Zechariah 14:9 which literally reads "his name is one"), Holy (Isaiah 57:15) and others. What is God's name? Most will answer with Yahweh or God but we must remember that a name

or shem in Hebrew is the character of the individual so the correct question should be "What is God's character?"

Vain

The third word that we need to understand correctly is the word "vain." This is the Hebrew word שוא (sheva). This word literally means "empty" and vain actions are empty of substance. This word can also be understood as "falsely" in the sense of being empty of its true substance. This idea can be seen in Exodus 23:1, "You shall not utter a false report." The word "false" is the very same Hebrew word שוא (sheva).

Now that we have a more complete understanding of the words in the passage we are able to make a more Hebraic interpretation.

You shall not represent the character of Elohiym Falsely

So, what does this mean? In another study we saw that when it says "God created man in his own image" it is in fact saying that God had placed within us a representation of himself. This representation is his *shem* or character and we are to show this character to others. If however, we represent that character falsely, in other words, live our lives contrary to the character of God, then we are violating this command and taking his name (character) in vain (representing it falsely).

Exodus 20:10 / Sabbath

The word שבת (*shabbat*) is always transliterated as "sabbath" and most assume it is simply a name for the day of the week and are unaware that this word has a meaning. It is derived from the verb שבת (*Sh.B.T*) meaning "to cease or stop." The noun *shabbat* is a time of ceasing and, as stated in this verse, the seventh day is a time for ceasing business.

Six days you will serve and do your business. (Exodus 20:9)

This verse also states it is the "*shabbat* of Yahweh Elohiym" in reference to Genesis 2:2.

And Elohiym finished his business which he did on the seventh day and he ceased in the seventh day from all his business which he did.

The word "ceased" in this passage is the verb שבת (*Sh.B.T*), the root of the word *shabbat*.

The parent root of the word *Shabbat* is שב (shav), which is written in the ancient pictographic script as שָׁב. The ש is a picture of teeth, and represents the idea of pressing as when pressing on food with the teeth when chewing. The ב is a picture of the nomadic tent. When combined, these mean to "press to the tent/house" or "return." This parent root is also the root of the word *tbs shabbat* ^[H:7676] with the

letter t. The letter ת, which is attached to the parent root שׁב to form the word *Shabbat*, is written in the pictographic script as † and represents a sign or mark as well as a covenant.

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. Exodus 31:16,17 (ASV)

On the seventh day, Israel “returns (שׁב) to the covenant (ת).”

Exodus 20:11 / Heaven and Earth

This is a Hebrew idiom meaning "all things". It should be remembered that the ancient Hebrew who wrote the Biblical text did not have a conception of the Milky Way Galaxy or the universe. Also they saw the heavens and stars as a canopy or tent covering over the earth. Genesis chapter one is not meant to be a scientific discussion on the origins of the solar system but rather a poetic story about God's involvement with his whole of creation.

It is quite possible that there are many Hebrew idioms in the Bible, the problem is that the definition of an idiom is a phrase that has no real meaning and is only understood from the culture the idiom is derived from. What this means is that there may be many other idioms, but because we do not know them, we would never know them to be idioms. Therefore we often understand them as literal when they were never meant to be literal. Some idioms are known only because they have survived as idioms to this day. In Israel the expressions "good eye" and "bad eye" are still used to mean "generous" and "stingy". Both of these idioms can be found in both the Old and New Testaments (Proverbs 22:9, Proverbs 23:6, Matthew 6:22,23).

Exodus 20:25 / Build

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,” 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 בֵּן. 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."

בֵּן (*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)

Exodus 21:6 / Slave

The original pictograph for the word עֶבֶד (*eved*), meaning servant or slave, is עֵטֶן. The ע is a picture of an eye meaning to see or experience, the ט is a picture of a house and the נ is a picture of a door. When these three meanings of each letter are combined they define the word as "experience the house door," now compare that with Exodus 21:6,

Then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for life.

Exodus 21:23 / Life for Life

What does "life for life" mean? How about "eye for an eye?" The King James Version translates Exodus 21:23-25 as follows.

And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

In this translation is the phrase "life for life" and implies that if you take a persons life, your life is to be taken. I do not believe this is what the verse is implying. The Hebrew translation for "life for life" would be *hhayim l'hhayim*, but this is not what is found in the Hebrew. The Hebrew reads *nephesh tahhat naphesh* which means "being in place of being." I interpret this to mean that if you take a life, such as that of a servant (see the previous verses) or a beast, then you must replace that life.

The KJV translation of "eye for eye" also implies that if you take the eye of another, then your eye must be taken. In the Hebrew, this phrase is written as *ayin tahhat ayin* meaning "an eye in place of an eye." If you take the eye of a person, then you must replace that eye. Of course this cannot mean implanting a new eye, but instead, you must take whatever measures are necessary to give that person what he needs in order to compensate him for the missing eye. This might mean giving him a servant to see for him or money to replace his lost wages.

This interpretation can be supported with the following passage.

but if a man will hit the eye of his servant, or the eye of his bondwoman, and he damages her, he will send him to freedom in place of his eye, and if the tooth of his servant, or the tooth of his bondwoman is made to fall out, he will send him to freedom in place of his tooth. Exodus 21:26,27

Exodus 21:35 / Shalom

The word שלום (*shalom*) is used in Modern Hebrew as a greeting, similar to our use of "hello," or as a farewell, similar to our use of "good-bye." A common phrase in Modern Hebrew using this word is *mah shlom'kha* and literally means "What is your shalom?" and is used the same as the English phrase "How are you?" The phrase *mah shlom'kha* is used when speaking to a male, but when speaking to a female this would be *mah shlo'mekh*.

This word is usually translated as peace but this translation does not adequately define this Hebrew word.

The root of this word is the verbal root שלם (Sh.L.M) and by looking at the context this word in the Biblical text we can get a better understanding of its meaning.

When one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the price of it; and the dead beast also they shall divide. Or if it is known that the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall pay ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his Exodus 21:35,36 (RSV).

In this passage the word שלם (Sh.L.M) is used to express the idea of "replacing" or "restoring" one dead ox for a live one due to negligence. The verb שלם (Sh.L.M) literally means "to make whole". The noun *shalom* has the same basic meaning as can be seen in the following verse.

They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance". Genesis 43:28 (RSV)

In this passage the word "well" implies "wholeness" of the person in health and prosperity.

The word *shalom* is not only used as a greeting in modern Hebrew but in Biblical Hebrew as well.

And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. Genesis 43:23

The next time you greet someone with the word *shalom*, recognize that you are not just saying "peace" or "hello", you are wishing complete wholeness on that person.

Exodus 23:30 / Yahweh is his own messenger

When Jacob blessed his son Joseph, he calls God a מלאך (mela'ak - messenger/angel).

The God who my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked before, The God who shepherded me from the beginning to this day, The Angel who redeemed me from all evil... (Genesis 48:15,16)

God is able to send himself as his own messenger, which can also be seen in the following summary of God's promise to lead the nation of Israel into the promised land:

The Angel leads Israel

"And I [Yahweh] will come down to snatch them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a good and wide land to a land flowing with milk and honey. (Exodus 3:8)

God hears the cries of Israel's bondage in Egypt and promises he will bring them out and lead them into the Promised Land. Once Israel is delivered and taken into the wilderness, Israel begins to grumble and complain. When Yahweh meets Moses at the burning bush, he tells Moses of his plan for Israel. Yahweh

delivers them out of Egypt and brings them to Mount Sinai. Throughout this journey Israel grumbles and complains and Yahweh becomes angry with them.

“Look, I [Yahweh] will send a messenger (\$alm) before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I prepared. Be on guard from his face and hear his voice, do not make him bitter he will not forgive your rebellion for my name is within him”. (Exodus 23:20,21)

“And I [Yahweh] will send before you a messenger (\$alm) and he will cast out the Canaanites, the Amorites and the Hittites and the Peruzites the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey for I will not go up with you because the people are stiff necked and I will turn and devour you on the way.” (Exodus 33:2,3)

After God declares that his “Angel” will lead them into the Promised Land, we read that it is Yahweh who will go before them preparing their way into the land.

“And they will say to the dwellers of this land, as they have heard, that you Yahweh are within this people who saw you Yahweh, eye to eye, and your cloud stood over them and you walked before them in the pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. “ (Numbers 14:14)

“And in this thing you did not believe in Yahweh your God who walked before you on the way to search for you a place to camp, in a fire by night to show you the way you are to walk and in a cloud by day”. (Deuteronomy 1:32,33)

“And you will know today that Yahweh your God is the one who will cross over before you as a devouring fire, he will destroy them and he will subdue them before you”. (Deuteronomy 9:3)

It would appear from the above passages that Yahweh promises to take Israel into the Promised Land but because of their stiff necks, Yahweh says that he will not go but will send his “messenger”. Then we read that Yahweh himself goes before them to prepare the way to the Promised Land. Again, we have Yahweh who does not go with them, but it is the “messenger” Yahweh who does. Another apparent contradiction concerning Yahweh is found in Exodus chapter thirty-three:

“And Yahweh spoke to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend”. (Exodus 33:11)

“And he [Yahweh] said, you cannot see my face because man cannot look on it and live... And when my glory passes by, I will set you in a cleft of the rock, I will cover over you with my palm until I pass by. I will remove my palm and you can see my back, but my face you cannot see”. (Exodus 33:20,22,23)

It is important to make a distinction between the simple reading and understanding of any text from ones interpretation of the text. It is not uncommon for people when reading the text to make an interpretation of the text based on their preconceived beliefs and biases. When we read the Bible and

interpret it according to our beliefs, we will never discover truths within it and therefore we are unable to grow in understanding. Instead, we must learn to read the Bible according to what it says and adjust our beliefs according to what the text says.

The simple reading of the above text states that Moses spoke with Yahweh face to face but Moses was not allowed to see the face of Yahweh. There are many different ways to interpret this apparent contradiction, and it is not my intention to do so here, but only to point out that according to the texts, there is a “messenger” of Yahweh called Yahweh.

We will now look at another series of passages where the “messenger of Yahweh” is not only called Yahweh, but also God.

The Angel of the Lord

“And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian and he drove the flock to the back of the wilderness and he came to Horeb the mountain of God. And he saw the messenger of Yahweh (hwhy \$alm) in flames of fire from the middle of the bush. And he saw and looked, the bush was consumed in fire and the bush was not devoured”. (Exodus 3:1,2)

Throughout the scriptures this “messenger of Yahweh” appears to individuals such as we see with Moses' encounter at the burning bush. Is this “messenger” a specific angel or God himself? In this passage, as can be seen in other passages as well, we will see that Yahweh is his own messenger.

“And Yahweh saw that he turned to see and God called to him from the middle of the bush and he said, Moses, Moses. And he said, I am here.... And he said, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God Isaac and the God of Jacob. And God hid his face because he was afraid to look at God”. (Exodus 3:4,6)

The “messenger of Yahweh” is now identified as God, the God of his fathers. Moses knew that this was God for he was afraid to look at his face, knowing that anyone who looks at the face of God would die (Exodus 33:20).

“And God again said to Moses, Say to the sons of Israel, Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”. (Exodus 3:15)

We have now seen that the “messenger of Yahweh” is God. In the above passage we see that Yahweh is God. From this we can conclude that the “messenger of Yahweh” is actually Yahweh himself.

Exodus 24:2 / Alone

The base word of the word לבדו (le'vahdo) 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 literally 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."

Exodus 24:12 / Law

The Hebrew word "Torah" is usually translated into the English word "Law". Because of this translation there is a great misunderstanding of what "Torah" truly is. "TORAH IS NOT LAW". When we use the word "law" we assume a certain meaning and concept of the word that is not present in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Let us start by looking at the Etymology of the Hebrew word Torah so that we may better understand its true definition. The word Torah comes from the Hebrew root word ירה (Y.R.H), a verb which means "to flow or throw something". This can be a flowing of an arrow from an archers bow, or the flowing of a finger to point out a direction. Nouns are derived from the verb by making one or two changes to the verb root. In this case the Y (yud) is replaced by an O (vav) and an M (mem) is added at the front of the word to form the noun "Moreh". A Moreh is "one who does the flowing". This can be an archer who flows an arrow, or a teacher who flows his finger to point out way the student is to go in the walk of life. Another noun is formed the same way except that a T (tav) is placed at the front of the word instead of an M and we have the word "Torah". Torah is "what is flowed by the Moreh". This can be the arrow from the archer or the teachings and instructions from the teacher.

A Hebraic definition of Torah is "a set of Instructions, from a father to his children, violation of these instructions are disciplined in order to foster obedience and train his children". Notice how the word "Torah" is translated in the New International Version translation in the following passages.

"Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching [Torah]." (Proverbs 1:8)

"My son, do not forget my teaching [Torah], but keep my commands in your heart". (Proverbs 3:1)

The purpose of a parents Torah is to teach and bring the children to maturity. If the Torah is violated out of disrespect or defiant disobedience, the child is punished. If the child desires to follow the instructions out of a loving obedience but falls short of the expectations, the child is commended for the effort and counseled on how to perform the instructions better the next time. Unlike Torah, law is a set of rules from a government and binding on a community. Violation of the rules requires punishment. With this type of law, there is no room for teaching, either the law was broken with the penalty of punishment or it was not broken. God, as our heavenly Father, gives his children his Torah in the same manner as parents give their Torah to their children, not in the manner as a government does to its citizens;

"Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your Torah" (Psalms 94:12)

Another noun derived from this root is מורה (*moreh*), which is a teacher, one who points out the way. The torah is the teaching of the teacher, or more literally, the way pointed out by the teacher, the journey. When we translate Psalm 1:2 with this literal understanding of torah, we read; "His delight is in the journey of Yahweh, and in his journey he meditates day and night." Also in Psalm 119:1; "Happy are the mature ones of the trail, the ones walking in the journey of YHWH."

A nomadic journey is a circuit, traveling from pasture land to pasture land, watering hole to watering hole, year after year. Much of the Hebraic lifestyle is related to this circular journey. Even the feasts are a nomadic journey of a circuit; Pesahh (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost), Sukkot (Tabernacles) and back to Pesahh again. The entire Torah is read through the year and when the end of Deuteronomy is reached, the scroll is rewound and the reading continues with Genesis 1:1.

As I mentioned, the verb *yarah* means to point, but is also used in the context of pointing an arrow, or shooting an arrow as we see in 1 Samuel 20:20; "And I will shoot three arrows." The word *moreh*, which we found meant teacher, is also used for an archer, the one who points the arrow. From this perspective, torah is the arrow. If the arrow goes off course it "misses the mark, or strays from the path." When we stray from the path, we also miss the mark. The Hebrew word for "missing the mark" is חטאה (*hhatah*) which is often translated as "sin." Interestingly, another word for "sin" is to "trespass," to leave the path.

