

What Language Was Used to First Write the New Testament?

by Clifford Besson

Introduction

At this moment almost every Bible college, seminary, and theologian in North America and Europe have been indoctrinated into the belief that all of the *New Testament* (NT) manuscripts were initially written generally in Koine or common Greek.

1) Is this true though?

Answer— According to almost every student of the Bible in this area of the world it is but not according to almost every Believer from the Mediterranean coastline to India, for they have always been taught that the NT documents were all written in the native language of the disciples of Jesus, which was Hebrew or Aramaic. Of these two groups of people, would it not be the ones closest to the area in question that should really know the truth? On studying the Greek of the NT it really appears to be translation Greek, like the Greek of the *Septuagint*. Is this not true?

2) Are there any documents that state that any or all of the disciples that wrote their respective manuscripts ever wrote them in Greek or in another language?

Answer— According to all that this writer has read and studied during the last fifty years of studying the Bible, there is no mention of any disciple or apostle ever writing his manuscript in Greek. At the end of Romans there is this note: “To [the] Romans [an Old Latin speaking area] written from Corinth [a Greek speaking area], by Phoebe [the deaconess] of the assembly in Cenchrea [of Greece].” This Phoebe may have been a Hebrew woman though, for Paul was in the practice of first going to the synagogues of whatever town or city to which he went. She therefore could have written the letter in her mother tongue of Aramaic to the Judean Hebrew believers in Rome for Paul, rather than the Old Latin language of Rome at that time.

At the end of 1st and 2nd Corinthians there are similar notes but the same explanation could apply. Then at the end of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2nd Timothy, and Philemon, there are notes that they were written from Rome.¹

Could this mean that they were therefore written in the Old Latin language of that area or simply Paul's native tongue of Aramaic? Most likely the Aramaic language, as the recipients were probably mainly Aramaic speaking Judeans living aboard. Though it says in Acts 16:1 that Timothy's father was a Greek in the Authorized Version (AV) from the Greek Scriptures, it says **Aramean** in the Aramaic Scriptures. It says in both versions though that his mother was Jewess, in other words, Timothy's mother tongue was most likely Aramaic.

Philemon is said to have lived in Colosse (Col. 4:9), which is in western Asia Minor, an Aramaic speaking area. So far there is nothing that definitely indicates that even Paul wrote in Greek. There are some significant quotes though that say that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, the Aramaic language of Abraham and his family:²

Concerning Matthew, Papias [A. D. 70 - 155] writes as follows: “So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able.” . . .
—*Eusebius, Book III*, chapter 39, par. 16.³

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the Church. *Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 3.1.1*⁴

¹Thomas Newberry, *The Interlinear Literal Translation of The Greek New Testament with the Authorized Version*, ed. George Ricker Berry, Ph. D. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1967).

²Note what the anonymously translated book called, *The Book of Jasher* (New York: M. M. Noah & A. S. Gould, 1840) has to say at Chapter XVI:11 “And Adonizedek [Melchizedek in A. V.] king of Jerusalem, the same was Shem went out with his men to meet Abram and his people, with bread and wine, and they remained together in the valley of Melech. 12 And Adonizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him [his great ancestor] a tenth from all that he had brought from the spoil of his enemies, for Adonizedek was a priest before God.” (See Gen. 14:18 and 1 Chr. 8:35; 9:41). In other words, the same language that Shem spoke with his father Noah, was the same language that Abraham was using. According to Jasher XXVIII:24, Shem died when he was six hundred years old, (see Gen. 11:11) which was about thirty-five years after Abraham died at one hundred seventy-five (175) (Jasher XXVII:29 and Gen. 25:7).

³George M. Lamsa, *New Testament Origin* (St. Petersburg Beach, Florida: Aramaic Bible Society, Inc., 1976) p. 50.

⁴Translation from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (repr.: Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1985) 1:414 as found in George Howard's *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, p. 157.

