| Khaph | Kaph | Yod | Teth | Heth | Zayin | Vav | He | Daleth | Gimel | Veth | Beth | Aleph |

| Tav | Sin | Shin | Resh | Koph | Tsadi | Feh | Peh | Ayin | Samekh | Nun | Mem | Lamed |

The History of Aramaic: The Language of Jesus
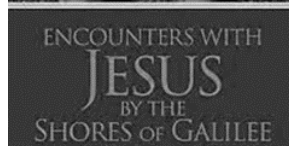
ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS BY THE SHORES OF GALILEE

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An in-depth Study of the Language of Jesus.

Contents:

Introduction

Introduction:

Here, I will present the history and usage of the Aramaic language and its effect on the Bible. Part of this will be, first, to place the language into the wider history of Mesopotamia and then narrowing that history down into certain specifics, such as the Aramaic of the Arameans, the Aramaic of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires. A greater emphasis will be put on understanding the history of the Persians, its Imperial Aramaic and how this affected the exilic history of the Jews and certain books of the Old Testament. The Aramaic language will be analysed and defined linguistically to a limited extent. The time period of this research primarily starts with the origins of people and their languages to the first century of Christ. Besides these themes, this study will put forth three related arguments. First, it will endeavour to show the ever increasing prominence of the language throughout its history, and especially during the time of the Persian Empire and the Maccabean times. Second, this study hopes to show that the effect and use of the language has been extremely under estimated in regards to the Jews during the exile and post exilic times. The third argument presented is more controversial. In continuing the thought of this ever increasing prominence, this study hopes to climax the language with the idea that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were in fact Greek translations of the Aramaic language and culture. John is also included in this but to a more limited extent. The dissertation is divided up into the following categories: Introduction, Ancient History of the Near East, The Arameans and their language, The Aramaic Language, and Old Testament Books of the Bible, The Persians, Aramaic Literature, and the Language of Jesus. In some respects, the flow of this dissertation should be looked upon as a history within a history within a history within a history. Reversed, this could include the wider Mesopotamia history along with the Arameans History taking in the combined history of Persia and the Certain Books of the Bible. The last history includes that of Jesus.

I. Ancient History of the Near East

Discoveries have shown that writing was a well-established art in many countries long before the beginnings of the Hebrew nation. The earliest forms of writings took place in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The earliest known writing shows a written Sumerian limestone tablet dated about 3,500 BC. Egyptian hieroglyphs were in a developmental stage at early as 3000 BC.

Other early writings have been found on stone as we see with the Ten Commandments. Hoerth, Mattingly, and Yamauchi (1994) explain that the Sumerians was a non-Semitic people of the Tigris & Euphrates delta. The Akkadian, forerunners of Babylonia, had their capital in Akkad with its infamous King Sargon. Babylon, meaning the Gate of God, came into being with Hammurabi in 1792 B.C. The Assyrians became famous for their dominating spirit and carrying off the Northern Kingdom of Israel never to be heard from again. We also remember Jonah being called by God to go to Nineveh to preach.

Clay was the predominant writing material of Assyria and Babylonia as huge libraries of clay tablets have been discovered from these areas. For hundreds of years leather was used for different portions of the Bible, however most of the New Testament was written on papyrus, a reed that grew in abundance along the Nile River in Egypt. They were collected together into rolls by which whole books were written on them. Later, leather and eventually paper was used to write manuscripts on.

Almost all of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew which belongs to a larger group of Semitic languages. Along with Hebrew, three of the more ancient languages include Aramaic: Syriac and Akkadian. Akkadian came from a mixture of Assyrian and Babylonian. Amharic, the language of Ethiopia also belongs to this group. A more recent Semitic language is Arabic. Both Hebrew and Arabic are written from right to left. Both languages are usually written without vowels. Some portions of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic. This is a kindred language to Hebrew and seems very similar unless you are well versed in them. It became a common language in Palestine after the exile of 500 BC up to and including during the time of Christ. The Greek that was used to write the New Testament was called Hellenistic or Koine Greek. It was the common language of the people at the time. Of course Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek are still used today: Hebrew in Israel, Aramaic in Damascus and Syria and Greek in Greece. The Greek used in Greece however is quite different. Hebrew of the Bible and what's spoken in Israel is closer (Vlack, 1999).

But first, one must be aware of how Aramaic fits into a wider history going back to the Time of Noah and Ancient Mesopotamia. Scaruffi (2005) provides us with a basic timeline:

10,000 – 5,000 B.C. – Early Farming Communities

5,000 – 3,500 B.C – Pre Sumerians

3,500 – 1,900 B.C. – Sumerian Period

1,900 – 600 B.C. – The Babylonians and Assyrians (The Neo-Babylonian Empire)

600 – 330 B.C. – The Persian Empire

330 – 65 B.C. – The Greeks

65 B.C and onward – The Romans

It was sometimes after 5000 B.C., the historical background of Genesis 11 suggests that the Ubaid period would be the period around this time (Seiglie, 2002). The area was in southern Mesopotamia; just northwest of Ur was the place of the first settlements. This area saw the first migration from the north to the south. There seemed to have been an explosion of people due to certain climatic changes causing the lowering of the sea and less amounts of water in the rivers. During this time, rainfall went further into North Africa. Since then, there is no systematic trend except for the fact of three large scale dry periods affecting the entire Middle East happened in 3200-2900, 2350-2000 and around 1300 B.C. Many attempts have been made to explain the course of history as a result of these large scale climatic changes.

The civilization developed in Mesopotamia around and down to Palistine and Egypt in an area often designated the 'Fertile Crescent'. It's a narrow strip of land that stretches from the Persian Gulf to Southern Israel up along the Tigris Euphrates rivers over and down along the Mediterranean coast. Ancient documents from the area are among the earliest known in the world and is also often referred to as the Cradle of Civilization. It was in Mesopotamia that Noah's descendants established themselves. Rwalinson (2003) says that the name Mesopotamia is itself an ancient Greek term meaning 'between the rivers', referring to the Tigris and Euphrates. Genesis records Nimrod as the founder of the first cities after the Flood, including Babel, Nineveh and Calah – better known today as Babylon, Nineveh and Nimrud. As all the people of the world descended from Noah and his sons, only one language should have been spoken, and so the author of Genesis tried to explain that the confusion of many languages was a punishment from God, the story referring to the building of the fabled city of Babylon that grew up alongside the Euphrates. The story relates that at Babylon a mud-brick tower – the Tower of Babel – was constructed with the intention of reaching

heaven, which incurred the displeasure of God. According to measurements, Argubright (1997) says that the tower rose to the height of a 20-story building. The reasons for God's displeasure are not given in Genesis, but the punishment was to disperse the inhabitants of Babylon far and wide and to 'confuse their language', so that they spoke different languages and could no longer communicate and cooperate. Because the similar-sounding Hebrew word *balal* means 'confuse' (and therefore a confusion of languages, or babble), the Genesis writer believed that this was why the city was called Babel. The name was actually derived from the much earlier name of *Babilu*, which, written in cuneiform, means 'gate of the god', and later on the ancient Greeks called the city Babylon. The origin of the city's name had nothing to do with why many languages are spoken throughout the world, but referred to the impressive gates of this fortified city (Walton, J. 2008). Because knowledge of cuneiform and its languages had been lost, so too had the origins of the name Babylon.

With no other suitable material for writing, the ubiquitous mud was used to make rectangular, square-shaped or occasionally oval tablets. From a ball of damp clay, tablets were flattened into a shape that fitted in the hand, though some could be far larger, and generally had one convex and one flat side. Adkins (2003) says that writing was done usually with a reed stylus by making impressions in the damp clay. Because one end of the stylus was cut at an angle, wedge or triangular-shaped marks were produced, with signs made up of lines or strokes that had one end wider than the other, displaying a characteristic wedge or tapering shape. The system of writing is known today by the clumsy word 'cuneiform', which is literally 'of wedge-shaped form', from the Latin word *cuneus*, meaning wedge. After writing, tablets were left to dry hard in the sun, or occasionally fired in a kiln.

Adkins continued to say that cuneiform was not a language, but a script or writing system that was used to convey several different spoken languages. In Egypt, hieroglyphic writing was used only to write down the ancient Egyptian language, so hieroglyphs tend to be considered as both a writing system and the ancient language. Sumerian was the earliest language to be written in cuneiform, and on the early tablets, the signs were grouped randomly in boxes. With the increased use of signs for syllables, the written language became more structured, and grammatical elements developed. More complex words could be expressed, and because word order became important, signs began to be written in a single horizontal line, from left to

right. Even so, there was no punctuation, nor spaces between words. Because Sumerian cuneiform signs started off as pictographs that were subsequently used as ideograms and syllables as well, almost every sign acquired several different functions. Many signs (termed polyphones) acquired several alternative sounds. For example, the sign *du*, meaning 'leg', could also have other associated meanings with different pronunciations, such as *gub*, 'to stand', *gin*, 'to go', and *túm*, 'to bring'. To get around this problem, the final consonant could be emphasized by adding another sign, a phonetic complement, comprising that final consonant and a vowel (usually a). This sign was not pronounced, but indicated what word was meant. For example, when this particular sign was to be read as *gin*, a sign for *na* was added, which cuneiform scholars write as gin (na) or ginna. Some Sumerian signs were pronounced the same way (like flour and flower in English). These signs are termed homophones – having the same sound. For example, there were ten different signs for the word or syllable pronounced *tum*. Most Akkadian words had more than one syllable, and the cuneiform signs used to spell out words phonetically were either single vowels such as *a*, consonant-vowels such as *tu*, vowel-consonants such as *an* or consonant-vowel-consonants such as *nim* – never single consonants. Sumerian signs were frequently adopted as syllables or to represent entire Akkadian words. For example, the Sumerian sign *an*, meant sky or heaven, and this same sign was adopted for Akkadian, but in that language was pronounced as *shamu*. The same Sumerian sign could mean a god, *dingir*, which was also adopted in Akkadian, but pronounced *ilu*. As in Sumerian, a few Akkadian signs were used as determinatives and placed before or after words to clarify the type of word (such as a place or a god), and these signs were not pronounced. Phonetic complements functioned in a similar way to those of Sumerian cuneiform, but were not so widely used.

DeMieroop (2007) points out that by 2000 B.C. about six hundred Akkadian signs were used, but most signs had two or more values or readings, representing a syllable, an entire word or a determinative. Some signs (the polyphones) had more than one phonetic value or syllable, such as one sign which could represent the syllables *ur*, *lig*, or *tash*, and several different signs (the homophones) shared the same sound, such as various signs that all represent the sound *ur*. As with Sumerian, scholars today show a sign's value by a system of accents and numbers: the most common homophone in a group has no notation, the second an acute accent over the

vowel, the third a grave accent, and the fourth and following have numbers, as in *ur*, *úr*, *ùr*, *ur4* and *ur5*, called ur-one, ur-two, ur-three, ur-four, ur-five and so on. They are all pronounced the same – as *ur*.

Sumerian had a great influence on the written form of Akkadian; DeMieroop continues, such as the verb occurring at the end of the sentence, which does not occur in other Semitic languages. However, verbs in Akkadian were not constructed like those of Sumerian (which had a fixed root word to which prefixes or suffixes were added). Instead, they had a root of three consonants (trilateral), which changed internally according to the meaning, mainly with the addition of different vowels. Many Akkadian nouns ended in 'm', such as *sharrum* (king), but this ending was dropped towards the end of Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian, so that the word became *sharru*. There were no spaces between words, but there was occasional punctuation, such as an upright wedge to indicate the beginning of a sentence. The writing was read from left to right, and larger clay tablets could be divided into columns, like a modern newspaper, which were also read from left to right. Horizontal lines often separated each line of cuneiform writing.

From the sixth century B.C. Persia began to expand its already immense empire westwards, firstly into areas like Elam and Babylonia where cuneiform was used and later as far as Egypt and Greece. Elamite, which is a non-Semitic language not closely related to any other, is first seen around 2300 B.C. and became one of the official languages of the Persian Empire. It is known mainly from hundreds of clay tablets found at Susa, the city that became the summer capital of Darius the Great, and also at his new capital Persepolis, as well as on monumental inscriptions such as at Bisitun.

Terms such as Old, Middle, and Neo-Babylonian and Assyrian are used to indicate chronological phases, and Standard Babylonian refers to a literary dialect found both in the south and the north. Earlier versions of Akkadian were used prior to the second millennium. We speak of Old Akkadian for the dialects found in

texts from the Akkad and Ur Ill dynasties. The traces of the Semitic language found in texts predating these periods are more difficult to identify, and the term proto-Akkadian is sometimes used. Babylonian was the language of culture and diplomacy throughout the Near East during the latter half of the second millennium. It was used in writing from Anatolia to Egypt, from the Levant to the Zagros Mountains, always written in cuneiform on clay tablets. It was used in addition to native languages and scripts, such as Ugaritic, a west Semitic language recorded in an alphabetic script in western Syria.

In the mid-third millennium, various other Semitic dialects were recorded in cuneiform script, the one from Ebla being the best known (Rwalinson 2003). The language shows grammatical affinities with later west Semitic languages and also with what was spoken in Babylonia at the time. A commonly spoken west Semitic language in the early second millennium was Amorite, found from western Syria to southern Babylonia. No texts completely written in that language are preserved; it is only known from the names of people. The same is true for the first-millennium west Semitic language Aramaic, which had a great vernacular spread. It was mainly recorded in an alphabetic script on perishable materials. Only a couple of Aramaic texts in cuneiform are known.

Hunt (2000) describes a group of people known as the Hurrians who migrated from the region between Black and Caspian called Urartu (modern Armenia).They established kingdoms in Upper Mesopotamia and later united with the Mitanni. The Hurrians also moved to the southwest of the Fertile Crescent, eventually forming a ruling elite in many cities in Canaan. They may even have formed a part of the nation known as the Hyksos, who invaded Egypt in about 1640 B.C.. The Mitanni were Indo-Europeans related to the Hurrians. They settled in Upper Mesopotamia in about 1500 B.C. and united the Hurrian kingdoms into a single state under their rule. In 1450–1390 B.C. they built up an empire that stretched from the Mediterranean to the Zagros Mountains. This brought them into conflict with the Egyptians, but the two nations made peace in about 1400 B.C. The Mitanni were known to be horsemen and even wrote books on horse management. In about 1370 B.C. the Hittites attacked the western part of the Mitanni kingdom, after which their state broke up. Another Indo-European race, the Hittites settled in Anatolia (a part of modern Turkey) in about 2000 B.C. By about 1740 B.C. the Hittites were united under one ruler, and occupied almost all of Asia Minor. At its height between 1600 and 1200 B.C., the Hittite empire extended from

Mesopotamia to Syria and Palestine. They conquered Babylon in about 1595 B.C., overthrowing King Hammurabi, and—like the Mitanni before them—clashed with the Egyptians, largely over the border town of Kadesh. In 1275 B.C. a great battle was fought, which neither side really won. In 1272 B.C. the Hittites signed a peace treaty with the Egyptians— the oldest known document of its kind. The Hittites were overthrown by the mysterious "Sea Peoples" in about 1196 B.C. Nineveh, a place mentioned in the Book of Jonah was once occupied by the kings of Agade (2300 B.C.), then Shamshi-Adad of Ashur (1800 B.C.), and later by the Mitanni. Since 1000 B.C. it has been the main Assyrian royal city. The walls of Sennacherib were about 50 feet high and enclose an area 7.5 miles. The city had 15 gates for access, each named after an Assyrian god and flanked by winged bulls with human heads. Nineveh had many public squares and parks, wide boulevards, a botanical garden, and a zoo. The oldest known aqueduct brought water from hills 30 miles away to irrigate exotic plants and trees in the parks and gardens. So great was the city that its suburbs extended almost 30 miles along the river's bank. The city was founded by the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser I (1273–1244), Nimrud also sits on the east bank of the Tigris, not far from Nineveh. Ashurnasirpal II another Assyrian Kings (884–859) made it his capital. The inner city covers about 500 acres, surrounding the major buildings at its southwest corner. These include a temple dedicated to the city's patron god Ninurta, with a large ziggurat. Nimrud also has extensive orchards and parks, all drained by a clever sewage system. Ashurnasirpal's palace is decorated with numerous plaster reliefs and wall paintings, and colossal winged lions and bulls flank the doorways. When the king held a feast for the builders and architects who had worked on it, he fed 63,000 people, including 47,000 workers who had been brought there from conquered lands.

Darius also invented a system of cuneiform for writing down his own language of Old Persian, which had never before been written down. This was the first time in antiquity that a complete writing system had been invented, rather than gradually evolving. Old Persian cuneiform was used for the first time from 521 B.C. in the inscription at Bisitun, and Darius and his successor Xerxes had many of their achievements recorded in other trilingual inscriptions in Elamite, Babylonian and the newly invented Old Persian cuneiform.