And I looked, and behold, you have sinned against YHWH your Elohiym, and you made for yourself a molten calf, you quickly turned away from the trail which YHWH directed you. (Deuteronomy 9:16)

Interpreting the Hebrew word torah as law is about the same as interpreting the word father as disciplinarian. While the father is a disciplinarian, it is a very narrow interpretation. The same is true for torah, a part of torah is law, but this is a very narrow interpretation of it.

Exodus 25:6 / Oil

In today's culture, oil symbolizes wealth. Nothing has changed over thousands of years. In the ancient cultures of the near and middle east, oil was a symbol of wealth. Oil was used in lamps for making light. Different types of oils, such as the olive oil, were used for medicinal purposes. Oil was poured on one who was taking the office of king or priest. Oil was used in offerings to Elohiym.

The Hebrew word for oil is שמן (*shemen*). The verb form is שמן (*Sh.M.N*) and means "to be fat." The parent root of this word is שם (*shem*), which is usually translated as "name" but more Hebraically means "character." Isn't your character your wealth? Isn't the character of YHWH his wealth?

Exodus 25:10 / Ark

In the Ancient Hebrew mind light is seen as order as without light we would be lost in the chaos of darkness. The Hebrew word for light is אור (or) and a related word is the word ארון (aron). This word means a "box" and is also related to the idea of order in the sense that items are placed within boxes as a way of bringing about order.

The "Ark of the Covenant" is a box that is used to place important items, including the stone tablets, Aaron's staff and the Manna, within it to keep them in "order."

Exodus 25:22 / The Ark of the Covenant

There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you of all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel. (RSV, Exodus 25:22)

The Hebrew word behind the English word "testimony" is עדות (edut) and is closely related to the word עד (eyd), meaning, "someone or something that provides or serves as evidence." This word is found in the following verse.

Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. (RSV, Deuteronomy 31:26)

Did YHWH give the "book of the Law (Torah)" to Israel to be a witness "against" them? The Hebrew for "a witness against you," is בך לעד (b'kha l'eyd) and literally means "with you a witness." The prefixed letter beyt (ב) means "in" or "with," but can also mean "against," but only in the sense of being "next" to something. As you can clearly see, the translators chose to use the word "against" here, but this is misleading as the context does not mean "next to something," but instead as "an adversary."

A perfect witness is a mirror and the torah (the law) was meant to be a mirror, by which Israel could themselves and their actions to determine if they were following YHWH's directions.

Another word found in the passage above is the word covenant, which is the Hebrew word ברית (beriyt). The verbal root of this word is ברה (B.R.H) and means "to have meat." Literally, ברית (beriyt) means "meat."

They said, "We see plainly that the LORD is with you; so we say, let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, (RSV, Genesis 26:28)

The Hebrew for "let us make a covenant" is ונכרתה ברית (v'nikh're'ta beriyt) and literally means "let us cut the meat" and this was how covenants were established, by cutting meat. By extension, the word ברית (beriyt) can also simply mean a "covenant."

Another word found in Deuteronomy 31:26 is the “ark,” which in the Hebrew is ארון (aron) and simply means a “box” and this box was to be made of acacia wood (see Exodus 25:10), which is a tightly grained dark wood.

And you shall overlay it with pure gold, within and without shall you overlay it, and you shall make upon it a molding of gold round about. (RSV, Exodus 25:11)

Gold is a very malleable metal; in fact, one ounce of gold could be molded into a wire that would be 50 miles long. One ounce of gold could be hammered out thin enough to cover about 100 square feet. When gold is hammered this thin it becomes translucent. What happens if you place a translucent sheet, such as made from gold, over a dark surface, such as the acacia wood? You have a mirror.

And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD." (RSV, Exodus 39:30)

A signet was a ring that had the name of the bearer engraved in it, but in reverse, so that when the image was in wet wax it would leave the name of the bearer within the wax. According to Exodus 39:30, the words “Holy to the LORD,” were to be written on a plate that was attached to the high priests head covering. I had always wondered why it was to be written in reverse. If in fact the ark was a mirror, then when the High Priest stood before it, he would see the reflection of the plate with the words in the correct order.

Exodus 25:31 / Gender Pronouns

In the original King James Version of Exodus 25:31, the pronoun "his" is used five different times to describe the Menorah. Why was "his" changed to "its" in every other Bible version I could find?

It is interesting that the KJV would use "his." Let me begin by explaining how pronouns work in Hebrew. All nouns in Hebrew are either masculine or feminine. For instance, father (av), light (or) and tree (ets) are masculine and mother (eym), faith (emunah) and soul (nephesh) are feminine. Pronouns used for these words would also be masculine or feminine. Below are some examples

hu av = he is a father

hiy eym = she is a mother

These translations make sense in English but when working with nouns that have no gender in English it is a little different. For instance, the phrase "hu ets" would literally be translated as "he is a tree" but because this is poor English the translators would change it to "it is a tree."

Now let's look at Exodus 25:31. The noun that the pronouns refer to is the Hebrew word menorah. Menorah is a feminine word. The KJV has "his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers." The Hebrew is "yereykhah, veqanah, geviyeyah, kaphtoreyah, uphraheyah." Notice that each of these words

end with "ah" and is the pronoun "her." So, it should be translated as "her branches, her bowls, her knops, and her flowers" or "its branches, its bowls, its knops, and its flowers."

Why the KJV chose to use the masculine pronoun "his" is beyond me.

Exodus 25:32 / Lampstand

And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: (KJV, Exodus 25:32)

The parent root of the Hebrew word מנורה (menorah), which is translated in the KJV as "candlestick," is נר (ner). In the Ancient Pictographic script this parent root is written as נר. The first letter is the nun and is a picture of a sprouting seed. A seed is the beginning of new life which came from the parent plant. This cycle will continue for generation after generation. The second letter is the head of a man. The head is seen as the top of the body and can be the top or head of anything such as the body (the head), time (the beginning), a landscape (mountaintop) or a rank (Chief). When these two letters are combined they mean a "seed beginning."

The literal meaning of the word נר is to "bring forth light" as well as a "freshly plowed field" because plowing is seen as "the bringing forth of light in the soil", to the ancient Hebrew. In order for a seed to grow/begin, there must be water in the soil. When the ground is plowed, the moist soil from underneath, surfaces and shines from the water in the soil and is a sign that the life giving water is present.

Exodus 27:2 / Copper

The Hebrew word nehhoshet is translated as copper one time (Ezra 8:27) in the King James Version. Copper is a pure mineral meaning that it is not mixed with any other minerals. The King James Version translates this same word as brass one hundred and three times. Brass is an alloy (mixture) of copper and nickel (another pure mineral). Other translations translate nehhoshet as brass or bronze. Bronze is alloy of copper and tin (another pure mineral). It would appear that the translators are not certain of the meaning of the word nehhoshet as no consensus can be made on how to translate this word.

Jewish Hebrew dictionaries and Jewish translations of the Bible always translate this word as "copper." Why would Christian translations and dictionaries commonly translate nehhoshet as brass or bronze while Jewish dictionaries and translations use "copper?" Which is more accurate? At first glance it may seem like an insignificant problem but on further examination it becomes evident that a proper translation is essential.

In Leviticus 19:19 we find three commands;

1. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind
2. you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed
3. nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff

Throughout the Torah God is demonstrating that mixtures are not appropriate. This would especially hold true for the items in the tabernacle. The altar was made of acacia wood and overlaid with nehhoshet. Is this nehhoshet brass, bronze or copper? Both brass and bronze are alloys, mixtures of pure minerals, only copper is a pure mineral. Would God call for an alloy, a mixture of different "pure" metals such as brass or bronze in the tabernacle? I doubt it.

Copper is the meaning of nehhoshet so whenever you see the word brass or bronze in your English translation make a mental note that this should be copper.

Exodus 27:21 / Congregations

The word Congregation appears 331 times in the King James Bible, but this word is used to translate three different Hebrew words; עדה (*eydah*), מועד (*mo'eyd*) and קהל (*qahal*).

The word עדה (*eydah*) is the feminine form of the noun עד (*eyd*) meaning "testimony" or "witness." A עדה (*eydah*) is a group of persons or things that are gathered for carrying on a project or undertaking; a group with a common testimony.

The word מועד (*mo'eyd*) is derived out of the verbal root יעד (*Y.Ah.D*) meaning to "appoint," in the sense of arranging, fixing or setting in place. This root is also derived out of the noun עד (*eyd*) meaning "testimony" or "witness." The word מועד (*mo'eyd*) is an appointed place or time.

The word קהל (*qahal*) is a large group gathered to one place, as a gathering of the flock of sheep to the shepherd. This noun is derived from the verbal root קהל (*Q.H.L*) meaning to gather or round-up a flock or group of people.

Exodus 28:8 / Machine

The Biblical Hebrew word for a machine is חשבון (*hhishbon*).

In Jerusalem he set up machines, invented by skilled workers, on the towers and the corners for shooting arrows and large stones. And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped until he became strong. 2 Chronicles 26:15 (NRS)

This Hebrew word is derived from the verbal root חשב (*Hh.Sh.B*) meaning to "think," but is used in the Biblical text for devising, planning, inventing or counting, all being forms of "thinking." The noun form, חשב (*Hheyshev*), is a skillfully woven band.

And the skilfully woven band upon it, to gird it on, shall be of the same workmanship and materials, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. Exodus 28:8 (RSV)

Each of these Biblical Hebrew words has been brought into Modern Hebrew, but with slightly different meanings. The verb חשב (*Hh.Sh.B*) has the same meaning of "thinking." However, the noun form חשב (*Hheyshev*) is an "accountant," one who counts, and the noun חשבון (*hhishbon*) is an "account."

The modern Hebrew word for a machine is now מכונה (*makonah*), a transliteration of the word "machine." A common "machine" is an automobile, which in Modern Hebrew is מכונית (*makoniyt*), a derivative of מכונה (*makonah*).

Exodus 28:41 / Office of Priest

And you shall put them upon Aaron your brother, and upon his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. Exodus 28:41 (RSV)

In this verse are four verbs describing Aaron and his sons' installation as priests; anoint, ordain, consecrate and serve as priest. While these words describe this installation, they are describing it from an abstract perspective. The Hebrew verbs in the Hebrew text describe this installation from a more concrete perspective that is hidden in the English translation.

משח (mashahh)

This verb is translated as "anoint," which unlike the other three translations, is a concrete concept. The verb literally means to "smear" as can be seen in Jeremiah 22:14 where it is translated as "paint," to smear on a color." Aaron and his sons were "smeared" with oil as a sign of their installation.

מלא (M.L.A)

In the RSV is the word "ordain" and in the KJV it is translated as "consecrate," both being abstracts. In the Hebrew, there is more than just the verb, but a phrase, which reads ומלא את ידם (*umileyta et yadam*) which literally translates as "and you will fill their hand." The actual meaning of this phrase is uncertain, but may be related to an Akkadian (another Semitic culture) custom of handing a scepter to the king at his ordination, a filling of his hand.

קדש (Q.D.Sh)

This verb is translated as "consecrate" in the RSV and in the KJV it is translated as "sanctify," again these are abstracts. The Hebrew word means to "set apart" meaning to separate from the whole for a special purpose. Aaron and his sons have been separated from the rest of the community for the special purpose of taking care of and administering the tabernacle.

כהן (K.H.N)

This Hebrew verb is variously translated as "minister in the priest's office," "serve as priest" or "be a priest." The literal concrete meaning of this word can be found in Isaiah 61:10 which reads, in part, "A bridegroom decks himself with ornaments." In this passage the word "decks" translates the verb כהן, which literally means to "adorn." Aaron and his sons were adorned with special garments and ornaments. The noun כוהן (kohen), usually translated as "priest," literally means "adorned one."

Below is the literal and more concrete translation of this verse.

and you will clothe them, Aharon your brother and his sons with him, and you will smear them, and you will fill their hand, and you will set them apart, and they will be adorned for me

Exodus 29:33 / Atonement

The Hebrew word *kaphar* means "to cover over," but is often translated as atonement. The word atonement is an abstract word and in order to understand the true Hebrew meaning of a word we must look to the concrete meaning. If an offense has been made, the one that has been offended can act as though the offense is covered over and unseen. We express this idea through the word "forgiveness." Atonement is an outward action that covers over the error.

Exodus 31:3 / Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge

Wisdom

The parent root חם (*hham*), meaning "heat," is the root of the word חכם (*hhakham*) meaning "wisdom."

The word *hham* appears as 𐤇𐤍 in its original pictographic script. The letter 𐤍 is a picture of a wall which "separates" one side from another. and the letter 𐤇 is a picture of "water." Combined, these two letters literally mean "separate water." When "heat" (*hham*) is applied to water, we have evaporation, or a "separating of water."

The following Hebrew words are all derived from the parent root root חם (*hham*).

חמת <i>hhey met</i>	skin-bag
חמה <i>hhey mah</i>	cheese
חמה <i>hham mah</i>	sun
חמס <i>hham as</i>	to shake
חמד <i>hham ad</i>	to crave/desire
חמץ <i>hham ats</i>	to sour

While we can plainly see the root חם (*hham*) at the beginning of each of these words, what may not be as plainly seen is how the meanings of each of these words are related.

Soured (חמץ) milk was placed in a skin-bag (חמת) that was set out in the heat (חם) of the sun (חמה) and shaken (חמס). The natural enzymes in the skin-bag causes the “water to separate” (חם) from the milk forming the delicacy (חמד) cheese (חמה).

So, what does all of this have to do with wisdom? חכם (*hhakham*) is related to the idea of “separating,” as this word means “one who is able to separate between what is good and bad.” This one word can be translated as either “skill” when applied to a craftsman, or as “wise” when applied to a leader or counselor.

and now send for me a man of skill (hhakham) to work in gold... 2 Chronicles 2:7

Provide for yourselves wise (hhakham) men and understanding and knowing for your tribes and I will set them as rulers over you. Deuteronomy 1:13

A verse found in the book of Isaiah has a very interesting connection between חמה (*hheymah* - cheese) and a חכם (*hhakham* - wisdom).



And he will eat cheese (hheymah) and honey (This Hebrew word can mean honey or dates) to know to reject the bad and choose the good. Isaiah 7:15

There appears to be a physical connection between cheese and wisdom as this passage indicates that eating cheese can bring about wisdom.

