

Understanding the Language of Yeshua



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Agenda

- The Context for our Studies
- What Language Did Yeshua Speak?
 - Extra-Biblical Evidence
 - Biblical Evidence
 - Cutting Edge Developments
- What Difference Does It Make?
 - Aesthetic Differences
 - Substantive Differences
 - Fundamental Differences
- What Now?



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Whatever He touches, He changes.



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The Context for our Studies



Theological:

-  Academic
-  Church preachers

Your Personal Study:

-  Books, CDs, DVDs, other materials

Prophetic Significance:

-  Christianity – understanding authentic Biblical Jewish roots
-  Judaism – removing barriers to entry



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Is Language Important?



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Is Language Important?

- Even when we're speaking the same language, the meaning can be completely different between cultures.
- Word meanings change very rapidly, across and within generations.
- Communication is much more than just language – so 2000 years on, Yeshua's language should be even more important to us.



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What Language Did Yeshua Speak?



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Extra-Biblical Evidence



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Extra-Biblical Evidence

"Matthew wrote down the sayings in **Hebrew** and each translated it as he was able."

~ Papias (end 1st Century) ~

Cited by Eusebius, *H.E. [the History of the Church]*, 3.39



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Extra-Biblical Evidence

"Matthew published a written gospel for the Hebrews **in their own tongue**, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there."

~ Irenaeus (end 2nd Century) ~

Against Heresies, 3.1.2



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Extra-Biblical Evidence

“First to be written was that of Matthew; it was published for believers of Jewish origin, and was composed in the **Hebrew** language.

Next came that of Mark, who followed Peter's instructions in writing it... next came that of Luke, who wrote for Gentile converts... last of all came John's.”

~ Origen (end 2nd Century) ~

Cited in Eusebius, *H.E.*, 6.25

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Biblical Evidence



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Biblical Evidence

John 19:20

- Crucifixion sign above Jesus' head -

John 20:16

- Mary speaks to Jesus in Gethsemane -

Acts 21:40

- Paul speaks to the crowd -

Acts 26:14

- Jesus speaks to Saul on the Damascus road -

~ 'Εβραϊστί *Hebraidi* ~



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Hebrew Word Puns

"the Lord God formed the **man** from the dust of the **ground** and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"

~ Genesis 2: 7 ~

אֲדָמָה
ground / earth,
'adamah'

אָדָם
man, 'Adam'



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Hebrew Word Puns

"And if your eye causes you to **stumble**, gouge it out and **throw it away**."

~ Matthew 18: 9 ~

הַשְּׁלִיכָה
hashliche-ah

תִּקְשִׁילָךְ
tach-shilcha



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But There's Aramaic in the NT

How about we *rendez vous* tomorrow at the *café* near the **cul de sac** in town?

I know it's a bit *passé*, but we could do it over *croissants* and a *latte*.

Cul de Sac
"Arse of a Bag"



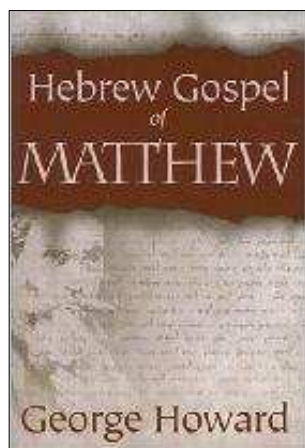
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Cutting Edge...



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Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew

