

Lesson 10.4 [49:12]: Hebrew History 5.1- New Testament Primacy (& Hebrew Idioms)

What Language the NT was originally written in? Why is this important?

If it was originally written in Greek- it's important for Greek to take precedence over Hebrew studies in Bible Colleges and for discipleship to be understood in a Hellenistic mindset.

If it was originally written in Hebrew/Aramaic combo- it's important for Semitic languages to take precedence over Greek studies in Bible Colleges, as well as the early Jewish Literature and for discipleship to be understood in a Hebraic mindset and in a Jewish context.

This effects our belief and the texts we study and the context in which we study our Bible.

Areas of Evidence:

1. Quotes from early church fathers and historians
2. Abundance of Semitic Idioms in the NT
3. Semitic phrases and untranslated words
4. Underlying Semitic grammar structure
5. Grave textual errors
6. Practical background of the NT authors
7. Growing scholarly opinion, who have studied these things.

1. Quotes from early church fathers and historians

Eusebius -Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew.

Irinus – Matthew wrote the gospel among the Hebrews in their own language.

Origen- Matthew wrote and published his gospel in Hebrew.

Eusebius - Matthew wrote his gospel in his native tongue, Hebrew.

Eusebius - Found Matthew's writings in the Hebrew language, in India.

Epiphanius- Found a whole copy of Matthew's writings in Hebrew, and preserve it as it was originally written

Jerome- Matthew/Levi the apostle, published his gospel in Hebrew and then it was translated into Greek.

Jerome- Found in India, Matthew's gospel brought back in Hebrew characters.

Eusebius quoting Clement– **The Book of Hebrews written by Paul, in Hebrew. Luke translated it in Greek for the Greeks and the Book of Acts.**

Eusebius – Paul wrote in Hebrew and Luke translated his writings into Greek.

Jerome- Paul wrote fluently in Hebrew and so could be fluently translated into Greek (Jerome then translated the Bible from Greek to Latin).

Epiphanius- Matthew, John & Acts were written in Hebrew and copies found.

*Apostolic scriptures were written in Hebrew and they wrote out God's Hebrew names and titles, so the Rabbinic writings say they must be burned.

*Peshitta text- is the text of the church of the east, originally written in Hebrew/Aramaic.

*Yeshua spoke in Aramaic & Hebrew and His gospels were written down in them.

[1:03:06] 2. Abundance of Semitic Idioms in the NT

Idiom: language peculiar to a people, dialect. Peculiar sayings to a language, grammatically or combined meaning of its words that make up a special meaning.

Examples:

It's raining cats and dogs

You're pulling my leg

He flew off the handle

She hit the ceiling

Kill time

Eat your heart out

Kick the bucket

Lose one's head

Throw in the towel

Why are a Wise man and a Wise guy opposites?

Why is a person who invests money called a Broker?

Oriental person spins in a circle does he become a disorient?

*If the text was originally written in Hebrew and then translated by someone who doesn't understand Hebrew idioms, our text becomes a text dressed first in Greek and then English, and doesn't make much sense.

Some argue that the Pauline Epistles were written to a Greek audience and therefore written in Greek. But if this was true, then why are so many Hebrew idioms used? There is also a very strong Jewish element in those early churches/synagogues.

17 examples of Hebrew Idioms in the NT:

1. Matt 1:25 Joseph wasn't knowing Mary = congenial relations (Genesis 4:1)
2. Matt 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance = show change (Jer. 32:19)
3. Matt 6:22 If your eye is good = you are generous (Prov. 22:19)
4. Matt 6:23 If your eye is evil = you are stingy (Deut. 15:19)
5. Matt 22:16 You don't look at the face of men = you don't show favoritism (Deut. 1:17)
6. Matt 24:48 Says in his heart = thinks privately (Gen 24:45)
7. Mark 2:19 Sons of the Bride chamber = guests of the bridegroom
8. Luke 11:27 Lifted up her voice and said = vocalize loudly (Gen. 27:38)
9. Luke 16:22 Bosom of Abraham = Paradise
10. John 2:4 What to me and you = That's not our problem.