Understanding

The Hebrew word for understanding is תבון (*tavun*) comes from the verbal root בין (*biyn*) meaning to "understand" but the more deeper meaning of this word can be found in a related verbal root - בנה (*banah*) which means to "build." In order to build or construct something one must have the ability to plan and understand the processes needed. This is the idea behind the verb בין (*biyn*) and its derivative noun תבון (*tavun*), to be able to discern the processes of construction.

Knowledge

The Hebrew word for knowledge is דעת (*da'at*), which is derived from the parent root דע (*da*). The name of the Hebrew letter ד is dalet, from the Hebrew word דלת (*delet*) meaning “door.” This letter was originally written as  in the ancient pictographic script and is a picture of the tent door. In a previous discussion, we learned that this letter meant to “hang” as the door “hung” down from the roof of the tent. Each Hebrew letter has more than one meaning, and this letter can also mean back and forth or in and out movement as the door is used for moving in and out of the tent. The name of the Hebrew letter ע is ayin, from the Hebrew word עין (*ayin*) meaning “eye.” This letter was originally written as  in the ancient pictographic script and is a picture of an eye. When these two letters are combined, the Hebrew parent root דע (*dea*), is formed, meaning “the back and forth movement of the eye.” When something

is carefully examined, one moves the eye back and forth to take in the whole of what is being examined. In the Ancient Hebrew mind, this careful examination is understood as knowledge and experience on an intimate level.

Do you know (yada) the balancings of the clouds, the wonderous works of complete knowledge (dea)? Job 37:16

The verb יָדָה (Y.D.H) is derived out of this parent root and carries this same meaning of an intimate knowledge. This verb is commonly used in reference to the marital relations of a husband and wife.

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain... Genesis 4:1 (KJV)

Do you know God? Not in the casual sense of awareness, as implied in the English sense of knowledge, but in a close and intimate relationship?

And those knowing your character will trust in you for you will not leave those seeking Yahweh. Psalm 9:11

God certainly knows us in this manner.

Will not God search this, for he knows the secrets of the heart. Psalm 44:21

Do we know God in this same manner? Do we know the heart of God?

And by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 1 John 2:3 (RSV)

The above verse is being translated from a western perspective, but if we translate it through the mind of the Hebrews, we get a slightly different perspective.

And by this we may be sure that we have an intimate relationship with him, if we preserve his directions.

Derived from the parent root דָּע (da) is the noun דַּעַת (da'at), meaning "knowledge." The Hebrew word for knowledge is דַּעַת (da'at), a noun derived from the verb יָדָה (yada) meaning "to know." The idea of "knowing" in Ancient Hebrew thought is similar to our understanding of knowing but is more personal and intimate. We may say that we "know" someone but simply mean we "know" of his or her existence but, in Hebrew thought one can only "know" someone if they have a personal and intimate relationship. In Genesis 18:19 God says about Abraham "I know him" meaning he has a very close relationship with Abraham. In Genesis 4:1 it says that Adam "knew Eve his wife" implying a very intimate sexual relationship.

Knowledge is the intimate ability to perform a specific task or function. This can be seen in Exodus chapter 31 where God had given men the ability to build the various furnishings of the tabernacle.

Exodus 31:10 / Priest

While the priests of Israel were the religious leaders of the community this is not the meaning of the word כוהן (*kohen*). The Hebrew word for the priests of other nations is כומר (*komer* - see 2 Kings 23:5), from a root meaning burn, and may be in reference to the priests who burn children in the fires of Molech (2 Kings 23:10). The word *kohen* comes from the parent root כן (*ken*) meaning a base such as the base of a column. The *koheniyim* (plural of *kohen*) are the structural support of the community. It is their responsibility to keep the community standing tall and straight. They are the administrators of the community.

Exodus 31:17 / Earth Age

Does a Bible believer have to believe that the earth is older than the rest of the universe as the earth was created in Genesis 1 and the sun, moon and stars are created in Genesis 1:16?

In our western minds we are accustomed to relating all things to a chronological order. A novel is a chronological order of events, we tell stories in chronological order, etc. If one reads Genesis one as a chronology then we would conclude that the earth was made first then later the sun, moon and stars came. But, there is a problem with this perspective.

On day one God separated light from darkness (Genesis 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.) but on day four God again separates the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:18 and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good). From a chronological perspective this makes no sense, how can God separate light from darkness on two different days?

The Ancient Hebrews did not think in chronological order as we do, in fact they perceived time in much the same way as space. Words related to time are the same words used for space.

For example the word *qedem* means "where the sun rises" and can mean "the east" or "ancient time". Imagine yourself standing in the desert of the near east facing the rising sun (In ancient time all things were oriented to the east whereas we use the north). What is before you is "the east" and it is "the past" it is all there for you to see. (While we see the past as behind us, the Ancient Hebrews see the past as in front of us and the future behind us). But the farther east you look the hazier it is and more difficult to see. What is obscure or unseen at the horizon is called the "*olam*" (usually translated as eternity). The origins of the world to the Ancient Hebrews are like the fuzzy horizon in front of you that is difficult to see.

The Ancient Hebrews did not attempt to clear up the image of the past; instead they just understood it as *olam* (at or beyond the horizon). It is only our western mind that needs to clear up this image; we need to know precisely how the origins of the world came about. The Ancient Hebrews did not care; they just knew that it was.

As I mentioned Genesis 1 is not a chronological order of events. The Ancient Hebrews think in blocks of events. Let me demonstrate with the following paragraph from a western perspective.

"I got up and ate breakfast and read the newspaper. I then drove to work. While at work I read yesterday's reports. At noon I walked across the street for lunch. While there I read a magazine. Back at work I read my emails. After work I drove home and had dinner."

Now let me rearrange this paragraph in block form, the way the Hebrews would have conveyed this same story.

"I drove to work and walked across the street and I drove home and I ate breakfast and I ate lunch and I ate dinner and I read the newspaper and I read the reports and I read a magazine and I read my emails."

There is no way you can make any chronological sense out of this narrative. Instead you can easily see what I "did". Genesis 1 is written in the same fashion of "blocks".

When I read the Bible I try not to read it from a modern western perspective. Instead I try and read it from an ancient eastern one. The question, "Which came first, the earth or the sun and moon?" is an irrelevant question to the Ancient Hebrews and therefore not a question that can be answered from the Biblical text.

Exodus 32:4 / Power

The original pictographic form of the Hebrew word אל (el) is אֵל. The first picture is the head of an ox, while the second is a shepherd staff.

The Ancient Hebrews were an agricultural people raising livestock such as oxen, sheep and goats. The strongest and most valuable of these is the ox. Because of its strength, it was used to pull large loads in wagons as well as to plow the fields. The letter א represents the concrete idea of "muscle" and "strength".

A shepherd always carried his staff. It was a sign of his authority and was used to lead the sheep by pushing or pulling them in the correct direction as well as to fight off predators. Since the yoke is also a staff that is used to direct the oxen, the yoke is seen as a staff on the shoulders (see Isaiah 9:4). The letter א represents the concrete view of a staff or yoke, as well as the idea of leadership and authority from the shepherd who leads his flock.

When the two letters are combined, the parent root אֵל (el) is formed with the meaning of an "ox in the yoke" as well as a "strong authority". It was common to place two oxen in the yoke when pulling a plow. An older, more experienced ox was matched with a younger inexperienced one so that the younger would learn the task of plowing from the older. This older "ox in the yoke" is the "strong leader" of the pair and was the ancient Hebrews concrete understanding of "God". God is the older ox who teaches his people, the young ox, how to work.

Besides the pictographic evidence for the meaning of the word $\angle \text{el}$ (el), the historical record supports the idea that the original meaning of $\angle \text{el}$ (el) is an ox. A Biblical example is found Exodus 32.

And he [Aaron] took from their hands [the gold earrings] and formed an idol made into a small bull, and they said; 'Israel, this is your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt'. And Aaron saw it and built an altar before it and Aaron called out saying 'tomorrow is a feast to the LORD. Exodus 32:4,5

In this passage, Israel formed an idol of the LORD in the image of a bull. Why did Israel choose a bull for its idol? Many ancient cultures worshiped a god in the form of a bull. The Egyptians name for their bull god is “Apis” and the Sumerians called him “Adad”. The Canaanites, whose language is very similar to the Hebrews worship $\angle \text{el}$ (el), a bull god.

The word $\angle \text{el}$ (el) is frequently translated as God, the “strong authority” of Israel, such as in the following passages.

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth”. Genesis 14.19 (NIV)

“For the LORD your God, is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome”. Deuteronomy 10:17 (NIV)

When the reader of the Bible sees the English word “God” (beginning with the upper case “g”), it is always applied to the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew word $\angle \text{el}$ (el) can refer to this same God, but as the concrete understanding of the word $\angle \text{el}$ (el) is a “strong and mighty one”, this same Hebrew word can be applied to anyone or anything that functions with the same characteristics as seen in the examples below.

“I [Laban] have the power to harm you” Genesis 31.29 (NIV)

“When he rises up, the mighty are terrified”. Job 41:25 (NIV)

“The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches”. Psalms 80.10 (NIV)

“Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains”. Psalms 36.6 (NIV)

“Do not worship any other god” Exodus 34:14 (NIV)

The imagery of the ox and the shepherd staff were common symbols of strength, leadership and authority in ancient times. Chiefs and kings commonly wore the horns of a bull on their head as a sign of their strength and carried a staff representing their authority over their flock, the kingdom. Both of these symbols have been carried through the centuries to the modern day where kings and queens carry scepters and wear crowns. The Hebrew word “qeren”, meaning horn, is the origin of the word “crown”.

Exodus 33:9 / The Pillar of the Cloud

And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. Exodus 33:9 (KJV)

In some translations, including the KJV, the word "LORD" is written in italics meaning that it has been added to the text. Why did the translators feel it was necessary to add the word "LORD?" Did they believe that the text needed to be fixed? This verse is translated as follows in the Revised Mechanical Translation.

and it will come to pass, when Mosheh is about to come unto the tent, the pillar of the cloud will go down, and he will stand at the opening of the tent, and he will speak with Mosheh,

Notice that the second half of this verse includes three verbs; go down, stand and speak. When two or more verbs are written, only the first verb will identify the subject of the verb, which is then applied to the following verbs. Here is an example from Exodus 2:15.

And Mosheh fled away from the face of Paroh, and he settled in the land of Mid'yan and he settled upon the well.

Note that only the first verb identifies Mosheh as the subject the verb and the following two verbs use the pronoun "he," in reference to Mosheh. We can see the same structure in Exodus 33:9 where the first verb states, "the pillar of the cloud will go down," and the following two verbs simply say, "he will stand," and "he will speak." It should be noted that in Hebrew, all nouns are either masculine or feminine and since the word עמוד (amud) is a masculine word, it would be identified with the masculine pronoun (he).

From the grammar in Exodus 33:9, we can see that it was the "pillar" that spoke with Mosheh. The standard translations have revised the text so that the "pillar" remains an inanimate object and YHWH, as a separate entity, becomes the active participant. Does this mean that YHWH is taking an inactive role here? Not at all. In verse 11 we read that it is YHWH who is speaking to Mosheh." Therefore, we can conclude that YHWH is not "in" or "with" the pillar, he "is" the pillar.

Exodus 33:14 / Face

The Hebrew word פנים (*paniyim*) means "face," but with a deeper meaning than just the front part of the head. The first clue that there is more to this word than simply meaning "face" is that it is a plural word, as indicated by the suffix *My iym*. In English, nouns denote inanimate objects and only if one adds a verb can the noun take on animation. Hebrew nouns, on the other hand, denote objects of action. The action behind *paniyim* is the expression of emotion and personality in the face, and since we have an infinite

number of “faces,” the Hebrew word is plural. Our second clue that there is more to this word can be read in the following passages.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. Exodus 33:1-3 (KJV)

In these verses, we are told that Yahweh refused to go with Israel to take them to the Promised Land because they were stiffnecked and he would kill them. He would send an angel to go with them instead. A few verses later, we are given another description of this “angel.”

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Exodus 33:14 (KJV)

The Hebrew word behind the word “presence” is *paniym*, the face, and is a description of the angel mentioned previously. The angel has the same personality as Yahweh and therefore is the “face of Yahweh.”

Exodus 34:14 / Jealous

For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14 (KJV)

From a Western perspective, the idea of one being named “Jealous” seems odd, especially as a name for God. As a name represents the character, this implies that God is by nature jealous. Our cultural understanding of the word is a type of anger felt over the suspected unfaithfulness of a spouse. As we shall see, the Hebrew word has a very different meaning.

Nest

The parent root **ן** (qen) is a nest.

“Like an eagle he wakes up his nest, over his chicks he hovers, he spreads his wings, he takes them, he carries them over his feathers”. Deuteronomy 32.11

The first letter of the parent root in the ancient script is **𐤒**, a picture of the sun at the horizon where the light is gathered during the sunrise or sunset. The second letter **𐤒** is a sprouting seed, the beginning of new life that came from the parent plant. Combined, these letters form the meaning, “A gathering for the seeds”. A bird goes about “gathering” materials for building a nest for her “seeds”, eggs, of the next generation.

Several words are derived from the parent root קן (qen - nest), all related to the idea of building a nest.

Builder

The child root קנה (Q.N.H) is the construction of a nest by the parent bird.

And he blessed him and he said blessed is Abram to God most high, builder of heaven and earth. Genesis 14:19

Some translations translate the above verse as, “Creator of heaven and earth”. The ancient Hebrews did not see God as an unknowable force that creates the universe for some unknown reason; rather he is the bird that goes about gathering all the necessary materials for building a home for his children. Man was not created as an additional component to the creation; the earth was created as a home for man.

Guard

Another word derived from קן (qen) is קנא (Q.N.A). This is the word translated as “jealous” in our introductory passage. The Hebraic meaning of this word is the passion with which the parent guards over the chicks in the nest. While our Western mind may see the term a “jealous God” in his feelings and actions toward us, it is in fact his feelings and actions toward our enemies. The heathens and false gods are like predators invading the nest and God fights them protecting his children from their clutches.

Exodus 34:29 / Horns

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. Exodus 34:29,30 (KJV)

In this verse, we find there was a physical change in Moses which created fear in the people. Was it just a light coming off him that generated this fear? No—as we shall see, the above translation “skin of his face shone,” is a poor translation of the Hebrew. The Hebrew word translated as “shone” is קרן (Q.R.N), which literally means “to have horns.” Interestingly, many paintings and sculptures of Moses depict him with horns such as in Michelangelo’s sculpture of Moses.

It has been speculated the “horns” on Moses’ face are “rays” of light that shone from his face, hence the translation we read in all English Bibles. However, there are other Hebrew words meaning “to shine” and if that was what the author had intended, he would have used one of those. Instead, he deliberately chose to use the word קרן (Q.R.N) to show Moses was indeed one of power and authority. This is an example of my reasons for desiring a “mechanical” and “literal” translation of the Hebrew Bible, so the reader can read the text without the translators’ bias being interjected into the text.