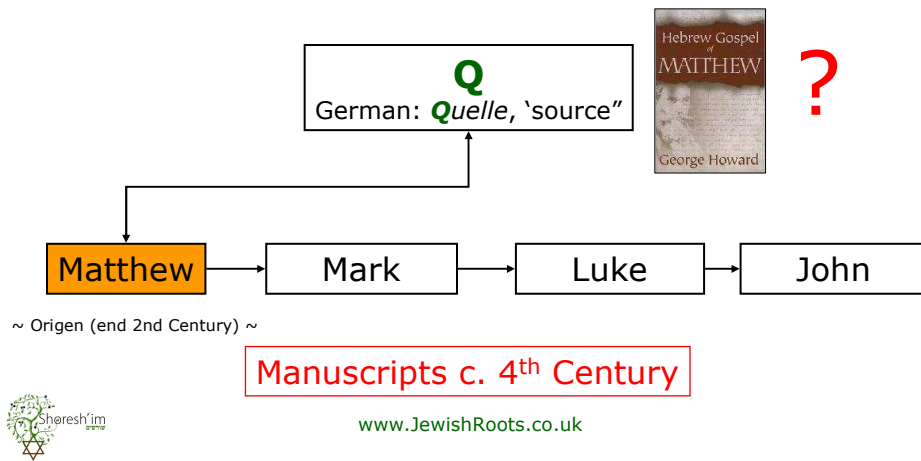


- 🕊 Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut
- 🕊 14th Century Spanish Jew
- 🕊 Inquisition: forced public debates vs. Catholics
- 🕊 *Even Bochan* – 'Test Stone', inc. an appendix of Hebrew Matthew
- 🕊 "Use their own book to refute allegations"
- 🕊 Preserved a Hebrew Matthew?



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Gospel "Family Tree"



George Howard

"Shem-Tov inherited his Hebrew Matthew from earlier generations of Jewish tradents... the unique and archaic readings in his text go back to the early centuries of the Christian era...

Shem-Tov is a prior composition, not a translation."

~ Howard, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, 1995, p 212 ~



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Craig A. Evans

“Shem Tob may actually preserve an independent textual tradition of Matthew, possibly related to a “Gospel in Hebrew letters,” mentioned by the second-century church father Papias.”

~ <http://www.craigaeans.com/Jewish%20Matthew.pdf> ~

(Craig Evans (Ph.D., Claremont) teaches Biblical Studies at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia, Canada)



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What Difference Does It Make?



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Aesthetic Differences

1. pertaining to the obvious physical appearance of
2. pertaining to, involving, or concerned with pure emotion and sensation as opposed to pure intellectuality



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Aesthetic Differences

~ John 3: 3 ~

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

απεκριθη ιησους και ειπεν αυτω **αμην αμην** λεγω σοι εαν μη τις γεννηθη ανωθεν ου δυναται ιδειν την βασιλειαν του θεο



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Aesthetic Differences

~ Matthew 1: 1-3, NIV~

"A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram..."



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Aesthetic Differences

~ Matthew 1: 1-3 in Hebrew ~

זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן־דָּוִד
בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם:

אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק וְיִצְחָק הוֹלִיד אֶת־יַעֲקֹב
וְיַעֲקֹב הוֹלִיד אֶת־יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־אֶחָיו:

וְיְהוּדָה הוֹלִיד אֶת־פְּרֶץ וְאֶת־זֶרַח מִתָּמָר וּפְרֶץ
הוֹלִיד אֶת־חֶצְרוֹן וְחֶצְרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־רָם:



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Substantive Differences

1. belonging to the real nature or part of a thing
2. possessing substance; having practical importance, value, or effect



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Substantive Differences

~ Luke 8: 43-44 ~

“As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no-one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.”



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Substantive Differences

και ιδου γυνη αιμορροουσα δωδεκα ετη
προσελθουσα οπισθεν ηψατο του
κρασπεδου του ιματιου αυτου



Kraspedon

Authorised Version translates
as "border" three times, and
"hem" twice.



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On Divorce

~ Deuteronomy 24: 1-4 ~

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something in her which is displeasing, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, he sends her from his house, and if after she leaves the house she goes and becomes the wife of another man, and that second husband dies, and she returns to the first husband, she may not be re-marry him because she has been defiled. This is the law of divorce.

Πληρώω, plēroō
To proclaim completely;
to give true meaning

~ Matthew 5: 17-18 ~

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."



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On Divorce

~ Matthew 5:31-32 ~

1881 Westcott-Hort

31 ερρεθη δε ος αν
απολυση την γυναικα αυτου
δοτω αυτη αποστασιον

32 εγω δε λεγω υμιν οτι
πας ο απολυων την γυναικα
αυτου παρεκτος λογου
πορνειας ποιει αυτην
μοιχευθηναι

NIV

31 "It has been said,
'Anyone who divorces
his wife must give her a
certificate of divorce.'

32 But I tell you that
anyone who divorces
his wife, except for
marital unfaithfulness,
causes her to become
an adulteress, and
anyone who marries
the divorced woman
commits adultery."

*No Bill of Divorce Required
(contra Deut. 24: 1-4)*

Hebrew Matthew

31 "It has been said,
'Anyone who divorces
his wife must give her
a certificate of divorce.'

32 But I say to you
that every one who
divorces his wife *is to
give her a certificate of
divorce*.

But concerning
adultery, he is the one
who commits
adultery..."

