

# *Hebrew*

## The Original Language

**Growing numbers of Bible-believers maintain that the first language of man was Hebrew. Among authorities, Noah Webster's dictionary is not alone in tracing many English words back to the Hebrew language. Yet the belief that Hebrew was the original language has long since been replaced by the concept of an "Indo-Aryan" mother language. A recent book reopens the question and provides solid evidence supporting Hebrew as the mother of all languages. Evidence shows that Hebrew is also the language of heaven.**

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"The curriculum of Harvard was full of Hebrew, and an early graduate thesis at Harvard concerned Hebrew as the Mother tongue. Noah Webster's etymologies (discredited for 200 years now) were full of English words traced to 'Shemite' sources."

So reads the preface of author Isaac Mozeson's book, *The Word*, in which he touts Hebrew as the original language of mankind. Quite comprehensive, his book has many examples of word origins traced back to Hebrew. Some literary critics rave at Mozeson's bold assertions showing Hebrew to be the mother of all languages.

The noted etymologist Dr. Joseph T. Shipley says, "The Word is a challenge to linguists. The parallels traced seem beyond the range of coincidence, and call for a re-examination of our etymologies. Etymon (truth) must be the quest."

Matityahu Glazerson, in *The Holy Language: Source of All Languages*, writes, "Mozeson's work is invaluable. A sanctification of the Name is made for the sanctified language (Hebrew)." Professor Louis Felman of Yeshiva University, writes, "What I have seen of Mozeson's work suggests a far wider sharing of the world regarding the monogenesis of language and the primacy of Near East culture."

We support these and other scholars and believe that Hebrew was indeed the original language spoken in the Garden of Eden, and was the inspired language of the Bible. Evidence shows that it was the language spoken to Adam and Eve and will be spoken again in the Kingdom.

Zephaniah 3:8 warns that Yahweh will pour out His wrath upon the rebellious people of earth, and only the meek in spirit will be left. The Hebrew language will be spoken when the kingdom is set up and Yahweh's Name will reign supreme, as shown by the following verses:

"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of Yahweh, to serve him with one consent," Zephaniah 3:9.

"In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to Yahweh of hosts..." Isaiah 19:18.

The Living Bible, among others, declares that the language of Canaan is Hebrew. The question and resistance against calling upon Yahweh's Name will vanish when His Kingdom is established on earth, because all will speak and understand Hebrew.

More scholars are coming to agree that Hebrew is the original language of both the Old and New Testament. Both were originally written in Hebrew (Request our ministudy: Was the New Testament Written in Greek?)

The Hebrew language existed since creation and will be spoken in the Kingdom. Hebrew was the language spoken by Yahweh to Adam, and the language used by the heavenly messengers conversing with mankind. Whenever the celestial beings spoke to mankind, it was to those who understood Hebrew. Nowhere do we find the angelic beings spoke in Greek, Latin, or English, but to those who knew Hebrew. In the original texts, the Father and the Son were referred to as Yahweh and Yahshua.

### **Richness of the Hebrew**

McClintock and Strong's Bible Commentary says of Shemitic (Semite) languages: "The Hebrew language takes its name from Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, who are ethnographically called Hebrew.... In the Old Testament it is poetically called the language of Canaan; Isaiah 19:18, emphatically the language of the holy land consecrated to [Yahweh] as contrasted with that of the profane Egypt. In its earliest written state it exhibits in the writings of Moses a perfection of structure which was never surpassed."

Further, this commentary states that it was the descendants of Shem who spoke Hebrew and other Semitic languages, of which are listed 14 primitive dialects. A growing number of writers reject the anti-Semitic teaching that the original language was some "Indo-European" tongue. They agree with author Mozeson that Hebrew is the mother of all languages.

### **Weakness of English**

Girdlestone's Old Testament Synonyms says, "The Hebrew language, though poor in some respects, e.g. in tenses, is rich in others; and probably no better language could have been selected for the purpose of preparing the way of Messiah."

