

SCHOOL OF MESSIAH BIBLE INSTITUTE

YESHIVAH MASHIACH

Under the Auspice of New Covenant Messianic Ministries Int'l

COURSE:

TRANSMISSION OF THE SCRIPTURES



Prepared By
David Ben Israel (D.R. Mode, Jr.), Th.B, D.D.
President & Overseer

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LESSONS

LESSON 1. INTRODUCTION

LESSON 2. THE SCRIPTURES OF EZRA AND THE SEPTUAGINT

LESSON 3. AQUILA OF SINOPE, TARGUM ONKELOS, AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MASORETIC TEXT

LESSON 4. THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

LESSON 5. THE WRITING OF THE SHALIACHIM/APOSTLES

LESSON 6. THE RELIABILITY OF THE PESHITTA

LESSON 7. TRANSMISSION OF THE SCRIPTURES IN THE WEST

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TRANSMISSION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Description

This course is designed to provide a historical layout of the development and transmission of the Sacred Scriptures throughout the generations of Israel -the Covenant People of Elohim.

Grading System

Assignments 60%

Term Paper 20%

Final Exam 20%

Assignments

The assignments shall consist of a one page written summary of each lecture.

Term Paper

The term paper shall consist of a 3 to 5 page type written paper on a topic related to the course.

TRANSMISSION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Lesson 1. Introduction

Definition

The term “transmission” describes the ancient process of copying Hebrew and Greek manuscripts to preserve them for future generation and to distribute them for greater use. Since there were no copy machines, the texts had to be copied by hand. In this way they were “transmitted.”

I. Writing Materials

A. The original writings of scripture were done on a variety of materials.

Stone – Exodus 24:12; Deuteronomy 5:22; Joshua 8:31,32

Papyrus (made by pressing and gluing two layers of split papyrus reeds to form a sheet) – perhaps mentioned in 2 John 12 (“paper”) and Revelation 5:1 (“scroll/book”)

Animal skins (vellum – calf or antelope, parchment – sheep or goat, leather – cow or bull) – 2 Timothy 4:13 mentions parchment.

B. To inscribe on these materials a variety of tools were used, including stylus, chisel, pen and ink.

II. The Copying Process of the Hebrew Scriptures (originally written in Paleo Hebrew)

A. Early copying

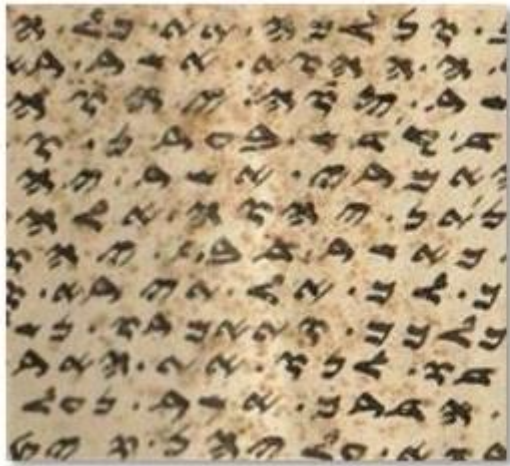
1) First 5 books called “The Torah” is attributed to Mosheh

At first, the only copies of the scriptures were kept at the temple (At first only the 1st 5 books – the Law). For many years, even the copies of the Law were lost, until they were found during Josiah’s reign (2 Kings 22:8-23:3).

Immediately following the Assyrian captivity of the 10 northern tribes, foreign people were placed in northern Israel. These people intermarried with the remaining Israelites in the land becoming the Samaritans. In order for these people to remain in the land they had to be taught the Torah. Cohenim brought the Torah to teach the people.

The Torah Scroll was transmitted to succeeding generations and is regarded as the Samaritan Torah. The Samaritan Torah preserves one of the most ancient sources of the Torah.

The Torah Scroll of the Samaritans use an alphabet that is very different from the one used on Jewish Torah Scrolls. According to the Samaritans themselves and Hebrew scholars, this alphabet is the original "Old Hebrew" alphabet, also called "Paleo-Hebrew."