*Must give her Bill of
Divorce, responsibility is
his.*



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On Swearing Oaths

~ Matthew 5:33-37 ~

1881 Westcott-Hort

παλιν ηκουσατε οτι ερρεθη
τοις αρχαιοις ουκ
επιορκησεις αποδωσεις δε
τω κυριω τους ορκους σου
εγω δε λεγω υμιν μη ομοσαι
ολως μητε εν τω ουρανω οτι
θρονος εστιν του θεου...

εστω δε ο λογος υμων ναι
ναι ου ου το δε περισσον
τουτων εκ του πονηρου εστιν

NIV

"Again, you have heard
that it was said to the
people long ago, 'Do not
break your oath, but
keep the oaths you have
made to the Lord.' But I
tell you, Do not swear at
all: either by heaven, for
it is God's throne..."

Simply let your 'Yes' be
'Yes', and your 'No',
'No'; anything beyond
this comes from the evil
one.

Hebrew Matthew

Again you have heard
what was said to those
of long ago: you shall
not swear *by my name
falsely*, but you shall
return to the Lord your
oath. But I say to you
not to swear *in vain* by
anything, either by
heaven because it is the
throne of God...

But let your yes yes or
no no. Everything in
addition to this is evil.



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Fundamental Differences

1. a basic principle, rule, law, or the like, that serves as the groundwork of a system
2. serving as, or being a foundation or basis; basic; underlying



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Good Eyes, Bad Eyes

~ Matthew 6: 22-23 ~

"The eye is the lamp of the body.

If your **eye is good**, your whole body will be full of light. But if your **eye is bad**, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

"bad eye"

Meaningless Greek, but excellent Hebrew idiom for 'mean' / 'miserly'

"good eye"

Meaningless Greek, but excellent Hebrew idiom for 'generosity'



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Fulfil and Destroy

~ Matthew 5: 17-18 ~

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

~ Genesis Rabbah 10: 1 ~

"Everything has an end - heaven and earth have an end - except one thing which has no end. And what is that? The torah."

~ Exodus Rabbah 6: 1 ~

"No letter will ever be abolished from the Torah."



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Fulfil and Destroy

 Technical Rabbinic terms...

 "Your are destroying the Law!"

 "Your are fulfilling the Law!"

 "Fulfil..." – correctly interpret

 "Destroy..." - incorrectly interpret



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Fulfil and Destroy

~ Matthew 5: 17-18 ~

“Do not think that I have come to *incorrectly interpret* the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to *incorrectly interpret* them but to *correctly interpret* them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”



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Bind and Loose

~ Matthew 16: 18-19 ~

“I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

“bind and loose”

Not about *spiritual warfare*, but permission to make rulings for Church life with the authority of Heaven.

Fits the context:

- ‘Rock’
- ‘Build church’
- ‘Keys of Kingdom’
- See also Matthew 18:15-19



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What Now?



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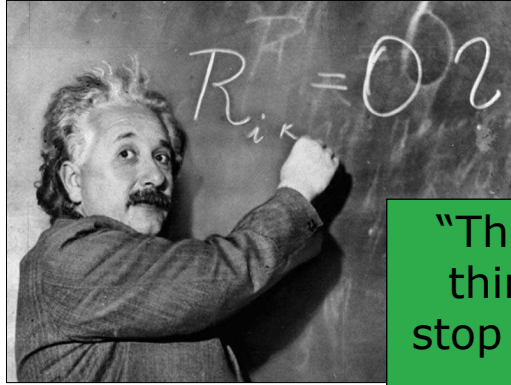
Useful Further Reading

- 💡 David Bivin and Roy Blizzard Jr., ***Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus: New Insights From a Hebrew Perspective***, Treasure House; Revised edition (October 1, 1994), ISBN-10: 156043550X
- 💡 David Bivin, ***New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus: Insights from His Jewish Context***, En-Gedi Resource Center (September 1, 2005) ISBN-10: 0974948225
- 💡 Nehemiah Gordon, ***The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus***, Hilkiah Press (January 1, 2005), ISBN-10: 097626370X
- 💡 James Strong, John R. Kohlenberger III, James A. Swanson, ***The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible***, Zondervan; Revised edition (September 1, 2001) ISBN-10: 0310233437
- 💡 Our website: www.Shoreshim.co.uk or www.JewishRoots.co.uk or www.BiblicalRoots.co.uk



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As Another Famous Jewish Teacher Once Said...



“The important thing is to not stop questioning”

~ Albert Einstein ~



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