Leviticus 4:3 / Messiah

The Hebrew word משיח (mashiach/mah-shee-ahh) is usually transliterated as Messiah. Let us first examine how this word is transliterated and translated. In the Hebrew Bible this word is usually translated as "anointed," but in Daniel it is transliterated as "Messiah".

If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering. Leviticus 4:3 (KJV)

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. Daniel 9:25 (KJV)

The root word of *meshiyach* is the verb מָשַׁח (M.Sh.Hh) meaning "to smear" or "to anoint". In the ancient Hebrew culture it is customary to pour oil on the head of one who is being given a position of authority. This practice is called "anointing". One of the most common misunderstandings about a *meshiyach* is that there is only one, but the Tenach identifies several. The word is used 39 times and just a few of these are listed below.

If the anointed (mashiyach) priest (kohen) sins bringing guilt to the people... Leviticus 4:3

And he (David) said to his men, YHWH forbid me if I should do this thing to my lord (Saul) the anointed (mashiyach) of YHWH. 1 Samuel 24:6

Do not touch my anointed (mashiyach), my prophets do not harm. 1 Chronicles 16:22

I chose these three passages for one reason, it demonstrates, from a Hebraic perspective, who is *mashiyach*. The Priests, Kings and Prophets of Israel are the *mashiyach* of Israel, they are the ones who are anointed as men of authority.

While the original meaning of the word *mashiyach* is applied to one who is actually anointed with oil, it can also refer figuratively to anyone who holds an office of authority whether they were anointed or not. The Tenach identifies Cyrus, the King of Persia as a *mashiyach*.

Thus says YHWH to his anointed (mashiyach) Cyrus (the King of Persia)... Isaiah 45:1

Leviticus 4:14 / Sin

When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. (KJV, Leviticus 4:14)

In this verse is the word “sin,” which is the Hebrew noun חטאה (*hhatah*) and the “sinned,” which is the verb חטא (*Hh.Th.A*), the root of חטאה (*hhatah*). Below is another verse that uses the verb form.

Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not miss. (Judges 20:16, ASV)

The word “miss” in this passage is the Hebrew verb חטא and literally means, to “miss the mark,” to miss what you are aiming at. Yahweh gave his Torah (teachings) to his people and Torah was their mark, their target.

The noun חטאה (*hhatah*, Strong's #2403), derived from the verb חטא (*Hh-Th-A*, Strong's #2398) is an error. When you shoot your arrow at the target and miss, you have made an error. When we aim to hit the target of God's teachings, but miss that target, we make an error.

Leviticus 5:2 / Unclean

The word טמא (*tamey*) means something that is “dirty” or “polluted,” but usually translated as “unclean.” This can be a literal pollution, such as from eating something that can bring on a disease or illness, or it can be a moral pollution such as through sexual immorality as we see in Genesis 34:2 where the word “tamey” is translated as “defiled.”

And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. (KJV)

Interestingly, the Hebrew word for clean, which is טהור (*tahor* – clean), and the Hebrew word טמא (*tamey* - dirty), both begin with the same letter, a tet (ט). The ancient pictographic picture for this letter is a picture of a basket - ט and can mean “surrounding” or “contained.” Do we surround ourselves with cleanness or dirtiness?

Leviticus 10:10 / Clean

The Hebrew verb טהר (*T.H.R*) literally means to clean or be clean as seen in Numbers 8:7.

*And wash their clothes and cleanse (*taher*) themselves.*

Derived from this verb is the noun טהור (*tahor*) meaning clean and is often used in the context of “clean gold.”

*And you shall overlay [the ark] with pure (*tahor*) gold. Exodus 25:11*

Clean gold has had all the impurities (dirtiness) removed from it. This same word is also used in the context of animals.

To make a distinction between the unclean and the clean (tahor) and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten. Leviticus 11:47

Many would consider this a "ritualistic" clean but I believe that this is a literal application. Those animals which are not allowed to be eaten (the unclean) have within them some "impurity" in the same manner as impure gold does. For instance, pork, an "unclean" animal, is known to carry trichinosis, an impurity within the meat and the meat of shell fish, also an "unclean" animal, can cause severe allergic reactions in some people.

God's laws were not just a set of rituals with no physical substance, they were actual procedures for the preservation of life (i.e.: salvation) from injury or disease just as it says in Proverbs 3:1, 2.

"My son, do not forget my teaching (תורה torah), but let your heart keep my commandments (מצוות mitsvot), for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare (שלום shalom) will they give you."

Leviticus 16:7 / Scapegoat

In the realm of Biblical Books, there are four different groups of books; the Tanach (Old Testament), the New Testament, the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha.

Judaism accepts the first as cannon, Christianity the first two, Catholicism the first three, but none of the major Judeo Christian religions accept the fourth within their cannon of scripture. This is to their disadvantage because the books of the Pseudepigrapha can often shed light on passages in the other three. One example of this is the scapegoat.

The following is a literal translation of Leviticus 16:7-10.

"And take the two goats and stand them up before YHWH at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And Aharon will give the two goats over to the casting of lots, one lot to YHWH and one lot to Azazel. And Aharon will bring the goat which over him was cast the lot to YHWH and make him a sin offering. And the goat which was over him the lot cast to Azazel, he will stand alive before YHWH to make atonement to send him to Azazel in the wilderness."

Each goat represents one type of person. The goat selected for YHWH represents the obedient servant who is committed to God; this one sacrifices his life to serve before YHWH. The other goat represents the haughty and proud who is free to live his life his own way, separate from YHWH and sent out into the wilderness.

While it would seem that the goat released into the wilderness has the better deal, this is not true, the goat that is sacrificed to YHWH is completely dedicated to YHWH while the other is sent out into the wilderness, probably to die from starvation. The Jewish tradition actually says that the goat was taken to a high place, a cliff, and thrown over it.

What exactly is Azazel? There have been three theories. The first is that it is a combination word meaning "goat" (az) and "shake" or "sent away" (azel), hence the translation in some Bibles of "scapegoat". The second is that the word is the place to which the goat was sent; a desert, solitary place, or a high place. The third is that Azazel is the name of an individual, angel or demon. The later makes more sense as the Hebrew says that one of the goats is "to" YHWH, while the other is "to" Azazel (one who is the opposite of YHWH). The Hebrew translated as "to" could also be translated as "for" or "belonging to."

Many times passages in the Bible cannot be understood correctly without outside sources to shed light on the ancient cultural understandings and background. While many people are attempting to interpret this passage based on the Bible alone, creating many different interpretations, the actual meaning of Azazel can be found in the book of Enoch.

ENOCH 8:1-3 And Azazel taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways

ENOCH 10:1-8 Then said the Most High, the Holy and Great One spake, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech, and said to him: 'Go to Noah and tell him in my name "Hide thyself!" and reveal to him the end that is approaching: that the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come upon the whole earth, and will destroy all that is on it. And now instruct him that he may escape and his seed may be preserved for all the generations of the world.' And again the Lord said to Raphael: 'Bind Azazel hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dudael, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face that he may not see light. And on the day of the great judgement he shall be cast into the fire... the whole earth has been corrupted 9 through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin.

ENOCH 54:3-6 And there mine eyes saw how they made these their instruments, iron chains of immeasurable weight. And I asked the angel of peace who went with me, saying: "For whom are these chains being prepared? And he said unto me: "These are being prepared for the hosts of Azazel, so that they may take them and cast them into the abyss of complete condemnation, and they shall cover their jaws with rough stones as the Lord of Spirits commanded. And Michael, and Gabriel, and Raphael, and Phanuel shall take hold of them on that great day, and cast them on that day into the burning

furnace, that the Lord of Spirits may take vengeance on them for their unrighteousness in becoming subject to Satan and leading astray those who dwell on the earth."

Leviticus 19:2 / Holy

Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy. Leviticus 19:2 (KJV)

The word "holy" is an abstract word used to translate the Hebrew noun קדוש (qadosh). This noun is derived from the root קדש (Q.D.Sh), which is common translated as "sanctify." One who is "sanctified" or is "holy," implies one who is exceptionally pious and righteous. But as we shall see, these words have a very different meaning. Also derived from the root קדש (Q.D.Sh) and related to noun קדוש (qadosh) is the word קדש (qadesh), which is used in the following passage.

No Israelite man or woman is to become a temple prostitute. Deuteronomy 23:17 (NIV)

We would never consider a "prostitute" as holy and yet the Hebrew word קדש (qadesh), whose root is often translated as "holy." To resolve this oddity, we can examine the following verse to determine the true meaning of the verb קדש (Q.D.Sh).

"Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy". Exodus 40:9 (NIV)

Furniture are inanimate objects that cannot be holy, pious or righteous, but they can be "set apart for a specific function", which is the true meaning of קדש (Q.D.Sh). These can be the furnishings of the Temple that are used for this purpose alone, or a prostitute whose is set apart from the rest of society for a specific purpose. The children of God are set apart from all others; they have the specific function of living for God and showing the world who God is.

Leviticus 19:18 / Love

In our modern Western culture, love is an abstract thought of emotion, how one feels toward another, but the Hebrew word אהב (A.H.B) goes much deeper than simple emotion.

The verbal root אהב (A.H.B) has several words that are related to it that can help to provide the concrete meaning of this word. The word הבהב (havhav) is a noun meaning "gift." The word יָהַב (yahav) is a verb meaning "to provide."

We do not choose our parents or siblings, but they are instead given to us as a gift from above, a privileged gift. Even in the Ancient Hebrew culture, one's wife was chosen for him. It is our responsibility to provide and protect those privileged gifts. As a verb, the Hebrew word אהב (A.H.B) means "to provide

and protect what is given as a privileged gift.” We are to love God, neighbors, and family, not in an emotional sense, but in the sense of our actions.

Leviticus 26:4 / Tree

Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Leviticus 26:4 (KJV)

The Hebrew word for a tree is עץ (eyts). In the passage above, the context clearly shows the word is used in a plural sense (trees). However, in the passage, the word is written as עץ, the singular form. In Biblical Hebrew, the word עץ can mean a tree (singular) or trees (plural), while the plural form of this word, עצים (eytsiyim), always means "wood," such as in the verse below.

make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch... Genesis 6:14 (RSV)

This allows for a different interpretation of the following passage.

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 2:9 (KJV)

Because the word עץ (eyts) can mean “tree” or “trees,” the "tree of life" and the "tree of knowledge," can just as easily be translated as the "trees of life" and the "trees of knowledge."

The word עץ is a parent root (a two letter root) from which a couple of other words are derived. The verb עצם (Ah.Ts.M) means strong and mighty, as is a tree. Derived from this verb is the noun עצם (etsem), meaning bones, the "strong tree" of the body. Also, the verb יעץ (Y.Ah.Ts) means counsel, to give support to another as the tree trunk supports the branches and leaves.

Numbers 5:22 / Amen

The Hebrew language developed in a nomadic agricultural culture. Because of this much of the language is centered on this lifestyle. The more we understand their way of life and culture, the more we can understand their language. This benefits us, as Bible students, because we can better understand the author's message if we better understand his language.

In our culture, concepts, words and ideas are taught by using other concepts, words and ideas. Often this is a very difficult task to accomplish. Since the Hebrew language is a task oriented language, teaching these concepts, words and ideas are much easier.

The subject we are going to cover here, is a prime example. If you wanted to teach your children what it means to believe, how would you do it? If you think about it, it is very difficult thing to do.

The Nomads

In Genesis 4:20 we read about the first Nomad Jabal, a descendent of Adam through Cain.

"And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle."

We know that Jabal and his descendents were nomads from the simple fact they lived in tents and raised livestock. A tent (ohel in Hebrew) is a portable shelter for the purpose of moving from one grazing place to another. The Hebrew word used in the above for cattle is "miqneh" which actually means any livestock property. This could be cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, etc. When the livestock consumed the edible vegetation in one area, the herder would then pack up his tent and his belongings and move on to better grazing land.

Probably the most famous nomad is Abraham. He traveled a great deal through the land of the Near East living in tents and raising livestock.

The Tent

The tent is a very important part of the nomad's life. By looking at the many words derived from this shelter we have tangible, hands on tools with which to teach our children the basic concepts in the Bible. In this study we will be looking at a tent stake. For those who have camped before, you are probably familiar with these stakes. What is the most important factor when placing your tent stakes? The ground. If you drive in soft ground, the tension on the rope will pull the stake right out. You need very firm ground to hold the in. The ideal ground would require a hammer to beat the stake in. In ground like this the stake will remain secure in its position even in a strong wind. Let us now look at a passage of Scripture that uses this "concept".

I will drive him like a peg into a firm place, he will be a seat of honor for the house of his father. Isaiah 22:23

Here we have the stake (peg) being driven into a "firm" place. The Hebrew word translated as "firm" here is the verb "aman" which literally means "to be firm or sure". When setting up our tent, we desire to find a spot where the ground will be firm.

Believe

This verb "aman" is used 110 times in the Old Testament. Let us now look at another passage using this same verb and see what it says.

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness Genesis 15:6

The word "believed" is the very same Hebrew verb "aman". The picture we have from this is that Abram was firm in his devotion to God. Just as a stake planted in firm ground supports the tent even in a storm, Abram will support God even in the storms of life. The question we now ask is, how did Abram remain firm? The verse just before states;

'[God] took [Abram] outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:5,6

We usually read this to mean that Abram believed God's promise in verse 5. The problem with this is that the Hebrew verb "aman" means more than just knowing something to be true. Why did God give this promise to Abram?

I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws. Genesis 26:4,5

God made this promise to Abram because he was firm in his obedience to God. The Hebrew in Genesis 15:6 does not say Abram believed God, it says he was firm in God. From Genesis 26:5 we see that he was firm in his obedience to God and his Torah.

Numbers 6:24 / The Aaronic Blessing

The LORD bless you and keep you: The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26 (RSV)

Each of the Hebrew words behind the English in this passage is filled with images, lost when translated into the English language. When we examine each of these words from their original meaning, the message in the passage comes alive.

Bless

(ברך *barak*) - This verb is written in the piel form, literally meaning "to kneel down and present a gift in respect to another."

Keep

(שמר *shamar*) - This verb comes from the corral of thorns erected by a shepherd while out at night with his flocks and is best translated as "guarding" and "preserving."

Face

(פנים *paniyim*) - The face reflects the many different moods, emotions, and thoughts of the person. This Hebrew word can mean the face but also the “presence” or the “wholeness of being” of an individual.