He points out the variety and richness of the Hebrew language and gives examples, such as seven Hebrew words rendered black in the King James Version: there are eight words translated axe; 12 words for beauty, 12 for body; 14 for dark; 18 are rendered fear; 22 for branch; 26 for cover; 42 for cut; 60 for break; 66 for bring; 74 are rendered take.

It is deplorably obvious that in reading our English translation of the Bible that we are missing much of the richness and flavor of the original language. The exact shade of meaning is lost when 74 different words in Hebrew appear in English as the single word "take"!

How much more, then, are we missing when we deliberately remove the Heavenly Father's inspired Hebrew Name Yahweh, and call Him by some title derived from paganism? There is no reason to substitute any titles for the Heavenly Father's Name as found in the Hebrew.

Yahweh is known as the Mighty One of Israel in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the saints or believers are known as the "Israel of Yahweh," Galatians 6:16. His Name has deep meaning in Hebrew!

### **Yahweh Spoke Hebrew**

The first spoken command given to mankind appears in Genesis 1:28. Yahweh warned Adam and Eve not to eat of the forbidden fruit (2:16-17). He again spoke to them in chapter 3, and they understood and answered.

Yahweh communicated with Adam and Eve in Hebrew, which is the language of celestial beings and would logically be the original human language. No other tongue but Hebrew is mentioned in Scripture for the earliest of Biblical communication. It is the language of the oldest manuscripts and is the language specifically mentioned when people were spoken to from on high in the Old and New Testaments.

Obviously speaking Hebrew, Adam named the birds and beasts as Yahweh brought them before him, Genesis 2:19-20.

The conciseness, simplicity, energy, and fertility of the Hebrew can be seen by examining the names of the individuals appearing in the early chapters of Genesis. All are Hebrew! Adam means "red" or "ruddy." Eve (Heb. Chavah) means "life," or "lifespriing." Just look at the names of other Old Testament personalities and you will see that they all have Hebrew meanings.

### **A Towering Change**

The language spoken by Adam must have been spoken by one after another of his descendants, for "The whole earth was of one language and one speech," Genesis 11:1. This was after the flood of Noah's time, and the population had increased considerably. It was the time of the people's journeying east into the land of Shinar or Babylonia, where they decided to build a tower for a name unto themselves.

Genesis 10 tells of Nimrod, the son of Cush, the son of Ham, who began his kingdom in Babel in the land of Shinar, verse 10.

The present world population is descended from the three sons of Noah – Shem, Ham and Japheth. All previous lines of humanity were destroyed in the flood. It is recognized that Nimrod was instrumental in getting the people together to build the city and the tower.

The families of Ham and Japheth settled in the plains and seacoasts. The descendants of Shem, however, did not dwell in the plains of Shinar, but settled toward the mountains in the hill country of Mesha:

"And their dwelling was from Mesha, as you go unto Sephar a mount of the east." (Gen. 10:30).

So the Shemites stayed in the high country, much as did Abraham later, Genesis 13:6-12. They were not in the area of the Tower of Babel.

Construction of the Tower of Babel was the project of sons of Ham and Japheth, under the directions of Nimrod. Reaching to the heavens, the tower was to be primarily a monument to man. Around the tower the city of Babylon was planned in order to establish for themselves a fame independent of Yahweh.

This is a prime example of carnal man, desiring to make a name for himself yet seeking all sorts of excuses to deny the Name Yahweh, the Elohim of the whole earth.

### **Protectors of the Name**

Shem means, "name," and through Shem and his descendants the good seed eventually begat the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is very unlikely that the descendants of Shem (or Semites) were involved in this undertaking, for they did not join with those at the plains of Shinar. Shemites were righteous, and would not rebel against Yahweh. Furthermore, scholars assert the Shemites were persecuted by Nimrod, and dwelt apart. (Beechick, Adam and His Kin, page 118-123).

Many people use the old excuse that the Name Yahweh could change with the various languages of the world. Names do not change but remain the same from language to language. Neither should names be translated. Yahweh is the Mighty One of the Hebrews, and His Name is the same no matter what language is spoken.

## **A Family Speaking Hebrew**

The lineage of Shem is the key showing that Hebrew is the heavenly language. Shem means, "name" in Hebrew, and it was the Shemites (Semites) who continued with Hebrew as their language.