3) Are there any documents that state that Jesus or any of his Galilean followers ever spoke or wrote in Greek?

Answer— No. There is one reference though showing that the Apostle Paul, who was from Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 21:39) was able to speak Greek to the chief Captain of the Roman military in Jerusalem.

4) Are there any problems that have developed through believing that Greek was the primary language of the *NT*?

Answer— Yes. Actually many problems because too much authority has been given to the Greek manuscripts which are obviously just a translation text, which could contain many errors that often occur upon translating from one language to another. One error was already pointed out above in the reference to Acts 16:1.

Another aspect of this, is that there are many signs that a number of people tried translating the same or different copies of the Hebrew or Aramaic copies of the *NT*. This can be seen from the many variant readings of sometimes very critical passages of the *NT*. Some of the variants are just minor with regards to the spelling of names, but then it causes a lot of confusion. These wrong spellings sometimes hides the fact that there are actually references to that same place or person in the *Old Testament* or other extra-biblical texts.

These variants, misunderstandings, and sometimes omissions in the Greek text not only cause problems when translating into English but also when the *NT* is translated into hundreds of foreign languages by missionary societies, for they have been told that the Greek was the primary language when in reality it was not. So we can see that any mistakes in the Greek Scriptures get compounded or more mixed up, upon being translated into other languages.

It is quite easy to see that mistakes can occur upon making hand written copies of any original documents. Greater inaccuracies can occur though, when not only someone tries translating from a copy of a copy but then someone else, later makes copies of incorrect translations.

It is said though, that often it appears that copyists sometime try to correct some of the words, which do not make sense. The passages may read strangely because of poor translations or because of missing words or misarranged texts. Some of them may have tried to correct these problems right in the text while others have made notes about them in the margins.

The more translations between the original and a present day English or other language version, the more mixed up, things could get. It is therefore best then, to figure out what the real primary languages were for the *NT* manuscripts and then make translations into English and into any and all foreign languages from **them**, the real primary texts and not from copies of translations.

5) Should not the opinion of eminent Biblical scholars be greatly considered?

Answer— Not necessarily, for one should check out their fruits. Consider the following comments after the following writer checked out the fruits of two or more “eminent” Biblical scholars:

“Scholarly consensus” is meaningless. Furthermore, most of these eminent scholars would perhaps not even be considered to be “real Christians” by the majority of those who believe. People like Metzger are highly liberal, don’t fully accept the inspiration of the Bible, believe that the Torah was compiled from many secular writings – from many different times – and believe the Bible to be full of myths. Yet these are the very people that are trusted to supply Christians with “the most accurate Bible texts”. That is akin to the widespread acceptance by Christians of the “Jewish” Massoretic Hebrew Old Testament version (which “messes around” with many Messianic prophecies, attested to by the Septuagint and Peshitta Old Testament – a topic for another day).

Dr. Metzger, you have earned your place in this book. Your lies have not gone unnoticed.⁵

Primacy of Hebrew or Aramaic Texts Rather than of Koine Greek Texts

There are many other proofs that the *Gospel of Matthew* was written in Hebrew rather than in Aramaic or Greek and much also can be said to show that the rest of the *New Testament* must have been first written either in Hebrew or the Aramaic languages of the first disciples and apostles of Jesus, rather than in the Greek language of their one time conquerors.

The Galilean language of the first disciples of Jesus, as well as Syriac, are dialects of the major language of Aramaic of which Noah and family spoke, as shown earlier. It was the *lingua franca* of that whole region of Palestine and into Asia Minor (present day Turkey). The Aramaic language is part of the “Semitic

⁵ Please see the rest of his article on the lies of Dr. Bruce Metzger at the following web site of http://www.aramaicpeshitta.com/Online_Version/greek_primacy_deception.htm A very enlightening web site by Raphael Lataster, Bpharm. We do not agree totally with all he states though, especially as to the Peshitta always being more accurate than George Howard’s *Hebrew Matthew* and the Old Syriac texts being very inferior to the Peshitta and the Peshitto.

family of languages, as does Hebrew and Arabic.”⁶

The well known scholar, Origen (c. 185-c. 254) wrote that Matthew composed his gospel “in the Hebrew language,” as does Epiphanius (ca.315–403 CE) and Jerome.⁷

True, Paul was born in Cilicia in Syria, but both the Jews and Syrians there spoke Aramaic [and many spoke Hebrew]. Cilicians were neither Greeks nor Romans. They were Syrians, Jews, and Armenians.