Shine

(אור *or*) - This verb means “to give light” or “to shine” and is equated with bringing about order as light illuminates or reveals what has been dark.

Gracious

(חנן *hhanan*) - A nomad’s camp consisted of many family tents, arranged in a circle, and was viewed as a place of beauty. Not just the appearance of beauty but the action, a place of warmth, love, friendship, community and sustenance. This verb is the expression of these concepts.

Countenance

(פנים *paniyim*) - This is the same Hebrew word as before meaning “face.”

Give

(סיים *siym*) - This Hebrew verb means to “set down in place.”

Peace

(שלום *shalom*) - This noun is derived from the verbal root *shalam* meaning to “restore” in the sense of replacing or providing what is needed in order to make someone or something whole and complete. The noun *shalom* is used for one who has, or has been provided, what is needed to be whole and complete.

Hebraic meaning of the Blessing

With the Hebraic understanding of each of these Hebrew words, we can better understand the true meaning of the Aaronic blessing as it was understood by the Ancient Hebrews.

Yahweh will kneel before you presenting gifts, and he will guard you with a hedge of protection, Yahweh will illuminate the wholeness of his being toward you, bringing order, and he will provide you with love, sustenance, and friendship, Yahweh will lift up the wholeness of his being and look upon you, and he will set in place all you need to be whole and complete.

Numbers 6:27 / Put my name on the sons of Israel

And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. (KJV, Numbers 6:27)

How does one “put a name” on another person? The previous three verses is the Aaronic blessing, a blessing that the priests would speak to all of the people of Israel. Contained within the Aaronic blessing is the character of YHWH. If we remember that the Hebrew word שם (shem) can mean “character” as well as “name,” we will recognize that by speaking the words of the Aaronic blessing to the people, they are “receiving” YHWH’s character.

Numbers 11:2 / Prayer

In our modern religious culture, prayer is a communication between man and God. While this definition could be applied to some passages of the Bible, such as in this verse, it is not a Hebraic definition of the Hebrew verb פלל (P.L.L). When we examine the etymology of this word, we find that palal comes from the parent root פל (pal), meaning “fall.” *Pal* is also the root of the Hebrew verb נפל (N.P.L), also meaning “fall”. The word פלל (P.L.L) literally means to “fall down to the ground in the presence of one in authority pleading a cause”. This can be seen in Isaiah 45:14 where the Sabeans fall down and make supplication (the Hebrew word פלל) to Cyrus.

Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. (KJV)

Numbers 14:25 / Yesterday and Tomorrow

The hand gesture, usually referred to as the “thumbs up,” conveys the idea of “good” while the “thumbs down” means “bad.” You are probably aware that these gestures have their origin in the gladiatorial games where Caesar would give one of these gestures to the conquering gladiator to convey his desire for the fate of the defeated, but you may not be aware of the original meanings behind these gestures.

If Caesar gave the “thumbs up,” which was actually pointing to the throat, and not up as we mistakenly think, it signaled the gladiator standing above the defeated to put his sword through the throat, to kill him. On the other hand, if he gave the “thumbs down” he is signaling the gladiator to throw his sword to the ground, to spare the defeated.

As you can see, over the last two thousand years, the meanings of thumbs up and thumbs down have reversed in meaning. We have already seen a few examples of how different Hebrew thought is from our own Modern Greek way of thinking, but is it possible at times our modern way of thinking is opposite of Hebrew thought? Let’s look at an example that shows that it can be.

In our way of recollecting time, we view time as a line or road. On this road the past—where we have already walked—is behind us, and the future—where we have not yet walked—is in front of us.

If we examine some Hebrew words related to time, we can get a clue on how the Ancient Hebrews perceived the past and the future.

The Hebrew word for tomorrow is מחר (*mahhar*) from the root אחר (*ahhar*) meaning “to be behind.” The Hebrew word for yesterday is תמול (*temol*, from the word מול (*mul*) meaning “in front.” As you can see, in Hebraic thought, they perceived the past (yesterday) as in the front while the future (tomorrow) as behind. It is not that they saw themselves walking the road of time backwards—in fact, they did not see time as linear, but as cyclical. They perceived their history, the past, as events that can be seen, therefore in front, while the future cannot be seen. Therefore, it is behind and out of view.

Numbers 15:38 / Tassels

One of the most beautiful aspects of the Hebrew language is its clear connection between a word and its illustrative meaning. The Hebrew word ציצית (*tsiytsiyt*) is a good example of this relationship.

*Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes (*tsiytsiyt*) in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe (*tsiytsiyt*) of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe (*tsiytsiyt*), that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. Numbers 15:38-40 (KJV)*

From the above passage we learn the *tsiytsiyt*, translated as “fringe,” are worn on the four corners of the garments. The standard dress of the Hebrews was a rectangular piece of cloth with a hole in the center for the head and was worn similar to a modern poncho. A sash was then tied around the waist to secure the garment. The fringes were then tied to each corner (border in the KJV translation) of this garment as reminders of God’s commands for his people.

The word *tsiytsiyt* is derived from the noun צִיץ (*tsiyts*) and the verb צוץ (*tsuts*), both of which can be found in the following passage.

*And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed (*tsuts*) blossoms (*tsiyts*), and yielded almonds. Numbers 17:8 (KJV)*

When I first began studying the word *tsiytsiyt*, I pondered the connection between *tsiytsiyt*, meaning fringe, and *tsiyts*, meaning blossom, and wondered if the fringe originally looked like a blossom. I then reminded myself I was concentrating on the physical appearance of these objects, a Greek way of thinking, and had forgotten the Hebrews were concerned with function. When I realized the function of a blossom was to produce fruit on a tree, I was amazed to discover this was the exact same function of the *tsiytsiyt*, to produce fruit within the man.

But his delight is in the teachings of Yahweh and in his teachings he meditates day and night, and he will be like a tree planted by streams of water which gives his fruit in its season. Psalm 1:2,3

The function of the fringe, according to Numbers 15:38-40, is to *remember the commandments*, the teachings of God, which according to Psalm 1:2,3, is like producing fruit.

Numbers 19:1 / Red Heifer

*He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."
(Exodus 15:26)*

Is God's promise, given in the passage above, what we would call a miracle? Or is there something more "scientific" at work behind the commands of God? Let's take the command to wash in the ashes of the Red Heifer (Numbers 19:1-12) as an example and look at the text with a more in-depth study of the words in the text.

1 Now the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron, 2 "This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded: Tell the people of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and upon which a yoke has never come.

Literally, the underlined portion of the verse reads, "a heifer of red, a whole one which has no blemish in her which has no yoke lifted over her". The Hebrew poetry of the end of this verse is very beautiful - lo alah aliyah al. This heifer never wore a yoke, which means that it will be fat. The Hebrew word "mum" translated as blemish or spot is often thought to mean completely perfect as in without even one white hair on it. The actual meaning of the word can be seen in Deuteronomy 15:21; "And if there be any blemish (mum) therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shall not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God."

3 And you shall give her to Eleazar the priest, and she shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered before him; 4 and Eleazar the priest shall take some of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of her blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times.

Portions of this procedure seem to be ritualistic in nature such as the sprinkling of the blood seven times in the direction of the tabernacle. The number seven is often associated with an oath, as an oath was spoken seven times, probably to emphasize its importance. The following procedure is part of the oath, or covenant between God and Israel.

Ritual is always a part of everyday life, just as when we stand and salute the flag or pray before meals. These rituals are physical reminders to keep our focus on what is important. While this procedure is performed outside the camp, we are reminded that the focus is still the tabernacle.

5 And the heifer shall be burned in his sight; her skin, her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall be burned;

In this verse we have the burning of the skin, flesh, blood and dung of the animal. On a side note, the smoke from this and other sacrifices do repel insects which can carry diseases. A clear physical benefit to the sacrifices. There very well could be chemical ingredients in the smoke from a burning animal that may repel insects far better than just wood smoke.

6 and the priest shall take cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet stuff, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Added to the fire is cedar wood, hyssop and a "scarlet thing." The cedar oil came from a kind of juniper tree that grew in both Israel and the Sinai. The cedar oil irritates the skin, encouraging the person to vigorously rub the solution into his hands. Hyssop oil contains 50% carvacol, which is an antifungal and antibacterial agent still used in medicine. The scarlet thing is literally a scarlet worm or 'coccus ilicis' (kermes), an insect used for dying (hence used for the scarlet color) as well as a medicine.

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterwards he shall come into the camp; and the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8 He who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the people of Israel for the water for impurity, for the removal of sin.

The above ingredients, cedar wood, ashes from the heifer, fat from the heifer, hyssop oil, and the scarlet worm are combined in water and a soap is made. This soap then is stored (rested) in a clean place outside the camp as "water of filthiness".

10 And he who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. And this shall be to the people of Israel, and to the stranger who sojourns among them, a perpetual statute. 11 "He who touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days; 12 he shall cleanse himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean; but if he does not cleanse himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not become clean.

One who has been in contact with a dead body (i.e.: potential carrier of diseases received from the dead body) is first removed from the camp and taken outside to the place of the "water of filthiness" and then is washed with the above solution. Germs from a dead human body are more dangerous to another human than germs from an animal's body because of the likelihood of transmission of disease

and infection. The ingredients of this soap would be very useful in eliminating diseases that one can come in contact with from a dead body.

God promises that if we follow his teachings (torah), we will be free from diseases. The above commands of the Torah will do just this, the ancient Hebrews may not have understood the scientific benefit to the "water of filthiness" as we can see today, but through their faith they were made "clean".

Numbers 21:16 / Authors

We all speak and write differently and the styles of writing can be compared to determine the authors of different texts. As an example from English, one might say "I talked to mom;" while another person might say "I spoke to my mother." We can easily see that these two sentences are from two different people. We frequently see the same thing in the Torah. For instance, in Numbers 21:16 we read אמר יהוה למשה (amar yhw' l' mosheh) which means "Yahweh said to Moses." But in Exodus 4:30 we find the phrase דבר יהוה אל משה (diber yhw' el mosheh) which means "Yahweh spoke unto Moses." These differences in writing style are found throughout the text. In fact, we can even see the writing of one person throughout the text that is intermixed with the styles of writing from another person. This is the result of what is called the "Redactor." This person took the different writings from different people and mixed them together to create one account.

Here is a story written by "John."

In the morning Fred drove to work.

He stopped at the coffee shop for an espresso.

When he arrived at work he began to work on his projects.

The second story is by "Jim" who is telling the same story from his perspective.

Fred went to work early to get a coffee.

When Fred got to work he attended a meeting.

Fred drank his coffee while working the project.

Then "Bill", who is the redactor and identified by bold words, combines the two stories of John and Jim (whose words are underlined to make one story).

In the morning Fred drove to work.

He left early to get a coffee.

He stopped at the coffee shop for an espresso.

When Fred got to work he attended a meeting.

***Then** he began to work on his projects.*

Fred drank his coffee while working the project.

Notice that the two stories are very similar, but they have differences, and these differences can be seen in the redacted story. For instance, John uses the word "espresso," while Jim uses the word "coffee." John mentions Fred's "projects," but Jim mentions a "project." Jim mentions a "meeting," but John doesn't.

Numbers 22:22 / Satan

The Hebrew word שטן (satan) means "adversary," one who stands against another as seen in 1 Kings 11:14.

And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal house in Edom. (RSV)

At other times this name is translated as a proper name such as in the book of Job.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. Job 1:6 (RSV)

In the above passage, the word translated as "Satan" השטן (hasatan). The prefix ה (ha) means "the," which identifies the word שטן (satan) as a noun and not a proper name and should therefore be translated as "the adversary." However, there is one verse where the word satan could be translated as a proper name.

Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to number Israel. 1 Chronicles 21:1(RSV)

In this verse the word satan does not include the prefix "ha" and could be translated as a proper name but upon further investigation we find that this verse is also recorded in 2 Samuel 24:1 where the "adversary" is identified as Yahweh.

Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah." (RSV)

Numbers 23:22 / Unicorn

Are there really unicorns in the Bible? The word unicorn is derived from two latin words, the first being “uni,” meaning “one,” and the second being “corn,” meaning “horn.” A unicorn is a “one horned animal” and is most likely the rhinoceros.

Numbers 24:2 / The Wind of Elohiym

The parent root of the word רוח (ru’ahh) is רח (rahh). In the ancient script the first letter in this parent root is ר (r), which is the picture of a head of a man. The head is seen as the top of the body and can be the top or head of anything such as the body, time, mountaintop, rank, etc. This letter can also represent a man. The second letter is ח (hh) and is a picture of the wall of a tent or enclosure that separates and protects what is inside from what is outside, such as inclement weather and predators. When these two letters are combined they mean “the man of the enclosure.”

The responsibilities of the nomadic man outside of the tent include the feeding, watering and caring for the livestock. Livestock are healthier and more productive when on a routine; therefore the man follows a routine or "a prescribed path" each day when caring for his livestock.

There are several words derived from this parent root. The word ירח (Ye-Re-ahh) is the moon, which follows a prescribed path each night from horizon to horizon.

And from the excellent produce of the sun and from the excellent yield of the moon (ירח - yere'ahh). Deuteronomy 33:14

The word ארח (A-RaHh) is a traveler, one who follows a prescribed path to arrive at a specific destination.

A stranger did not lodge outside, I opened my door to the traveler (ארח - orehh). Job 31:32

The word רחה (re-hheh) is a millstone, a large circular stone that is revolved in a “prescribed path” on top of another stone to grind grain into flour.

All the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on the throne to the firstborn of the maidservant who is behind the millstones (רחה - rehah), and all the firstborn of the livestock. Exodus 11:5

The word רוח (ru’ach) is the wind. The Hebrew nomads were very familiar with the wind patterns as they would follow a prescribed path indicating the coming season. From this word comes the idea of breath as it is the wind of man which also follows a prescribed path of inhaling and exhaling. This word is

often translated as "spirit" but hebraicly is the "breath". The ancient Hebrew saw the breath as an essential part of the man, just as much as the mind is.

The רוּחַ (ruahh - wind) cannot be seen, but the effects of the wind can. We can see the leaves of the tree moving in the wind and we can feel it against our bodies. In the same manner, God cannot be seen but we can see his effects all around us in his creation. Just as the winds follow a prescribed path through the seasons, God also follows a prescribed path; he is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Our life is a journey along the road that will lead to righteousness or wickedness. Just as the wind of the sky follows a prescribed path, our wind follows a prescribed path. When God gives us a new wind, his wind, he will cause us to follow his path.

And I will give to them a new heart and a new wind I will give within them, and I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and I will give to them a heart of flesh, and I will give within them my breath and I will cause them to do my statutes they are to walk and my laws they will guard and do them. Ezekiel 36:26,27

Only by receiving the wind of God can we follow the correct path.