Samaritan Torah Scroll



Jewish Torah Scroll

Even as far back as 1691, this connection between the Samaritan and the "Old" Hebrew alphabets was made by Henry Dodwell; "[the Samaritans] still preserve [the Pentateuch] in the Old Hebrew characters."

Humphrey Prideaux also writes in 1799; "And these five books [of the Samaritans] still have among them, written in the old Hebrew or Phoenician character, which was in use among them before the Babylonish captivity, and in which both these and all other scriptures were written, till Ezra transcribed them into that of the Chaldeans [Aramaic]."

This same theory is presented in the 1831 edition of the Encyclopedia Americana; "During the Babylonish captivity, they received from the Chaldees the square character in common use; and in the time Ezra, the old Hebrew manuscripts were copied in Chaldee [Aramaic] characters."

Prior to the Babylonian captivity, the Jews used an alphabet very similar to what is found in the Torah scrolls of the Samaritans.

As the books of history (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, etc.), the books of poetry (Job, Psalms, etc.) and the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.) were written and gathered together, scribes began to copy the scriptures for use in various synagogues and for private purchase and study.

Lesson 2. The Scriptures of Ezra and The Septuagint

I. Ezra the Scribe

Ezra lived during the time of Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE) (Note: Josephus confirms that Ezra came on the scene during the period of Artaxerxes I.)

Ezra was responsible for compiling the books of Scripture for the Judean Israelite community.

Views on Compiling the scripture.

1. Ezra received a copy of the Torah from the Samaritans
2. Ezra transcribed the copies of Torah in the Babylonian Aramaic script from copies he compiled
3. It is believed that for forty days, Ezra was under divine inspiration, Ezra dictated to five scribes the twenty-four books of the Old Testament as well as seventy other books that were not to be made public at that time. According to 2 Esdras 14:44-48
4. Among Rabbinic Judaism, in their Talmud, there is a consistent theme of Ezra and the men of the Great Assembly were the ones who collected the sacred writings. In these traditions, Ezra is given a position second only to Moses.

II. The Septuagint

The Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.

Time period of translation: (280 to 250 BCE)

The translation was done in Alexandria Egypt by 72 Judean Israelite scholars

Arrangement of the Septuagint:

Books of the Septuagint

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- Kings (Samuel) I
- Kings (Samuel) II
- Kings III
- Kings IV
- Paralipomenon (Chronicles) I
- Paralipomenon (Chronicles) II
- Esdras I
- Esdras I (Ezra)

- Nehemiah
- Psalms of David
- Prayer of Manasseh
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon
- Job
- Wisdom of Solomon
- Wisdom of the Son of Sirach
- Esther
- Judith
- Tobit
- Hosea
- Amos
- Micah
- Joel
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Baruch
- Lamentations of Jeremiah
- Epistles of Jeremiah
- Ezekial
- Daniel
- Song of the Three Children
- Susanna
- Bel and the Dragon
- I Maccabees
- II Maccabees
- III Maccabees

The Septuagint and the Hebrew text that the Septuagint was translated from composed the Sacred Scripture of Messiah and the Apostles.

The Hebrew Scripture of the Orthodox Christian Churches is the Septuagint.

Contrast Exodus 12:40 in the Septuagint, Samaritan Torah and Masoretic Text

Septuagint:

“And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Chanaan, four hundred and thirty years.”

Samaritan Torah:

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel and fathers of them, who dwelt **in Canaan** and in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years.”

Masoretic Text:

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years

Lesson 3. Aquila of Sinope, Targum Onkelos, and the Development of the Masoretic Text

I. Aquila of Sinope

Aquila of Sinope of about 130 CE was a translator of the Hebrew Scriptures into [Greek](#), a [proselyte](#), and disciple of [Rabbi Akiva](#). The purpose for producing the Greek translation was to replace the existing Septuagint. The Septuagint was highly effective to present Yahshua and Messiah among non-believing Israelites of the sect of Pharisees/Rabbinic Jews. This was the first major attempt by Rabbinic Judaism to produce a text of scripture to be antithetical or to have leanings away from Yahshua of Nazareth as being the Messiah.