.....
On the other hand, Paul . . . was trained by Gamaliel [a teacher of the Hebrew law]. At that time the Greek language and culture was so repulsive to the Jews that they considered it better to eat swine flesh than to learn Greek. Hebrew was the sacred tongue.⁸

Do not these comments suggest then that the disciples must have therefore written their letters and gospels in their own languages of Hebrew or Aramaic, otherwise their own Hebrew or Aramaic speaking people, in all the churches throughout the Mediterranean might not even read them? If they were first written in Greek, that would have been in the tongue of the Gentiles or of the nations, which many Jews despised.

Is it not more likely that the apostles and other writers of the *New Testament* manuscripts wrote in their own language to their own people, who then could translate them into whatever language of other members of the community, who also desired to read them? Could not this be the reason for so many versions or diverse readings in the Scriptures in the Greek language?

Mt 10:5 These twelve did Jesus send forth, having given command to them, saying, `To the way of the nations **go not** away, and into a city of the Samaritans **go not** in, 6 and **be going rather** unto the **lost sheep of the house of Israel**. Mt 15:24 and he answering said, `I was not sent **except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**.' Ac 3:25 `Ye are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant that God made unto our fathers, saying unto Abraham: And **in thy seed** shall be blessed all the families of the earth; 26 **to you first**, God, having raised up His child Jesus, did send him, blessing you, in the turning away of each one from your evil ways.' Ac 13:26 `Men, brethren, sons of the race of Abraham, and those among you fearing God, **to you was the word of this salvation sent**, :27 **for those dwelling in Jerusalem, and their chiefs**, this one not having known, also the voices of the prophets, which every sabbath are being read--having judged him --did fulfil, Ac 13:46 And speaking boldly, Paul and Barnabas said, `**To you it was necessary that first the word of God be spoken**, and seeing ye do thrust it away, and do not judge yourselves worthy of the life age-during, lo, we do turn to the nations; Ro 1:16 for I am not ashamed of the good news of the Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one who is believing, both to **Judeans first**, and to Greek. Ro 2:9 tribulation and distress, upon every soul of man that is working the evil, both of **Judeans first**, and of Greek; Ro 2:10 and glory, and honour, and peace, to every one who is working the good, both to **Judeans first**, and to Greek. Ro 11:26 and **so all Israel** shall be saved, according as it hath been written, `There shall come forth out of Sion he who is delivering, and he shall turn away impiety from Jacob, . . .

Hebrew was Still Widely Used in Palestine

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, many of which are Hebrew compositions, and the discovery of other Hebrew documents from the Judean Desert, it is now confirmed that Hebrew was used as a written medium in first century Palestine. Hebrew, and even Greek,⁴ were also spoken in first century Palestine. Whether Hebrew was spoken with the same widespread proficiency as Aramaic is debated.⁵ (Howard, p. 156)

Josephus (A. D. 38-97), the great Jewish writer and contemporary of first-century Christians, states that Greek was not spoken or read in Palestine, and that only a few native people were rewarded for their efforts to learn Greek. . . . He says:

I have proposed to myself, for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans, to translate those books into the Greek tongue, which I formerly composed in the language of our country.— *The Jewish Wars*, Preface.

⁶ Joseph Pashka, *The Aramaic Gospels and Acts: Text and Translation* (Longwood, Florida: Xulon Press, 2003) p. vii.

⁷ George Howard, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* (Macon, Georgia, U. S. A., Mercer University Press, 2002) pp. 157-159.

