

Jesus

God of the Old Testament

Part 1 The First and the Last in Genesis 1:1 and Zech 12:10

I have a book called an interlinear Bible. It's a study tool that shows English Bible text alongside the original Hebrew and Greek words.

In an interlinear, even if you do not know Hebrew, you can see the Hebrew letters, their pronunciation in Hebrew, and a word for word English translation. These Hebrew words are then tied to Strong's Numbers so that you can see how they are used in other places of scripture.

This kind of study allows one to see first hand the amazing (awe inspiring) supernatural design and precision of the scriptures.

Years ago a friend showed me a strange placement of a couple of letters in the Hebrew that are not translated into the English.

The first verse of the Bible in English says:

“In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.”

Here is what this verse looks like in the Interlinear Bible:

1:1	בְּרֵאשִׁית	בְּרָא	אֱלֹהִים	אֶת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	וְאֶת	הָאָרֶץ	:
	b·rashith	bra	aleim	ath	e·shmim	u·ath	e·artz	:
	in·beginning	he·created	Elohim	»	the·heavens	and·»	the·earth	

The Aleph and the Tav At Creation

In the Hebrew interlinear, there are a couple of things that stand out. First of all, the word translated “God” in the English is Elohim. In Hebrew, when “im” is attached to the end of a word, it becomes plural. For example, Seraph becomes Seraphim, and Cherub becomes Cherubim.

For a New Testament reader, looking under the revelation of Christ, we sense at least a hint of the Triune God in the first verse. This will be explored more fully in another study in this series.

In addition, there are two Hebrew characters placed immediately after the word Elohim that the English translators didn’t know what to do with:



These two characters are the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the **Aleph and the Tav**. These are *not* translated in the English because they technically do not form a word. Again, as a Christian reading the Bible in the light of the revelation of Christ, the **Aleph** and **Tav** call to mind the words of Jesus’ in Revelation:

Revelation 1:8, “I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,” says the Lord God. “I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.”

The Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. They correspond to the Hebrew Aleph and Tav. If this verse was written in Hebrew, Jesus would have said said “I am the **Aleph** and **Tav**.”

When I read the Bible, I'm learning more and more to read it under the realization that Jesus is the word, and He deliberately wrote this message to reveal Himself to me. In Genesis 1:1 Jesus is declaring Himself as the Aleph and the Tav. He is the beginning, and the end. In the Revelation at the end of the Bible He says He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last - the one who is, who was, and who is to come! This is a powerful way to express that He is the "I Am". We will see in another study that Jesus claimed in the Gospels to be the very "I AM" who appeared to Moses at the burning bush. He is God.

He is the One who created all things, and all things were created through Him. (John 1:1-3) Today everything is held together in Him.(Col 1:17) The scripture says He holds it all together by the "word of His power." (Hebrews 1:3)

Christians know that Jesus is given the title "the Word of God" and is called the "Word Made Flesh" - the very expression of God's thought. As the **Aleph and Tav**, He is the first and last of God's alphabet, and every letter in between. He is God's language, and He is what God wants to say. This is literally and figuratively true. He is the subject of the Bible from cover to cover, and every detail points to Him..

In the beginning, Elohim, the Aleph and the Tav, created the heavens and the earth!

The Aleph and Tav in Salvation

We've seen that He is the Aleph and Tav in creation. Now we'll see from another Old Testament verse that He is the Aleph and Tav in salvation.

While this un-translated pair of letters occurs in a few other places in the Hebrew scriptures, I want to focus on one of my favorite prophecies from Zechariah:

ZECH 12:10 Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer upon the house of David and on the people of Jerusalem. And they will LOOK UPON ME <ALEPH TAV> WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED, and mourn for HIM as for an only son. They will grieve for him bitterly as for a firstborn son who has died.

וְהִבִּיטוּ	אֵלַי	אֶת	אֲשֶׁר - דָּקְרוּ	וְסִפְדוּ	עָלָיו	כְּמוֹסֵפֶד
u·ebitu	al·i	ath	ashr - dqru	u·sphdu	oli·u	k·msphd
and·they-look	to·me	»	whom	they-stabbed	and·they-wail	over·him
						as·wailing

The un-translated ALEPH and TAV appear right between the words “Me” and “Whom”:

And they will look upon ME <ALEPH TAV> Whom they have pierced.