We find this confirming statement in *The New Bible Dictionary*, J. D. Douglas, editor: "Hebrew belongs to the western group of Semitic languages (the word Semitic is formed from the name of Shem, Noah's eldest son)," p. 710.

In his blessing on Shem, Noah called Yahweh the "Elohim of Shem," and said Yahweh would "dwell in the tents of Shem," Genesis 9:26-27. Yahweh, of course, was the Mighty One of the Hebrews.

Shem, whose native tongue was Hebrew, lived 98 years during his Great-grandfather Methuselah's time. Remember, the earth was one language at this time.

Shem had nearly 100 years to carry on a discourse with, and receive instruction from his great-grandfather. Methuselah lived and shared a 243-year span with Adam, and another 600 years with Noah. Noah lived 350 years after the flood, and died only two years before the birth of Abraham. Noah's son Shem lived until Abraham was 150 years old, and Isaac was 50 years of age.

So here is a FAMILY of which the progenitor, Adam, spoke in Hebrew with Yahweh His Creator. Parents even today teach their children their natural, native language, and there is no reason to assume that Adam's was any language other than Hebrew – by virtue of his family line and the Hebrew language they all spoke.

Inheritance of language continued down to Genesis 11:1, where the whole earth was of ONE TONGUE. Then follows the inset chapter 12 telling of the rebellion of the people who, exploited by Nimrod, joined him to build a tower in the plains of Shinar. It was upon the descendants of Ham and Japheth that the confusion of languages came. Shemites were not involved, and so their Hebrew language was not affected.

Here is more confirmation: we find in Genesis 10:21 that Shem is the father of all the children of Eber. From "Eber" we get the word "Hebrew" (NIV note on Gen. 10:21; Companion Bible note on Gen. 10:24, among others).

In Genesis 14:12-13 we learn that Abraham is referred to as a Hebrew. One has but to study the names of people and places in the Book of Genesis to acknowledge they are all definitely Hebrew and have names with Hebrew meaning!

## **Languages We Grow Up With**

Children learn the language of their parents, even though they might be reared in a foreign country.

It is not unusual for a group of people to cluster together in a foreign land because of the difficulties of language. There are many examples of immigrants arriving in the United States and settling in areas where their native tongue is spoken and their native customs practiced.

Many cities contain foreign enclaves where common cultures and specific languages predominate. Some are known as "Chinatown" or "Germantown" or "Little Italy" sections of the city. These people settled in areas that were less hostile toward their background, language and culture. This was true also of the Biblical Hebrews.

## **Abraham's Blessings**

Beginning with chapter 12 of Genesis the Bible focuses upon the man Abraham and his descendants, Isaac and Jacob. As was shown, Shem lived 98 years before the flood, 502 years after the flood, and 75 years after Abraham entered Canaan. All of these men held a special relationship with Yahweh. He was very real to them, as He occasionally spoke directly to them in their Hebrew language.

The Ten Commandments were written with the finger of Elohim on two tables of stone and then given to Moses. They were written in the Hebrew language. Israel stood before Mount Sinai and listened as Yahweh spoke in a language they could understand.

Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible in Hebrew. This helped unify the Israelites and also establish Hebrew is the language of the Temple and worship in the synagogues.

It further can be shown that this was Sephardi Hebrew as opposed to the later Ashkenazi, which was influenced by the Germanic language of Eastern Europe.

The Sephardic is anchored to the Masoretic vowel pointing system, which shows that it was in vogue when the Masoretes established the system of vocalizing Hebrew by vowel points. The Sephardic Hebrew is the language of the Temple and has been preserved for us by the Yemenite and Spanish Jews. (For more information see Horowitz, How the Hebrew Language Grew.)

Even today young Jewish children learn to read and write Hebrew no matter what country they reside in to become eligible for their Bar- or Batmitzvah.

## **Hebrew Old Testament**

The Old Testament was handed down from Hebrew originals, with the possible exception of Ezra 4:8 to 6:18 and Daniel 2:4 to 7:28. Note that in Nehemiah 8:8 the people were instructed in the law – likely in the Aramaic paraphrase, the language of the Babylonian captivity.