⁸ Lamsa, p. 39.

I have also taken a great deal of pains to obtain the learning of the Greeks, and understand the elements of the Greek language; . . . For our nation does not encourage those that learn the language of many nations. . . . there have yet hardly been two or three that have succeeded herein, who were immediately rewarded for their pains.—Antiquities XX, XI 2.⁹

The Shem Tob Matthew is a Copy of a Much Earlier Hebrew Matthew

In the introduction to Professor George Howard's book, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, a date of 1385 - 14th Century is given for that Hebrew manuscript but it is more than just that. It says that Shem Tob ben-Isaac ben-Shaprut (sometimes called Ibn Shaprut) of Tudela, Castile, Spain wrote his *Eben Bohan* at that time, which included his Hebrew copy of *The Gospel According to Matthew*. This *Eben Bohan* means "The Touchstone."

The author George Howard, is a professor of Religion, emeritus of the University of Georgia in Athens. In his above mentioned book, he proves convincingly that it is most unlikely that the *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* in Shem Tob's treatise *Eben Bohan* is his translation from any Latin Vulgate, any Byzantine Greek text, "or any other known edition of the Gospel of Matthew. He [must have] received it from previous generations of Jewish scribes and tradents." (In Howard's "Preface to the Second Edition") In other words he simply must have copied it from one or more old Hebrew manuscripts that he may have found in a synagogue library, which may have been hundreds of years older than the above date of 1385 - 14th Century. It may have been so old that it has now disintegrated.

It has been said though, that when a manuscript was getting difficult to read, that it would get copied and after the copy was checked for accuracy, then the old manuscript would be burnt, rather than allow it to be misused. Perhaps this is what happened to the one or more old copies that he used in order to write his edition of Matthew's Gospel.

Shem Tob Made No Changes

Though George Howard calls Shem Tob's *Eben Bohan* a polemical treatise, Shem Tob nowhere, apparently, ever changed the wording of the text. He simply made some comments at places where he criticizes the spelling or wording of some passages. He even advises others to do likewise out of respect for the old sacred manuscript as seen in the following quote from his writing in his book *The Touchstone*:

I adjure by the life of the world that every copyist that he not copy the books of the gospel unless he writes in every place the objections that I have written just as I have arranged them and written them.¹⁰

Primarily in Biblical Hebrew with Much Agreement to Very Old Manuscripts

Howard says, "Considerable parts of the original[, primarily in Biblical Hebrew], however, appear to remain, including its unpolished style, ungrammatical constructions, and Aramaized forms."¹¹ There are also nine readings which are found in the Codex Sinaiticus (IV century book) and "one or more of them in Egyptian versions and a few minor witnesses."¹² As this Sinaiticus text was not found until the middle of the nineteenth century, the roots of similarity or agreement to these texts must therefore go back to the early beginnings of Christianity¹³. This is also supported by numerous examples of similarity or agreements to Old Latin (second to fourth centuries), to old Syriac (fourth to seventh centuries) as well.¹⁴ There is even much agreement (twenty-two times) with the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*, "which was probably written in the second century, or even the latter part of the first"¹⁵.

Others Before Shem Tob had Made Some Minor Changes

Shem Tob's Hebrew manuscript was amended a little here and there and modernized a little with Midrash Hebrew before he ever copied it. An example is that the word *Elohim* is spelled as *Eloqim* with a *qoph* instead of with a *cheth*, which sounds quite similar. In other words, someone must have read out one of the previous copies of the original manuscript, while one or more scribes wrote the words down.

This very practice of readers of the manuscripts working with one or more scribes appeared to happen

⁹ Lamsa, p. 32, 33.

¹⁰ James Scott Trimm, *Hebraic-roots Version Scriptures* (Republic of South Africa: Institute for Scripture Research (<http://www.messianic.co.za>) 2005, p. xliv.