Loosely based on the signs used for Sumerian and Akkadian, Old Persian cuneiform was a far simpler system, since it followed the alphabetical

principles of Aramaic. There were thirty-six signs in all – signs for the three vowels *a,i* and *u*, twenty-two signs for consonants usually linked to the vowel *a*, four linked to the vowel *i* and seven to the vowel *u*. Two simple signs were used as word dividers, which were to prove a valuable aid to decipherment, and single signs represented the words king, land, earth, god and Ahuramazda, as well as numerals. Unlike other types of cuneiform, the invented Old Persian cuneiform is rarely found on clay tablets, but normally as inscriptions on rock faces, metal plaques, vases, stone buildings and stone monuments.

In the thirteenth century BC, a much better cuneiform alphabet was used in the Syrian city of Ugarit and its territory alongside the cuneiform system from Babylonia (DeMieroop, 2007). Written on clay tablets, the Ugaritic alphabetic signs were shaped like the syllabic cuneiform ones, but there is no obvious formal connection between the two. A large variety of texts was written in the alphabetic script, including letters, contracts, and literature. Very few texts record the local Semitic language, however. It seems that local affairs were recorded in Ugaritic alphabetic writing, while Babylonian was preferred for international affairs. In total, some 1400 tablets with the Ugaritic script are preserved. Interestingly, both for the cuneiform and the other alphabetic systems, abecedaries of this period were found proving that the sequence of letters was well established.

Ugarit did not survive after 1200 B.C., nor did its script. The Phoenicians adopted the linear alphabet and developed it further during the first millennium to write the Semitic languages of Syria-Palestine. With the spread of the Aramaic language in the Assyrian empire in the first millennium, and its adoption as an official language in the Persian Empire in the fifth century, the alphabet became the dominant script of the Near East and far beyond.. The language of most of the texts is Babylonian, heavily influenced by local west Semitic languages, and the script is syllabic cuneiform, also borrowed from the east. The situation of the states of Syria-Palestine can be exemplified by the history of Amurru (Izre'el, 1997), a

kingdom extending from the Mediterranean coast in northern modern-day Lebanon to the plain of Homs in Syria

Lishtarlight (2000) tells us that the Assyrians were the descendants of Asshur, one of the sons of Shem. They seem to have been an independent Semitic offshoot that migrated and settled in Assyria between 3000 and 2500 B.C. Listerlight thinks that an Assyrian Kingdom most likely rose up around the 1700 B.C. Thothmes III of Egypt ruled over Syria and Mesopotamian valley in 1480 to 1427 B.C. According to the Amarna letters, Izre'el (1997) says that diplomatic letters were frequent between Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Mitanni and Amenhotep IV. Towards the end of the 14th century Shalmaneser I became King over Assyria and at the same time the Hittites broke the hold Egypt had over everyone. Shalmaneser I transferred the seat of his kingdom from Ashur to Kalkhi (Calah of Genesis) forty miles to the north on the eastern bank of the Tigris and 18th miles south of Nineveh. He also extended the empire towards north and northeast. He then conquered Babylon and set up his government there for seven years. His own nobles killed him and set up his Ashur-nasir-pal as king. Babylon attacked Ninib-pal-Eshara a later king reigning over Assyria and defeated him. Through this, Babylon regained possession of a large part of their former territory (Arnold, 2004).

Tiglath-pilsner I succeeded his father in 1120-1110 and conquered forty two countries and their kings. He kept an animal park at Ashur and a botanical garden at Nineveh. His reign coincided with Eli, one of the ten judges who ruled over Israel before the monarchy. Afterwards, Ashur-nasir-pal reign in 885 B.C. continued to raise Assyria prominence. His son, Shalmaneser II took over in 854 B.C. and went to subdue Damascus. Thus eleven years later, Jehu was proclaimed king over Israel and started paying tribute to Shalmaneser II. When Shalmaneser I11 crossed the Euphrates in 853 and engaged in a major battle at Qarqar, by his own account he was confronted with: 1200 chariots, 1200 cavalry, and 20,000 troops of Hadad-ezer of Damascus; 700 chariots, 700 cavalry, and 10,000 troops of Irhuleni, the Hamathite; 2000 chariots and 10,000 troops of Ahab, the Israelite; 500 troops of Byblos; 1000 troops of Egypt; 10 chariots and 10,000 troops of the land of Irqanatu; 200 troops of Matinu-ba'al of the city of Arwad; 200 troops of the land of Usanatu; 30 chariots and [1,000 troops of Adon-ba'al of the land of Shiannu; 10,000 camels of Gindibu' of Arabia; [ ] hundred troops of Ba'asa of Bit-Ruhubi, the Arnm~nite (DeMieroop, 2007).

This was written on a well-known black obelisk in the British Museum. Rammannirari III came to power in 812 B.C. and conquered Tyre, Sidon, Edom, Philistia, Israel and Damascus. Jehoahaz was then king over Israel and welcomed the Assyrians because they broke the hold that Damascus had over Israel. In 745 B.C. Tiglath-pilsner III seized the Assyrian throne at Nineveh. It's said that he saved the Assyrian Empire from ruin and decay. He organized the empire and divided it into provinces and set a fixed amount of tribute on each. In the Old Testament, he is mentioned as Pul. Shalmaneser IV succeeded his father and reigned for five years and thus he was succeeded by Sargon II. Sargon II was one of the greatest figures in Assyrian history and found of the Sargonid dynasty which ruled for more than a century. It was under him that Samaria fell in 722 B.C. and the Kingdom of Israel was ended with the people being carried away. He conquered the Elamites, the Philistines and Egypt. He attacked Karkemish, the capital of the Hittites and also deported them to Assyria. Sargon was assassinated in 705 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. At the end of the dynasty, Nineveh fell and the Assyrian Empire was overthrown (Roux 1992).

Argubright (2003) gives us a run down on the wars of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal which were nothing more than successful counter attacks. At the end of Sargon's reign the Assyrians ruled over the entire Fertile Crescent and over parts of Iran and Asia Minor. The reign of Sennacherib was almost entirely taken up by rebellions as soon as word of Sargon's death was known. In Phoenicia and Palestine Egyptian propaganda had persuaded Lulê, King of Sidon; Sitka, King of Escalon; Hezekiah, King of Judah and Ekron to break ties with Nineveh. In 701 B.C., his 4th year of reign he went against and defeated the rebels. Sennacherib attacked Judah, besieged and captured the strongly fortified town of Lachish and then went against Jerusalem. The Second Book of Kings show how three of Hezekiah's officials negotiated a peace with three dignitaries of the Assyrian court. Hezekiah refused to open the gates of Jerusalem and finally a treaty was reached costing Judah 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver plus treasures, daughters, musicians and cities that were given to the Philistines. Later in Sennacherib reign, a second campaign against Egypt was launched and his army was ravaged by the angel of the Lord and killed 145,000 troops. War against the Arameans and their Elamite allies went on during most of Sennacherib's reign in 703 B.C. Sargon's old rival, Marduk-apaliddina (Merodach-Baladan), left Elam, where, it will be remembered, he had taken

refuge, and assisted by Elamite officers and troops raised the entire Aramaean population of southern Iraq against the Assyrians, entered the capital-city and proclaimed himself King of Babylon. Sennacherib entered Babylon only after several weeks and plundered his palace, took many prisoners and carried away 208,000 people to Assyria and installed another King at Babylon. In 694 B.C. Sennacherib sent a land and sea force to establish access to the Gulf. The Elamites retaliated and took Sippar and the Babylonians took Ashur-nadin-shumi and handed him over to the Elamites replacing the Babylon throne with another king of their own which again was soon expelled by the Assyrians. In 689 B.C. the Babylonians used the treasure of Marduk's temple to get help from the King of Elam (Arnold, 2004). A battle took place at Hallulê on the Tigris which was a near defeat for Assyria. In his anger, Sennacherib completely destroyed Babylon after that. While praying in a temple, he was stabbed to death by one of his sons.

Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, had to leave Nineveh as his father turned against him. Upon Sennacherib's death, Esarhaddon returned with an army and took the throne back. His brothers fled to another country but Esarhaddon killed those who had helped his brothers. Esarhaddon felt that Sennacherib had done wrong by destroying Babylon so he rebuilt it eleven years later. The work of restoration of Babylon occupied Esarhaddon's whole reign. In 669 B.C. Ashurbanipal returned from Assur and was reinstated in their temples. Many Babylonians gave their friendship to Esarhaddon for doing this

As to the murder of Sennacherib by one of his sons; this had obviously affected many kingdoms of that time. According to Parpola (1999), Israel and Babylonia were pleased with the death of the hated despot. For Assyria there were expressions of horror and resentment. Some think that it was Ardior Arad-ninlil, a son of Sennacherib but other believed that it was the heir designate and successor, Esarhaddon. A Neo Babylonian letter explicitly states the name of the murderer which agrees with the name forms found in the Bible. The name given in the Bible is: Adrammelech or Adramelos or Ardumuzan. This Biblical Adrammelech differs from the Assyrian name only in two respects; one due to the metathesis or 'r' and 'd' and the other from a scribe correcting a seemingly nonsensical 'meles' to 'melek', a frequent final element in North-West Semitic personal names. Within this context, the Aramean Empire rose up in Syria during 1200 B.C.

II. The Arameans and Their Language:

Roux (1992) describes the Aramean language as belonging to dialects of Canaanites and Hebrew, or the north western groups of Semitic dialects. Aramaic used the Hebrew Script for hundreds of years and eventually adopted other scripts. In texts of the Akkadians, Ur III and Old Babylonian periods, we see an occasional mention of the Arameans in the form of a city called Arami and individuals by the name of Aramu. The Aramean presence was also acknowledged in Assyria at Nippur and even at Dilmun (Bahrain). Shalmaneses I defeated the Hurrians and their Hittite and Ahlamu allies in Jazirah. So it could have been as early at the 14th century that this group of tribes (Arameans) established a quasi-confederation in Syria along the Euphrates. An inscription of Tiglath pilsner I (1115-1077 B.C.) refers to the Ahlamu-Arameans. By the 12th century, there were established kingdoms both in the north and south. The timing was similar to that of Israel. When the Israelites arrived on the scene, the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Hivites and Philistines were already there. The Israelites spoke a language from the West Semitic family of languages which was similar to that of the Canaanites, Moabites and Ammonites. Many of the Hebrews were also familiar with Aramaic (Borowski, 2003). Those near Israel were Aram Sobah, Aram Bit-Rehob, and Aram Ma'akah was established around Mount Hermon. Geshur was established in Hauran and then there was Aram Damascus. Further north they controlled Hama on the Orontes. By the 9th century they conquered Sam'al (the area of Aleppo) which was renamed Bit Asqushi and Til Barsus which became the chief town of Bit Adini. They invaded the steppe to the east of the Euphrates and this area became known Aram Nahanaim. One of the earliest kingdoms was Bit Bahiani. The word, 'bit' is more appropriately spelled 'bayt' and means 'house' in most of the Semitic languages.

The word, Aramean, contains the name Ram, the son of Shem. Tenney (1976) in Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible give us a genealogy of Shem and his son Ram. In addition, the word 'Aram' first appears in the 23rd century B.C. in a cuneiform inscription of the Akkad. In the table of nations in Genesis 10, Aram is listed as the son of Shem and the father of Uz, Hal, Gether, and Mash. And according to Genesis 11:10 Shem was 100 years old when he begat Arpachshad, two years after the flood, and he was to live another 500 years. Shem is the first born son of Noah and brother of Japheth and Ham (Genesis 10:21 & 9:24). After 35 years

Arpachshad begat <u>Shelah</u>, and Shem still had 465 years ahead. When Shelah was 30 years old he begat <u>Eber</u>. Eber was 44 years old when he begat <u>Peleg</u>. Peleg was 30 when he begat <u>Reu</u>. Reu was 32 when he begat Serug. When Serug was 30 he begat <u>Nahor</u> and Shem had 299 years to go. When Nahor was 29 he begat <u>Tarah</u> and Shem had 270 years left. When Terah was 70 years old he begat Abraham, Nahar and Haran (either a triplet or simultaneously from different mothers) and Shem still had 200 years to go. That means that when Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175 (Genesis 25:7), old man Shem was still going strong with 25 more years ahead. And that means that the flood generation did not only see the Noahic flood, it also saw Abraham's sons Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac was the son of the Great Promise and he was born to Abraham when he was 100 (Genesis 21:5) and when Shem still had 100 years ahead. And when Jacob and Esau were born to 60 year old Isaac (Genesis 25:21&26) Shem entered his last 40 years. And that means that according to Moses, Shem died exactly when Esau started taking Hittite women for wives at the age of 40, hence grieving his parents who consequently sent Jacob to the House of Nahar for a wife (Genesis 27:46 & 28:1 &29:5). According to The NIV Archaeological Study Bible by Zondervan there are about fifty references to Aram and/or Shem in the Bible. The word 'A-ra-mu' appears in an inscription at Ebla listing geographical names and Amri is an Ebla term for nearby Aleppo which occurs frequently in the Ebla Tablets written around 2300 B.C. The Arameans appear to have replaced the earlier Amorite population of Ram around 1200 B.C. which is said to be a time of upheavals and mass movements of people. Padden Aram was an early Aramean Kingdom referred to in Genesis.

The Old Testament associates the patriarchs with the Aramaeans in Gen 24:3-10, 25:20; 27; 43; 28:2-5 and Deut 26:5. Saul, David and Solomon fought against the Aramaean Kingdoms which lay across the Northern frontier of Israel: Aram-Zobah (Psalm 60), Beth-Rehob (2nd Sam 10:6), Aram-Naharaim (Psalm 60), Geshur (1 Chron 2:23). The Kingdom states that stood the longest was Aram-Damascus. Greenspahn (2007) says that the term 'Aram' was used in place names almost 4,000 years ago. He also states that the Bible connects Israel's Patriarchs with Aram in Genesis 24:1-10, 28:1-5. Deuteronomy even refers to the Israelites as being descended from a wandering Aramean. Genesis 26:5 in a passage traditionally linked to Jacob, whose father-in-law Laban is called an Aramean in Genesis 31:20. In the 9th century, an alliance between Damascus and Hamah and nine other countries

was able to withstand the powerful Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III in 853 B.C., but a decade later this coalition fell apart and this same group were defeated in 841 B.C.

The Assyrian ruler Tiglath Pileser I encountered Arameans along the Northern Euphrates. One Aramean ruler named Adad-apla-iddina, even seized the Babylonian throne at one time. The Bible describes close connections between Israel's Patriarchs and Aram in Genesis 24:1-10, 28:1-5. Deuteronomy refers to the Israelites as being descended from a wandering Aramean. Genesis 26:5 in a passage traditionally linked to Jacob, whose father-in-law Laban is called an Aramean in Genesis 31:20. In the 9th century, an alliance between Damascus and Hamah and nine other countries was able to withstand the powerful Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III in 853 B.C., however, a decade later this coalition fell apart and this same group were defeated in 841 B.C.

Burns (2005) says that the Arameans rose as a power in the first millennium B.C. Their language was a version of western Aramaic and eventually became the major language by the 8th century B.C. Aramaic grew stronger and became the lingua franca for hundreds of years. Even Greek and Latin could not replace it. It became the common communicative language in the Judean hills at the time of Christ. The particular environmental back drop of the lower reaches of the two rivers perhaps helped in shaping the Aramean people. The delta of the Twin Rivers provided heavy silting with un-controlled overflows into the surrounding areas. This even changed the ancient coastline on the Arabian Gulf. This caused a socio-economic and political-geographical landscape for the Aramean people (Fales, 2007).

