

e. Conclusion

At Biblical we are still teaching Hebrew and insisting that the students achieve at least marginal reading skills. It has been abandoned in several evangelical seminaries as a required part of the program. But in the light of the multitude of new Bible translations, and with the desired goal that the man ministering the Word should know as much about it as possible, it seems that the need for these ancient languages today is far greater than it was a few years ago. The basic knowledge of Hebrew is viewed, by us, as "sine qua non" for the Bible student who has the opportunity to study it. And, if you do well, you may some day lead a tour to Palestine and sound as if you were a native.

2. Aramaica. History

In the Semitic family it is a cognate to Hebrew with a square script (printed) that is very similar to Hebrew. It had become the "lingua franca" after the Persian period in Palestine and was the common language of that land during the lifetime of the Lord. Aramaic is also known as Syriac, the Hebrew word transliterated Aram is translated Syria for the country of that description. We are really interested in Biblical Aramaic, that which belongs to the cultural or classical age...and the later Aramaic of the New Testament period is of less direct consequence. There are some important structural changes in it and Hebrew and we shall note some of these if time allows which, of course, it never does. Palestine turned from Hebrew shortly after the Roman debacle and apart from ecclesiastical usage in some eastern churches, Aramaic ceased to be of much importance. It is, in post-biblical times, the language of the Targums and the Talmud.

b. Usage

The use of Aramaic is very limited in the Old Testament and consists chiefly of:

about six chapters in Daniel.  
extracts of letters in Ezra  
random words and occurrences (Gen. 49,  
Jeremiah 10, etc)