Numbers 27:17 / Shepherd

Note: participle of feeding not seeing!

Throughout the Bible God is compared to an ox, eagle, king, husband, as well as many others. Probably the most common imagery ascribed to God in the Bible is that of a shepherd.

Yahweh is my Shepherd. Psalms 23:1

The Hebrew word for a "shepherd" is רועה (ro'eh), the participle form of the verb רעה (R.Ah.H) and means "to feed." The parent root of these words are רע (ra), meaning "friend." The Shepherd is not a distant ruler or overseer, but a constant companion and friend to the flock. He spends more time with his flock; traveling to watering holes and green pastures, then he does with his own family. Our relationship with God is meant to be this type of relationship, where we become intimate friends with our guardian, protector and provider.

Numbers 29:20 / Eleven

The Biblical Hebrew word for "one," is אחד (ehhad).

And one kid of the goats for a sin offering... Numbers 29:19 (KJV)

However, this word can also mean a “unit,” a part of the whole.

*And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel...
Numbers 36:3 (KJV)*

I have theorized that in the Ancient Hebrew language there was another word to represent the ordinal number “one” and the word *ehhad* was solely used for a unit that exists within a unity. But over time, the original Hebrew word for “one” went into disuse and the word *ehhad* was used for a unit as well as the ordinal number “one.” This would not be a unique occurrence, as languages are constantly evolving, words are dropped and added, and definitions and usages change over time. However, there are some textual evidences to support this theory.

The number twelve is written in Hebrew as שני עשר (*sheney asar*), which can literally be translated as “two ten.” We would then expect eleven to be written as אחד עשר (*ehhad asar*). While we do find this phrase in some verses, we also find עשתי אשר (*ashtey asar*), such as in the following verse.

And on the third day eleven bullocks... Numbers 29:20 (KJV)

The word עשתי (*ashtey*) is most likely the original Hebrew word for the ordinal number “one,” but fell out of disuse, being replaced with the word אחד (*ehhad*).

Numbers 34:6 / West

While the Hebrew word ים (*yam*) means “sea,” it is also used for the direction “west” as the great sea, the Mediterranean, is “west” of Israel. The Ancient Hebrews related the four compass points to their geography in relation to the land of Israel. The word for East is קדם (*qedem*) and is from a root meaning to “meet” and the rising sun is “met” each morning in the east. The word for South is נגב (*negev*), a word meaning desert region, and refers to the desert region south of Israel. Finally, the word for North is צפון (*tsaphon*), which comes from a Hebrew root literally meaning “hidden,” probably alluding to the idea that the northern regions were unknown to them.

Deuteronomy 3:19 / Livestock

While the Hebrew word מִקְנֶה (*mikneh*) is often translated as “cattle,” this word more literally means “livestock.” The Hebrews were master herders and shepherds and possessed a variety stock.

Camel

These large and powerful animals are well suited for travel in the desert because of their ability to travel long distances without water. They were often used to carry family members as well as their belongings as they traveled from pasture to pasture.

The Hebrew word for "camel" is "גמל" (gamel), the origin of our word "camel". This word is from the root "גמל" (gamal) meaning "wean" or "ripen". This "adopted root" is derived from the parent root "גם" (gam) meaning "gather to the water". When a child is "weaned" he no longer derives liquid from the mother but from the watering hole. A camel is one that gathers to the water to drink.

Cattle

The ox was a common labor animal used to pull plows and wagons. Because of these abilities, only on very rare and special occasions, such as a large group of visitors or a festival, was one of these animals slaughtered for a meal.

There are several Hebrew words used for cows, bulls, oxen and cattle.

Sheep

One of the principle animals found in the nomad's flock are the sheep. The wool of the fleece were used for clothing. The milk of the sheep was a part of their diet and was also made into a cheese. One is occasionally slaughtered for a meal, especially when visitors arrive or for a festival. The horns of the rams were used to make trumpets called shofar's. The skin of the slaughtered animals were made into clothing or bags for storage.

Goat

The goat served many of the same functions as the sheep including; milk, cheese, leather and meat. The horns of the goats, smaller than the rams, were made into flasks for carrying olive oil, a common food ingredient as well as a medicine for wounds. The hair of the goat was also vital in the construction of the nomads tent.

Donkey

This animal was mostly used for transporting people and materials.

Deuteronomy 3:24 / Lord

Word of the week – Adonai

Thank you all for your suggestions for the "Hebrew word of the week." I apologize for taking so long in getting this ball rolling, but it has been a very busy few months after returning home after spending the last year and a half working in Tennessee.

You all had some great suggestions and we will examine many of these, but let's start with Isaac Espinoza's request of Adonai.

As many of you are aware, Hebrew uses a root system of words, meaning that one root can be the foundation for many different words, but all of those words are related in meaning to the original root.

As an example, the root בן (ben), meaning a son, is the root of אבן (even-stone), בנה (banah-build) and בינה (binah-understanding).

Also, Hebrew uses a lot of different prefixes and suffixes. For instance, by adding the suffix ים (iyim) to the word בן (ben), we have בנים (beniyim) meaning “sons.” Or by adding the yud suffix (י) to בן we have בני (beniy) meaning “my son.”

The word Adonai is a very complex word and filled with difficulties, controversy and confusion. But let's begin with the base word, the noun אדון (adon), which is used in Psalm 114:7.

This word means “lord” and is related to the noun אדן (eden-Not the same spelling as the garden of “eden”), which means a footing or base that sustains a stable position. This meaning of eden can help us to understand adon as one who provides a firm base. Both adon and eden are derived from the parent root דן (dan) meaning a judge or moderator.

Before much further we need to explain the nikkudot (singular – nikkud). The nikkudot are vowel pointings that are placed above and below the letters to identify the vowel sounds. In Psalm 114:7, the word adon is written as אֲדֹן. The first nikkud is placed under the aleph and looks like a little “t”. This mark represents the vowel “a.” The second nikkud is a dot placed between the dalet and the vav and represents the vowel “o.” It is very important to remember that these nikkudot were not in the original Hebrew text (such as seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls), but were invented by the Masorites about 1000 years ago in order to standardize the pronunciation of the words, but also to provide clarification on word meanings (in other words define words according to their theology, as will be apparent below).

When the yud suffix (י - iy) is added to the word אֲדֹן (adon) it becomes אֲדֹנִי (adoniy). Note that the vav is dropped, but the “o” vowel pointing is retained. This is very common in the Masoretic Hebrew text. While the Dead Sea Scrolls will have the vav in the word אֲדֹון (the letter vav often represents the vowel sound “o”), the Masorites dropped the vav and added the “o” vowel pointing to represent the “o” sound. Many of you are familiar with the word אֱלֹהִים (elohiyim). Notice that there is a dot between the lamed and hey representing the “o.” In the Dead Sea Scrolls this word is usually written as אֱלוהים, with the vav, which was apparently dropped by the Masorites and replaced with the dot.

Getting back to the word אֲדֹנִי (adoniy), this word means “my lord” and can be seen in Genesis 23:6 where the children of Heth call Abraham “my lord.”

Keep in mind that before the masorites and the nikkudot, the word adoniy would simply be written as אדוני (with the vav intact and without the nikkudot).

The plural form of אדון (adon) is אֲדֹנִים (adoniym) as can be seen in 1 Kings 22:17 where it is written as אֲדֹנִים. Now, if you want to say “my lords,” then you would drop the mem and the yud becomes “ai” (in contrast to the “iy”) and is written as אֲדֹנֵי and can be seen in Genesis 19:2. Note that אֲדֹנִי (adoniy – my lord) has a dot under the nun for the “i” sound, but in אֲדֹנֵי there is a line under the nun for the “a” sound.

As the original Hebrew text did not include these nikkudot, both adoniy and Adonai would be written as אֲדֹנִי. So how would you know if אֲדֹנִי was “my lord” or “my lords?” By the context. But sometimes the context is not clear and for this reason the Masorites developed the nikkudot to clarify the words. In other words, they decided the context for you. And when the Masoretic text is translated into English, the translator followed the context set by the Masorites and your English translation is following their interpretation of the text.

There is one other twist to this whole subject and that is the spelling אֲדֹנִי instead of אֲדֹנֵי, such as can be seen in Genesis 15:2. Whenever the word adonai was used for God, the Masorites changed the line (called a patach) under the nun with the little “t” (called a qamats). Again, the Masorites have taken upon themselves to determine if the word adonai is being used for mere men or for God. The English translators follow their decision by using “lord” for adonai with a patach or “Lord” for adonai with a qamats. (When LORD appears in all capitals, this is for יהוה - YHWH)

Why is the word Adonai, meaning “my lords” being used for God? While some may say this is a sign of the trinity, this is not the case. Hebrew will frequently use a plural word as a title. Even Elohiym is a plural word meaning “gods.” But it is very important to understand, that even while plural nouns are used, they do not always mean a plural and other words used in the sentence will clarify this. For instance, in Genesis 1:1 it reads “bereshiy bara elohiym.” While elohiym is plural, the word bara means “he created,” identifying the elohiym as a singular.

Deuteronomy 4:10 / Learning

There are several Hebrew words which can be translated as “learn” into English. When we read the English text we will often come across words like learn, teach, instruct, discipline and chastise, but as we will see, these words do not give us an accurate meaning of these words from a Hebraic perspective and some of the meaning is “lost in the translation”.

The Hebrew language is centered around the life of desert dwellers who live their lives as shepherds and farmers. In order to really understand the Hebrew words for learning, we will be looking at them as they did 4000 years ago.

Learn by direction

Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. (Deuteronomy 4:10, KJV)

The Hebrew verb למד (L.M.D) appears twice in this verse. The first time it appears in the simple form of the verb and is translated as “learn.” The second time it appears in the intensive form and is translated

as "teach." This Hebrew verb is origin of the noun מלמד (malmad), meaning a goad, a stick with a pointed end for driving livestock.

The verb למד (L.M.D) literally means to learn through directions

Learn by example

Oxen were very important to desert dwellers as a source of power, much as the tractor is to the modern farmer today. The Hebrew word for an ox is אלף (eleph) and is derived from the verb אלף (A.L.P), meaning "to yoke together."

When two oxen were placed together in a yoke for plowing, an older more experienced ox is placed alongside a younger inexperienced ox. The younger would then learn by association and example from the older. Hence, the word eleph can also mean "to associate with" or "to learn by example".

A man yoked to another will learn by example from the other. A child will also learn from his parents only by observing the actions of the parent. This can be either in a positive or in a negative way.

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. (Proverbs 22:24,25)

To learn by showing

The next word we will look at is the verb ירה (Y.R.H) meaning, "to throw" such as a rock or arrow as in the following passage:

And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. (1 Samuel 20:20)

This can also be a figurative "throwing of the finger" meaning to point as in the following passage:

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them. (Exodus 15:24,25)

It can also mean "to learn by pointing out the way".

And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. (Exodus 24:12)

To learn by exercise

The next word which we will look at which is usually translated as learn or teach is שן (Sh.N.N). This verb literally means "to make pointed," or "to sharpen" such as a knife or sword.

When I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand grasps it in judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me. (Deuteronomy 32:41)

A dull knife will not cut. Hence, we take our knife and sharpen it on a stone so that it will be ready to perform the work it must do properly. This sharpening process is careful and sometimes time consuming. "Shanan" can also refer to the careful sharpening of your children's skills.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

To learn by discipline

The word יסר (Y.S.R) literally means "to turn the head" or "to turn to another direction". This word can be translated as chastise or discipline.

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. (Proverbs 29:17)

Deuteronomy 4:19 / Sun

The Hebrew word שמש (shemesh) is the sun is derived from the verb שמש (Sh.M.Sh), which appears only once in the Tanach/Old Testament.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7:10, KJV)

While this is an Aramaic word, Hebrew and Aramaic are almost identical in their vocabulary. This word is also found in another verse which is often interpreted with difficulty because of its difficult use of the word.

But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall. (Malachi 4:2)

What, or who, is this "sun of righteousness?" It is very possible that "sun" is a poor translation for the noun שמש (shemesh). As the verb שמש (Sh.M.Sh), means to "attend," then the noun שמש (shemesh) could then mean an "attendant" and this word is used for the "sun" as the "sun" is the attendant of the earth. If this is true, then the phrase in question should be translated as "attendant of righteousness."

Deuteronomy 4:24 / Positive and Negative

When I speak of the positive and negative nature of *Elohim*, I am not speaking about a "moral" positive and negative, but the "forces" of positive and negative, much like the two poles of a magnet or the forces of the protons (positive) and electrons (negative) of an atom. God is a perfect balance of positive and negative: Good and Bad, Light and Dark, Large and Small, Make and Break, Loud and Quiet, Far and Near, One and Many, Male and Female, etc.

This concept of "balance" is virtually unknown in our western philosophy, but it is a very important one in the ancient philosophy of the Israelites and other ancient peoples. From this ancient perspective, "balance" is "order" and anything out of balance is chaos. In the following two verses we can see this balance of positive and negative within the actions of *Elohim*.

In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1, LT)

I (Elohim) will destroy all [flesh] with the earth. (Genesis 6:13, LT)

In the first verse we see *Elohim* creating (positive) the world, but in the second verse we see him destroying (negative) it.

And Elohim said, Let there be light, and there was light. (Genesis 1:3, LT)

And Moses drew near to the thick darkness where Elohim was. (Exodus 20:21, LT)

In these two verses we see *Elohim* being associated with light (positive) and darkness (negative). It is interesting to note that Jews and Christians always associate *Elohim* with light and Satan with darkness. However, almost every time *Elohim* appears to the Israelites, he is in the darkness.

In Genesis 1:4 we read that "*Elohim* separated the light from the darkness." The word for light is feminine while the word for darkness is masculine. Not only is this verse about the balance of light and darkness, but it is also about the balance of the masculine and the feminine.

In the next two verses we see two contrasting attributes of Yahweh, mercy (positive) and a consuming fire (negative).

Yahweh your Elohim is a consuming fire. (Deuteronomy 4:24, LT)


Yahweh your Elohim is a merciful El. (Deuteronomy 4:31, LT)

In Genesis 1:26 we find that the image of *Elohim* is male (positive) and female (negative). In Genesis 3:5 and 3:22 we see that *Elohim* is good (positive) and bad (negative). In Joshua 23:15 we read that Yahweh does good things (positive) and bad things (negative). In Deuteronomy 30:1 Yahweh provides blessings (positive) and curses (negative). In Isaiah 45:7 we are told that God makes peace (positive) and evil (negative).