¹¹ Howard, p. 178.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 191.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 192.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 194-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 205.

in Old Testament times with Ezra and his five scribes (2 Esdras 14:23-45).

Many Signs of Originality

Professor Howard also points out the numerous puns, word plays, word connections, and alliterations of various kinds that are just not found in the Greek texts, making the Hebrew more original and a more realistic presentation of what Jesus and the disciples really said. "The wordplay [regarding standing and resurrection, which is the same word עמד in the Hebrew], so clearly operative in Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew, is totally lacking in the Greek."¹⁶ A supposed translation from the Greek into the Hebrew would hardly present anything like the saturation of these puns and word plays throughout the Shem Tob Hebrew texts.

Three other Hebrew Manuscripts of Matthew

Du Tillet is another Hebrew manuscript of Matthew found in 1553 amongst the Jews but has been modified much more than the above to agree more with the newer Latin and Greek manuscripts. Then there is the Munster manuscript which Sebastian Munster got in 1537 from some Jews. Though he filled in many lacunae (missing parts), it is still quite valuable, for it presents a Hebrew Matthew as to what was available to him at that time, whether he filled in the gaps with words from other Hebrew Matthew manuscripts or with translations from Latin or Greek. It is similar to the du Tillet one. There is also the Cinquarbres Matthew in Hebrew in 1551.

Though these documents were made known to the European scholars at the above dates they may have been hundreds of years old at those times.

A Hebrew Epistle to the Hebrews

Besides the above copies of the *Gospel of Matthew* in Hebrew there is also the Sebastian Munster Hebrew copy of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which was added as an appendix to his 1557 second edition of his Hebrew copy of Matthew's Gospel.

All other N. T. Scriptures Besides the above can be Found Also in Aramaic

All the other New Testament manuscripts can be found in either the Old Syriac Aramaic texts of Sinaitic (syr^s – Lewis) (III/IV century) and of Curetonian (syr^c --Burkitt) (III/IV c.) or in the Syriac texts of the Peshitta (syr^p – eastern) (1st half of 5th c.) and the Peshitto (western) and Later Syriac texts of Philoxeniana (syr^{ph} – A. D. 507/8), Harklensis (syr^h – A. D. 616), and Palestinian Syriac (syr^{pal} – about the 6th c.).

Dr. George M. Lamsa, the translator of his *Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text*, who was born in Assyria, before moving to the U. S. A. as a young man, said that he was shocked to hear that the western people of Europe and America were saying that the *New Testament* was originally written in Greek. His people, who spoke almost the identical Aramaic as found in the *Peshitta NT* always believed that the disciples of Jesus all wrote their manuscripts that became the *NT* in their native tongue of [Hebrew or] Aramaic. They also were never told of anyone ever translating any part of the *NT* from Greek into Aramaic.

Does this not seem absurd to speak of Hebrew or Aramaic speaking Galileans learning to speak and write Greek, before ever writing their gospels and letters in their native tongues for the tens of thousands of their own Hebrew or Aramaic speaking people to read in neighbouring villages, towns, cities, provinces, and synagogues throughout the Roman Empire and beyond?

Would it not be expected of them to write their manuscripts in their own mother tongues and then leave the translation work to those who were already fairly proficient in Greek or other languages?

Lamsa and his people should know much better than our professors of hundreds to thousands of miles away and of about fifty generations of time since the *NT* was written. Who are we to tell them how their ancestors or neighbors wrote?

Consider the Borgian manuscripts and its remarks about the "*Diatessaron* (a word meaning "fourfold"), the work compiled by Titianus the Greek out of the fourThe work was translated from Syriac into Arabic by the excellent and learned priest Abu'l Faa'raa'j O^Abdulla ibn-at\-T|ayyib,54 may God grant him his favour."¹⁷ From this quote, it appears that Titianus, with great pain staking work compiled his *Diatessaron* in the same language that he found the gospels, in the Aramaic or Syriac language.