To catch the significance of this verse we need to understand its context. Through the prophets in the Old Testament, God says that at the end of days the Jewish people will have been re-gathered into the land after dispersion into the nations (for unbelief and disobedience). They will be re gathered but still in a state of unbelief. (Essentially a secular state.)

However at that time, all the nations of the world will turn against Jerusalem. It will be a very terrifying situation for the Jewish people. God says that He will use that situation to reveal Himself to a remnant of them that survive that terrible time, which the Bible calls “the time of Jacob’s trouble”. Ultimately God will climax history by revealing Himself to His estranged people, reconciling them to Himself, saving and delivering them from their enemies, and establishing His Kingdom on earth through the saved nation of Israel to fulfill the promise He made to the fathers and to David.

In Zechariah especially, God prophetically spells out His final salvation of the Jewish People in great detail. In this verse specifically God will reveal WHO HE IS as their savior. He is *the*

one that they have pierced! Again, “underneath” the text, we see that He is the **Aleph and the Tav**.

And they will LOOK UPON ME < Aleph Tav> WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED, and mourn for Him as for an only son.

There are A few other very interesting things about this verse:

1. God speaks of Himself first in the first person, and then in second. “They shall look upon Me”... “they shall mourn for Him.” This happens quite a few times in the Old Testament, one of many types of allusions to the "christian" concept of plurality in the Godhead (the triune God, or the trinity).
2. God is prophetically identifying Himself as the one that Israel will realize that *they have pierced*. When they realize who He is, they will mourn. If you read the verses that follow it you’ll see that the entire remnant of the -nation will be in mourning and wailing with realization. This will be the greatest and probably most bittersweet family reunion in human history. It is prefigured in the story of Joseph when he is reunited with his brothers. This is only one of many OT references of the sacrificial death of Messiah for His people.

Summary

So much revelation is packed in just two verses!

The **Aleph and TAV** show up in a few places other places, but from only two verses – Genesis 1:1 and Zech 12:10 we can see much about the identity of the God of the Old Testament. Let’s just look at a list of facts we can extract from these two verses.

- As God, He is the creator of the heavens and earth.
- He is the Aleph and the Tav, the first and the last.
- He is the Son of the House of David, a man! He is both God and Man.
- He will be pierced by His people.
- He will reveal Himself to them and they will see that they pierced him, and mourn as if mourning for a son.
- This is the one that will be salvation to His people, Israel

In the next section we will go on to see a few more amazing meanings communicated through these two letters.

Part 2 Prophetic “Secrets” in Hebrew Letters

The Hebrew language is very dense in what it communicates. Not only do Hebrew letters combine to form words, the letters themselves also convey meaning. They are pictographs.

Paleo Hebrew

In the last section we saw the Aleph and the Tav as it was presented in the Interlinear, which is based on the modified Hebrew alphabet that took shape during the time of the captivity in Babylon. The Hebrew Alphabet scripts went through a couple of modifications through the centuries, and the original that Moses would have penned Genesis in is called the Paleo Hebrew alphabet. Fervent scribes who revered the scriptures and spent their days meditating on God’s word believed that this alphabet was given by God Himself and expresses the language that would have been spoke in Eden.

Picographs – Pictures of Christ

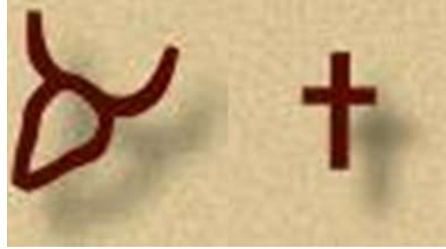
The characters in the paleo Hebrew alphabet are pictographs- each having its own meaning. There are many good resources on the internet that can be used to learn about the meaning of the Hebrew letters. Hebrew is a unique language in that a word consisted of several letters that were pictures, and understanding the pictures and putting them together revealed the meaning of the word. It is said that a child who is “illiterate” can accurately understand the meaning of Hebrew words by breaking them down in pictures. The pictures had an agreed upon meaning.