II. Targum Onkelos

The Targum Onkelos is a 2nd century CE Aramaic translation of the Scriptures. It is believed that Onkelos and Aquila are the same person. The names "*Onkelos the proselyte*" and "*Aquila the proselyte*" are frequently interchanged in the [Babylonian Talmud](#) and [Jerusalem Talmud](#). Therefore it has been concluded that Onkelos and Aquila are the same person. It is strongly believed that the Targum Onkelos was translated from the first Greek translation of Aquila. Consider the following, [Zvi Hirsch Chajes](#), one of the foremost Galician Talmudic scholars, identified the Aramaic "Targum Onkelos" as Aquila's Greek translation, translated once again into Aramaic.

III. Development of the Masoretic Text

Masoretic text, (from [Hebrew](#) *masoreth*, "tradition"), traditional Hebrew text of the Scriptures used in Rabbinic Judaism, meticulously assembled and [codified](#), and supplied with diacritical marks to enable correct pronunciation. This monumental work was begun around the 6th century CE and completed in the 10th century CE by scholars at Talmudic academies in [Babylonia](#) and Palestine, in an effort to reproduce, as far as possible, the original text of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Masoretic text was the oldest Hebrew manuscript known to exist. It was called the Aleppo Codex which was written in 826 A.D. This text is considered the most authoritative Hebrew manuscript and all future editions are based on this text.

The development of the Masoretic text owes a great deal of its contribution from the translated work of Aquila of Sinope's Greek translation and the Targum Onkelos.

Contrast Exodus 12:40 in the Septuagint and Aquila of Sinope Translation

Septuagint:

"And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Chanaan, four hundred and thirty years."

Aquila of Sinope Greek Translation:

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years”

Lesson 4. The Dead Sea Scrolls

I. DDS Background Information

DSS, ancient, mostly Hebrew, manuscripts (of leather, [papyrus](#), and copper) first found in 1947 on the northwestern shore of the [Dead Sea](#). Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is among the more important finds in the history of modern [archaeology](#). Study of the scrolls has enabled scholars to push back the date of a stabilized Hebrew [Bible](#) to no later than 70 CE, to help reconstruct the history of Palestine from the 4th century BCE to 135 CE, and to cast new light on the emergence of [Christianity](#) and of rabbinic [Judaism](#) and on the relationship between early Christian and Jewish religious traditions.

The documents were recovered in the Judean [wilderness](#) from five principal sites: Khirbat Qumrān, Wadi Al-Murabba'āt, Naḥal Hever (Wadi Khabrah) and Naḥal Ze'elim (Wadi Seiyal), Wadi Daliyeh, and [Masada](#). The first manuscripts, accidentally discovered in 1947 by a shepherd boy in a cave at Khirbat Qumrān on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, were almost immediately labeled Dead Sea Scrolls. Later (especially from the 1950s to the mid-1960s) finds in neighbouring areas were similarly designated.

II. DSS Manuscripts discovered in 11 caves near the ruins of [Qumrān](#)

III. DSS Manuscripts date from the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE.

V. Confirm the legitimacy of the Hebrew Scriptures

- A. Septuagint
- B. Samaritan Torah
- C. Masoretic Text
- D. Has a closer alignment with the Septuagint and Samaritan Torah than the Masoretic text.

VI. Confirm the legitimacy of the “so-called” Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha books

- A. Contains “so-called” Apocryphal writings in the Hebrew language (Note: The Protestant reformer Martin Luther believed that the “Apocrypha” books were not canonical because they were not written in Hebrew.)
- B. Confirms the ancient existence of the book of Enoch that has been preserved in the Geez language by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Note: The credibility of the book of Enoch in the Ethiopic language was criticized by Western Christian theologians. The discovery of the DSS, which contains the book of Enoch, helped to make the book of Enoch more credible in the minds of scholars.)

Lesson 5. Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles

Preface: The Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles commonly called “The New Testament” has been preserved in more manuscripts than any other ancient work of literature. The manuscripts are complete or fragmented catalogued manuscripts with over 5,800 in Greek, 11,000 in Latin and 9,300 in various other ancient languages including Syriac, Ethiopic, Coptic, Slavic, Gothic and Armenian.