As already mentioned, several small kingdoms arose in northern Syria which somewhat reflected a Hittite heritage at the time. The largest kingdom was Hamath and then Carchemish on the Euphrates near the present day border of Turkey and Syria. The rise of the Arameans Empire happened during a time when Egypt, Babylon and Assyria were foundering. At the same time, the Hebrew Empire under David and Solomon expanded, but the most successful group was the Phoenicians and the Arameans. There was no large takeover as such but instead a slow process of infiltration and absorption. They eventually absorbed the culture and institutions of the older city states. Some were inducted into the Assyrian ruling classes but overall, the Arameans tried to block the western expansion of Assyrian. This became more and more problematic as centuries passed by. It was around 1200 B.C.

that the Arameans established their loose federation. These states were roughly Aram Damascus, Hamath, and Bitaqushi with several smaller over lapping groups. Arpad was the capital of Bitaqushi. Two minor kingdoms of Unqi and Bit Adani also plied for power. Kunulua and Carchemish were major towns within Bit Adani, but it capital was Til Barsib, now tell Ahmar. In 856, this kingdom was absorbed into the Assyrian Empire during the reign of Shalmaneser III as were other kingdoms of northern Syria. Now the area a little further east was called Aram Naharaim which was used interchangeably with Padden Aram. This was mentioned in three different tables of the Amarna correspondence. This was the location of Harran, where Abraham and his father Tarah settled after leaving Ur in Genesis 11:3. Padden Aram appears eleven times in eleven verses in Genesis. Abraham's nephew Bethuel, son of Nahar and Micah and father of Laban and Rebekah lived in Padden Aram. Remember also that while in Palestine, Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob there to take refuge and marry a niece of Rebekah. The name means Aram of the Two Rivers and also sometimes called Mesopotamia. The area lay west of the ancient kingdom of Ashur. Aram was supposedly to have received it as an inheritance. All except Hamath and Aram Damascus were situated in Northern Syria between the Euphrates and the Med Sea. Hamath was the largest and greatest kingdom of the time. It included Ugarit and Aruad within its borders. Another small Aramean kingdom existed east of the Sea of Galilee (1st Chronicles 19:6). It included part of the Israeli occupied Bashan given to the half tribe of Manasseh. Its king, Maach, became a mercenary of the Ammonites in their war against David in 11 Sam 10:6.

Then there was Aram Damascus with Damascus as its capital. Initially Damascus was only an outpost of Aram-Zobah. Ezron took Damascus by force around 965 B.C. It was also referred to as Aram Zobah. This eventually became the major Aramean Kingdom and centre of the Aramean Empire. King David established friendly relations with Hamath, thus helping to contain expansionist ideas of Aram Damascus. We see from this that Israel was already being influenced by this Aramaic language. One such battle in Hamath territory against Aram Damascus gained Israel land. Another Aramean kingdom that sprang up later was Aram Rehob with a capital named Beth-Rehob. Earlier in 1st Samuel 14:47, the group of Aramean Kings fought against Saul. Damascus and the Arameans were forced to pay tribute to Israel. This didn't last very long. The breakup of Israel and Judah benefitted Damascus and under Bir Hadad I, grandson of Ezron and also his successor

Hazael annexed the region of Bashan. But in the 8th century under the second Bir Hadad, Aram Damascus suffered defeat and was taken prisoner in Israel. He was forced to grant Israel special trading right in Damascus. These terms were mild for the reason because there were stirrings in Assyria again. By this time, Damascus was the only free Aramean state left as the Arameans were forced to retreat to Damascus under Hazel but in the end they blocked the Assyrian advance. After that, The Arameans were left alone for about thirty years. This gave Damascus time to move against their enemy, Israel, eventually controlling parts of Palestine. But Assyria returned in 803 B.C. and suffered defeat under Bir Hadad III and was forced to pay a large tribute. But as Assyria declined once again, the Arameans gained their freedom and became economically sound (Jeremiah 49:25) and developed many centres in the regent to their god, Hadad-Ramman, a storm god deity. Their strength increased to the point that Israel sought Assyrian help against the Arameans in Damascus. Adad-Nirari III did indeed come to their aid. As Assyria grew again in strength and was watching over the situation in Palestine very closely. Rezon in 750 B.C. tried to gain support from both Judah and Israel but Judah refused. So Rezon and Israel joined forces and came against Judah. It was then that Ahaz ask Tiglath Pilaser for help and help came in 733 B.C. Tiglath Pilaser nearly destroyed the Aramean state of Damascus. He warred against sixteen different Aramean principalities and most of the population was carried off to Assyria. Damascus still continued as the local administrative capital of the Assyrian Empire. Ahaz, king of Judah, went to Damascus to celebrate the Assyrian victory and was very impressed with an altar built to their god, Beth-Ramman, that he had one built in Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:10-13 & 2 Kings 17:1-11). Aramean resistance against Assyria until a revolt happened in 727 B.C. The Aramean State of Hamath tried to rebel but was put down by Sargon II. Sennacherib re-subjugated the Aramean States in 701 B.C. and at the same time took Tyre and Sidon and deported them to Nineveh. In spite of the Assyrian Empire, the Arameans were slowly staging a comeback.

Then in 612 B.C., Nineveh fell to the joint efforts of the Medes and Babylonians. This was the end of the Assyrian Empire and the beginning the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This happened under Nabopolassar between 625-609 B.C. In 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and in 572 B.C., they were deported to Babylon. In 559 B.C. Cyrus II grasped control from the Medes which ushered in the Achaemenid Dynasty of the Persian Empire. The

Jews were allowed to return to Palestine after seventy years. The Persian Empire adopted Aramaic as their official language. The Achaemenid Empire came to an end by Alexander conquering Darius III. It took Alexander twelve years to defeat the Persians.

III. The Aramaic Language:

Woodard (2008) says that Aramaic is a member of the Semitic family and forms one of the two main branches of the Northwest Semitic group. The language most closely related to Aramaic is Hebrew. More distant is Akkadian and Arabic. The Aramaic language has existed for 3,500 years and is even used today. Its origins grew out of Aramean tribes of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. They were a Semitic people, like the Hebrews, the Phoenicians and Assyrians unlike the Hittites, Hurrians and Urartians. Aleppo and Damascus were two of their major towns. The language eventually became the lingua franca of the whole of the Middle East by 850 B.C. due to the deportations of the Assyrians. Aramaic is part of the Biblical Languages and some sources call it Chaldean or Syrian. This was during the same times Israel was establishing themselves in Canaan. And according to Jewish tradition it was spoken by Adam and native language to Jesus. A large collection of literature exists especially gathered from Qumran. Aramaic was used in Ezra 4:6 – 6:18 and 7:12 – 26 and Daniel 2:4 – 7:28 as well as Jeremiah 10:11 and Genesis 31:47. Many of the Dead Sea Scrolls rabbinic texts, parts of both of the Talmud's and various Midrashim, a substantial number of ancient Jewish Bible translations, called targumims. There are Aramaisms in the books of Esther and Chronicles and in the Song of Deborah in Judges. These characteristics have led some scholars to speculate that certain books of the Bible were originally written in Aramaic and later translated into Hebrew (Greenspahn, 2007). The oldest surviving texts in Aramaic consist of inscriptions, short sayings or comments on a plaque or statue. The earliest evidence of Aramaic's long history comes from a series of inscriptions found in Southern Syria. Several of these are from rulers of Aramean kingdoms during the time of the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah. One such ruler, Barrakile who is said to be from Sam'al during the times of Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah were found at Zinjirla and mention's Tiglath Pulesar III also called Pul in 2 Kings 15:19. Another inscription was found on a stone plaque at the Russian convent on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives. It mentions Judah's King Uzziah, who reigned during the early part of

the eighth century. A final inscription comes from the mosaic floor of a seventh century synagogue located in Ein Gedi, along the western coast of the Dead Sea between Qumran and Masada.

The language can be divided up into five different historical stages and dialects: Old Aramaic conservatively went back to 950 to 600 B.C. Inscriptions consisted of mainly stone cravings. Different dialects slowly emerged with centres at Aleppo and Damascus and a city state located at Sam'el in the north western border region. Another existed in the north-eastern region around Tel Fekheriye. Imperial Aramaic came was used between 600 to 200 GC. The Babylonian Empire adopted Aramaic as the lingua Franca of the time. Texts developed were official documents of the Persian Empire, its kingdoms and especially Egypt. Middle Aramaic came into being in 200 B.C. and went to about 200 AD. Textual records have been found in places like Palmyrene, Hatran, Nabatean and Qumran. Late Aramaic covers years AD200 to 700. This period revealed an abundance of texts and dialects. Samaritan Aramaic, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (Galilean Aramaic) and Christian Palestinian Aramaic. An Eastern group included Syriac, Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Mandaic. Modern Aramaic came about from 700 Ad to the present yet gradually declined being replaced by Arabic.

Aramaic is a language where morphemes are unsegment able units. Words are divided into three categories: nouns, verbs and uninflected words. And these include adverbs, prepositions, particles, conjunctions and interjections. Excluding inflectional material, all native Aramaic nouns, adjectives, and participles and verbs consisted of a two, three or four consonant root along with a vowel pattern and one or more prefixed, suffixed, and infixed consonants. The Old and Imperial Aramaic are common to other Semitic languages. In Late Aramaic, the use of suffixes increased as a results of the loss of short vowels in open syllables. Nouns, adjectives and participles are inflected for gender, number and state. There are no case distinctions in any extant dialect of Aramaic. There are no comparative or superlative forms of adjectives at any stage of the language. There are two genders with nouns having an inherent gender but adjectives and participles do not. Numbers can be singular or plural. In earlier stages of the language, the absolute state represented an indefinite noun, the emphatic state represented a definite noun and the construct state represented a noun of definiteness. Personal pronouns include 1st common, 2nd masculine, 2nd feminine and 3rd masculine and feminine. Bound pronouns are suffixed to

nouns, prepositions, particles and infinitives. For verbs, it depends on the tense, phonological form and dialect. Demonstratives pronouns included MS and FS in Old, Imperial and Middle Aramaic. There are six major tenses in the languages with three of them expressing passive states. Verbs are inflected for three persons, two genders, two numbers and two primary tenses. There are also imperatives and infinitives. In earlier dialects, there were very few adverbs but this changed by the time of the Late Aramaic Period. The /w/ represented the 'and/but' conjunctions with /p/ for 'also' and /brm/ also for 'but'. There were nonverbal and verbal clauses with the standard sentence structure being verb, subject, object and indirect object. Most loan words were nouns from languages such as Akkadian, Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Latin and Hebrew.

There were no vowel markings until about 700 AD. The writing system provided little indication of these markings. The phonology of the transcription of this time is certainly ambiguous and thus cannot be accurately determined. And the relationship of Aramaic consonantal phonemes to Aramaic letters is very complex since the phonemic inventory went through a number of changes in its history. Prior to Modern Aramaic, one such document, the Matres Lectian indicated long vowel use. Phonological Aramaic vowel stage development covered Proto-Aramaic, Middle Aramaic and late Aramaic. By the Late Aramaic period systems were qualitative only with three overlapping systems: Tiberian, Babylonian and Nestorian. All three were very similar with different usage of /E/. In Proto-Aramaic, all singular nouns ended in a short vowel.

Yildiz (1986) says that the language is further divided up into Northern Semitic which is made up of Akkadian from which has two other branches: Babylonian and Assyrian. Both of which are divided up into Ancient, Middle and New Dialects. There is also the North-western Semitic Languages which includes Aramaic and Canaanite. Arabic and Ethiopian is classified as South-western Semitic. There are two other dialects that fit into the above: Ugaritic and Elbaite. Ugaritic belongs to the North Western while Enubilate belongs to the Eastern Semitic. The other system has Aramaic being divided into five distinct times: Ancient, Official, Middle, Late and Modern. One thing to remember is that Aramaic became the lingua franca during the neo-Assyrian time.

According to the Yildiz, Ancient Aramaic covered the 12th to the 7th centuries. This originated in the Aramean states which were made up of

different dialects. Some of these later joined together to from the Official or Imperial Aramaic which was used in Persia. Proof of these dialects comes from the many different steles, many of which were found near Aleppo. They referred to various kingdoms of the time usually related to certain Aramean states. There was a massive deportation of Aramaic populations which were absorbs into the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This caused these dialects to merge and form into an official Aramaic. This continued into the Persian Empire up until the 4th century B.C. when it was replaced by Greek. Even though Greek took over as the lingua franca, it was blocked in certain place by cultural resistance against Hellenism. Inscriptions of this official Aramaic came from Ashur, Achaemenid Empire between the 5th and 3rd centuries B.C. There were texts relating to the Jewish military colony in Elephantine, Egypt. Also the texts in the Bible belong to this period from Ezra, Daniel and even in Genesis and Jeremiah. Middle Aramaic dates from 200 B.C. to 250 AD. Written Aramaic remained as the medium of communications among distinct Aramaic speaking groups. Two such groups included the Hasmonean used in Jerusalem and Judea which lasted to 37 B.C. (Beyer, 1986). Yet unofficial documents continued to be written in Aramaic until 155 A.D. These dialects were also found in theological texts of Qumran and also Babylonian and Galilean Turgumins.   The Aramaic of Galilee was in the Hebrew square script. This was used to develop complete versions of the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy, Psalms, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastics, Esther and 1 & 2 Chronicles, all written in Aramaic. Interesting, none of these translations acquired official status. The Nabatean Aramaic was the written language of the Arab Kingdom of Petra. The Arsacid Aramaic was the official language of the Parthian Empire. This was similar to the Imperial Achaemenid Aramaic. Late Aramaic traces its history back to around 200 B.C. and continued to 1300 AD. Some divide this up into western and eastern Aramaic while others divide it into Palestinian, Syriac and Babylonian Aramaic. Palestinian Aramaic includes a lot of Jewish and Christian texts. From the Jews, we have Palestinian and Galilean Targumin, inscriptions in synagogues and the dialect of the Talmud. All came from the area of Amman and Jerusalem, dating back to the 6th and 11th centuries AD. The Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmud was the language spoken by the Jews of Babylon as preserved in the Babylonian Talmud. Mandaic Aramaic is the spoken and literary language of a Gnostic sect situated in the south of Mesopotamia. In

regards to Modern Aramaic, this is still spoken in areas of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey.

It was the Assyrian King Sennacherib and Judean King Hezekiah who negotiated in Aramaic before the walls of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18:26. Another example, Imperial Aramaic was used by Darius I in 522 – 486 BC in the Achaemenid Imperial Administration. This was especially so in the western half of the Persian Empire, and it remained the official language, both commercial and literary until its fall in 331 BC. This same dialect, Achaemenid Imperial Aramaic, was used to write Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-26; Dan 2:4b – 7:28, Gen 31:47 and Jer 10:11.

Klaus (1986) says that Hasmonaean Aramaic came into being in 142 BC. Of course, Greek came to the forefront before that, yet Aramaic was still the language of choice against Hellenistic views. The Hasmonaean Aramaic influenced writings such as from Qumran especially from two oldest Enoch manuscripts and Babylonian and Galilean Targum. The dialect was quite distinct from that of Achaemenid Imperial Aramaic. Old Judean replaced Hasmonaean in 37 BC except in private documents. In Judea, by the time of Christ, there were four different types of literature: Middle Hebrew, Neo-Hebrew, Hasmonaean and Old Judean. Southern Old Eastern Aramaic was used by the Jews as a written language during this time. Both the Galilean Targum and the Babylonian Targumic was a mixture of Hasmonaean of which the original Targum was composed. The Galilean Targum was completely preserved for the Gen-Deut and Psalms, Job, Song, Ruth, Eccles, Esther and 1-2 Chron. As far as Nabataean Aramaic, this was closer to Achaemenid Imperial, and by the 4th century AD, it merged fully with Arabic. Old Western Aramaic gained acceptance throughout Palestine by the 4th cent BC starting from western Syria. Jewish Old Palestinian uses the square script and appeared first in the forms of Old Easter Jordanian and specifically in the oldest Enoch manuscript in 170 BC. It was next seen in the form of Old Judean which was also the language Josephus used in writing the first, non-extant edition of his Jewish War.

There were seven different distinguished Western Aramaic dialects during the time of Christ, several of which include Samarian and then Galilean. This was the dialect that Jesus used. There was Middle Aramaic plus the rabbinic literature. The Klaus (1986) concedes that it is difficult to see where Hebrew could have been spoken in Jesus' time since Aramaic had spread from the north into north and south Palestine.

According to Greenspahn (2007) Aramaic was also used by the Nabateans, an Arab desert people who flourished around the time of Jesus. Ezra 4:6 – 6:18 and 7:12 – 26 and Daniel 2:4 – 7:28 as well as Jeremiah 10:11 and Genesis 31:47. The Gospels, though written in Greek provide evidence of Aramaic traditions. Many of the Dead Sea Scrolls rabbinic texts, parts of both of the Talmud's and various Midrashim, a substantial number of ancient Jewish Bible translations, called Targumims (Magness, 2002). There are Aramaisms in the books of Esther and Chronicles and in the Song of Deborah in Judges. These characteristics have led some scholars to speculate that certain books of the Bible were originally written in Aramaic and later translated into Hebrew.

IV. Old Testament Books of the Bible:

The following books: Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are listed as prophecy books whereas Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah are included as writing books (Vlach, 1999). These are the books that relate to the deportation of the Neo-Babylonian Empire of the exilic and post-exilic times. Ezekiel lists the events of the deportation of Israel carried away in exile to Babylon. It was during these times that the people of Israel were taken away from their language and cultural identity to be replaced by the language of Aramaic and its culture. Aramaic had already made inroads as the major language of the Assyrians in the later days of their existence (Greenspahn, 2007).