11. John 20:26 Peace to You = Saying Hello/Greetings
12. Acts 2:41 Souls = People (Lev. 22:6)
13. Acts 7:60 Fell Asleep = he died (I Kings 2:10)
14. Acts 18:14 Open the mouth = communicating
15. Acts 22:14 Hear the voice of his mouth [bat kol] a supernatural voice
16. Col 1:23 Under the sky = on the earth (Gen. 6:17)
17. 1 Peter 1:13 Gird up the loins of your mind = Prepare your minds for action (2 Kings 4:29)

Example of whole sentences that can be translated back into Hebrew:

Luke 10: 5-6 would be foreign to a Greek speaker, but would make complete sense to a Hebrew speaker, because it's filled with Hebrew idioms.

3. Semitic phrases and untranslated words

1. Hallelujah, Amen, Gehenna, Pesach, Meshiach, Hosanna, Satan, Abba, Mammon, Corban, Maranatha, Rabbi, Roca, Eli Eli Sabachthani, etc. Instead of being translated or transliterated they are just added into the text.
2. "A YHVH spoke to Moshe saying," = *Saying* is a Hebrew way to introduce what was said in quotation. Mark 8:28; Matt 23:1-2; 28:18; Luke 14:3; 24:6.
3. The introductory phrase - "It came to pass" [v'yahe], like Gen 4:3 -not a Greek phrase. Luke 2:1; 2:6; 2:15; 3:21; 5:1; 5:12; 5:17; 6:1; 6:6; 6:12; 7:11; 8:1; 8:22; 9:18; 9:21; 9:37; 9:51; 11:1; 11:27; 14:1; 17:11; 18:35; 20:1; 21:24; 24:4.
4. Redundant phrase of "answered and said", is very common in Hebrew, but not in Greek. And is VERY common in the gospels. Matt 11:25;12:38; 17:4; 28:5; Mark 9:5; 11:14; 12:35.
5. "Hineh!" means Behold! or Look! This word is rarely used in Greek but is a natural product of a Semitic language and used very commonly in Hebrew. Matt 1:20; 2:9; 3:16; Luke 1:20; 1:31; 1:36; 2:25; Acts 12:7 and James 5:9.
6. Extra poetic filler verbs are commonly used in Hebrew- "he arose and went", "he lifted up his eyes and saw" and "he took and planted". Matt 13:33; 13:46; 25:16; Luke 15:18 and Acts 5:17. Also "began"- Mark 1:45; 5:17; 6:7; Acts 1:1.
7. "Son of ____" noun functions as an adjective substitute. Luke 10:6 a peaceful man is a "Son of Peace"; I Thess. 5:5 An enlightened people are "Sons of Light" and Col. 1:13 God's Beloved Son is "the Son of His Love."

4. Underlying Semitic grammar structure- it is written in poor Greek, but excellent Semitic grammar. "And" is the basis of Hebrew, but not Greek. You'll find long passages of text that are on long run on sentences.

5. Grave textual errors

The errors found in the Greek texts are not found in the original Hebrew texts.

Examples:

1. In Matt 23:35 a Zechariah son of Jehoidah is referenced- 2 Chron. 24:20-21, and in Jewish writings. But in the Greek text he is wrongly referenced as the son of Berachiah.
2. In Matt 27:9, Zech 11:12-13 is quoted and the reference as from the prophet Jeremiah, but in the original Hebrew manuscript of Matthew it's rightly referenced to Zech, and in the Aramaic manuscript it just says the prophet.
3. In the Greek version of Matthew chapter 1; it subtracts a name from Yeshua's genealogy; the name missing, Avner though does appear in the Hebrew manuscript.

6. Practical background of the NT authors

Hebrew was the mother tongue of the Land of Israel. It was the language used by Galileans and Judeans.

Almost all of the characters in the NT were Hebrew people, of Israeli decedent and all spoke Hebrew (even Luke). All of Yeshua's family members, apostles and disciples were all Hebrew speakers and none of them but a small handful were very highly educated or skilled in multi-lingistics. They were simple fisherman, carpenters and farmers. And these men wrote most of the NT, in their native language.

7. Growing scholarly opinion, who have studied these things.