Below is one of the most vivid passages in the entire Bible that demonstrates this positive and negative aspect of ancient philosophy.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, ASV)

Deuteronomy 5:22 / Voice and Assembly

The parent root קל (qal), written as  in the ancient pictographic script, is formed by combining the picture of the sun at the horizon, meaning “draw in,” with the picture of a shepherd staff. The combined meaning is “to draw to the shepherd staff”. The child root קול (qol) is translated as “voice” and it is the voice of the shepherd that calls the flock to be drawn toward his staff (the sign of his authority). Another child root derived from this parent root is קהל (qahal) meaning, “assemble”. This word is used throughout the Bible for the “assembly” or “congregation” of Israel, the sheep who hear the voice of their shepherd Yahweh.

*“These words Yahweh spoke to all your assembly (lhq - a gathering flock) with a great voice (lwq - voice of the shepherd) from in the midst of the fiery cloud on the mountain”.
Deuteronomy 5.22*

In this passage we can clearly see the imagery of the shepherd calling his sheep. When the voice of Yahweh (the shepherd) came from the mountain, all of Israel (the sheep) gathered in front of the mountain (the staff) to hear his words.

Deuteronomy 6:4 / Hear O Israel

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (RSV, Deuteronomy 6:4,5)

Hear

The Hebrew verb שמע (Sh.M.Ah) means “to hear” but with the Hebraic idea “to pay attention to what is being spoken and act upon it.” When Israel “hears” the directions of God, they agree to act upon them

(they obey his words). When God “hears” the pleas of Israel in bondage in Egypt, he acts upon them (he rescues Israel).

One

The use of the word “one” in this verse is commonly interpreted to mean that there is only “one” God. However, from a Hebraic perspective, the Hebrew word אחד (ehhad) can mean a “unit” within a unity. This verse is stating that YHWH is in unity with himself. A good example of this is the pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. A cloud and fire are opposites—one provides coolness and shade and the other heat and light. Yet, they work together to preserve the people during the day and the night.

Love

Love, the Hebrew verb אהב (A.H.B) is not an emotion: it is an action. The context of this word in the text indicates that we are to “love” God with our actions, not with our emotions.

Heart

The heart, לבב (levav) in Hebrew, is the thoughts of the mind, not an emotion as the word is generally understood in western minds. In this passage, we are informed how to “love” Yahweh—by keeping all of our thoughts focused on him.

Soul

The Hebrew word נפש (nephesh) is literally the whole of the person. First we are told to love Yahweh with our minds, now with all of our bodies.

Might

The Hebrew word used here is מאד (me’od) and is a very interesting word, especially in the way that it is used in this context. This word is used throughout the Hebrew text as an adverb, intensifying a verb, and is usually translated as very, greatly, or much. This is the only time this word appears as a noun and is best translated as “muchness.” This idea of muchness is expanding on the previous two ways we are to love Yahweh, first with our mind, then with our body, and now with everything we have.

Now that we have examined each word in this passage, to uncover their original meanings in the Hebrew culture, let’s translate it with a more Hebraic flavor.

Israel, pay careful attention and respond: Yahweh works in unity with himself: and you shall act upon your love to YHWH with your thoughts and mind, with your entire body and with everything that you possess.

The phrase “heart, mind and soul,” as it is translated in the RSV, is generally interpreted to mean that we are to love YHWH with “three” things, but the reality is that this phrase is a form of poetry that is using three synonyms to show that our love for YHWH is to be all encompassing, beginning with our thoughts, then to our bodies, then to everything we possess

In modern day Hebrew Bibles, this passage is written as follows.

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

Notice that the ayin (ע), the last letter in the first word is written oversized, as is the dalet (ד), the last letter in the last word. When these two letters are placed together, they form the word עד (eyd) meaning "witness." In Judaism, the sh'ma (the name given to this verse as it is the first word in this verse) is Israel's witness, their statement of faith if you will.

However, these oversized letters are not found in any ancient scroll such as found in the Dead Sea Caves. They first appear in the Masoretic Hebrew texts from 1,000 A.D. Whether the Masorites added them or not we don't know, in fact the origins of these oversized letters are a mystery.

Even though these letters do not appear to have been in the original texts, they are still excellent teaching tools.

Deuteronomy 6:9 / Mezuzah

The modern Mezuzah is a piece of paper or parchment with Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 written on it and placed in a box. This box is then attached to the doorpost of the house. This 'Mezuzah' is to fulfill the Torah requirement of Deuteronomy 6:6-9:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

The first question that needs to be answered is "What are "these words" that are to be taught and written?" According to modern Judaism it is Deuteronomy 6 as they are what is written on the Mezuzah, but I contend that it is the commands given prior to Deuteronomy 6 – the '10 commandments' found in Deuteronomy 5.

The second question is "Is the modern Mezuzah the correct application of the command in Deuteronomy 6?" If you read the passage above literally, it says that you are to write "these words" on the "doorposts." The Hebrew word for a doorpost is "mezuzah"(literally a mezuzah is 'not' the paper or the box which are today identified as a mezuzah). The command is not stating that a Mezuzah is to be placed on a doorpost but that "these words" are to be written on the doorpost (the mezuzah).

I am of the opinion that the Ancient Hebrews wrote the 10 commandments directly on their doorposts (Mezuzah) of their homes.

Deuteronomy 6:25 / Command

This Hebrew word is usually translated as a "command" or "commandment". By definition a command is "To direct with authority; give orders to" and "To have control or authority over; rule: a general who commands an army". Is this the meaning of the Hebrew word mitsvah? When the Torah says *"And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us"* (RSV Deuteronomy 6:25), is it telling us that God our general is giving us an order to obey or is the Ancient Hebrew understanding something different?

Remembering that the Ancient Hebrews were concrete thinkers, we need to understand the meaning of this word based on the Ancient Hebrew perspective of thought. We, as Western Greco-Roman thinkers, are very comfortable using abstract words but not the Ancient Hebrews. Each word painted a picture of action and this is also true for the word mitsvah. We are going to look at other roots and words that are closely related to this word and its roots and all of them when combined will paint a very clear picture of action which is completely lost in the English translations of the Bible.

The parent root צו (tsav) means "direction". From this parent comes the child root צוה (tsavah) meaning "to direct". From this child root comes the word מצוה (mitsvah) also meaning a "direction".

The parent root צא (tsa) means "excrement" in the sense of "going out". From this parent root comes the child root יצא (yatsa) meaning "to go out". From this child root comes the word מוצא (motsah) meaning a "going out" or to "proceed".

The parent root צי (tsiy) means a "nomad" or "ship" (as a nomad on the sea). From this parent root comes the word ציי (tsiyiy) meaning a "desert" and ציון (tsion) meaning a "sign".

At first glance these three sets of roots do not appear to have anything in common that is until we see these words through Hebrew eyes. The action painted by the parent root צי (tsiy) and its related words, is the landmarks (signs such as mountains, ranges, wadis, rock outcroppings, etc) of the desert are used by the nomad to follow to the next encampment, pasture or water hole. The action painted by the parent root צא (tsa) and its related words, is the migrations of the nomad through the desert. The action painted by the parent root צו (tsav) and its related words including the word mitsvah, is the directions taken by the nomad by following the landmarks through the desert.

Getting back to our word מצוה (mitsvah) we need to read this word as a "direction" one is to take in their migration. Our life is a journey through the desert and in this life we are given landmarks or signs which guide us in this journey. The Torah, the Bible, the words of God is these landmarks. When God says "honor your father and mother" he is giving us a landmark which gives us a direction to go. If we follow each of these landmarks we will not become lost in our journey and will arrive at the ultimate landmark - Zion. The word Zion is ציון (tsion) in Hebrew and is the very same word we looked at previously meaning a "sign" or "landmark".

Deuteronomy 7:13 / Oxen

The oxen likewise and the young asses that till the ground shall eat savory provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fork. (ASV, Isaiah 30:24)

In the verse above is the Hebrew noun אֵלֶף (eleph) meaning oxen. Oxen are the largest of the Ancient Hebrews' livestock and were most frequently used for plowing the fields, usually in pairs. An older ox would be yoked to a younger one in order for the older one to teach the younger through association. This same noun is also found in Judges 6:15 where it is translated as "family." In a family, the children learn from the parents, in the same manner as the oxen, through association.

The verbal root of this word is אִלַּף (A.L.Ph) and means "learn," but more literally, to learn through association, as can be seen in the following verse.

Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger; And with a wrathful man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn this ways, And get a snare to thy soul. (ASV, Proverbs 22:25)

As oxen are "very large" animals, the word אֵלֶף (eleph) is also used for a "thousand," a "very large" number. From this aspect of the noun, a second verb is formed. Normally, Hebrew nouns are derived out of verbs, however on occasion, a verb is derived out of a noun, this verb is called a demonstrative verb. The demonstrative verb formed out of אֵלֶף (eleph) is אָלַף (A.L.Ph) meaning to "give a thousand."

In summary, the Hebrew word אֵלֶף can be;

- A verb meaning to learn by association.
- A noun meaning oxen, a large beast, which learns through association.
- A noun meaning family, through the idea of association.
- A noun meaning a thousand, a large number.
- A verb meaning to give a thousand.

Deuteronomy 9:3 / Canaan

The name Canaan refers to the son of Ham, the son of Noah as well as the descendants of Canaan who settled the land west of the Jordan river. The Hebrew for this name is כְּנַעַן pronounced kena'an. It is derived from the root כָּנַע (Kena) meaning "to be brought down by a heavy load". By extension this word can also mean subdue or humble. Canaan and his descendents are continually being "brought down". Canaan was cursed by Noah and his descendents were subdued and conquered by Israel as God had promised in Deuteronomy 9:3.

Know therefore this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before thee: so shalt

thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee. (ASV)

The phrase "Bring down" is the Hebrew word כנע (Kena) in the context of the conquest of the Canaanites. God used Israel to "bring down low" (Kena) the people who are "brought down low" (Kena'an).

The word כנען (kena'an) can also mean a "merchant" as in Hosea 12:7 (verse 8 in the Hebrew Bible). This may be because a merchant is one who carries heavy loads or it may be that the people of Kena'an were frequently merchants.

Deuteronomy 10:17 / Lord

In most cases, the Hebrew word אֲדֹנָי (adon) lies behind the English word "lord". It is used throughout the Bible and is used commonly in prayer, but the actual meaning of the word has been robbed of its cultural meaning.

Again we will begin our search for the Biblical meaning of אֲדֹנָי (adon) by looking at its parent root דָּן (dan). In the ancient pictographic script, this word would have appeared as ד. The letter ד (d), is a door meaning "to enter" and the letter נ (n), is a seed meaning "perpetual life". When these letters are combined we find the Hebraic definition, "the door of life" or "to enter a perpetual life".

One child root derived from this parent is דִּין (diyn), meaning to "judge". This word is used as a legal term, but not in the modern Western sense of seeking guilt or condemnation; rather it is seeking innocence or life from an Eastern Hebraic sense. We can see this search for innocence in Genesis 15:4 where God punishes the guilty in order to bring life to the descendants of Abraham who were unjustly treated as slaves.

"But I will punish the nation they [the descendents of Abraham] serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions". (NIV)

In the next two passages, the word דִּין (diyn) is paralleled with "save", meaning to deliver from a trouble or burden and "compassion". Just as a deliverer saves one's life from an enemy, a judge also brings life.

"God, in your name save me, and in your might judge me". (Psalms 54:1)

"For Yahweh will judge his people, and on his servants he will have compassion". (Psalms 135.14)

We have seen that the parent root דָּן (dan) means "to enter life" and the child root דִּין (diyn) is "to bring life to another". We now come to the child root אֲדֹנָי (adon - lord) which means "one who brings life" or "one who opens the door to perpetual life", the judge or deliverer. In the ancient Hebraic culture each family was a kingdom unto itself, the head of the family, the patriarch, was the king. Within the hands of

this king was the power to take or grant life and for this reason he is seen as the אֲדֹנָי (adon). After Jacob flees from his family, Esau becomes the head of the family, he is the אֲדֹנָי. When Jacob returns he is afraid for his life and approaches Esau as a servant in the hopes that Esau will spare his life.

“And you are to say, it is an offering from your servant Jacob sent to my lord (אֲדֹנָי) Esau and he is coming after us”. (Genesis 32:18)

Moses is also called אֲדֹנָי, the deliverer and judge of Israel.

“And Joshua son of Nun, attendant of Moses from his youth, answered saying, my lord (אֲדֹנָי) Moses stop them”. (Numbers 11:28)

As Genesis 1:1 states:

“In the beginning God created”.

All life is granted by God which makes him אֲדֹנָי over all creation.

“And the angel answered saying, these are the four spirits of heaven going out from the standing over the lord (אֲדֹנָי) of all the earth”. (Zechariah 6:5)

Deuteronomy 13:4 / Walk

You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him, and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave to him. (RSV, Deuteronomy 13:4)

The Hebrew verb הלך (H.L.K) literally means to "walk," as can be seen in the following passage.

And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain... (KJV, 2 Samuel 2:29)

This word is also used frequently in a figurative sense as can be seen in the following passage.

And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. (KJV, 1 Kings 3:14)

In this passage, YHWH is asking Solomon to "walk" in the footsteps of his father David, who walked in the footsteps of YHWH. A son "walks" in the footsteps of his father, a student "walks" in the footsteps of his teacher and a people "walk" in the footsteps of their ancestors. In our English language, we call this "culture." Many of your thoughts and actions are a result of "walking" in the footsteps of your parents, family, neighbors and community. In the case of Israel, their culture was to patterned after YHWH's teachings, but the other nations culture was patterned after other gods.

And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. (RSV, Leviticus 20:23)

The Hebrew language always uses concrete concepts to express abstract thought. While we may use an abstract word like "culture," the Hebrew language will use a much more concrete word, such as "walking," to express the same idea. Israel was commanded to walk in YHWH's footsteps (follow YHWH's customs) and not walk in the footsteps of other gods (follow the customs of other nations).

Deuteronomy 18:13 / Perfect

I begin this study with a comparison of two people, Jacob and Job.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. (KJV, Genesis 25:27)

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright. (KJV, Job 1:1)

From these two verses, we could conclude that Jacob was plain, just an ordinary person, nothing special, but Job, on the other hand, was rather extraordinary as he was "perfect." What you might find interesting is the word "perfect" in Job 1:1 is a translation of the Hebrew word תָּם (*tam*) but so is the word "plain" in Genesis 25:27. So why isn't Jacob considered "perfect" by the translations just as they did with Job? This is another case of translators relying on the Greek Septuagint for their translation rather than the Hebrew text itself. The Greek uses the word *amemptos*, meaning "blameless," for Job and the word *haplous*, meaning "simple," for Jacob.