I. Original Language of Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles

A. Hebrew/Aramaic

1. 2nd thru 4th century successors of the 1st century Shaliachim (commonly called “Church Fathers”) provide a historical record of the writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles were first written in Hebrew/Aramaic.

Note: The 2nd thru 4th century successors were the following: Papias – 150-170 CE/AD Irenaeus of Lyons -180CE/AD, Origen - 244 CE/AD, Eusebius - 300-325 CE/AD

2. Greek text of the writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles gives evidence of the Greek text being translated from Hebrew in the beginning of Matthew and Mark. Look at an example of a transliteration of the Hebrew root “Qana” (Quph-Nun-Aleph) to the Greek word “Kananites” (Kappa-Alpha-Nu-Alpha-Nu-Iota-Tau-Eta-Sigma) in the phrase “Simon the Canaanite” in Matt. 10:4 & Mark 3:18. In Hebrew “qana” means “zealous or jealous”. Simon the Kananites should be “Simon the Zealot” as expressed in Luke 6:5.

Note: “Canaan” with reference to the land of Canaan in Hebrew is “Khanaan” (Kaph-Nun-Ayin-Nun) and is transliterated in Greek to “Chanaan” (Chi-Alpha-Nu-Alpha-Alpha-Nu) as used in Matt. 15:22 by the phrase “woman of Canaan”.

- B. Hebrew/Aramaic books compiled by the Congregation of Syria (Syriac Congregation) in the 1st century with the exception of 5 books that had not yet been written.
- C. Compiled books of the Scriptures came to be known as the Peshitta

II. Translated into Other Languages (Note: There are multiple thousands of existing manuscripts)

- A. Greek
- B. Ethiopic/Geez – a Semetic language of Ethiopia
- C. Latin

III. Major Existing Ancient Manuscripts

- A. Aramaic Manuscript dated to the 5th century
- B. Greek Manuscripts
 1. Codex Sinaiticus
 2. Codex Alexandrinus
 3. Codex Vaticanus

Lesson 6. The Reliability of the Peshitta

Preface: As a result of the ongoing debate between the Western and Eastern Churches concerning the Primacy of the Greek Scriptures vs. the Primacy of the Aramaic Scriptures, it is important to address the matter of the reliability of the Peshitta.

I. The Peshitta

- A. The term “Peshitta” is a Syriac term meaning “simple”, “common” or “straight”. It was first employed by Moses bar Kepha (a Bishop the Syriac Orthodox Church) in the 9th century to suggest that the text was in common use.
- B. The collection of the Hebrew/Aramaic manuscripts of the Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles.
- C. Manuscripts were copied from generations of copies of the original manuscripts that were compiled in the 1st century by the Congregation in Syria.
- D. The earliest extant (oldest existing) manuscript dates to the 5th century CE.

II. Common Version Used by the Churches of the East

- A. The Peshitta had from the 5th century onward a wide circulation in the East, and was accepted and honored by the whole diversity of sects of Syriac Christianity. It had a great missionary influence: the Armenian and Georgian versions, as well as the Arabic and the Persian, owe not a little to the Syriac. The famous [Nestorian tablet](#) of [Chang'an](#) witnesses to the presence of the Syriac scriptures in the heart of China in the 8th century.

III. An Explanation for the use of the Greek term “*namosa*” in the Peshitta.

- A. The word “*namosa*” is used in the Peshitta to refer to the “Law/Torah”. As a result of this Western Theologians claim that the Hebrew/Aramaic scriptures were translated from the Greek Scriptures.
 - 1) “*Namosa*” is a loan word that became part of the Hebrew/Aramaic language as a result of the Judaen Israelites interacting with the Greek culture since the time of the Greek empire. It is a loan word in the same way as “*ballet*” is a loan word from French that is now of regular use in the English language.
 - 2) Examples of the continued use of the word “*namosa*” which is also called “*nimosa*” are in Hebrew/Aramiac writings of the Talmud to refer to the Torah.