Ezekiel was written in Hebrew shortly after the deportation and it recounted many visions and events during his time. The book was written from Babylon graphically portraying the sinfulness of the Jerusalem of his day, as well as certain judgment to come. The book is highly structured and symmetrical and includes the following themes: Judgment, God's sovereignty and future hope. His location and time is made clear in the first several verses, 'In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God' and then 'on the fifth of the month – it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehiachin, the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the Lord was upon him. Ezekiel six made reference to the high places of Israel which refers to local, open-air shrines that were frequently

described as being located in a hill but could also be found anywhere. The practice of deportation became increasingly popular among later kings. Sargon II was responsible for the deportation of the Israelites in 721 B.C. counted over 239,000 deportees (Roux, 1992), while Sennacherib who unsuccessfully besieged Jerusalem in 701 B.C. listed over 469,000 exiles during his reign. Exiles were often treated with extreme cruelty. Assyrian relief show long lines of captives being led away bound and naked. The sexual imagery employed by Ezekiel to demonstrate the apostasy of Israel and Judah is very explicit. Ezekiel prophesized against the likes of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia and Tyre. Tyre struggled to remain independent of Assyria but Ezekiel predicted that Nebuchadnezzar would march against the city. The Babylonians succeeded in capturing the causeway and the city (Bradshaw, 1999).

In the Book of Daniel we find that he wrote to the Jewish exiles in Babylon to encourage them in accepting God's sovereignty and promises of restoration. Half of Daniel was written in Aramaic. Most recent research places the Aramaic within the tradition of the 7th century B.C. onward. This is the same for the Hebrew as it relates to the traditions of the exilic and postexilic period as found in Ezekiel, Haggai and Ezra and not a later time. Daniel was taken to Babylon around 605 B.C. and was still alive when the first group returned to Jerusalem. Belshazzar, Nabonidus's son, was coregent with his father and ruled Babylon during Nabonidus's ten-year absence. Daniel is the writer of the book and the screen is situated sometime around 605 to 536 B.C. during the Neo-Babylonian Empire after the fall of Assyria in 612 B.C. Daniel is full of apocalyptic literature similar to that in the Book of Revelation. Themes include God's sovereignty, Faithfulness and Prophecies of future events. The theology of Daniel has much in common with that of Ezekiel. God is viewed as a transcendent authority that by nature is superior to all the gods of the heathen. Because God is all-powerful, events work out according to a predetermined divine purpose, and this is consistent with 8th century prophetic thinking. The fact that half of Daniel is written in Aramaic presents a mystery. Aramaic had well been established throughout the Assyrians Empire by the time of Daniel; however the Aramaic he used was Imperial Aramaic of the Persian Empire. He provides us with a prophetic look at four kingdoms that would dominate the world. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and reigned from 605 – 562 B.C. over Babylon at the peak of its power. Inscriptions reveal a pride over his achievements in

building temples and fortifying Babylon. The illness described in 4:22-34 was some kind of delusional disorder which appears later in life. Belshazzar was the son of the Babylonian King Nabonidus was a ruthless leader. As 'second' in the kingdom, he promised Daniel the position of 3rd ruler. Babylon came to an end when Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates which opened an access into the city. Daniel six says that the city was ruled by a king called Darius the Mede. This Darius could also have been a subordinate king appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon. The Aramaic of Daniel 5:31 says that Darius received the Kingdom or took over the kingdom thus he was not a king in terms of Cyrus but a ruler appointed by Cyrus. His name might have been Gubaru as mentioned in cuneiform documents. Nabonidus was the father of King Belshazzar of Babylon with whom he reined as coregent for at least several years. The Prayer of Nabonidus, was a Qumran scroll dated around 75 B.C. which was a re-write of Daniel Chapter 20. Here, we understand that the Chaldeans were a seminomadic ethnic group first mentioned in ancient sources from the 9th century B.C. as a people from the land of Kaldu. Living in the southern frontier of Babylon, they were organized into tribal houses. The term Chaldean and Babylonian became synonymous as shown in Isa 47:1 and Daniel 9:1. It also came to stand for priests, astrologers and the educated class of Babylon in Daniel 2:10; 4:7 and 5:7. This period marked the beginning of the rise of Aramaic as the lingua franca of the Near East. In the 3rd year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel. This involved a man speaking to Daniel who spoke about the Prince of Persia and then told Daniel that the Prince of Greece would follow.

The Aramaic of Daniel was situated between two periods of the language: Imperial Aramaic of the neo-Assyrian, neo-Babylonian and Persian Empires and Middle Aramaic. Li (2009) believes that the Aramaic of Daniel represents a single form of Aramaic that would be understood by original readers of the same dialect. He presents us with a look into the linguistics of Daniel's Aramaic where we see the grammar becoming more organized and understandable. There are 897 clauses in the Aramaic portion of Daniel which contains about 857 verbs. Conjugation is established by suffixes and prefixes. These are added on generally to verbs and also noun unlike that of English. So for the suffix conjugation of the Aramaic of Daniel is represented by Present, Past, and Future Resultative and also the Simple Past and Stative. The Modality of the suffixes are conditional, epistemic and evidential. The

following passage include both suffix conjugated verbs and participles; the verbs that don't necessary express the simple.

Dan. 3:1-3

‏2 נבוכדנצר מלכא עבד צלם די-דהב . . . אקימה בבקעת דורא במדינת בבל
‏3 . . . ונבוכדנצר מלכא שלח למכנש . . . וכל שלטני מדינתא למתא לחנכת צלמא
‏באדין מתכנשין . . . וכל שלטני מדינתא לחנכת צלמא . . . וקאמין לקבל צלמא

King Nebuchadnezzar made [suffix conjugation] a statue of gold. . . . He set it up [suffix conjugation] in the plain of Dura' in the province of Babylon. And King Nebuchadnezzar sent [suffix conjugation] to gather . . . all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue . . . . Then, . . . all the rulers of the provinces were being gathered together [participle] for the dedication of the statue . . . , and were standing [participle] before the statue.

However, they can express the simple past but the verbs' basic function is to express completed actions. The perfective views a situation as bounded, a single, unified, discrete situation, but an action that occurs before or in the past. If the result of an event no longer continues into the present, the verb is clearly not resultative. Look at the example in Daniel 5:14 where the king is speaking of Daniel's present abilities. If the suffix expressed only the simple past, perhaps the king would have used a present tense form.

Dan. 5:14

‏ונהירו ושכלתנו וחכמה יתירה *השתכחת* בך

[Resultative:] . . . light and insight and abundant wisdom *are found* in you.
[Anterior:] . . . light and insight and abundant wisdom *have been found* in you.
[Past:] . . . light and insight and abundant wisdom *were found* in you.

There are 36 instances of suffix conjugation forms that are resultative in the Aramaic of Daniel. In the following, 'To you it is said, king

Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom has departed from you.' This is not simple past since the event hasn't occurred yet. Sometimes suffix conjugation verbs can be seen as present. A present resultative function can include acts of speech. In English, performatives are generally expressed with the present tense. However, later, Aramaic and Hebrew express performatives with active participles. In regards to the Past Resultative, this usually occurs in subordinate clauses in an object clause introduced by 'dy'. Look at the following.

Dan. 6:11

ודניאל כדי ידע דיׄדשׄים כתבא על לביתה

Daniel, when *he knew* [or, after he came to know] that the document had been published [or, *was published*], went in to his house.

A suffix conjugation could express a future resultative. Look at the following in Daniel 7:27: 'And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole sky will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.' The vast majority of instances of suffix conjugated verbs are best seen as simple past tense: 'Then the iron, the clay, the copper, the silver, and the gold were shattered as one, and became as chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind took them away. And no place was found for them. And the stone that had struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. But there are two major indicators to see whether a past time form is perfective or simple past. A past imperfective must exist before a perfective can develop. But a stative verb denotes a past state whereas a perfective stative normally designates a present state. In the Aramaic of Daniel, suffix conjugated stative verbs generally denote a past time state. Look at the following: Daniel 2:12 – 'Therefore, the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men Babylon.' Other instances are best understood as a simple past time. This is shown in Daniel 3:28, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him.'

Like English, modality is difficult to define. There are thirteen modals in English and they are generally classed as helping verbs indicating

permission or ability. The modality in Aramaic is much less straight forward. First, let's look at the different types of modality: conditional, epistemic and evidential. In Daniel 6:6 – 'Then these men said, we will not find any pretext against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his god.' This is a future function in a conditional clause describing a modal past. Thus the use of the past tense form here expresses some modality in a situation of a hypothetical condition. Whereas in Daniel 2:23, we have an epistemic example, 'You have given me wisdom and strength.' For evidential look at Dan 7:8, 'Look, another little horn came up.'

In English there are two types of participles. The Active Participle in the Aramaic of Daniel ranges from a progressive to simple past. It primarily expresses a state or simple past. For linear verbs, it denotes the present. There are 219 examples showing the use of active participles in the Aramaic of Daniel. Participles are classed as verbal nouns in Aramaic in Daniel in regards to nominal functions. These may act as a subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, and predicates of verb less sentences. They also could be used in verbs of speaking in direct speech. In Daniel 2:5, 'The king answered and said to the Chaldeans.' In regards to what is called the imperfective by the author, it relates to progressives as seen in Daniel 5:5: 'At that moment, the fingers of a human hand came out. And they were writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the royal palace, and the king was watching the back of the hand that was writing.' And in some cases, active participles are habitual referring to repeated actions such as in Dan 6:11; 'And three times a day he kept on kneeling on his knees, and praying, and giving thanks before his God.' There is also a Past Inceptive where it depicts a beginning of an action. In Daniel 5:1-2 we have, 'Belshazzar the king made a great feast for his thousand nobles and before the thousand he began to drink wine. Belshazzar commanded when drunk to bring the vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had brought out from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king, his nobles, his concubines and maid servants might drink with them.' The Passive participle in the Aramaic of Daniel is basically a verbal adjective that is developing into a resultative participle. The Imperfective of the Active Participle include that of past habitual as mentioned above and past inceptive. There is also a general, actual, performative and historical present. And there are also non active participles which can be classed under passive and T-Stem. The passive can function as a

predicate adjective, attributive, substantival and complement. The T-Stem participles are classed as reflexive, imperfective and predicate adjective.

The Prefix Conjugation relates to verbs of movement, markers of obligation, desire and ability and temporal adverbs. Non-modal functions include simple future, general present and past imperfective. The modality of prefix conjugation include agent, speaker, epistemic, and subordinate modalities. Agent-oriented modality shows both internal and external conditions on an agent in regards to the completion of the action. This includes obligation, necessity, ability, desire and possibility. Speaker-oriented modalities allow the speaker to set conditions on the listeners, thus requiring an obligation. Epistemic modality relates to assertions. It shows how much the speaker is committed to the outcome of the proposition. It includes possibility, probability and inferred certainty. Subordinate modality includes complement, concessive and purpose clauses. Daniel 4:14, 'so that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the kingdom of man, and to whoever he wishes he gives it, and lowest of men he sets up over it. (or, giving it to whoever he wishes, and setting up over it the lowest of men…). This doesn't seem to show what God will do but what he does generally. The following verse is either future or general present; Daniel 7:14, 'His dominion is an eternal dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be destroyed.' In Daniel 7:10, we have two participles followed by two prefix conjugation verbs followed by two suffix conjugation verbs. The Prefix conjugation verbs are past progressive.

Daniel 4:30-31, 'At that moment, the matter was fulfilled upon

Dan. 7:10

נהר די־נור נגד ונפק מן־קדמוהי אלף אלפים *ישמשונה* ורבו רבון קדמוהי *יקומון* דינא
יתב וספרין פתיחו

A stream of fire was flowing and coming out from before him. A thousand thousands were ministering to him, and a myriad myriads were standing before him. The court sat, and the books were opened.

Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from mankind. He used to eat grass like oxen, and his body used to be drenched with the dew of heaven, until his hair had grown like eagles (i.e., eagles' feathers), and his nails like birds (i.e., birds' claws). And at the end of the day, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted my eyes to heaven.

Here a prefix conjugation covers seven years starting 'at that moment' to 'at the end of the days'. According to the author, a past time habitual function works best here. And there is a descriptive nature to the conjugative clause.

The Imperative of the Aramaic of Daniel can be divided up into command, permission, request and optative. There are twenty six instances of imperatives in the Aramaic of Daniel. Command is used when a superior addresses a subordinate such as in Daniel 2:6, 'Therefore, tell me the dream and its interpretation.' In regards to permission, we this used in Daniel 3:26, 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High god, come out and come here!' In Daniel 2:4 we have an example of a request, 'O king, may you live forever, tell your servants the dream and we will make known the interpretation.' The optative imperative is used to express a wish such in the above example, 'O King, may you live forever.'

The infinitives of Aramaic of Daniel are verbal nouns. They have both nominal functions and verbal functions. They are neutral in terms of voice when functioning nominally. In Daniel 2:12, we see in regards to the 'destruction of all the wise men of Babylon.' This has to do with a noun phrase being an object or a subject. Most verbal functions happen in a subordinate clause and in many instances, it functions as a complement. Such as 'to verbs' of speaking, commanding, intending, seeking, desiring or being able to. Read Daniel 2:12: 'Therefore, the king was angry and very furious, and he commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.' There are times when the infinitive doesn't function as a complement but simply expresses a purpose. Look at Daniel 2:16-18, 'and Daniel came in and requested from the king that he might give him time, so that he might make known the interpretation to the king. Then Daniel went to his house and made known

the matter to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, so that they might seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery.

The next book relating to the era of the Persians is Ezra. The NIV Archaeological Study Bible tells us that Ezra appears in the Old Testament Bible partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. Along with Ezra, the books of Esther, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi took place against the background of the Persian Empire. Ezra, the priest who returned to Jerusalem with a group of Babylonian exiles in 458 B.C. wrote this book around 440 B.C. He was the son of Jozadak, a priest and prominent postexilic leader. Ezra is thought to have written the book of Nehemiah also and at one time it was treated as one book. It was in 539 B.C. Cyrus, King of Persia, decreed that Jewish exiles could return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel's leadership. The Persians gave huge amounts of gold, silver, supplies, livestock and offerings to God's temple. Cyrus also returned 5,400 articles of gold and silver which

The auxiliary and verb הוה can function either as the verb "to be" or as an auxiliary. The Copula אִיתַי is used to ascertain and confirm a statement. The auxiliaries יכל and כהל express the modality of ability. For example: Dan. 7:21

לְהוֹן וְיָכְלָה עִם־קַדִּישִׁין קְרֵב עָבְדָה דְכֵן וְקָרְנָא

This horn was making war with the holy ones, and *was overcoming* them.

The auxiliary עתיד comes from the root verb meaning 'to be prepared'. Look at Daniel 3:15 below.

שַׂבְּכָא קִיתָרֹס מַשְׁרוֹקִיתָא קַרְנָא קָל דִּי־תִשְׁמְעוּן בְּעִדָּנָא דִּי עֲתִידִין אִיתֵיכוֹן הֵן כְּעַן

דִּי־עַבְדַת לְצַלְמָא וְתִסְגְּדוּן תִּפְּלוּן זְמָרָא זְנֵי וְכֹל וְסוּמְפֹּנְיָה פְּסַנְתֵּרִין

Now, if you are *ready* . . . to fall down and worship the statue that I made,

King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple. Ezra returned to Jerusalem with the second group around 458 B.C. The first group returned in 538 B.C. Two major themes of Ezra focussed on God's sovereignty and Restoration.

Aramaic was the diplomatic language of the day as found in a letter of complaint to Artaxerxes I about rebuilding the city walls and his reply. A letter to Darius I and his reply in Ezra 4:8. The official authorization of

Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 was also in Aramaic as well as names mentioned: returned exiles, those who married pagan wives, the builders of the wall and the section where they worked (Neh 3). The leaders who set their seal to the covenant in Neh 10:1-27. Lists of priests and Levites down to Jaddua in Neh 12:1-26. Cyrus the Great was a famous conqueror and statesman who founded the Persian Empire. Isaiah's predictions, as well as those of Jeremiah (Jer 25:12; 29:10), were fulfilled in 539 B.C. when Cyrus captured Babylon. According to the Babylonian Chronicle, Cyrus entered Babylon after his army had taken it. With the addition of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, he now controlled the entirety of Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Levant (Syria – Palestine). The Book of Ezra was in a time when the languages of the Sumerian, Akkadian, Ugaritic and Hebrew were known but Aramaic had taken over the Old Testament period. Aramaic used a 22 letter alphabet borrowed from the Phoenician language becoming the international language of communication for the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians during the first thousand years before Christ. During the inter-testament period, Aramaic gradually replaced Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews.