Signs of a Translation

Upon reading the *NT* English translations from the Hebrew and Aramaic texts, one will find that they generally exhibit much more sensible or logical readings than any translations from the Greek translation texts. Why? It is that the Greek manuscripts must be just a secondary version translation language New Testament. This is amply indicated by the many alternative or diverse readings for numerous passages in the *NT*, while there are hardly any alternative readings in the Aramaic *NT*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹⁷ Roger Pearse, *The Fathers of the Church in English Translation* CD-Rom, 2004

Besides the many alternative readings from one NT version from the Greek to the others, like from the old Authorized Version or the New King James Version to watered down versions like the New International Version (about 3600 words omitted¹⁸ from what is in the Received Text, which is equivalent of the words from Mt. 1 to Mt 8:1 and then they added about 976¹⁷ which are not in the Received Text), there are numerous big differences from the versions from the Aramaic or Hebrew NT. These passages in the Lamsa Bible, which is translated mostly from the Aramaic Peshitta, are quite different than what are in the versions from the Greek, though sometimes it may be just one word but that can make a world of a difference: Mt 5:19,22,32; 6:13; 10:10,23; 18:19; 19:28; 21:5,7; 22:37; Mk 5:10; 7:26; 8:29,31; 9:44; 11:24; Lk 3:38; 13:11,32,33; 14:5; 14:26; 15:23; 19:17,19; 24:1, 4,26, 47; Jhn 1:38,41,42; 4:11,12; 5:23; 6:1; 12:20,40; 19:25; 20:20; Acts 3:6; 8:3,33; 14:10; 17:9, 26; 18:3; 20:28; 23:8; Ro 5:7; 8:19-21; 9:13; 16:1 (deaconess/servant (AV)); 1 Co 2:3; 4:19; 7:5; 2 Co 5:21; 13:5-7; Ga 3:13; 4:9; Col 3:11; 1 Th 2:3,6,7, 14,18; 1 Tim 2:12,15; 2 Tim 4:13; Titus 3:4; Heb 2:1; 4:8; 7:3; 1 Pt 4:11; 1 Jhn 5:6-8; Rev 11:1,2; 19:7. Examples from Lamsa's and other translations from the Aramaic in comparison to the AV:

Mt 18:19 Again I say to you that if two of you are worthy on earth, anything that they would ask will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

Jhn 1:41 He saw his brother Simon first, and said to him, We have found the Christ (footnote: Aramaic, *Meshikha, Messiah*.) The AV has **He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. {the Christ: or, the Anointed}**

Acts 3:6 “. . . In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . .” (*our Lord* not there in the Greek)

1 Tim 2:12 I do not think it seemly for a woman to debate publicly or otherwise usurp the authority of men, but she should be silent. For I do not allow a wife to teach nor to be presumptuous (footnote: Lit: teach against) over the husband, but she should be at peace. (Another translation from the Aramaic but **by a woman**: Janet M. Magiera¹⁹) 15 Nevertheless, if her posterity continue in faith and have holiness and chastity, she will live through them.

Note: does not the ending in the AV suggest that the Greek reading is a translation?

For some important technical words or phrases that some people have complained about in the AV according to an article in the *Quarterly Record of the Trinitarian Bible Society*, Jan-Mar 2007²⁰ issue here are what translation from the Aramaic and Hebrew say about passages such as Ro 5:1, such as *atonement* it is *reconciliation* in Janet's translation while at 2 Th 3:5 (AV) *patience*, (Janet's) *endurance*.

Ro 1:3 (AV) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

(Janet) concerning his Son, who was born (footnote: OS (Efr [Old Syriac of St. Ephrem of Syria]) ‘who was seen’) in the flesh of the seed of the house of David 4 and was made known [as] the Son of God by power and by (footnote: Repeat by; lit: by power and by the holiness Spirit, not normal construction for “Holy Spirit”) the Holy Spirit, who raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead,

1 Peter 1:2 (AV) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

(Murdock from the Peshitto) to them who have been chosen, by the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto the obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus the Messiah: May grace and peace abound towards you.

