



ONE TORAH FOR ALL

One Torah shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.
Exodus 12:49

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Restoration of a Pure Language

A brief look at history and prophecy

Tzephanyah (Zephaniah) 3:9

“For then will I give to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the name of YHWH, to serve him with one shoulder.”

The thoughts which I write down this day have been in my mind for many years. I must confess I still have questions about this matter and some of those questions shall be presented here in this study. It seems it is time that the questions which are in my own mind be presented to the body of Mashiach in order that more of the members can give further consideration to what I have already been pondering.

The basic thought concerning the above passage deals with YHWH bringing about the restoration of the Hebrew language. This is believed in part not only by what the above passage states, but also because of the verse directly before that one, which states:

Tzephanyah (Zephaniah 3:8)

“Therefore, wait for Me,” declares YHWH, “For the day when I rise up to the prey. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.”

This passage contains each one of the twenty-two characters of the Hebrew aleph-bet as well as the sophit (final) forms of the five characters which have the sophit. That is, all twenty-seven characters are present in this one verse.

Zephaniah 3:8
 לְכֵן תִּכְוֹלִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה לְיוֹם קוֹמִי לְעַד
 כִּי מִשְׁפָּטִי לְאַסֵּף גּוֹיִם לְקַבְּצֵי מַמְלָכוֹת לְשַׁפֵּד עֲלֵיהֶם
 וְעַמִּי כָל תְּרוֹן אֲפִי כִי בְאִשׁ קִנְאַתִּי תֹאכַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

There is one incongruity concerning the letter *shin* (pronounced *sheen*). This letter can have the phonetic value of either an *s* or an *sh*. If the text is pointed, the pointing over the *sh* will be over the upper left or upper right depending upon which way it should be pronounced. If the pointing is over the upper right like so, *sh* this indicates an *sh* phonetic value. If the pointing is over the upper left like so, *s* this indicates an *s* phonetic value of the character. It is this value, the *s* (pronounced *seen*) which is not present in this particular verse.

While the name of this character *s* is *sin* (pronounced *seen*), this word looks like our English word “sin.” Thus, it has been said that the reason this form of this character is not present, is because there shall be no “sin” present when a pure language is restored in the millennial kingdom of Mashiach, sort of a play on words. That statement would be difficult to prove from Scripture, and in particular, from those portions dealing with prophecy concerning the millennial kingdom considering that there shall be sin offerings during the millennial kingdom of Mashiach, which may indicate sin is present.

However, there may be another reason as to why there is only one form of the *s* present in this passage. Let us carefully and prayerfully consider this matter.

There are two languages which are quite similar, Hebrew and Aramaic. It is often believed that Aramaic was derived from its older sister Hebrew. However, there are a couple of clues in Scripture which may actually support the opposite of this view; that is, it was Hebrew which was derived from Aramaic, making Aramaic the older language of the two.

B’reshit (Genesis) 10:22

The sons of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arpachshad, and Lud, and Aram.

Please note that one of the sons of Shem was Aram. The language which Aram spoke is known today as the “Mesopotamian Language.” This was the root language of all Semitic languages. Shem passed this to his sons, who in turn passed it down to their sons.

Terah, the father of Avraham, left Ur of the Chaldees and moved to Haran, which is in Syria. One of the sons of Nahor, Avraham’s brother, was also named Aram (see B’reshit 22:21). This land became known as the land of the Arameans or Aram. The people developed a cursive version of the North Semitic language. The usage of this language has continued in use in this area until today.¹

¹ Janet M. Magiera, *Aramaic Peshitta New Testament Translation*, LWM Publications, 2006, pg. 5.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:5 refers to Ya'aqov as a "wandering Aramean." Avraham was called the first Hebrew, a term which likely comes from the Aramaic word "*abar*," meaning "to cross over."

Please allow me to quote from Janet M. Magiera's introduction concerning the development of the Aramaic language.

"Around 1000-800 BC, there were several major powers in the Near East: Assyria, Babylonia, and Syria. They adopted the alphabet and language of the Arameans and Aramaic became the *lingua franca* throughout the Mesopotamian area. It was the language of commerce, trade and communication. It became the vernacular language of Assyria, Babylonia (Chaldee) and Syria. There was then a split in dialects between the east, consisting of Babylonia and Assyria and the west, consisting of Syria. The eastern Aramaic was further divided into two dialects, Assyrian (northern) and Babylonian (southern).

The Assyrians conquered the northern ten tribes of Israel in 721 BC and transported the Israelites to Assyria. Those who came from Assyria to settle in Galilee and Samaria spoke this northern dialect of Aramaic. This dialect continued until the time of Christ."²

Historically speaking, we know that this was the language of that region at the time of the birth of Yeshua. Aramaic was the language of his earthly parents. Even the name which they gave to Him (Yeshua) is Aramaic.

Galatians 4:3-5

***3 So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world;
4 but when the fullness of the time came, Elohim sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
5 that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.***

Yeshua came into this world at exactly the right moment in our history. He was not too early, nor was He too late. This is a very important truth for us to understand. Since YHWH is sovereign over His creation, He has the authority and power to do as He wills. Therefore, since Yeshua was born to earthly parents who spoke Aramaic (in fact, all the people of that region spoke Aramaic), this was not accidental, nor even incidental. This was by His design. Therefore, we as His people need to stop ignoring this reality and face it and ask some very hard questions.

² Ibid.

In His sovereignty, YHWH could have made it so that the language spoken at that time was Hebrew. He did not. He made it Aramaic. This reality cannot be dismissed; rather, we need to embrace it and learn from it.

One of the duties of Mashiach is to restore. He is the Restorer. He restores all things. According to the prophet Tzephanyah, He will also restore to His people a “pure language.” Now we have just assumed, yay, we have been taught, that this pure language was Hebrew. So I submit to you this day, it may not be Hebrew; it may be Aramaic. After all, was this not the language He grew up speaking? Was this not His native language, the language of His parents and His people? To be sure!

One more tidbit of information for you to consider concerning the passage about the restoration of a “pure language”: in the passage immediately before it (verse 8) where there is no character *שׁ* (*sh*), this may be a strong indication that the pure language being spoken of is Aramaic. Why? In Aramaic, this character has only one phonetic value, *sh*. Could it be that the pure language being spoken of here is Aramaic and not Hebrew?

YHWH knows, and in His time we shall know as well!

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