The Levites went among the people elucidating and teaching what they had heard so that the Hebrew Scriptures would be clearer to them. By Daniel's time (495 BCE), both Hebrew and Aramaic were used.

With the exceptions previously noted, we can safely say that the Old Testament was handed down to us by those who spoke and wrote Hebrew. It is apparent, therefore, that when Yahweh spoke to these Hebrew men, that He spoke in the Hebrew tongue.

## **A Family Speaking Hebrew**

The name Hebrew derives from Eber, the great-grandson of Shem ("name"). Eber was a Hebrew and spoke Hebrew. So did his great-grandfather Shem. Parents always pass down their language to their children, and so on. Shem would speak the same language that his great-grandfather Methuselah spoke, with whom he shared 98 years of his life in the homeland. Methuselah would speak the Hebrew language that Adam spoke, with whom he shared 243 years of his life.

## **Yahshua Spoke Hebrew**

Some Bible scholars believe that the second chapter of Luke (relating Yahshua's being left behind by Mary and Joseph, who later found Him in the temple discussing the Hebrew scriptures) shows that Yahshua even at a young age was very knowledgeable of Hebrew and was ready for His Bar-mitzvah. He did read Temple or Sephardi Hebrew, although some say He also spoke Aramaic, a close dialect.

Later we learn that Yahshua was in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:17), and while there, read from the Book of Isaiah. Hebrew is still today the language of worship and is heard in the synagogues when prayer and Scripture is heard.

### **Angels Spoke Hebrew in NT**

In examining the New Testament, we find again that when one was spoken to from the heavens, it was always in the Hebrew tongue. In chapter 1 of Luke we read that the priest Zechariah was performing his duties in the temple. The angel of Yahweh appeared to him and related how Elizabeth was soon to have a son who would be called John. Certainly a priest of the course Abia would be addressed in his native Hebrew tongue, the language of Temple worship!

Later we learn that the virgin Miriam was also visited by Gabriel who proclaimed the soon-coming birth of Yahshua the Messiah, Luke chapter 1. Both Miriam and Joseph were descended from the lineage of King David, the ruler of Israel, of the tribe of Judah.

In chapter 2 of Luke we read of Judean shepherds watching their flocks by night when the celestial being came to them announcing the birth of the Redeemer of Israel. The language used to communicate was Hebrew and was understood by uneducated, pastoral shepherds.

In Matthew 3:17 and Luke 3:22 is the account of the baptism of the Messiah. A voice came from heaven declaring that this was the beloved Son in Whom He was well pleased – obviously in the Hebrew tongue. In both Luke chapter 4 and Matthew 4 is the account of Satan, the fallen angel, speaking with the Hebrew Yahshua, obviously in Hebrew.

This fallen angel was the "anointed cherub that covers" who was in the presence of Yahweh until iniquity was found in him, Ezekiel 28:14. In Job chapters 1 and 2 we learn that Satan carried on a conversation with Yahweh, which would have been in Hebrew, the heavenly language.

### **Resurrected Savior Used Hebrew**

Acts 9 tells of the Apostle Paul being struck down on the Damascus road. Recounting this experience to King Agrippa (Acts 26:12-14), Paul says of the heavenly voice of Yahshua:

"And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 26:14). Paul inquired of the speaker. "*And I said, Who are you, Master? And he said, I am Yahshua whom you persecute.*" (Acts 26:15) This was after Yahshua's death and resurrection, and He was still speaking Hebrew!

Yahshua told us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be in the Kingdom, Matthew 8:11, and there will undoubtedly be many other ancient worthies who have been chosen to be in that glorious Kingdom. All of those resurrected people will be brought back to life in a country that even now is speaking Hebrew as its national language.

Notably in 1948, when it was admitted to the United Nations, the tiny nation of Israel established Hebrew as its national language. Elieazor BenYehuda, known as the father of modern Hebrew, already had prepared an updated Hebrew dictionary and thesaurus of the Hebrew language. It was his desire to see Hebrew revived and made alive as the spoken tongue.

