

Languages of the Bible

- The O.T. was written in Hebrew, except for about (250) verses of Daniel and Ezra which were written in Aramaic
- Genesis 2:16 says God spoke to Adam, many believe indicating God Himself gave Adam a language.
- In Genesis 5 and 6, we first read of Noah and his sons. It is (10) generations from Adam to Noah. Every name from Adam thru Noah's sons are Hebrew names.
- Not until we read the names of Noah's grandsons, do we find a name from a language other than Hebrew.
- Therefore, according to the Biblical record, Adam and his descendants – at least through Noah's sons spoke Hebrew.
- This fact, causes many to believe that Hebrew was the 1st language of mankind; and also a language of Heaven.
- After the Great Flood, God tells Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.
- In Genesis 11:1, the timeline is about 100 years after the Great Flood, the pen of Moses writes *“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech”* (Hebrew).
- Instead of obeying God and filling the earth, the people stay together, and settle in the Plain of Shinar, in the Mesopotamia Valley. Many believe this is the same general area as the Garden of Eden.
- Genesis 11:2, begins to tell the story of the Tower of Babel, where the Bible says God confused the language of the people, causing them to divide and scatter.
- History reveals that at this same time, the Sumerians (land of Sumer – Shinar in Bible) appear in southern Mesopotamia (descendants of Japheth, one of Noah's sons).
- At approximately the same time, the Egyptian civilization emerges in the southwest. The original language of the Egyptians is Hamitic (from Ham, one of Noah sons).
- Again, at approximately the same time, a third civilization emerges to the west, in the land of Canaan (descendants of Shem, one of Noah's sons).
- Shem is an ancestor to the Jewish people, and in the bloodline of Jesus Christ. The Hebrew language is a Semitic or Shemitic language, from Shem, a son of Noah.
- From the three sons of Noah, Japheth, Ham, and Shem, will come the nations of the world, and its many languages.
- The Aramaic language became prominent during time of Assyrian Empire, 911-605 B.C., the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom Israel.
- Assyrians were conquered by Babylonians. Aramaic language also used by Babylonian Empire, 605-539 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem & Temple, took thousands of Jewish people into exile for 70 years
- Babylonians conquered by the Medes & Persians. Aramaic language used by Medes & Persians, 539-331 B.C., Cyrus the Great, allowed Jewish exiles in Babylon to return home
- When the Jews return from Babylonian exile, the Aramaic language begins to replace Hebrew for the common people of Israel. Hebrew will continue to be the language of the Jewish religion and for upper class.

- **In 330 B.C., Alexander the Great conquers the Persian Empire, becomes the world power of that time, and the Greek language becomes dominant.**
- **As the Greek language became more common, the Hebrew language faded from the common man, mostly used by Jewish priests**
- **Somewhere around 285-247 B.C., the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek, that translation is called the “Septuagint.”**
- **That translation was done at the order of Ptolemy II, King of Egypt, son of Ptolemy I, one of the four generals of Alexander the Great, who divided Alexander’s world empire at his death.**
- **Per Jewish historian Josephus, this translation was done in Alexandria by (72) priests (6 from each of 12 tribes), and took (72) days.**
- **Around 200 B.C., Rome becomes the world power, and the Latin language becomes dominant.**
- **The first translation of the English Bible was begun by John Wycliffe and completed by John Purvey in 1388.**
- **The movable type printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Europe around 1440. Considered one of the most life altering inventions in human history.**
- **This gave the world books, newspapers, and greatly increased the necessity and desire for people to learn to read.**
- **Our King James version, English language, named after King James I of England, who commissioned it in 1604, first published in 1611**

R. Skidmore, 10-14-22