

נצל hophal

(For fuller discussion of the lexical field as a whole see the ‘Overview of SAHD entries for “Deliverance” words’ on this site)

Introduction

Grammatical Type: vb hoph.

Occurrences: Total 2x OT, 0x Sir, 1x Qum, 0x inscr.

Qum: 1Q38 iv 5 (במוצל[י]);

Text doubtful:

A.1 [nil]

B.1 It is possible that יִקְלֹי at Jb 21.30 should be read as the hophal יִצֵּל in light of its parallelism with הִשָּׁךְ niph (Fohrer 1963:338 and predecessors cited there; HAL:677), although other emendations have been suggested (e.g. Tur-Sinai 1957:333). The semantic evidence implies that an emendation to יִצֵּל is not the best possible solution (see Conclusion).

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 [See נצל hiphil]

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 [See נצל hiphil]

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 The subject of נצל hophal is אֵיזָה ‘brand’ (Am 4.11; Zc 3.2).

A.2 The verb נצל hophal is followed by מֶן + שָׁרְפָה ‘flame’ (Am 4.11) or + אֵשׁ ‘fire’ (Zc 3.2).

4. Versions

a. LXX: ἐκσπάω (Am 4.11; Zc 3.2);

Minor Greek Versions [MRN]:

b. Peshitta: *pš*’ (Am 4.11); *plṭ* (Zc 3.2);

c. Targum: שִׁיזַב (Am 4.11; Zc 3.2);

d. Vulgate: *rapio* (Am 4.11); *eruo* (Zc 3.2).

A.1 It may be significant that the Vg at Am 4.11 opts for *rapio*, a lexeme that does not mean ‘to save’ but ‘to snatch’. Similarly in the piel the Vg translates נצל by *diripio*. Cf. also נצל hiphil, Root and Comparative Material.

B.1 Pesh and Targ (and Vg once) render נצל hophal with verbs from the ‘deliverance’ group, following their general practice with the hiphil, but probably mistakenly. LXX is the best guide to the meaning.

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 [See נצל hiphil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 The verb נצל hophal only appears in BH in two passages that share the same imagery (but for the different lexemes for fire), and one (i.e. Zc 3.2) may be based on the other (Petersen 1985:192). Petersen does, however, note that the simile in Amos becomes a metaphor in Zechariah (1985:192).

A.2 In both of the occurrences in BH נצל hophal is used to denote the removal of a brand from a fire, an action that requires swift or perhaps violent movement. It is accordingly glossed by BDB as ‘plucked’ (665). It is likely in the context that removal from the fire is the prime meaning and not rescue (see B.1).

A.3 At 1Q38 iv 5 נצל hophal appears in a very small fragment and little can be said with certainty. It appears to be part of a Psalm addressed to God, and נצל hophal denotes those whom he has saved.

B.1 Andersen & Freedman (1989:444) note that the wording “suggests rescue, not just survival”. Similar expressions by other scholars (e.g. Harper 1960:101; Meyers & Meyers 1988:187), where “wording” is an imprecise term, should be understood as referring to the context and not the semantics of the lexeme נצל hophal. It should not be presumed that the lexeme necessarily denotes a saving act rather than ‘to remove’, a meaning that appears in some cognate languages (see נצל hiphil Root and Comparative Material) and other binyanim of נצל.

7. Conclusion

A.1 It seems that the hophal is used as the passive of הצייל in the sense ‘remove (violently)’, whereas the niph'al is used for the passive of the sense ‘deliver’. An exception to this may be 1Q38, although the context there is too damaged to permit any certainty (see also A.2 below).

A.2 The emendation proposed in Jb 21.30 would contradict the pattern outlined in A.1, which is perhaps a reason for rejecting it and dealing with the problem of the verse in another way (cf. Tur-Sinai 1957:333; Pope 1965: 161).

Bibliography

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