Today Hebrew is the official language of the land of Palestine. Jewish immigrants must learn Hebrew as part of their orientation and assimilation into Israeli society and culture.

## **Yahshua Returns to a Nation Speaking Hebrew**

Hebrew is the heavenly language. It was spoken to Adam and Eve, and down through history was spoken to all the ancient worthies. The prophets who were given messages from on high were those who spoke Hebrew. When Yahweh had a message for a foreign nation such as Assyria, He spoke to Jonah and Nahum who understood Hebrew. They in turn warned the Assyrians of impending doom.

When Yahshua returns, He will go to the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east (Zech. 14:4). He will return to deliver a nation that is already speaking Hebrew. The Hebrew speaking Jews will recognize Him.

He will come again to His own, and this time they will receive Him. He will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication and "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for His only Son," Zechariah 12:10. He will return to His people and save "the tents of Judah first," verse 7.

## **The Pure Language**

It is at this time that Yahshua commences to take charge of world affairs and will rule with a rod of iron. He will set up His rule at Jerusalem and it will continue to expand until it encompasses the world Micah 4:2. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language [HEBREW], that they may all call upon the Name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one consent." "...the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem," Zephaniah 3:9.

All of those who will be in the Millennial rule will be speaking Hebrew and will be calling upon the personal, only Name of Yahweh and His dear Son, Yahshua. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Yahweh is the King of the universe.

## **Our Very Thoughts Known**

It should be understood that at this time we can pray to Yahweh in any language, any tongue, because He is not limited to audible speech as humans are. The One Who made man's tongue and ears can bypass speech, for He can read our very thoughts, "I am He which searches the reins and hearts," (Rev. 2:23). But we must call upon His true Name which He has revealed to us.

"And he said unto them, You are they which justify yourselves before men; but Yahweh knows your hearts..." (Luke 16:15).

"And they prayed, and said, You, Yahweh, which knows the hearts of all [men] show whether of these two you have chosen" (Acts 1:24).

The language spoken in Eden by Yahweh was Hebrew. The angelic beings continued to communicate with those who understood Hebrew. Yahweh spoke to people through prophets who understood Hebrew. The Old Testament was without question written in Hebrew. In the New Testament, the angelic messengers spoke to Hebrew-speaking people. Yahshua spoke and read Hebrew in the synagogue. He spoke to Saul in the Hebrew tongue.

From all this evidence and more, increasing numbers of scholars are coming to agree with Charles Cutler Torrey that the entire Bible was originally written in Hebrew. A growing number agree the Bible was written in part or whole in the Hebrew tongue. (Request our mini-study "Was The New Testament Originally Greek?")

As mentioned, Isaac Mozeson, the "new kid on the block," has compiled overwhelming research validating that the underlying language of all tongues is Hebrew. He takes issue with

those in the past who have contrived an "Indo-European" original language of the Middle East. This he blames on rampant animosity toward anything Jewish, including the Hebrew language.

Prestigious scholars are now having second thoughts about the origin of human language. Mozeson's book, *The Word*, offers within its pages numerous examples of Hebrew as the mother of English and all languages.

Even our English word alphabet derives from the first two Hebrew letters, "Aleph" and "Beyt" (Aleph-Bet), which also begin the alphabet of many other languages.

### **The Family Name**

Increasing attention given to the Dead Sea Scrolls reveals the rising interest in Yahweh's Name as well as new light and a deeper understanding of the Bible. While His Name has been revealed by those who spoke Hebrew, His Name, Yahweh, is the same around the world and does not change from language to language.

Paul tells us the whole family in heaven and earth is named after Yahweh: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Sovereign Yahshua Messiah, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15). Thus, if we are to be His sons and daughters in the Kingdom; and are called by His name, how can we hate the name Yahweh now? We will take on His name, Yahweh!

There likely are many changes we need to make in each of our lives, but making His personal Name a part of our daily living is a firm witness to the reverence we have for His memorial name Yahweh and the coming rulership of Yahweh and His Son.

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