The word תָּם (*tam*) can be best defined as "mature in thought and action" and is the parent root of the verb תָּמַם (*tamam*) meaning to be whole, finished or completed. From this verb comes another noun with similar meaning-תַּמִּיּים (*tamiym*).

Thou shalt be perfect (tamiym) with the LORD thy God. (KJV, Deuteronomy 18:13)

Can anyone be perfect? From a Greek perspective, no, because everyone has his faults, but in Hebraic thought there is no concept of "perfect." A better translation of the verse above is; You will be complete (*tamiym*) with Yahweh your Elohiym

Deuteronomy 19:5 / Jungle

Many Modern Hebrew words are transliterations of European words. For instance the Modern Hebrew word for "telephone" is טֵלֶפּוֹן, which is pronounced telephone. The Modern Hebrew word for a "jungle" is ג'ונגל, which is pronounced "jungle" (the letter ג is a "g" sound, but when followed by the apostrophe

it takes on a “j” sound in Modern Hebrew). This Modern Hebrew word is a transliteration of the European word “jungle,” which is found in English, Italian, German, Spanish, Polish and French.

According to Isaac Mozeson, world renowned for his work in Edenics, the study of Semitic/Hebrew origin to words around the world, the word jungle comes from the Semitic/Hebrew word יער (ya’ar). At first glance there does not seem to be any connection between this Hebrew word יער and “jungle,” that is until we examine the sound shifts that have occurred over time. When a word is transferred from one language to another the sounds of letters are swapped for other letters of similar sound. For example the Latin word for foot is “ped” (where we get our words pedestrian and pedal). The “p” is exchanged for the “f” (both sounds being made at the lips) and the “d” for “t” (both sounds being made at the roof of the mouth just behind the teeth) and the word “ped” becomes “fet” or “feet.”

In the case of the word יער, the י (y) is exchanged for a “j,” the ע (a guttural stop) for an “ng,” and the ר (r) for an “l” and יער (ya’ar) becomes JuNGLe. The Ancient Hebrew יער traveled through many different other languages to become the European word jungle, which was then transliterated back into Hebrew as ג'ונגל. Interestingly though, the Modern Hebrew word for a “forest” is the Ancient Hebrew word יער.

Deuteronomy 20:4 / Salvation

Let's begin this study, as should be done with any serious word study, with the root for the word salvation.

For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. (KJV, Deuteronomy 20:4)

The Hebrew word translated as “save” in the verse above, is the verbal root ישע (Y.Sh.Ah) meaning to rescue. The context of this word throughout the Tenack (Old Testament) is to rescue someone from his enemy, a trouble or illness, such as can be seen in the verse above. Another form of this verb is מושיע (moshi'ah). This is the “hiphil participle” form of the verb. A hiphil verb changes the action of the verb into a causative and would literally be translated as “to cause one to be rescued.” A hiphil participle verb changes the action of the verb into active and would literally be translated as “causing one to be rescued” or it can be one who performs the action of the verb which would then be translated as “one causing another to be rescued.” The word מושיע (moshi'ah) literally means “one causing another to be rescued,” or simply, a “rescuer,” but this word is usually translated as “deliverer” or “savior.”

And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer (moshi'ah) to the children of Israel, who delivered (the verb Y-Sh-Ah) them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. (KJV, Judges 3:9)

The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour (moshi'ah); thou savest (the verb Y.Sh.Ah) me from violence. (KJV, 2 Samuel 22:3)

The word ישועה (yeshu'ah) is a noun derived from the verbal root ישע (Y.Sh.Ah) and means "relief," in the sense of being rescued from an enemy, trouble or illness. The King James Version translates this word as help, deliverance, health and welfare, but most frequently as salvation.

And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help (yeshu'ah/relief) me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help (the verb Y.Sh.Ah/rescue) thee. (KJV, 2 Samuel 10:11)

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save (the verb Y.Sh.Ah/rescue) us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation (yeshu'ah/relief). (KJV, Isaiah 25:9)

The name Joshua is written as יהושע (yehoshu'ah) and is the name/word יה (yaha form of the name/word YHWH) and the word ישועה (yeshu'ah) meaning "rescue." The name then means, "Yah is rescue." The Aramaic form of the Hebrew name יהושע is ישוע (yeshu'a – see Ezra 2:2). While the name Yehoshua has been latinized as Joshua, the name Yeshua has been latinized as Joshua and Jesus.

Deuteronomy 22:24 / Friend and Bad

... he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. (KJV, Deuteronomy 22:24)

In this passage are the words 'neighbor' and 'evil.' Both of these words are the Hebrew word רע. How is it possible that one Hebrew word could have two very different meanings?

There are several Hebrew words that include the letter ayin (ע), but have two very different meanings. Here are a few examples.

רע / friend / bad

יעל / profit / goat

סער / hair / storm

עול / infant / wicked

עור / skin / blind

עייף / weary / darkness

עיר / colt / city

ענה / heed / answer

ערב / weave / dark

ערם / naked / crafty

ערף / neck / rain

רעה / shepherd / break

In Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew there are 22 letters in the alphabet. However, at some time in the very ancient past, a time before the Bible was written, there were more than 22 letters in the Hebrew (Semitic) alphabet. One of these letters was the ghayin (identifying this letter as the ghayin is simply an educated guess as we really do not know what the name of that was). The letter ayin had the sound like an 'a', but the ghayin had a sound like a 'g'. And then at some point, again, before the Bible was written, the ayin and ghayin were combined into one letter, the ayin. Therefore, the Hebrew word רע was originally two words, one pronounced 'ra' (meaning friend) and the other 'rag' (meaning bad).

As I mentioned, when the Bible was written, the letter ghayin had been absorbed by the letter ayin, but the pronunciation did not change. How do we know this? By examining Hebrew names that include the letter ayin, and how they were transliterated in the Greek Septuagint.

The following three Hebrew names, followed by their transliteration in the Greek Septuagint, include the letter ayin and notice that in the Greek the ayin is assigned an 'a' sound. From this we can conclude that these names were in fact written with the letter ayin.

בעל / baal
בלעם / Balaam
עשתרות / Astaroth

The next three Hebrew names also include the letter ayin, but this time, when they are transliterated into Greek, they now have a 'g' sound, evidence that the ayin in these names were originally spelled with a ghayin.

עמרה / Gomorras
עזה / Gazan
פעור / Pogor

Deuteronomy 28:12 / Lend and Borrow

The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. (KJV, Deuteronomy 28:12)

If you look up the word "lend" from this verse in a Strong's dictionary you will find that it is identified as the Hebrew verb לוה (L.W.H). If you look up the word "borrow" in a Strong's dictionary you will find that it is identified as the very same word - לוה (L.W.H). How can the same word have two completely opposite meanings?

My standard comment about Strong's dictionary is that it is one of the best tools invented for people learning Hebrew but it is also the worst tool invented for people learning Hebrew. Strong's is great for people who do not know Hebrew to get a little exposure to it and learn a little more about the deeper meaning of Hebrew words but on the flip side Strong's has its limitations and if those limitations are not known it can create some problems, such as your question. It is true that the same Hebrew word is used for lending and borrowing but what Strong's cannot show you are the different tenses, prefixes, suffixes, moods and voices of each Hebrew verb. The Hebrew verb in question is *lavah* which literally means "to join" and is used in the context of borrowing in the sense of joining yourself to another. Where you see the word "borrow" the Hebrew has *til'vah* which means "you will join/borrow" (but the word preceding this is *lo* meaning "not" so it would then be translated as "you will not join/borrow." Where you see the word "lend" the Hebrew has *vehilviyta* which means "and you will cause to join/borrow." The main

difference between the two is that the first one, *til'vah* is in the qal (or simple) form while the second is in the hiphil (or causative) form.

Deuteronomy 28:29 / Savior

Many who are embracing the Hebrew language of the Bible will often use the Hebrew words for key Biblical words instead of the English. Some examples are, *shalom*, *ruach hakodesh*, *kehilat*, *torah*, and many more. While I believe this to be a great idea I often see some errors in how the Hebrew is applied.

I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. (RSV, Isaiah 43:11)

A common mistake is made with the word "savior". If you look this word up in a concordance you will find that this word is #3467 in Strong's Dictionary and is identified as the Hebrew word יָשָׁה (yasha). Because of this many believe the Hebrew word yasha means "savior" and this is not true. The word יָשָׁה (yasha) is a simple verb meaning "to deliver." When the letters 'י, ו and מ are added to the verb a more complex verb is formed and more specifically a hiphil participle verb. A hiphil verb is causative and would mean "cause to deliver." A participle is a verb of present or continuous action meaning "delivering." A hiphil participle verb combines both of these meaning "causing to deliver".

In Biblical Hebrew there is a fine line between verbs and nouns and both can be used to describe an action or a person, place or thing. The word מוֹשִׁיָּה (moshiah) can be used in the sense of an action as in Deuteronomy 28:29 where it is translated as "save" but literally means "causing to be delivered." The same word can be used as a noun as in Isaiah 43:11 where it is translated as "savior" but literally means "one who is causing to be delivered."

The word moshiah (as a noun) is generally translated two different ways as shown below.

I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. (RSV, Isaiah 43:11)

*But when the people of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer,
Ehud, the son of Gera. (RSV, Judges 3:15)*

As the words savior and deliverer are the same Hebrew word there appears to be a contradiction between these two verses. If God is the only savior how can there be another savior such as Ehud? A good understanding of what the word moshiah means is critical in proper interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. As the verb moshiah is a hiphil verb meaning "to cause to be delivered" we can see that God is one who "causes to be delivered" and this can be done by the hand of God himself or by sending another to be the agent of the deliverance. Israel's deliverance is caused by God, the one and only moshiah, who sent Ehud.

There is one other point to make concerning the word *moshiah*. Remember that this verb/noun is written in the participle form. God is not one who has delivered (past tense) and he is not the one who will deliver (future tense) he is the one who "IS DELIVERING" (present tense).

Deuteronomy 28:58 / Scroll

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*) and is also the Modern Hebrew word for a book.

The word *seypher* comes from the verbal root ספר (*S.Ph.R*) 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 form (active voice and simple mood) of the verb ספר is to "count," but the hiphil form (active voice and causative mood) 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: 2 Samuel 20:25 (KJV)

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*) 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*), 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.

Deuteronomy 32:8 / Boundaries of the Nations

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, When he separated the children of men [Hebrew: Adam], He set the bounds of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. (Deuteronomy 32:8, ASV)

In the Hebrew Masoretic text, the Hebrew for "children of Israel" is *b'nei yisra'el*, literally meaning "sons of Israel." If we are honest with the text, this really does not make sense as the "sons of Israel" did not exist at the time that these nations were being formed and separated. However, in the Dead Sea Scrolls we find *b'nei Elohim*, which means "sons of *Elohim*." It is pretty clear that the writers of the Masoretic text revised this passage and changed it from "sons of *Elohim*" to "sons of Israel." Why? Because the use of "sons of *Elohim*" implies a non-Monotheistic view of the Bible, so it was revised to be more Monotheistic friendly. As the evidence suggests, the Masorites edited this verse and opens up the possibility that they may have edited other verses as well, something to keep in mind as we continue our investigations into the text of the Hebrew Bible.

According to the above passage, *Elyon* (by the way, just in case you didn't notice, this is not Yahweh) divided up the nations and set boundaries (borders) around them. These nations were "numbered" according to the "sons of *Elohim*." Genesis chapter 10, commonly referred to as the "Table of Nations," lists the nations descended from Noah through his three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The total number of nations in this list is seventy.

The ancient city of Ugarit was discovered in 1928 in Syria. The height of the Ugaritic civilization was around the 12th Century BCE making them contemporaries with the Israelites. Also, the religion and language of the Ugarit people are very similar to that of the Israelites. Excavations of the site revealed an ancient library filled with clay tablets. One such tablet states that *El Elyon* had seventy sons (the *Elim*) and each son was allocated to a specific people. Many of these sons of *El* are mentioned by name, including *El* of Shaddai and *El* of Beriyl.

Can you see the close parallels between Deuteronomy 32:8, Genesis 10 and the Ugarit tablets? According to these sources, *Elyon* divided up all the nations into seventy nations, one for each of his sons (*Elim*). Not a very monotheistic view of *Elohim* is it?

Deuteronomy 33:2 / Religion

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. 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.

Deuteronomy 33:27 / Eternal

Hebrew words used for space are also used for time. The Hebrew word *qedem* means "east" but is also the same word for the "past." The Hebrew word *olam* literally means "beyond the horizon." When looking off in the far distance it is difficult to make out any details and what is beyond that horizon cannot be seen. This concept is the *olam*. The word *olam* is also used for the distant past or the distant future as a time that is difficult to know or perceive. This word is frequently translated as "eternity" meaning a continual span of time that never ends. In the Hebrew mind it is simply what is at or beyond the horizon, a very distant time. A common phrase in the Hebrew is "l'olam va'ed" and is usually translated as "forever and ever," but in the Hebrew it means "to the distant horizon and again" meaning "a very distant time and even further."

Deuteronomy 34:5 / Moses the Servant

Each individual is designed to follow a passion. A passion that is pursued as a hobby, such as sports, collecting, etc, result in great satisfaction but little is gained. When that passion is your occupation, there is great benefit, as you will more than likely succeed and grow because of the passion.

Any form of art, whether it is a painting, writing, etc, done without passion is drab and lifeless. But once passion is interjected into the art, it comes to life as the heart and soul of the individual is transplanted into the art.

Within a kingdom, there are two types of people, those who are subjects to the king, and those who are servants to the king. The subjects confine their passions to their family and business and are virtually oblivious to the needs and desires of the king. The servant on the other hand is continually occupied with the needs and wishes of the king. His sole purpose in life, his passion, is to recognize and fulfill the needs, desires, wishes and will of the King. A good servant will learn from and study the king so that he knows the king so well that he can anticipate the needs and wishes of the king. A servant knows what the king wants because the will of the master is in him; the servant becomes echad (one, or in unity) with the king.

According to Amos 3.7, the prophets are the servants of YHWH. The Hebrew in this passage literally states that YHWH makes his foundations (the Hebrew word here "sod" also means the mysteries) naked before the servant prophets. He literally lays completely bare all his plans and mysteries to the prophets who in turn will carry the plans and mysteries to the people. A prophet who performs his function with passion will be a mighty servant for YHWH.

The majority of Israel as well as today's followers of God are subjects. We continually live our lives to ourselves, following after our needs and desires with little regard to the desires of the King. Moshe and a few other prophets in the history of Israel have shown us what a true servant of God is capable of.