A common and easy to understand example of how this works is the word Father. It is comprised of the letter Beyt followed by the letter Aleph. Beyt was a picture of a tent/and a house. Aleph was a picture of the ox. Ox was understood to represent leader (more later). So the word for Father is the House with its leader, or the leader of the house.

The ancient Hebrew scholars wrote books and books about the meaning of each sacred letter in their alphabet. If you take the time to investigate it you’ll find that every single letter in the alphabet points in some way to God revealed in Christ. There are resources on the web that are written from a Jewish perspective, and from a Christian perspective.* From the Jewish perspective, because they do not believe Jesus is the Messiah, you will not see the connections to Christ made by them. But it will be hard not to make them yourself!

Pictographs – Aleph and Tav

Here is what the **Aleph and Tav** looked like in the Paleo (original) Hebrew alphabet.



Notice the Aleph (left) looks like an Ox Head, and the Tav (right) is shaped like a cross.

Let's consider these two letters and their symbolic significance: **the Aleph and the Tav.**

Aleph

- First letter of the Alphabet, Represented by a picture of an Ox Head.
- According to the Jewish understanding of the meaning of this letter, The ox Signifies strength and leadership, but also service.
- Jesus a King that came not to be served, but to serve. (It's how He leads.)
- The Ox is also a burden bearer. Jesus is the only King that said "come to me you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you - for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
- Jesus clearly associated Himself with the yoked beast of burden, to bear our burden and be yoked with us to carry our load.
- The Gospel of Mark emphasizes His servant nature. This gospel is often theologically associated with the Ox. *The Gospels are organized in a way that matches the faces of the Cherubim that surround the throne of God. Matthew, emphasizing that Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the seed of David to inherit the throne, focuses on what Jesus SAID. Mark emphasizes the acts of service of Jesus, focusing on what he DID. Luke focuses on the humanity of Jesus, revealing His sympathy, compassion and His very human feelings. John focuses on His divinity as the One in the Bosom of the Father, and His identity as the one who bore Isarel in the wilderness - with many references to types in the wilderness. It focuses on who He Is as the very God represented by the Eagle that bore them on His wings in the wilderness. When we see the throne of God in Revelation 4 and in Ezekiel, we are shown four living creatures, cherubim, that surround the throne, and they have the faces of a Lion, an Ox, a Man and an Eagle, in that order!*

The Tav

- Two crossed sticks (looks like a cross!)

- Associated in the Hebrew tradition with the sign, or monument, or emblem of a covenant. In fact it was identified as the “seal of God” or the “seal of truth.”
- The cross and the scars that Jesus bears are the emblem of the covenant He has made to always be the savior to anyone who would believe in Him. He still bears those scars in resurrection, and they will be a perpetual monument signifying what He did for us.
- Although the ancient Hebrews could not foresee that this cross shape would have an ultimate prophetic connotation in the sacrificial offering of Messiah, they still held this letter to be powerfully significant, recognizing it as the very “seal of God”. We who look back with knowledge can now see that from the beginning God hid all of these details in the very fabric of the language in which the scriptures were written!

With this understanding of the **Aleph and the Tav** in a Christ centered prophetic context, it would not be a stretch to read Genesis 1:1 this way:

"In the Beginning God,

...the First and the Last...

....the servant Leader ...

...whose cross is the sign of His covenant,

created the heavens and the earth."

This kind of discovery and inspiration requires a childlike faith that believes first and foremost that the scripture is breathed by God and is designed by Him. There are many cynics, “christian” and otherwise, who actually scoff at this kind of digging. I’ve found the root of that kind of attitude tends to be a cynical unbelief in the power and precision of the word.

It is true that the Hebrew alphabet has a lot of properties and characteristics that can lead to many tangents and even some have developed occultic understandings from going too far in the wrong direction, such as Kaballah. But if our aim is to worship God and know Him as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, and we find ourselves appreciating the power of the word and begin to see Jesus Christ on every page, we are in a good and healthy place. The goal in all scripture study should be to know and appreciate Christ Himself!

In the next section we are going to look further into how Jesus Christ shows up in the meaning of some Hebrew letters that comprise the name of God as He revealed Himself to man.