Here is one example:

The Aramaic word “**נימוסא**” (*nimosa*) is used in the Targums and the Jerusalem Talmud. For example where Psalm 1:2 says:

*But his delight is in the Law of YHWH;
and in His Law does he meditate day and night.
(Psalm 1:2)*

The Aramaic Targum has “**נימוסא**” (*nimosa*) for “Law [of YHWH]:”

Lesson 7. Transmission of the Scriptures in the West

Preface: The intent of this lesson is to discover how the Scriptures were transmitted to the Western European world from the 4th century to the present.

I. Greek Text of the Scriptures used in since the 3rd century BCE

- A. Septuagint Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures 280 BCE
- B. Codex Vaticanus – first half of the 4th century
- C. Codex Sinaiticus - 4th century CE
- D. Codex Alexandrinus - early 5th century CE

II. Gothic Translation of the 4th century CE

- A. Translated by Arian bishop Ulfilas or Wulfilas in CE 360 for the Eastern Germanic tribes

III. Latin Text of Scriptures used since the 2nd century CE

- A. 2nd century version used in North Africa and Italy
- B. The Vulgate - translated from Greek into Latin by St. Jerome between CE 383 and 404
- C. The Vulgate became the official Latin Version of the Roman Catholic Church

IV. German Text of the Scriptures

- A. Luther's Complete Bible – German translation from the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek manuscripts in 1534.

V. English Text of the Scriptures

- A. Wycliffe Bible – English translation from the Vulgate in the 14th century from 1382 to 1392 attributed to John Wycliffe.
- B. Douai-Reims – English translation of the Vulgate (NT in 1578, OT in 1607)
- C. Tyndale Bible – First English translation from the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek manuscripts by William Tyndale. (NT in 1526, OT in 1535)
- D. Coverdale Bible – First authorized translation in England by King Henry VIII in 1535. (Produced using the work of Tyndale)
- E. The Great Bible – Another version under the supervision of Coverdale in 1539.
- F. King James Version – A revision of earlier English versions against the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek manuscripts in 1611.

TRANSMISSION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Final Exam

1. Define "transmission" with respect to the course.
2. What were the materials that the Scriptures were written on?
3. What tools were used to write the Scriptures?
4. According to the Samaritans themselves and Hebrew scholars, the Torah Scroll of the Samaritan is the original "Old Hebrew" alphabet, also called the "Paleo-Hebrew". (True or False)
5. Provide 3 views on Ezra compiling the Scriptures.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
6. Give the time frame when the Septuagint was produced.
7. What is the "Septuagint"?
8. The Septuagint and the Hebrew text that the Septuagint was translated from composed the Sacred Scriptures of Messiah and the Apostles. (True or False)
9. Regarding Exodus 12:40, what is the difference between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text?
10. Who is "Aquila of Sinope"?
11. The Targum Onkelos is a 2nd century CE Greek translation of the Scriptures. (True or False)

12. The names "Onkelos the proselyte" and "Aquila the proselyte" are frequently interchanged in the Babylonian Talmud and Jerusalem Talmud. (True or False)

13. What was the time frame of the development of the Masoretic text?

14. The DSS (Dead Sea Scrolls) date from the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE. (True or False)

15. The DSS confirms the legitimacy of the Hebrew Scriptures and the "so-called" Apocrypha writings. (True or False)

16. What is the original language of the Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles?

17. What is the name of the books of Scripture compiled by the Congregation of Syria (Syriac Orthodox Church)?

18. The Greek manuscripts of the Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles were a translation of the original Hebrew/Aramiac manuscripts of the Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles. (True or False)

19. How many Greek manuscripts of the Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles are catalogued?

20. Name 2 of the major existing ancient manuscripts containing the Writings of the Shaliachim/Apostles.

21. The Peshitta was the common version of the Scriptures used by the Churches of the East. (True or False)

22. Explain the use of the Greek term "namosa" in the Peshitta.

23. Who produced the Gothic translation of the Scriptures in the 4th century CE for the Eastern Germanic tribes?

24. What is the name of the official Latin Version of the Scriptures used by the Roman Catholic Church?

25. Martin Luther produced the German translation of the Scriptures from the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek manuscripts.
(True or False)

26. What is the name of the first English translation of the Scriptures that were translated from the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek manuscripts?