

Lesson Six: Some mental Gymnastics with the Hebrew Text.

Following are some concepts with no text presented! I am hopeful that you can think through these with me and perhaps in time to come you will see texts that more particularly dramatize the concepts. But these are mostly just thought areas and the sort of thing that is learned in grammatical study and not subjected to great attention in later periods. Just take the items as I mention them...read through my suggestions...and tuck the stuff away in a safe place in the hope that you may use it some day.

1. You see a form, in your reading, that is obviously plural but it is consistently treated as a singular with accompanying verbs, etc. This tells you....

--the form is a majestic plural (too big to be thought of as a single thing)

--a poetic conceit...something such as "vanity of vanities."

And occasionally it may happen because...Hebrew does that sort of thing every now and then. But if it is consistent, it is most likely one of the above.

2. The word you are taking special notice of obviously received the direct action of the verb because it is preceded by the accusative sign but it does not have the definite article. Puzzled briefly, you recognize that the word must be...

--a definite noun

--perhaps a pronoun (which is definite, of course)

3. A reading in a variant text is preferred by your favorite commentator but when you look at the MT you discover that the questioned word is marked with paseq. This tells you....

--the Masoretes were aware of the variant and were positive that it was not the right reading...Be careful, is their suggestions, to read this one.

4. Obviously you are seeing an adjective but it does not agree in number and gender with the word it must modify. You quickly realize that it....

--is a number..remembering that the numerical qualifiers disagree in number and gender.

5. The Hebrew is translated by your favorite version as a simple command but when you look at the text you see it is imperfect in form. Then you understand:

--the translator has interpreted it as a jussive. The form is sometimes marked by a shortened pointing and sometimes by a sign word..and sometimes is understood only in context.

6. In what appears to be a simple conditional clause you spot the Hebrew particle lamedh-shureg. The verb you see is perfect. This tells you:

--the condition cannot be fulfilled

--or the condition is hypothetical and cannot be fulfilled