Ezra 4 tells us about a libellous letter to King Artaxerxes reminding the king of the previous rebellions of Jerusalem and suggesting that if the city were rebuilt it would exist as a seedbed of resistance to Persian rule. The Exiles had returned home and after 16 years, the work had resumed on the Temple. Ezra explains how Tattenai, governor of the Persian province of Trans-Euphrates tried to stop the work. A letter was sent to Darius I by Tattenai, but Darius ordered him to fully support the reconstruction and even to provide government funding. Cyrus's original decree was written in Aramaic, what became the official language of the Persian Empire.

Considering the Aramaic of Ezra, we see that the consonantal alphabet of Hebrew and Aramaic were most likely from the Phoenician letters. The Hebrew Bible was originally written with only those consonants. It was the Masoretic who added vowels for both languages which only had slight differences as shown below.

Aramaic		Hebrew
אֱנָשׁ	(man)	אֱנוֹשׁ
דָּר	(generation)	דּוֹר
טָב	(good)	טוֹב
לָא	(not)	לֹא
עָלַם	(eternity)	עוֹלָם
קָל	(sound)	קוֹל

Nouns behave the same way in both languages but along with the absolute and construct Aramaic has a 3rd state called 'determined'. It's like the definite article in Hebrew.

FROM THE BIBLE (Ezra 5:1–5)

וְהִתְנַבִּי חַגַּי וּזְכַרְיָה בַר עִדּוֹא נְבִיאַיָּא עַל יְהוּדָיֵא דִּי בִיהוּד וּבִירוּשְׁלֶם בְּשֻׁם אֱלָהּ

יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲלֵיהוֹן. בֵּאדַיִן קָמוּ זְרֻבָּבֶל בַּר שְׁאַלְתִּיאֵל וְיֵשׁוּעַ בַּר יוֹצָדָק לְמִבְנֵא בֵּית

אֱלָהָא דִּי בִירוּשְׁלֶם. אֲתָא עֲלֵיהוֹן תַּתְּנַי פַּחַת עֲבַר נַהֲרָה וּשְׁתַר־בּוֹזְנַי וּכְנָוָתְהוֹן וְכֵן אָמְרִין

לְהֹם: מַן שָׂם לְכֹם טְעֵם בַּיְתָא דְנָה לְמִבְנֵא? מַן שְׁמָהָת גֻּבְרַיָּא דִּי דְנָא בִנְיָן?

וְעֵין אֱלָהֲהֹם הֲוָת עַל יְהוּדָיֵא וְלָא בַטִּלוּ הִמּוֹ.

Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and in Jerusalem with the name of the God of Israel over them. Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, arose to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem. Tattenai, the governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shetar-Bozenai came to them and said (lit. saying) thus to them: "Who issued a decree to build this house? What (lit. who) are the names of the men who are building this?" But their God's eye was over the Jews, and they didn't stop them.

Verbal systems are a prominent feature of most languages and provide a way to classify them. Semitic verbs are based on three letter roots and can be conjugated seven ways. As in Hebrew each Aramaic conjugation comprises two major tense which uses a series of suffixes. For example, the perfect tenses which describes a completed action, uses pronominal suffixes attached at the end of the verbal root.

FROM THE BIBLE (Daniel 2:37–49)

אַנְתְּ מַלְכָּא מֶלֶךְ מַלְכַיָּא דִּי אֱלָהּ שְׁמַיָּא מַלְכוּתָא חִסְנָא וְתׇקְפָּא וִיקָרָא יְהַב לָךְ וּבְכָל דִּי דָארִין בְּנֵי אֲנָשָׁא

חֵיוַת בָּרָא וְעוֹף שְׁמַיָּא יְהַב בִּידָךְ וְהַשְׁלְטָךְ בְּכָלְּהוֹן. אַנְתְּ הוּא רֵאשָׁה דִּי דַהֲבָא.

וּבָתְרָךְ תְּקוּם מַלְכוּ אׇחֳרִי אֲרַעא מִנָּךְ וּמַלְכוּ תְלִיתָיָא אׇחֳרִי דִּי נְחָשָׁא דִּי תִשְׁלַט בְּכָל

אַרְעָא. וּמַלְכוּ רְבִיעָיָה תֶּהֱוֵא תַקִּיפָה כְּפַרְזְלָא מְהַדֵּק כֹּלָּא. וְדִי חֲזַיְתָה רַגְלַיָּא

וְאֶצְבְּעָתָא מִנְּהֵן חֲסַף וּמִנְּהֵן פַּרְזֶל מַלְכוּ פְלִיגָה תֶּהֱוֵה וּמִן נִצְבְּתָא דִי פַרְזְלָא לֶהֱוֵא בַהּ מִנְּהֵן פַּרְזֶל

וּמִנְּהֵן חֲסַף מִן מַלְכוּתָא תֶּהֱוֵא תַקִּיפָה וּמִנַּהּ תֶּהֱוֵה תְבִירָה. וּבְיוֹמֵיהוֹן דִּי מַלְכַיָּא אִנּוּן

יְקִים אֱלָהּ שְׁמַיָּא מַלְכוּ דִּי לְעָלְמִין לָא תִתְחַבַּל וּמַלְכוּתָה לְעַם אׇחֳרָן לָא תִשְׁתְּבִק

תַּדִּק וְתָסֵיף כָּל אִלֵּין מַלְכְוָתָא וְהִיא תְּקוּם לְעָלְמַיָּא. כָּל קֳבֵל דִּי חֲזַיְתָ דִּי מִטּוּרָא אִתְגְּזֶרֶת אֶבֶן דִּי לָא בִידַיִן

וְהַדֶּקֶת פַּרְזְלָא נְחָשָׁא חַסְפָּא כַּסְפָּא וְדַהֲבָא. אֱלָהּ רַב הוֹדַע לְמַלְכָּא מָה דִּי לֶהֱוֵא

אַחֲרֵי דְנָה. וְיַצִּיב חֶלְמָא וּמְהֵימַן פִּשְׁרֵהּ. בֵּאדַיִן מַלְכָּא נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר נְפַל עַל אַנְפּוֹהִי וּלְדָנִיֵּאל סְגִד. עֲנֵה מַלְכָּא

לְדָנִיֵּאל וְאָמַר. מִן קְשֹׁט דִּי אֱלָהֲכוֹן הוּא אֱלָהּ אֱלָהִין וּמָרֵא מַלְכִין וְגָלֵה רָזִין דִּי יְכֵלְתָּ לְמִגְלֵא רָזָה דְנָה.

אֱדַיִן מַלְכָּא לְדָנִיֵּאל רַבִּי וּמַתְּנָן רַבְרְבָן שַׂגִּיאָן יְהַב לֵהּ וְהַשְׁלְטֵהּ עַל כָּל מְדִינַת בָּבֶל וְעַל כָּל חַכִּימֵי בָבֶל.

"You are the king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven gave the kingdom, and into your hand He has given human beings, animals of the field, and birds of the sky—wherever they dwell—and made you rule over all of them; you are the head of gold. And after you there will arise another kingdom, lower (lit. more earthly) than you, and afterwards a third kingdom of copper which will rule the whole earth. And a fourth kingdom will be as

strong as iron, smashing everything. And the feet and toes which you saw, partly of clay and partly of iron, will be a divided kingdom, and the toes of the feet will be partly iron and partly clay—part of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be breakable. And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that will not ever be destroyed; and the kingdom will not be abandoned to another people, but it will stand forever, inasmuch as you saw that a stone was broken off from the mountain not by hands, and it smashed the iron, the copper, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God has informed the king what will be after this." Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and bowed down to Daniel. The king answered Daniel and said, "Your God is the God of gods and reveller of secrets, since you were able to reveal this secret." Then the king made him rule over the entire province of Babylon and over all the wise men of Babylon.

In 464 to 424 B.C. Artaxerxes I ruled Persia. Xerxes I, his father, was assassinated by Artabanus, a courtier. Egypt helped by the Athens rebelled during his reign. Artaxerxes I allowed Ezra to return to Judah as the spiritual leader of the Jewish people. Meanwhile, Nehemiah served as cupbearer in Susa, the administrative capital of the empire was commissioned as governor of Judah for twelve years.

As mentioned in the Book of Ezra, Ezra and Nehemiah were considered one book. Like Ezra, Nehemiah tells the story of the Jews' exile and their return to Jerusalem. Its story is communicated through the life of Nehemiah. In returning, Nehemiah was heartbroken in seeing neglect of the temple, Levites not receiving food and supplies, working on the Sabbath and Jews marrying pagan women. Major themes surrounded renewal, prayer and opposition. Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, some 13 years later than Ezra. Nehemiah met resistance from rulers of areas around Jerusalem in building the wall. They were Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem whose names were discovered from Elephantine letters. It seems that Sanballat was governor of Samaria, while Geshem seemed to have been governor of Dedan. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem; some went but many stayed. Those that stayed became known as the dispersion. Most of the Jews' history (with the exception of Esther) only dealt with the difficulties they faced in returned to Jerusalem. Upon their return, the Jews were helped by two prophets: Haggai and Zechariah. Zerubbabel was also appointed governor and later as we have also seen, Nehemiah was appointed

governor of the whole of Judah. Nehemiah closes his writing having explained the religious reforms he had instituted in Jerusalem, he asked the Lord to remember him favourably for those efforts. The Bible indicates that Nehemiah acted out of the glory and zeal for God.

The Book of Esther shows that her reign in Persia is estimated to be around 479 B.C. This was before Nehemiah's third return to Jerusalem in 445 B.C. The book is thought to have been written between 460 and 350 B.C. The theme of the book focusses on God's sovereignty, service, obedience and pride. The book appears within the Bible in Hebrew. The book reads like a novel with and exciting plot without the mention of God, prayer, worship or sacrifice. It's a book of God's power moving within individuals who served the God of Israel and her people. The setting of this story is in Susa, far across the mountains on a plain in what is today, Iran. The story fits into the interval of nearly sixty years that separates Ezra 7:1 from 6:22.

In Esther we see something of the palace life of the Persian Empire. We see the counsellors and high officials as advisors to the King. This influence could have been for good or evil. They were expected to be 'wise' which combined things like education, good judgement, the ability to read omens and practice divination as was the case in the examples of Joseph's and Daniel's ability to interpret dreams or solve riddles. This was what happened with Queen Vashti being removed from her position as Queen. There were also the Royal Wives and Concubines who were given quarters of their own. In ancient times, the harem referred to the palace women or to the area where they lived. Persian royal women attended banquets and accompanied the king on hunts and even on military campaigns. Concubine included foreigners, daughters of other kings and had their own attendants. In addition, palace life pointed out that no one could approach the king without having been summoned nor could anyone meet the royal women alone, however, royal women could use their influence to intercede with the king. In this, Esther was able to intercede on behalf of her people when Haman tried to destroy them.

Susa was the winter palace of the Persian rulers. Seiglie (2002) tells us that the gatehouse mentioned in Esther was found to be approximately 80 metres east of the palace. It was some 40 metres across and had a central room of about 21 metres square. The city was about 625 acres in size. The palace was in two divisions, a three acre audience hall and a ten acre residential area with four successive inner courts. Alexander the great took

Susa without a fight and it continued to flourish in trade and textile production. It remained the centre of a large Jewish population until around 1300 A.D. Some people regard Esther as non-history because of the lack of clarity in terms of the length of the feast Esther describes, the number of Persian provinces listed, a decree being irrevocable, the plans of the massacre of Jews, the idea of Haman being a descendant of Agag the Amalekite, the enemy of Israel who cost Saul his crown. But the name Mordecai and that of Haman's son Parshanatha are shown in other places during the Persian period. Xerxes is the only indisputable historical figure in the book. But the contradictions can be explained if one wishes to read and understand them. Xerxes I is best known for his failed invasion of Greece. Esther was chosen as the new Queen in Xerxes' seventh year. It was 14 years later that Xerxes was assassinated in a palace intrigue. King Xeroxes first presented his signet ring to Haman, authorizing him to dispose of the Jews but later, Xerxes reclaimed the ring and gave it to Mordecai, who issued an edict permitting the Jews to defend themselves again any attacker. We see that Esther is the only book of the Old Testament not represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The last three books are Haggi, Zechariah and Malachi. Haggai's words were directed to the postexilic community 18 years after the initial return from exile. The Temple had still not been repaired and the leadership was deeply discouraged, not only by local opposition but also by its own people. The year was around 520-480 B.C. The message was an exhortation to persevere in the effort to re-establish the community and the temple. Themes included the idea of Priorities and Obedience. During this period, Judah was a large administrative district or satrapy of Persian Empire called Abar Naharah in Ezra 4:10.   The Book of Zechariah was written during the same time as Haggi. He began his ministry just two months after the time of Haggai. There seems to be two writing styles in the book or a divided time between the writing of chapters 1 to 8 and chapters 9 to 14. It was a message of hope and encouragement for the postexilic Jews. It seems that both books were written from Judah although both were in the exile. Themes include Israel's near future and distant future. Sometimes the messenger from God was an angel or was God. Human messengers in the Near East acted as heralds, envoys and ambassadors, bearing the authority of the sender. Angels functioned in the Bible as God's representatives. Biblical cherubim and seraphim are analogous to the supernatural gatekeepers of the ancient Near

East. Cherubim secured the way into Eden after the expulsion of the man and woman. Malachi ministered somewhere around 440 to 430 B.C. The book was written to exhort the postexilic Jews to worship God rightly and to live faithfully as they awaited the fulfilment of his promises. The Themes surrounded Israel's unfaithfulness and Judgment of God.

V. The Persians

Argubright (1997) tells us about the alliance with the Chaldeans; that the Medes captured Nineveh and brought the Assyrian Empire to an end. The Persians became the dominant partner in that alliance with Cyrus as leader. After Cyrus, Cambyses who in turn was succeeded by Darius I. Judea became part of the satrapy called 'Beyond the River'. Religion of the Empire was looked upon as a political tool for gaining support from subject peoples. Darius died in 486 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Xerxes. Esther became Xerxes' queen. In turn, Xerxes was succeeded by his son, Artaxerxes I. It was during Artaxerxes' reign that Ezra and Nehemiah did their work in Jerusalem. Afterwards, Darius II ruled who was followed by Artaxerxes II. A civil war broke out under Artaxerses II with Cyrus the Younger. This Cyrus had hired 10,000 Greek mercenaries who had to fight their way back home through Persian territory. Artaxerxes II was succeeded by Artaxerxes III who portrayed himself as the most ruthless of all the leaders.

The Kings of Persia:

Throne Name	Term of Office	Family
Cyrus the Great	549 – 529 B.C.	Son of Cambyses I, King of Anhan
Cambyses	529 – 522 B.C.	Son of Cyrus the Great
Bardiva	522	Son of Cyrus the Great?
Darius I	522 – 486 B.C.	Son of Hystaspe
Xerxes I	485 – 465 B.C.	Son of Darius I
Artaxerxes I	465 – 424 B.C.	Son of Xerxes II
Xerxes II	424 B.C	Son of Artaxexes I
Sogdianus	424 – 423 B.C.	Son of Artaxeses I

Darius II	423 – 404 B.C.	Son Artaxerxes I
Artaxerxes II	404 – 358 B.C.	Son of Darius II
Artaxerxes III	358 – 338 B.C.	Son of Artaxerxes II
Artaxerxes IV	338 – 336 B.C.	Son of Artaxerxes III
Darius III	336 – 330 B.C.	Son of Artaxerxes IV
Artaxerxes V	330 – 329 B.C.	Descendant of Artaxerxes II

(The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible)

DeMieroop (2007) says that the Persian Empire was at the same time highly centralized and respectful of the multiplicity of the people it governed. It was the first empire that acknowledged the fact that its inhabitants had a variety of cultures, spoke different languages, and were politically organized in various ways. In contrast, the Assyrians had incorporated numerous peoples and cultures, but their ideology had erased the differences and made them all Assyrians once they were conquered. The most telling demonstration of Persia's novel approach comes from the city of Persepolis. In the centre of Fars was constructed a massive stone platform with palaces and audience halls on the top. The complex had a primarily ceremonial function connected to the collection of tribute from the empire's provinces. On the sides of the platform was carved a long procession of people bringing specialties of their regions: Bactrians bringing vessels, hides, and a camel, Arabs robes and a dromedary, Nubians elephant tusks and a giraffe, and so on. The groups were clearly differentiated by their clothing, hairstyles, and weapons, showing their varied origins. On several other reliefs the throne of the king is carried by people identified by trilingual inscriptions as Persian, Mede, Babylonian, Assyrian, and so on. Some of these lists include up to twenty-nine groups, representing the multitude of the empire's people and recognizing that they differed from one another. A variety of languages and scripts was equally embraced. The Persians themselves spoke an Indo-European language and had no written tradition of their own until they created the empire. When they conquered countries with ancient bureaucratic traditions, they adopted them for local use. In Persia itself they introduced the Elamite language and cuneiform script for administrative records, as is documented by the archives found at Persepolis, of which some

25,000 tablets were excavated. In Mesopotamia they continued the use of Babylonian recordkeeping, and in Egypt they adopted local scripts (hieroglyphic and demotic) and papyrus scrolls. As the administrative language for the whole empire they chose Aramaic, written on parchment or papyrus in an alphabetic script. This shows that centralizing forces were at work, but not to the extent that they erased local variation. At the same time, several languages and scripts were adopted for the monumental inscriptions, which were virtually always multilingual. In addition to the ancient Elamite and Akkadian languages and cuneiform scripts, an alphabetic cuneiform to write the Old Persian language was developed under Darius. These three languages and scripts became used for almost all royal inscriptions, while Egyptian hieroglyphic writing was sometimes added. The text was also occasionally translated into Aramaic and written on scrolls distributed throughout the empire.

