

**11.30.2022 SHOW NOTES:**

**Hebrew Meaning of Grace, Faith and Salvation**

## The meaning of Grace from a Hebrew perspective

By Jeff A. Benner

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*, Strong's #2580) 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*, Strong's #2583), 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*, Strong's # 4264).

*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 were 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 חֵן (*hhen*). The first letter is the letter *hhet*, which was written as ח 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 חֵן (*hhen*) is חָנַן (*Hh.N.N*, Strong's #2603), spelled exactly the same except with the addition of the letter ך (*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 a 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 חָנַן (*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, **נָח** (*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 **הָנַח** (*Hh.N.H*), the camp, and **נָח** (*Hh.N.N*), protection, are related. Now we need to see how these words are related to the parent root **נָח** (*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 **נָח** (*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 **נָח** (*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.

# Faith

By Jeff A. Benner

אֱמוּנָה    אֱמוּנָה    *emunah*

*Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith.* (Habakkuk 2:4 - ASV)

What does it mean to have "faith" from an Hebraic perspective? In our western minds faith is a mental exercise in knowing that someone or something exists or will act. For instance, if we say "I have faith in God" we are saying "I know that God exists and that he will do what he says he will do".

The Hebrew word for faith is אֱמוּנָה (*emunah* - Strong's #530) and is an action oriented word meaning "support". This is important because the Western concept of faith places the action on the one you have faith in, such as "faith in God". But, the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה places the action on the one who "supports God". It is not a knowing that God will act, but rather I will do what I can to support God. This idea of support for the word *emunah* can be seen in Exodus 17:12.

*But Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady (emunah)until the going down of the sun.*

It is the support/*emunah* of Aaron and Hur that held of Moses' arms, not the support/*emunah* of Moses. When we say "I have faith in God", we should be thinking "I will do what I can to support God".

**Strong's: #530**

# Salvation

By Jeff A. Benner

יְשׁוּעָה      יִשׁוּעַ      *yeshu'ah*

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 יִשׁוּעַ (*Y-Sh-Ah*, Strong's #3467) meaning to rescue. The context of this word throughout the *Tanakh* (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 מוֹשִׁיעַ (*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 מוֹשִׁיעַ (*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)*

*he 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 יְשׁוּעָה (*yeshu'ah*, Strong's #3444) is a noun derived from the verbal root יִשׁוּעַ (*Y.Sh.Ah*, Strong's #3467) which 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*, Strong's #3091) and is the name/word יה (yah, Strong's #3050, a form of the name/word YHWH) and the word ישועה (*yeshu'ah*, Strong's #3444) meaning "rescue." The name then means, "Yah is rescue." The Aramaic form of the Hebrew name יהושע is ישוע (*yeshu'a*, Strong's #3442), the name many use for the name "Jesus" which is the Latin transliteration of the Greek *Iesous*, which is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic *Yeshua*, which is the Aramaic transliteration of the Hebrew *Yehoshuah*.