(Janet—mainly from the Peshitta) those who were chosen by the foreknowledge of God the Father by the holiness of the spirit to be to the obedience and the purifying by sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Mt 27:44 (KJV) The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

(Murdock) In like manner the marauders also, that were crucified with him, reproached him.

(Janet) Likewise, also, those robbers who were crucified with hime were insulting him.

Mr 2:3 (KJV) And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

(Murdock) And they came to him and brought to him a paralytic, borne between four persons.

¹⁸ Everett W. Fowler, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* (Watertown, Wisconsin: Maranatha Baptist Press, 1981) p. 66.

¹⁹ *Aramaic Peshitta New Testament Translation* (Truth or Consequences, NM: Light of the Word Ministry, 2006.

²⁰ London, England: www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org.

(Janet) And they came to him and brought him a paralytic, bearing him between four [men].

Ro 3:4 (KJV) God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

(Murdock) Far be it: for God is veracious, and every man false: as it is written: That thou mightest be upright, in thy declarations; and be found pure, when they judge thee.

Mt 8:31 (KJV) So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

(Murdock) And the demons entreated of him, and said: If thou cast us out, suffer us to go into the herd of swine.

Actually the Greek is in the diminutive state, so it should be translated either demonette or small demon. Most likely the Hebrew and Aramaic are in the diminutive state as well, for why would the Greek be translated as such? In Luke 8:30, the man had so many demonettes that the evil spirits in him called themselves Legion. They must have been very small, like flies, bugs, or bacteria. This writer checked the states of those words in the Hebrew and the Aramaic but they do not appear to be in any known diminutive state according to the grammars of those languages. Their neighbours, the Greek Christians though, who understood both languages should know though.

Rev 4:6 (KJV) And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

(Murdock) And before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and around it, and before the throne, were four Animals, full of eyes in their front and in their rear.

Mt 3:11 (KJV) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

(Murdock) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is more powerful than I; whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

(Bauscher²¹) has in water as does James Scott Trimm's translation (from the Hebrew) while George Howard's, as well as Janet's, and Joseph Pashka's says with water.

Mr 1:8 (KJV) I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

(Murdock) I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

(Bauscher²²) 8 I have immersed you in water but He will immerse you in The Spirit of holiness (The doubled underlined words are emphatic)

Mt 6:10 (KJV) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

(Murdock) Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done; as in heaven, so on earth:

(Janet) on earth as does (Howard) but Bauscher has in earth.

2 Pe 1:1 (KJV) Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

(Murdock) Simon Peter, a servant and legate of Jesus the Messiah, to those who have obtained equally precious faith with us, through the righteousness of Our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus the Messiah;

Lk 9:58 (KJV) And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (No the before foxes and birds)

(Murdock) Jesus said to him: The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have coverts; but the Son of man hath not where he may lay his head.

2 Co 5:14 (KJV) For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

(Murdock) For the love of the Messiah constraineth us to reason thus: One died for all; therefore are all dead.

Two Hundred Key References for Evaluating Translations

Now it has been shown that almost every new translation of the NT from the Greek texts leave out or omit sixty-two (62) to 197 sections or parts of the texts from the NT in comparison to two hundred (200) similar parts or sections of the Textus Receptus [Greek Text] from which the King James Bible came.²³ The pamphlet indicates that Lamsa's translation from the Eastern Syriac Aramaic manuscripts only leaves out forty-nine out of the two hundred (200). On checking those passages though, many of the ones that are said to be omitted in Lamsa's are quite insignificant because in places like Mt 9:13, "to repentance" is understood by context and so are the missing words in Mk 2:17; Jhn 11:41; 20:29; Acts 20:32; Mt 16:20, "Jesus" not there is really what it should be and so the passage at 1 Jhn 5:7-8. Most other places are also minor or Lamsa has words altogether different from what is from the Greek, which often make more sense than what is in the AV. Most likely the other NT translations from the Hebrew and Aramaic are very similar to what was found with Lamsa's translation as they are mostly from the same Aramaic texts. Though there are the Peshitta (Eastern)

²¹ Rev. Glenn David Bauscher, The Peshitta Aramaic-English Holy Gospels: An Interlinear Translation (<http://aramaicnt.com/> 2006).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ J. J. Ray (Missionary), *New Eye Opener* (pamphlet)(Eugene, Oregon: The Eye Opener Publishers.

and the Peshitto (Western) texts, there are only minor differences between them.