Moreover, the Persians were aware of and respected the different political traditions of the people they had conquered, and adapted them to facilitate their overall control. When Cyrus captured Babylon, he became a traditional Babylonian king, took part in the religious rituals, and left building inscriptions. When Cambyses conquered Egypt, he appointed a local official to teach him how to behave like an Egyptian king, and adopted an Egyptian throne-name, Mesutire (offspring of the god Re). The early Persian rulers protected local cults and even presented themselves as restoring traditions that had been disrupted. Cyrus describes the conquest of Babylon as liberation from Nabonidus at the request of the god Marduk:

The Persian Time Line runs from 628 B.C. to 330 B.C. There was the birth of Zoroasterin 628 B.C. Cyrus the Great who defeated the Lydian in 549 B.C. reined from 559 to 529. His Son took over in 529 and conquered Egypt. In 521, Darius I took over and reined until 486 B.C. The Persians conquered Thrace and Macedon in 512 B.C. In 490 B.C. the Persians were defeated by the Greeks in the battle of Marathon. Xerxes I, son of Darius I began his reign in 486 B.C. and lasted until 465 B.C. In 480 B.C. the Persians were defeated by the Greeks at Salamis. In 330 B.C. the Persian Empire came to an end and Persepolis was burned (Reece, 2005).

Before the defeat of Babylonia the Persians did not have major cities or a tradition of monumental architecture. One of the necessities of the empire was a capital city, and the Persians constructed several of them in succession. Cyrus built the earliest capital at Pasargadae. It was a large walled

area in which were placed at considerable distance from one another a number of palaces and audience halls, with extensive gardens in between them irrigated with special channels. Gardens were especially popular among the Persians and were laid out throughout the empire. At Pasargadae there was also a fortified citadel and a cultic area including a fire altar, while Cyrus' tomb was built nearby in a separate building.

Darius moved the capital to Persepolis some 40 kilometres to the south. Construction of the city started in 518 and continued under his two immediate successors. At its centre was an enormous platform, 450 by 300 meters, on which were placed several palaces, audience halls, and a treasury. All buildings were of stone, and prominent in them were tall columns with capitals carved in the shape of griffins and bulls carrying the wooden roof-beams. The columns of the largest building, the apadana or reception hall, were almost 20 meters high. Another building contained a hall of one hundred columns. On the sides of the platform was carved a large procession of royal servants, soldiers, and representatives from all satrapies bearing gifts for the king, who was shown seated on his throne. Oftentimes the winged sun disk, probably depicting Ahuramazda, was carved above the king. Persepolis was extended far beyond the monumental stone buildings that have been excavated. It was one of the main administrative centres of the empire and contained its greatest treasury. It lay at the heart of a fully developed agricultural area with numerous settlements. The tablets found at Persepolis derive from two locations. In the fortifications were found thousands of records of food disbursements to people of widely differing social status, from royal family members to labourers. In the treasury a smaller group records payments to workers. We do not have the imperial archives, however. The city was burned down by Alexander, either deliberately or in an accident when he was drunk. Near the city, at Naqsh-i-Rustem, the tomb chambers of Darius and three of his successors were cut into the cliff.

Together with Persepolis, Darius also developed Susa as a capital, because it had direct access to the eastern parts of the empire. An immense palace was also built there, decorated with glazed brick representations of Persian soldiers and servants (figure 15.3). Among the finds was a monumental statue of King Darius, represented according to Egyptian sculptural traditions but in Persian garb. Carved on the statue were trilingual inscriptions (Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian) invoking Ahuramazda, and

hieroglyphic inscriptions rendering traditional Egyptian texts. All of these constructions reveal a mixture of architectural and artistic influences, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, Egyptian, and local. The Persians used materials from different parts of the empire and employed specialist workmen from the various regions, not to work in their local styles but to contribute to an imperial form of expression that showed Persia as a multicultural unit (DeMierop, 2007).

The Persian Empire consisted of Ionians and Lydian's from Africa, the Armenians from the North and Bactrians and India from the East. The Western part included the Arameans and other Semitic groups. There first great leader was Cyrus II also known as Cyrus the Great who came to power in 549 B.C. and took over the Neo-Babylonian Empire, The Persians respected the customs of their new subjects and welcomed diversity within the Empire. Cambyses II, Cyrus' son, added Egypt to their empire. Darius I was the next ruler. He developed a better system of government by dividing the empire up into twenty different satrapies. Governors were appointed to rule each satrap. To prevent abuse of power by the satraps, Darius assigned inspectors who oversaw each satrap. They were the eyes and ears of the empire. Old Persian became the language of the Empire with a new style of cuneiform. But at the same time they also switched to the Phoenician alphabet and the use of the Aramaic language was the primary language, especially in the Western parts of the Empire. Darius had an image of himself craved into a Clift in Brehistan. The cuneiform inscription had more than 1300 lines of text which became a cipher to understanding cuneiform. In 509 B.C. Persepolis, a new capital was built. Darius also rebuilt the old Elamite capital of Susa. A new royal road was also built from Persepolis connecting 111 stations and was 1,600 miles long. He even built a canal from the Nile River to the Gulf of Suez.

Zoroastrianism was the religion of the new empire. Their prophet, Zoroaster, claimed he had a divine revelation that revealed that there was a god of justice, kindness, and generosity, not vengeance. Two gods equal in power created a struggle of good and evil. Ahura Mazda was the god of goodness guided by a moral code. The god of evil was Ahriman, a destructive spirit associated with wickedness and death. A battle was eventually coming that would lead to the destruction of evil. This was a belief in one god and upon death, a soul would have everlasting life or go to hell.

Borwman (1970) points out that Aramaic text have been found in Egypt, Persia and throughout the Middle East. Even in the library of Persepolis, Aramaic is seen to be the major writing system used along with cruciform Elamite tablets. In the Persian capital, Persepolis, correspondence was first written in Aramaic and an additional copy was made in Cuneiform. In regards to the Aramaic Ritual Texts, a close examination of Aramaic grammar revealed the following points. The dates of these objects refer not only to the time of Darius I and Xerxes but other like Arte-Xerxes I and Darius II. It was by the late Assyrian timeframe, Aramaic was already an important language, especially in the western areas as well as having a strong hold in Assyria proper and Babylonia. People found it to be adaptable and useful. The complicated cuneiform system developed by the Akkadians, Elamites and Old Persian was too archaic. But Aramaic used a simple alphabet which could be scratched, cut and easily written with ink on papyrus and leather immediately became a diplomatic and commercial which lasted over three thousand years

First, one such verb at first was translated 'he made' or 'he did.' But because the subjects of the sentence referenced military officers; a better translation eventuated as, 'he had someone make.' Interestingly, in a few cases the verbs were shown as plural but the subject was singular. This indicates a relationship between Aramaic and Old Persian where the copula appears virtually as an auxiliary verb. Additional studies also indicated that the perfect tense was virtually lacking in Old Persian.

Bowman (1970) explains the nature of the certain ritual objects at Persepolis. These were indicated by their names they bear in Aramaic. Frequently in Aramaic, the objects are described as being 'of gll' or of a particular stone. This word seems to be from Akkadian and the equivalent of 'benglal' of Biblical Aramaic in Ezra 5:8, 6:4. Other objects were classified as plates or bowel called 'shr'. The description of the objects has modifying words like, 'aiym' which seems to be an Aramaic loggram. Another word 'rayan' appears in Biblical Aramaic and later in Jewish Aramaic as well as Hebrew. Its Semitic root signifies 'to desire'. From Biblical contexts it involves 'longing' in Ecclesiastes and 'desire' in Daniel as well as 'ambition' and 'greed' in later Aramaic.

There is also evidence of the use of the simple Aramaic infinitive along with the older forms which was used during the Assyrian Era. There is only a little evidence of the finite verb. The Aramaic text of the Behistun

Inscription reflects adverbial meanings from the noun 'Iwh' or 'his name' which actually reflects 'namely'. Adjectives are frequently encountered, such as mortars, pestles and plates to indicate 'large.' Many Aramaic noun types are found as with prepositions such as, 'b' being 'in' and 'l' for 'to' and 'gdm' or 'in front of'. The word order is subject verb which is an indicator of the influence of Old Persian.

There are a few loanwords indicated on the objects from Akkadian while others are from biblical Aramaic and Papyri. Iranian words, letters, sounds and phonemes are seen along with Aramaic transcriptions of Persian names.

VI. Aramaic Literature

Vlach (1999) lists a number of books that would fall under Aramaic Literature. Many of these books were claimed to have been written by biblical authors but were considered lacking authenticity. Many of them were written between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. Many of these have recently appeared recovered from the caves at Qumran. One of these books is the Book of Enoch which is cited in Jude 1:14-15. This is the longest of the surviving Jewish writing. It was written in Aramaic on revelations that were granted to Enoch. Bitzmyer (1979) states that the Qumran material shows us that literature had been written in the last century B.C. and first century A.D. The number of texts is quite large from Caves IV and XI where copies of the Tobit, the Targums of Job and Leviticus were found. There is very little influence of Greek in these texts unlike the Palestinian Targums which are restricted to the first and second century A.D. There is an influence of Aramaic on Hebrew as seen from the texts in Ezra and Daniel. (Just a side line here, the Nabataea dialect of Aramaic has been influenced by Arabic.) Interestingly the name for Aramaic in Dan 2:46 is 'Aramit'. This was used in the Old Testament and Elephantine papyrus texts.

Bitzmyer says that a number of Palestinian Aramaic texts also came from the 1st century B.C. from the Qumran caves. Bitzmyer has pinpointed just a few of the 'phrases' from the text of which some are augmentative. There is the absolute title of 'Lord' for God in the Qumran Targum of Job. This seemed to be attributed to Jesus as the enthroned Son of Man. Another text bears the title, pseudo Danielic text from Qumran Cave IV using the name; 'Son of God and Son of the Most High' which parallels with that of Luke 1:32 & 35. The language of this text comes from the latter part of the first century

B.C. and is apocalyptic in character. But the title within the text did not apply to anyone called Messiah or Anointed One. Another such phrase came to light, 'men of (his) good pleasure' relates to Luke 2:14. The Hebrew of Job 40:9 reads 'Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like this?' The Qumran Targum shows this verse almost literally in Aramaic. We also have in the Genesis Apocryphal the laying of hands upon the Pharaoh and praying for him that the evil spirit might be exercised from him and the plagues and afflictions ease. This is seen in Mark 5:23, 6:5, 7:32 and Luke 4:40-41, Acts 9:12, 17 & 18. Interestingly, two further points here is the belief in demons and also sickness and praying for a persecutor. In a fragment of 4Q Amran 2:3 of an Aramaic text, Melchizedek is portrayed to be the archangel Michael. It mentions that Melchizedek and Malki-resa are spiritual adversaries. This one parallels with the Jewish background material for Jude 1:9 with Michael arguing with the devil concerning Moses' body. There are others that relate to the birth of Noah. Lamech's doubts the conception of Noah and wonders whether his birth was caused by the watchers or the holy ones or by the Nephilim. His father goes to Enoch for answers but Enoch assures that Noah is the child of Lamech. This parallels with the birth of Jesus somewhat.

In Ezek 14:14 we have Noah, Daniel and Job mentioned. All three of these appear in Qumran texts. Noah appears in the paraphrase of the Biblical story in the Genesis Apocryphal of Qumran Cave I and also figured in the Book of the Patriarchs. There is also a paraphrase of Gen 6:9 which shows Noah saying, 'During all my days I practiced truth'. Daniel is esteemed and hailed as a 'prophet' in the Qumran War Scroll. A letter of the leaders of the Jewish community at Elephantine was addressed to the governor of Judah in 408 BC. It complains about the problem in the community regarding the destruction of their temple. They ask permission to rebuild the temple. This is but one of many official letters written in Aramaic on Papyrus.

In regards to the Books of Enoch which were written in Aramaic, Milik (1976) says that, there were eleven manuscripts that belong to the Books of Enoch. One such book was canonized in the 3rd Century A.D. by the Manicheans. Other books listed as The Book of Enoch were canonized by the Ethiopian Church. But the Qumran Enoch Corpus was composed essentially of five Aramaic literary works: The Astronomical Book, The Book of Watchers, The Book of Giants, The Book of Dreams and the Epistle of Enoch. The dates of these books seem to have been written around the 2nd and 1st century B.C.

First, the Astronomical Book seems to be the oldest. An indirect reference in Genesis 5:23 relate to the book regarding the length of a year. Three hundred and sixty five days was employed during Persians and Hellenistic times. The writer points out that the invention of the sciences used by the Phoenicians and Egyptian priest of Heliopolis in astrology goes back to Enoch. Enoch had a son 'Methuselah' who learned all these things through the angels of God. There is a calendar that covers part of the Aramaic document. In Jubilees 4:17, Enoch is said to be the first among children of men, born of the earth, who learned writing, science and wisdom. In Jubilees 4:21, Enoch is said to have spent 300 years walking with God and learning from the angels. The writing in this book is of an antediluvian wisdom. Details remind one of Sumerian and Babylonian content. Interestingly, The Books of Enoch describes the Earth as being an Orb and talks about the oceans that surround the Earth. The writer provides a list of the names of angels, presiding stars, seasons and days.

Second, the Book of Watchers is from the 1st century B.C. The book is also quoted by the Book of Jubilees 4:21-2. Enoch witnessed against the Watchers who were sinning with the daughters of men. The book is divided up into Angelology and cosmography. Enoch, after returning to earth witnessed against them all. The names of twenty of these Watches are derived from astronomical, meteorological and geographical terms. One such watcher is the Canaanite hero Dan'el. It is said that Enoch married Dan'el's daughter. Genesis 6:1-4 again, seems to refer to this book. If so these books are much older than first thought. In the story Enoch is four angelic missions which require him to undertake four different journeys. The first journey is commissioned by the great Watcher and Holy One who is the second in charge of the fallen Watchers. The Watchers attempt to win over the inhabitants of paradise to their own cause. Other journeys include an expedition to the West which ends up in the far north toward the Kingdom of God. Then in the eastern voyage of Enoch, he encounters a region filled with huge beasts and birds. Next, Enoch is required to go around the Earth to explore the reservoirs of the winds, the corner-stone of the Earth, the four cardinal points shown to be the pillars of heaven, plus the winds that drive the stars and the firmament of heaven.

Third, the Book of Dreams is concerned with the Flood of Noah. Enoch had these dreams while he was still unmarried. One of his dreams provides us with a picture of world history from the creation of man to the

eschatological advent of the Kingdom of God. Individuals and peoples are mentioned in the guise of animals whereas angels are men dressed in white. The writer uses the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Ezra as source information. En 90:16 talks about the political situation of 164 B.C. where all eagles, vultures, crows and hawks along with wild asses come together to break the ram's horn into pieces. This book was composed during the few weeks which followed the Battle of Eithsur and was well known by the author of Jubilees.

Fourth, in the Epistle of Enoch, the author shows as lack of sensitivity toward the Greek works such as Demetrius, Philos, Eupolermin, Artspan, Aristeas, etc. The Greek town where he lived could be a port on the Palestinian coast. Yet, despite his hostility, the cultural and intellectual influence of the Greek environment is seen. It shows in the author's use of eschatological themes. But this was little compared to his Aramaic sources. The book is written in the form of an Aramaic letter used by the Assyrians and Persians. The letter had been incorporated into the Book of Watchers. In addition, it also discusses the origin of evil. The Book of Noah is briefly mentioned along with the Books of Signs and of the Heavenly Bodies and of the Wars.

