



The Karl Coke Evangelistic Association



Home Contact

About Us

The Timothy Program

Monthly Newsletter

Israel Tours

Hebrew Alphabet

The Reading Room

The Video Room

Restore!

Product Catalog

Donate Now

The Karl Coke
Evangelistic Association
PO Box 10285
Charlotte, NC 28212
Phone: 704.568.5232
Fax: 704.532.9990
Email Us
Web By: EyeBenders

Links Join Us
Search

The Importance of Hebrew

The ancient *TaNak*, (Torah, Neveem and Ketoveem), which is called the Old Testament, was written in Hebrew. Some portions, however, were written in Aramaic: Genesis 31:47 (two words); Jeremiah 10:11; Daniel 2:4-7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:8 and Ezra 7:12-26. Aramaic was used to give "texture" to certain passages and also used as a poetic form. Hebrew, however, is the language of communication in the Old Testament. When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was attempting to conquer Jerusalem, Judah's king, Hezekiah, sent his officials out to speak to Assyria's field commander. This story is recorded in Isaiah 36. Hezekiah's officials, Eliakim, Shebna and Joah told Sennacherib's field commander to "speak in Aramaic" (Isa. 36:11) as they understood it. They did not want the Israelite workers on the wall to understand what was being said. The Assyrian field commander then changed from speaking Aramaic to speaking Hebrew just so the Israelites on the wall would understand. Apparently, educated people spoke languages. In fact, the languages are very similar. Far too much has been made of the differences between Hebrew and Aramaic. In the Church of the Lord's Prayer on Mt. Olivet in Jerusalem, the Lord's Prayer is on the walls of the courtyard in many of the world's languages. Of particular importance is that the Lord's Prayer is in Hebrew immediately upon entering the gates. Located next to the Hebrew Lord's Prayer is the Aramaic version. The only difference is to be found in the final verse where one word is changed. The point is, Hebrew is the language of the Old Testament. Since it is the language of the greatest series of "books" known to mankind, it should be studied. We know God communicates to his creation in all languages. As proof of that, people from all nations have received God's Messiah, Jesus, via their own language. However, to fully know foundational truths, one must study Holy Scriptures in Hebrew. Someone in every spiritual grouping should have access to God's Word in Hebrew. This would prevent calling *t'fillin* (phylacteries – Matt. 23:5) "valor ribbons" (worn on chest of soldier) in the Creole Bible. Samuel Heilman, in his book, *Defenders of the Faith*, says on page 12, "At a time when Jews have returned to their biblical homeland and resurrected their ancient tongue, they no longer need foreign labels. Both "Orthodox and "Ultra-Orthodox" come from a language foreign to Jewish experience. Unlike them, "haredi" (those who tremble at God's Word) resonates with Jewish meaning. Language, after all, is also an expression of nationhood." Heilman makes us aware that by studying a language you discover other things. He says that by using Hebrew you discover a nation. I would add that by studying Hebrew you discover a culture, a land and a history. By immersing oneself in Hebrew, a student of God's Word discovers not only "what" is said but "why" it is said. By learning a language you learn a mindset. It is then that the Holy Spirit of God can more accurately apply what He has written. By studying Hebrew the Church could possibly have fewer divisions. Is it possible that the Western Church's greatest enemy is its common language – English? English is not a good language of conveying truth because it is: noun oriented; abstract in meaning; a secondary language made of other languages; western in its culture; and lends itself to "proof-texting." The language of the Bible is Hebrew. Hebrew is an excellent conveyor of truth. Hebrew is: verb oriented; concrete in meaning (word pictures); a primary language; eastern in its culture; and gives itself to teaching "concepts." There is nothing new in the Bible after the Book of Deuteronomy. The Prophets, Writings and New Testament make clear the Torah. The first five books of the Bible contain the complete revelation of God and His Messiah, Jesus. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law (Torah) or the Prophets (Neveem); I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. When Paul told Timothy "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and teaching in righteousness," in II Timothy 3:16, he was talking about the *TaNak* (Old Testament). It is the Hebrew text that Paul told Timothy, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). The only group in the world that studies its sacred texts in foreign languages is the Church. This accounts for the Church's penchant for denominationalism, sectarianism, hatred, strife and suspicion. Much of this division would end if the Church would pursue studying the Bible in Hebrew. Studying Hebrew would not by itself end divisions already established. It would, however, slow them down and bring them back into unity. The human spirit that sets out to "prove" to others that it is "right" and all others are "wrong" would destroy the value of Hebrew study. For those seeking to find out what God "says," the best way to eliminate "isogesis" is Hebrew study. It lifts the student out of his culture of the Bible. It lifts one out of his zone and places him in God's. It broadens narrow horizons. It elevates study out of the pedantic into the divine. It ties Scripture together to reveal the purposes of God. Some men have made the study of Hebrew the domain of the intellectuals. It is actually for the masses. Other men say Hebrew study is only for professors. It is intended for all men, women and children. A few preachers parade their scholarship when they quote the meanings of Hebrew words in their sermons. Hebrew words are best understood in the everyday, simple life of all Believers. When Hebrew turns "lights" on in passages like Isaiah 40:31: "they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength..." "Wait" in Isaiah 40:31 is the transliteration from the Hebrew *hw'q*, which means 'to twist, or to bind, whence a rope.' This verse reveals the active nature of intertwining one's life with the life of God. When intertwining is being done, that person is made strong. He who "waits" (twists his life with God's) upon the LORD is made strong. Studying Hebrew may not be necessary for salvation; it certainly is necessary to plumb its depths! It is the best method I know to remove the clothing from the Bible text!