

Bite Size Bible Study

They had it Wrong #103

By Pastor Lee

I am always intrigued when I find where the translators have misinterpreted something in the Bible. Generally it was not intentional but was a lack of their understanding of Hebrew words and culture.

Jeff Benner writes the following: “I was always puzzled by the Hebrew word אָהֳלוֹ (*ahaloh*), which did not conform to standard Hebrew morphology. In Genesis 9:21 this word is usually translated as “his tent,” but in Hebrew, “his tent,” is written as אֹהֶלוֹ (*ahalo*), such as we can see in Genesis 31:25.

Donald P. Cole spent a year living with the Bedouin and documented his research into their culture with his book **Nomads of the Nomads**. While reading his book I discovered that the tents of the Bedouin were not the property of the men, but instead the wives. In their culture, it is not “his tent,” it is “her tent.” Assuming this is not only true for the modern day nomads, but also the Hebrew nomads of the Bible, it would explain the spelling of אָהֳלוֹ (*ahaloh*).

The vowel pointings, which are the dots and dashes above and below the Hebrew letters, were invented only 1,000 years ago. So if we remove these vowel pointings we have the word אהלה (*ahalah*), which means “her tent.” Noah was not sleeping off his drunken stupor in “his tent,” because he did not own a tent. He was sleeping in “her tent,” the tent owned by his wife.

Genesis 24:67 reads, “*And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent...*” It has been assumed by many, based on this passage, that Sarah had her own tent, apart from Abraham's. However, now we know, based on what we have learned from the Bedouin culture, that Abraham did not have a tent, only his wife Sarah did.”

(Lee) Partly because of mistranslations like this it has been assumed that women were subservient to men and that men owned and ruled over everything. Women were nothing but workers and in essence slaves to their husbands, fathers and brothers. With this information it appears that women were not only the owners of the tent but by being the owner they would have been the one with the say so about what went on within the tent. Women were responsible for the family home and the men were responsible for the animals and the fields. So far from being subservient, they were an essential part of the family team.

(Jeff) “This picture is an artist's interpretation of what scientists believe our Milky Way Galaxy looks like. While some may think that this image of our Galaxy is fact, in reality it is nothing more than an educated guess, as we have never seen our Galaxy from the outside. But this is a good example of how our modern complex philosophy deals with the unknown; we make assumptions, hypothesis and theories and then turn them into fact, thereby making the unknown, known. Did the Ancient Hebrews conceive of us living on a planet inside the Milky Way Galaxy filled with billions of giant balls of burning gas? Of course not, but still, when we read about the stars in the Bible, we assume this cosmological understanding.



When you are reading the Bible, it is imperative that you leave behind your complex philosophy and adopt a much simpler philosophy. Unfortunately, much of our modern theology is based on our western complex philosophy. Concepts such as God, heaven and hell have been tainted by this complex philosophy. As an example, if you read the theology about “hell,” you will find volumes of works on the subject detailing where it is, who goes there, when and how it came about, etc. But all of this is extra-Biblical philosophy does not exist in the Bible or in the minds of the Ancient Hebrews who wrote it. In fact, the Hebrew word that is translated as “hell” is *she'ol*, which is derived from a root meaning “something that is not known.” To the Ancient Hebrews, *she'ol* is “the unknown place,” but modern western philosophy is not comfortable with leaving something “unknown,” which is why we have to develop all of these theologies in order to make something that is unknown, known.”

(Lee) To the ancients the universe was “unknown” or *she'ol* “the unknown place” and to a large extent it is still an unknown place to us, as there are processes going on out there we don't understand now. But God does!

If you have found this author's article of interest, you may also be interested in his website: <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/index.html>

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