Fifth, the Book of Giants develops the story of the fallen angels a little more. There are references to the mysteries to great impiety on earth regarding the massacre of men committed by the giants. There will be a great judgement against them for this with no escape from the King of All Ages.

We have Torrey (1991, Pages 98-111) who said, "the use of Aramaic literature in Palestine in the last centuries B.C. and the first century A.D. has been greatly under estimated." Torrey continues to say that another Aramaic work is the Book of Jubilees which is styled as an enlarged Targum on Genesis and Exodus. Other books include the testament of Job, Apocalypse of Moses, and the Apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch which are closely related works. The Genesis Apocryphal, the Prayer of Nabonidus (an earlier story of chapter 4 of Daniel, The similarities include the fact that a Babylonian King was struck by illness for seven years, and was afterwards healed by God and encouraged by a Jew of the exile to write a declaration of praise to God. But there are differences in location, the King, the Illness and other details.) These books were meant to be read by the populace which illustrates the fact that Aramaic was at that time the most highly developed language of West Asia. Hebrew was the language of Israel's past history, the

language of the sacred wrings, not the language of the people. The Book of Judith was written in idiomatic Hebrew, and was translated into Greek. In addition it was circulated in one or more Aramaic versions. The Book of Tobit was originally composed in Aramaic in the 2nd century B.C. The 1st Maccabees was written the vernacular Aramaic. The Hebrew books were not for the ordinary common people and many were translated into Aramaic. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarch were written in both languages, Hebrew and Aramaic. In the Persian and Greek eras, popular Aramaic fiction was available thought Pagan in origin revealed the influence it had even on Jewish writers. In John 20:31 the Gospels were written to persuade the Jewish people that Jesus was the divine Messiah; why would they just write the Gospels in Greek. After examination of the Gospels, Aramaic had to be used for the Jews. . The Written Aramaic of Palestine in the first century A.D. was practically identical to the Biblical Aramaic. In addition, the Greek Gospels never get away from the Aramaic, even in a single sentence! For example, Greek idioms are not found in the Greek Gospels. Everything that is said in this 'Greek' can be said in similar words in idiomatic Aramaic. The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and John were composed and published in Aramaic. Luke's Gospel was published in Greek yet was made up of Semitic documents which was assembled and translated by Luke himself.

This represents a review of Aramaic Targumic and such studies of these books. The Geniza Targum fragments were written in an artificial Aramaic which was understood by both Babylonian and Palestinian Jews; however, it was fundamentally a Babylonian composition. One such argument says that the language of the Palestinian Pentateuch Targum was more representative of first century Palestinian Aramaic. Another such document, the Genesis Midrash was composed in a literary Aramaic, was Palestinian of the 1st century B.C. at the time of Christ. The discovery of the Targum of Job, twenty seven small fragments with twenty eight columns contained portions of the Job 27:14-36:33 and also 37:10 – 43:11. The translation of the book is literal, not free or paraphrastic and without haggadic expansions. The Genesis Apocryphal is also a kind of Midrash on Genesis 12 and 14. The date is absolutely certain but general consensus puts it before AD 70. The book uses an Aramaic conjunction found in Daniel alone, a classical literature of the Daniel-Ezra type (Black, 1991).

Missick (2006) says that in in Nehemiah 8:2 when Ezra read the Hebrew text, afterwards he orally translated it into Aramaic. This was called a

Targum. In regards to Targums, Bible translators often refer to them to clarify something that is obscure in the original Hebrew Texts. The Aramaic Targums are important because they originated from the time of Christ and in that they are paraphrases or interpretive translations rather than literal word-for-word translations. So they reflect understanding of the Bible current with Jesus' era. Aramaic Targums were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, i.e. the Targum of Leviticus and the Targum of the Book of Job. A fifth of all the scrolls are written in Aramaic. A partial copy of the Book of Enoch was also found to be written in Aramaic. This book tells the story of the corruption of the world before the flood. It also speaks of the Son of Man. The Aramaic Bible contains five more Psalms and these are included in the Aramaic Bible and also in the Book of Isaiah found at Qumran. The Old Testament of the Pesheeta is based on Hebrew scrolls for older than the traditional Masoretic Hebrew text.

VII. The Language of Jesus

Missick (2006) also said that during the Babylonian captivity Jews changed over from Hebrew to Aramaic. They eventually developed an Aramaic version of the Old Testament called the Targum. The Syriac Aramaic version was called the Pesheeta which the Christians used much later after Christ. Hebrew was still used for writing but this didn't exclude the use of Aramaic. We see how Aramaic affected the Greek used by the Jews. We also see the Aramaic words in the Gospels and Josephus, and the Aramaisms in their Greek syntax. Yet, we don't see the influence of Greek on Aramaic in the first century A.D. (Fitzmyer, 1991).

Chancey (1991) acknowledges that Hellenism was centuries old by the time of Jesus. It had permeated the land and its people to some extent. But the Seleucids were never able to take complete control and in fact once the Hasmonean dynasty took control, Greek influence slowed down but not stopped since they were very devoted to Hellenistic culture as well. Shortly after with Rome taking control, the area took a different turn entering the Greco-Roman culture. Herod the Great was the new king who placated the Jews within their own culture. Yes, there were Roman temples built to Caesar

but these were 'outside' of Jerusalem proper and certainly outside of Galilee. These were in Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste and Caesarea Philippi, all Pagan cities. Galilee was basically neglected and communities appeared to have remained without Greco-Roman architecture under Herod. Jewish cities included Bethsaida, Capernaum, Cana, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Beth Shearim. Herod Antipas got Galilee and ruled until 39 AD covering the life of Jesus. The Jews of Galilee used limestone vessels for the reason of purification. This differed from non-Jewish cities where clay pots and dishes were commonly used. In John 2:1-11, Jesus turned the water into wine at a wedding. In addition, Jews used Ossuary's as a second burial which was only practiced by the Jews. This was especially done in a number of Galilean sites during 63 BC to 135 AD. The enclave of Galilee was predominantly Jewish during Jesus' life time while pagan cities existed immediately outside this area; in Scythopolis, Hippos, Caesarea Philippi and Kadesh to the north.

Missick (2006) statement about Jesus speaking in Aramaic is confirmed by Aramaic words used in the Gospels. Jesus was able to read the scriptures in Hebrew and he may even was able to speak some Greek but his common language was Aramaic. His mother tongue was the Galilean version of western Aramaic. Related to this are analogies in the Aramaic passages of the Palestinian Talmud and Midrashim which have their home in Galilee. Jesus used the term, 'the Son of Man', this is found in Daniel 7:13, the Aramaic section of Daniel. This is confirmed by Hamp (2005) saying that it is generally agreed that Jesus and his disciples primarily spoke Aramaic, the common language of Palestine in the first century AD, most likely a Galilean dialect distinguishable from that of Jerusalem. The towns of Nazareth and Capernaum in Galilee, where Jesus spent most of his time, were primarily Aramaic-speaking communities. Aramaic was indeed the common language of the Eastern Mediterranean during and after the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Achaemenid Empires (722 BC – 330 BC) and remained a common language of the region in the 1st century AD. In spite of the increasing importance of Greek, the use of Aramaic was also expanding, and it would eventually be dominant among Jews both in the Holy Land and elsewhere in the Middle East around 200 AD. So the Aramaic speaking masses could no longer understand Hebrew. A very small minority believe that most or all of the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic, though such theories are rejected by mainstream scholarship. Traditionally, parts of the Nestorian church have also claimed originality for the Aramaic

New Testament, though this is considered by scholars to be a translation from Greek. Instead, the consensus among mainstream academia is that although it is possible that there may be Aramaic source materials that underpin some portions of the New Testament, the New Testament was compiled and redacted in the Greek language.

Jesus in Aramaic is Yeshu as the Assyrians use it. This is found in Zechariah 3:1. In Mathew 5.22, Jesus used the word 'Raca' an Aramaic word embedded in Greek. It refers to empty, an abusive word that is something like airhead. Another word, 'mammon' which Christ used refers to riches or wealth, but Jesus used it in terms of greed personalized. When Jesus called to the daughter of Jairus, he said, 'Talitha Cumi' meaning 'little girl, get up'! These are both Aramaic words. In Mark 7:34, Jesus used the word, 'Ephphatha' meaning, 'be opened' to heal the deaf mute. On the Cross Jesus spoke Aramaic when he decleared, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachtani'. This was from Psalam 22:1. Karban and Gehenna are two other Aramaic words. Abba, Father was used to describe God the Father and the Aramaic phrase, 'Kingdom of God' represent the main thrust of the teachings of Jesus, an Aramaic word not found in the Old Testament. Jesus called himself, 'the Son of Man' eighty eight times in the New Testament, a word used from the Aramaic section of Daniel (Daniel 7:13).

In the synagogues, they would open a service using the statement, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord in one Lord.' This was followed by a Berokoth or blessings and then benedictions or prayer. Scripture was read in Hebrew and then explained using Aramaic and then a sermon was given in Aramaic. The service was then closed with an Aramaic prayer known as the Kaddish. So this was the form of worship Jesus was used to. Jesus quoted from many places using the Targum, for example, Isaiah 6:9-10 and Mark 9:44 & 48. Jesus referred to Isaiah 66:24 talking about Gehenna quoting the Aramaic Targum. During the trial of Jesus, he muttered, 'Thou has said it'. This was an Aramean colloquialism meaning 'yes' but meaning more than yes, It also meant 'You have said it, not I'.

Babbartha, Aramaic for the Pavement, was the judgement seat of Pilate where Jesus was condemned to die. Golgotha is the Aramaic word for Clavary. This means 'skull place'. Calvary is the Latin equivalent. Revelation refers to the Song of Moses which comes from Deuteronomy of the Aramaic Targum. In Revelation 19:2, the Palestinian Targum Deuteronomy 32:41 was quoted. This use of Aramaic Targums in the New Testament shows the prevalence of Aramaic at the time of Jesus (Missick, 2006).

There are seven Aramaic principles for followers of Jesus and these are repentance, faith, confession, baptism, profession, worship and discipleship. Repentance in the Aramaic is Taybuha. This is related to the word, 'good'. Haimanutha is the Aramaic word for Biblical Faith. Jesus says that if you have faith you can move mountains. Confession is mowbeeyta in Aramaic. The word of the Baptist is Mammdana. The earliest concept of the Church was a believers' baptism by immersion. In Aramaic Sabratha means news or tidings. It comes from the Aramaic word 'sbar which means to think or believe but also to broadcast, to tell abroad, to spread good news. In Aramaic the Gospels are called Karozutha, the announcements, the proclamations, the gospels. Saghed in Aramaic is but one word for worship. Worship can be done through prayer or Slota.

Hamp (2005) examines parts of the New Testament that reveal an Aramaic background. This includes about thirty different New Testament verses.

Matthew 5:18 - For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law (that is, the Torah) till all is fulfilled. The quotation uses them as an example of extremely

minor details. In the Greek text translated as English jot and tittle is found iota and keraia. Iota is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet (ι), but since only capitals were used at the time the Greek New Testament was written (I), it probably

represents the Aramaic yodh (ʼ) which is the smallest letter of the Aramaic alphabet. Keraia is a hook or serif.

Matthew 5:22 - But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother [without a cause] shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever

shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Raca, or Raka, in the Aramaic and Hebrew of the Talmud means empty one, fool, and empty head.

Matthew 6:24 - No one can serve two masters: for either they will hate the one, and love the other; or else they will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 26:36 - Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. Mark 14:32 - And they went to a place that has the name Gethsemane. The place where Jesus takes his disciples to pray before his arrest is given the Greek transliteration Gethsēmani. It represents the Aramaic 'Gath-Šmânê', meaning 'the oil press' or 'oil vat' (referring to olive oil). Mark 15:22 - And they took him up to the place Golgotha, which is translated Place of the Skull. John 19:17 - And carrying his cross by himself, he went out to the so-called Place of the Skull, which is called in 'Hebrew' Golgotha. 'Gûlgaltâ' Aramaic means 'skull'. The name appears in all of the gospels except Luke, which calls the place simply Kranion 'the Skull' in Greek, with no Semitic counterpart. The name 'Calvary' is taken from the Latin Vulgate translation, Calvaria.

Matthew 27:6 - But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.' In Aramaic it refers to the treasury in the Temple in Jerusalem, derived from the Hebrew 'Korban', found in Mark 7:11 and the Septuagint (in Greek transliteration), meaning religious gift or offering.

Matthew 27:46 - Around the ninth hour, Jesus shouted in a loud voice, saying 'Eli Eli lema sabachthani?' which is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Mark 15:34 - And at the ninth hour, Jesus shouted in a loud voice, 'Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani?' which is translated, 'My God, my God, for what have you forsaken me?' This phrase, shouted by Jesus from the cross, is given to us in these two versions. The Matthean version of the phrase is transliterated in Greek. Overall, both versions appear to be Aramaic rather than Hebrew because of the verb is 'abandon'\', which is originally Aramaic. The 'pure' Biblical Hebrew counterpart to this word, `zb' is seen in the first line of Psalm 22. Thus, Jesus is not quoting the canonical Hebrew version (êlî êlî lâmâ `azabtânî); he may be quoting the version given in an Aramaic Targum (surviving Aramaic Targums do use 'šbq' in their translations of the Psalm 22. The Markan word for 'my god' definitely corresponds to the Aramaic form elāhî. In the following verse, in both accounts, some who hear

Jesus' cry imagine that he is calling for help from Elijah (Ēlīyā in Aramaic). The Aramaic word form šəbaqtanî is based on the verb 'to allow, to permit, to forgive, and to forsake', with the perfect tense ending -t (2nd person singular: 'you'), and the object suffix -anî (1st person singular: 'me').

Mark 5:41 - And taking the hand of the child, he said to her, 'Talitha kum', which translates as, 'Little girl, I say to you, get up.' This verse gives an Aramaic phrase, attributed to Jesus bringing the girl back to life, with a transliteration into Greek, as Talitha kum, even though this is Aramaic, it doesn't prove that Jesus spoke exclusively in Aramaic. The Aramaic is ṭlīthā qūm. The word ṭlīthā is the feminine form of the word ṭlē, meaning 'young'. Qūm is the Aramaic verb 'to rise, stand, get up'. In the feminine singular imperative, it was originally 'qūmī'. However, there is evidence that in speech the final -ī was dropped so that the imperative did not distinguish between masculine and feminine genders. The older manuscripts, therefore, used a Greek spelling that reflected pronunciation, whereas the addition of an 'ι' was perhaps due to a bookish copyist.

Mark 7:34 - And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha,' which is 'be opened'. Once again, the Aramaic word is given with the transliteration, only this time the word to be transliterated is more complicated. This could be from the Aramaic 'ethpthaḥ', the passive imperative of the verb 'pthaḥ', 'to open', since the 'th' could assimilate in western Aramaic. The guttural 'ḥ' was often omitted in Greek transcriptions in the Septuagint and was also softened in Galilean speech.

Mark 11:9 - Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! This word is derived from Psalms 118:25 'O LORD, save us', but the original Biblical Hebrew form could be either Aramaic or Hebrew.

Mark 14:36 - 'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.' Abba, an originally Aramaic form borrowed into the Greek Old Testament as a name (2Chr 29:1), common in Mishnaic Hebrew and still used in Modern Hebrew (written abbā in Aramaic), is immediately followed by the Greek equivalent
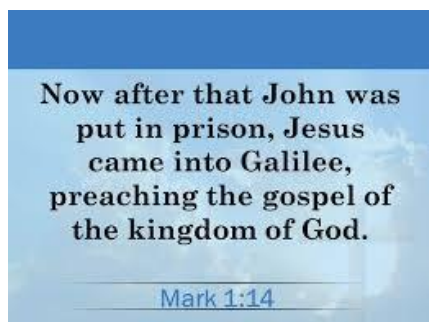
with no explicit mention of it being a translation. The phrase Abba, Father is repeated in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6.

Mark 15:34 records some of the last words of Jesus as he was on the Cross. They have been used to support the claim that Jesus spoke Aramaic, 'And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabahthani' which translates as 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' These words closely parallel the words in Psalm 22:1 in both the original Hebrew and in the Aramaic Targumim. Now we know that Mark received his Gospel from the testimony of Peter. Matthew records this in 27:46 as being 'Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?' this could have been Hebrew or Aramaic but Eloi, Elio, many assume to be Aramaic. In Daniel 4:5 and 6:22 it is 'elahi' as does the Targum 22:1. According to Hebrew grammar, the way to say my God would be Elohi. Aramaic uses El for God as does Hebrew. Shabachtani is a word of Aramaic origin. It's used a total of five times in the Old Testament, all found in the Aramaic portions of Daniel and Ezra. This also occurs in the Mishnah seven times with four of them related more to Hebrew prose.