Though Using Old English, the Authorized Version May be the Most Accurate of the Versions from the Greek

What the above section shows is that the Textus Receptus is closer to the ancient Eastern Syriac manuscripts than the eclectic texts of Westcott and Hort, 1881, Nestle, 26th ed., and the United Bible Societies' 4th ed. 2005. Though the Textus Receptus is also an eclectic text, it is mainly made from the majority of manuscripts of the NT that the Church honoured and respected as genuine. Some of the other oldest manuscripts which are not regarded as being in the majority of the texts, were quite defective and were rejected by the Church, because they were so defective. Too many words and sometimes even whole verses were missing. See good books on this subject like *Counterfeit or Genuine: Mark 16? John 8?* and *Which Bible?* and *True or False* all by David Otis Fuller, D. D., *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* by Everett W. Fowler, *Bible Version Manual* by Donald T. Clarke, *The Authorized King James Bible Defended* by Chester A. Murray, *The King James Version Defended* by Edward F. Hills, Th. D., *New Age Bible Versions* by G. A. Riplinger, *God Wrote Only One Bible* by J. J. Ray, *Modern Versions of the Bible* by The Peoples Gospel Hour, *Modern Versions and Ancient Manuscripts* by Evangelistic Literature Enterprises, *The Divine Original* by the Trinitarian Bible Society, *The Foundation and Authority of the Word of God* by Dr. Bruce D. Cummons, Pastor, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* by Dr. Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* by Wilbur N. Pickering, and *The First New Testament* by David Estrada and William White, Jr.

We do not agree with every point in the above mentioned books and pamphlets but overall though, they show that texts or manuscripts most similar to the Aramaic and Hebrew manuscripts of the NT are the most logical and authoritative.

We also believe that it is a mistake to base the English *Old Testament* on the Masoretic Texts for often readings from the Aramaic and the Greek manuscripts are more complete and make more sense than from the Hebrew Masoretic Texts. Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls should also be used to help determine what were most likely in the original *Old Testament*. Any other versions of the *Old Testament* should also be used. Check out our samples of the *Holy Bible*, Victory Version at our web site: www.truthandlightministries.org or www.tlm55.org.

For some good Internet sites that agree and support these findings that Hebrew or Aramaic were the primary language of the New Testament, please see sites like <http://aramaicnt.com/> of Pastor Glenn David Bauscher, who just recently published the *Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament*, <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/6623/aramaic.htm>, <http://www.peshitta.org/>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_primacy, <http://aramaicbible.us/>, <http://www.geocities.com/shenlan.geo/NT-is-Hebrew-originn-or-not.html>, http://aramaicbible.us/WastheNewTestamentReallyWritteninGreek-first_edition.pdf, <http://ad2004.com/Biblecodes/Greekmatrix/Grkmatrix.html> <http://www.mashiyach.com/hebrew.htm>

Conclusion

It therefore appears that the AV is still a fairly accurate translation in comparison to the ones directly from the Hebrew and Aramaic, which differ between themselves. It should also be seen though, that what we have in translations from the Hebrew and Aramaic are just as good in perhaps every place and even better in other places than any that are from the Greek manuscripts. The Hebrew must have been the primary language then for the *Gospel According to Matthew* and the *Epistle to the Hebrews* while the common Aramaic of Syria and of Galilee was the primary language of the rest of the *New Testament* manuscripts.

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