Luke 16:9-13 - And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. The word mammon has long been assumed to be Aramaic. But it comes from an Old Hebrew root meaning many, a lot. Among the meanings are riches and abundance. Now the Lord declares, 'No servant can serve two masters.' If we desire, then, to serve both God and mammon, it will be unprofitable for us. 'For what will it profit if a man gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' This world and the next are two enemies. The one urges to adultery and corruption, avarice and deceit; the other bids farewell to these things. We cannot, therefore, be the friends of both; and it behoves us, by renouncing the one, to make sure of the other. Let us reckon that it is better to hate the things present, since they are trifling, and transient, and corruptible; and to love those [who are to come,] as being good and

incorruptible. For if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest; otherwise, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, if we disobey His commandments. In the typical Aramaic 'emphatic' state is suggested by the Greek ending. This is usually considered to be an originally Aramaic word borrowed into rabbinic Hebrew,[9] but its occurrence in late Biblical Hebrew and, reportedly, in 4th century Punic may indicate that it had a more general 'common Semitic background'.[10]

John 5:2 the NIV translates 'near the Sheep gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda'. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Bethesda was originally the name of a pool in Jerusalem, on the path of the Beth Zeta Valley, and is also known as the Sheep Pool. Its name in Aramaic means 'House of Grace.' It is associated with healing. In John 5, Jesus was reported healing a man at the pool.

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Mark 1:14

John 11:16 - Then Thomas, who was called Didymus, said to his co-disciples, 'Now let us go that we might die with him!' Thomas is listed among the disciples of Jesus in all four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. However, it is only in John's Gospel that more information is given. In three places (John 11:16, 20:24 and 21:2) he is given the name Didymus (Δίδυμος), the Greek word for a twin. In fact, 'the Twin' is not just a surname; it is a translation of 'Thomas'. The Greek Thōmâs comes from the Aramaic tômâ, 'twin'. Therefore, rather than two personal names, Thomas Didymus, there is a single nickname, the Twin. Christian tradition gives him the personal name Judas, and he was perhaps named Thomas to distinguish him from others of the same name.

John 19:13 - When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. The place name appears to be Aramaic. According to Josephus, War, V.ii.1, #51, the word Gabath means high place, or elevated place, so perhaps a raised flat area near the temple.

John 20:16 - Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. (KJV) Also in Mark 10:51. Hebrew

form rabbi used as title of Jesus in Matthew 26:25,49; Mark 9:5, 11:21, 14:45; John 1:49, 4:31, 6:25, 9:2, 11:8.

Acts 1:19 - And this became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that field was called, in their own dialect, Akeldama, that is Field of Blood. The place of Judas Iscariot's death is clearly named Field of Blood in Greek. However, the manuscript tradition gives a number of different spellings of the Aramaic. Despite these variant spellings the Aramaic is most probably 'ḥqêl dmâ', 'field of blood'.

Acts 9:36 - In Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. The disciple's name is given both in Aramaic. The Aramaic name is a transliteration of Ṭbîthâ the female form of Ṭabyâ. It may be just coincidence that Peter's words to her in verse 40, 'Tabitha, get up!' are similar to the 'talitha kum' phrase used by Jesus.

Galatians 1:18 NRSV - Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days; In these passages, 'Cephas' is given as the nickname of the apostle better known as Simon Peter. The apostle's given name appears to be Simon, and he is given the Aramaic nickname, kêfâ, meaning 'rock' or 'stone'. The final sigma (s) is added in Greek to make the name masculine rather than feminine. It is not known why Paul uses the Aramaic name rather than the Greek name for Simon Peter when he writes to the churches in Galatia and Corinth. He may have been writing at a time before Cephas came to be popularly known as Peter. According to Clement of Alexandria, there were two people named Cephas: one was Apostle Simon Peter, and the other was one of Jesus' Seventy Apostles. Clement goes further to say it was Cephas of the Seventy who was condemned by Paul in Galatians 2 for not eating with the Gentiles, though this is perhaps Clement's way of deflecting the condemnation from Simon Peter. In any case the relationship of Paul of Tarsus and Judaism (which this involves) is still disputed.

1 Corinthians 1:12 - But I say that each of you says 'I am of Paul', or 'I am of Apollos', or 'I am of Cephas', or 'I am of Christ'.

1 Corinthians 16:22 - If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. This depends on how one selects to split the single Greek expression of the early manuscripts into Aramaic.

Personal names in the New Testament come from a number of languages, Hebrew and Greek are most common. However, there are a good few Aramaic names as well. The most prominent feature in Aramaic names is

meaning 'son of', a common patronym prefix. Its Hebrew equivalent, ben, is conspicuous by its absence. Some examples are:

- Matthew 10:3 - Bartholomew 'son of furrows' or 'ploughman').
- Matthew 16:17 - Simon bar-Jona from Šim`ôn bar-Yônâ, 'Simon son of Jonah'.
- John 1:42 - Simon bar-Jochanan ('Simon son of John').
- Matthew 27:16 - Barabbas from bar-Abbâ, 'son of the father'.
- Mark 10:46 - Bartimaeus from combination of Aramaic bar and Greek Timaeus meaning 'honorable' or 'highly prized', perhaps 'honorable son'.
- Acts 1:23 - Barsabbas 'son of the Sabbath'.
- Acts 4:36 - Joseph who is called Barnabas from bar-Navâ meaning 'son of prophecy', 'the prophet', usually translated as 'son of consolation/encouragement', the Greek could mean 'invocation' as well).
- Acts 13:6 - Bar-Jesus 'son of Jesus/Joshua'.
- John 1:42 - He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John, you shall be called Cephas', which is translated 'Peter'. (New International Version)

Mark is the winner out of the Gospels and Casey (2004) takes an in-depth look to see the Aramaic in the Gospel. The change in language of all the Gospels was an attempt in a cultural shift from Aramaic and a Jewish environment to a Gentile one. Parts of Mark's Gospel are literal translations of written Aramaic sources. In studying Mark, it is difficult to understand the connections between different parts of certain events described with that of the culture of Jesus. It was easier in Aramaic than from the surface level of Mark's Greek text. One must understand that language and culture go hand in hand. Stories within Mark must be understood within the cultural historicity it was used.

The Gospels that have survived in Aramaic are translations from the Greek. For example the translation from Aramaic into Greek caused the term 'Son of Man' to

become a Christological title. When translated back into Aramaic, it becomes 'the son of the man' or the Son of Adam. It's not clear why Jesus used the Aramaic term, this will be discussed later.

Reconstructing the sayings of Jesus into Aramaic isn't an easy task; many scholars turn to Jewish Aramaic, and Targums source. In addition, major rabbinical dictionaries were also sought. Talmudic evidence is also considered as sources along with the Samaritan Targum. Aramaic Elephantine papyri and additional letters plus the inscription of Darius I and the proverbs of Ahigar increased the knowledge of Aramaic vocabulary and grammar. The other difficulty lies in knowing and using the Aramaic of a specific time period. The author asks what sort of Aramaic should be used to reconstruct sayings of Jesus. What about the Genesis Apocryphal. Job was also in Aramaic plus fragments of the books of Enoch such as the Book of Giants. There is also the Tobit plus a Targum to the Pentateuch in Aramaic.

The question is whether or not Jews spoke using just Aramaic and then used Hebrew for writing or was Aramaic used occasionally with Hebrew being the major language. And the question remains as to how well was Greek known. Certainly, Galilean Aramaic was Jesus' dialect. However, there is clear evidence that Aramaic was the lingua franca of Jesus' environment, the language which he would have had to use in teaching normal Jews and the natural language for his first followers to use when they reported on his life and teaching. And the Gospels certainly contained Aramaic words and ideas within the Greek. However, it is a consensus that Jesus did, in fact, used Aramaic to minister in. And furthermore, without a doubt, the Gospels are a translation of Aramaic and Hebrew Culture into Greek. But how was this Semitic culture and language transferred to the Greek language and culture poses certain challenges.

For example, long presented as problematic, Mark 9:11-13 talks about Elijah restoring all things and his suffering and rejection of the son of Man. The term 'man' here is 'br' and its meaning includes man's basic human experiences. If these verses were in Aramaic, they might be translated as: And they were asking him and saying, 'why do the scribes say that Elijah is going to come first?' And he said to them, 'Elijah comes first and turns back all, and how it is written (a/the son of) man and he suffers much and is rejected. And I tell you that, moreover, Elijah has come, and they did in the case of him whom they desired according as it is written concerning him/it.'

In verse 12 Jesus agrees with the scriptural prediction, but he did not think that Elijah was ready to come but instead he had already come. He believed that these prophecies were fulfilled through John the Baptist's ministry. But the Greek translation falls short of a true understanding that the Aramaic might present. It has to do with the comprehensive style of Aramaic can be used in a more restricted way in regards to these verses in Greek. In interpreting these points on Elijah, Jesus also used Mal 3 and Isaiah 40 in reference to the John's ministry. Then he used Isaiah 40 and Job 14 of the death of man and continued with Job 14 in describing his suffering of man and the rejection of the Jewish people as seen in Jeremiah 6-7. In using these, he included himself as being referenced to which revealed that in Mark 9:12, John's death was not the main problem, but it was the rejection by the people.

In regards to Mark 2:1-3:6 and the Sabbath, the author sees the problem as a literal translation of the underlying Aramaic sources.

"[23]And he was, on the Sabbath, going through the cornfields and his disciples began to go along a path and to pluck the ears of corn. [24]And Pharisees said to him, `Hoy! Why are they doing, on the Sabbath, something which is not permitted?' [25]And he said to them, `Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry and in need, he and his associates? [26]He went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar, a great/chief priest! And ate the showbread, which is not permitted except to priests, and gave also to his associates?' [27]And he said to them, `The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. [28]Surely, then, a man is master even of the Sabbath.'

[1]And he went again to the synagogue. And there was there a man who had a withered hand. [2]And they were watching him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him [literally eat his pieces]. [3]And he said to the man whose hand was withered, `Get up (and come) into the middle.' [4]And he said to them, `Is it permitted on the Sabbath to do what is good, or to do evil, to save life/a person or to kill him?' And they were silent. [5]And he looked over them with anger, and he was grieved at the hardness of their hearts, and he said to the man, `Stretch out the hand.' And the hand stretched out and returned to him. [6]And the Pharisees went out in that hour with the Herodians and gave counsel against/concerning him how they might destroy him."

The Greek translation confuses the issue here because the language itself is non-biblical. The Aramaic 'Sabta' seems to relate to the Greek neuter

plural. Mark's Aramaic source gives the specific reason for the disciples' presence in the fields: 'and his disciples began to go along a path, and to pluck the ears of corn. The Greek translation is misleading. This relates to a system of taking Peah and the regulations of it are biblical. 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not complete the border of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard nor shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard: you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner' (Lev. 19:9). The use of 'border' rather than 'corner' is not obvious. The Peshitta evidently understood the custom as leaving the edges un-harvested. Paths not only gave access to corn and a way through it but marked the boundaries between fields so that peah had to be given for each field. Also, in Deut 23:25, 'When you go into your neighbour's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbour's standing grain. The point in dispute was therefore the right of hungry people to pluck corn on the Sabbath, and the mention of their going along a path made the situation clear for people familiar with the relevant customs. Thus the Greek wasn't correct in that the cultural aspects of the point weren't clear. Of course the Pharisees argument was that the plucking was work, but there is evidence that such 'halakhah' of plucking wasn't part of the halakhah until the 3rd century A.D. And furthermore, Jesus did not share the concern of the Pharisees and others to defend Judaism by means of the religious regulations. But to clarify, there was no generally accepted regulation prohibiting such on the Sabbath.

In Mark 10:35-45, two of the twelve ask to sit on Jesus' right and left in his glory. Jesus refuses them. Let's look at the Aramaic reconstruction which differs from that of most research. "35And Jacob and John, sons of Zebedee, approached him and said to him, `Rabbi, we want you to do for us what we ask of you.' 36And he said to them, `What do you want me to do for you?' 37And they said to him, `Let us sit one on your right and one on your left in your glory.' 38And he said to them, `You do not understand what you have asked. Can you drink the cup which I will drink, or be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed?' 39They said to him, `We can.' And he said to them, `You will drink the cup which I drink, and be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed, 40but to sit on my right or my left is not mine to give, except to those for whom it has been prepared.' 41And the ten heard and began to be annoyed with Jacob and

John. [42]And Jesus called them and said to them, `You know that those who think to rule over the nations have power over them, and their great ones lord it over them. [43]Not so among you, but he who wishes to be great among you, he shall be your servant, [44]and he who wishes to be chief among you, he shall be a slave to you all. [45]What is more; a/the son of man does not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life/soul/self as a ransom for many."

The author proposes several arguments here: As to the names and lists of apostles, Luke's lists have Judas (son) of Jacob, whereas Matthew and Mark have Thaddaeus. It could have been that Thaddaeus left the movement and he was replaced by Judah. The 2nd point relates to the number as stated in Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30. We also see that the twelve will judge Israel. This act may help us understand that the two were asking for the seats of honour. Their request provides us with a straightforward piece of evidence of Semitic interference and corresponds closely to the Aramaic and Hebrew. Their request also makes literal sense as they usually sat on the right and left of Jesus. This also tells us that the Kingdom is not purely a spiritual realm without place, space or time. In regards to Jesus' glory, this referred to events of the last times. They would sit at the table with Jesus and the rest of the twelve, when they had risen from the dead. Jesus would be the decisive witness before the heavenly court in the judgement of people and the twelve would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This is the cultural context for their request to sit on Jesus' right and left which is a reasonable request.

In Jesus' final Passover with his disciples in Mark 14:12-26 relates to how we celebrate the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist. Let's again try to reconstruct and interpret Mark's Aramaic source. "[12]And on the first day of unleavened bread, [literally and on day one for unleavened breads] when they were sacrificing the Passover (victim), his disciples said to him, `Where do you want us to go to, and prepare for you that you may eat the Passover?' [13]And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, `Go to the city and a man will meet you, and he (will be) carrying a pitcher of water. Go after him, [14]and where he enters, say to the owner of the house, ``The rabbi says, `Where (is) the house of my-spending-the-night, where I will eat the Passover with my disciples?' '' [15]And he will show you a large upper room, set out ready. And there prepare for us.' [16]And his disciples went forth and came to the city. And they found according as he said to them. And they prepared the Passover. [17]And it was evening and he came with the twelve. [18]And they (were)

reclining and eating and Jesus said, `Amen I say to you, that one of you will hand me over, he who ``eats'' with ``me''.' [19]They began to be sad and to say to him one by one, `Certainly not I!' [20]And he said to them, `One of the twelve, he who dips with me into a dish. [21]A/The (son of) man goes as it is written concerning him, and woe to that man by whose hand a/the (son of) man is betrayed/handed over. (It would be) good for him if that man had not been born.' [22]And they (were) eating and he took bread, and said a blessing, and broke (the bread) and gave (it) to them and said, `Take! This it/is my body.' [23]And he took a cup and said a blessing and gave (it) to them, and all of them drank in it. [24]And he said to them, `This (is/was) my blood, it (is) of the covenant, shed for many. [25]Amen I say to you that we will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day on which I drink it and it (will be) new in the kingdom of God.' [26]And they sang the Hallel, and went out to the Mount of Olives."

The passage holds several distinctively Aramaic words. Mark 14:1 gives us a date two days before Passover and Unleavened Bread. Some scholars believe that Mark 14:12 should read 'on the day before Unleavened Bread.' It seems that Mark deliberately referred to 14th of Nisan as the first day for Unleavened Bread. Nevertheless, in regards to accuracy, the story begins with a general description of the approximate time when the leavened bread was removed, and followed it up with a precise description of the time and place. The Aramaic source takes for granted basic facts about Jewish culture.

To conclude, we have seen that Aramaic developed into a worldwide language and how the effect of that language slowly restructured what many thought to be purely Hebrew, but in fact was a mixture of Aramaic, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian and Hebrew cultures. The above information shows that Aramaic dominated the known world. We have seen how it was used in the Bible, but as the research points out, many of the Books of the Bible was perhaps written in Aramaic and then rewritten in Hebrew. As pointed out, the use of Aramaic has been greatly underestimated in today's Christian culture and what we have today in the four Greek Gospels are really translations of the Aramaic language used by Jesus. The originally Aramaic language was never considered important. We have seen that it is virtually impossible to separate language and culture thus the translation into Greek had though good they were is not the same as the original Aramaic.

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