

ARAMAIC RESEARCH MATERIALS

It is recommended that disciples first become familiar with working the Greek since

- *the structure and detail of the Greek language fit more closely with our Western way of thinking;*
- *most of the points on language made in our classes and books have to do with the Greek; and*
- *many more reference works are available in Greek than in Aramaic.*

The Word of God of the New Testament was originally given in the Aramaic language, but over the centuries, all of the original Aramaic texts have been lost. The Aramaic text used in our research books is not the original God-breathed Word; it is the Peshitta Version of the New Testament, which was produced by the fifth century A.D. At places this text represents older and more accurate readings than the Greek, while at other places a Greek version may be more accurate. By using both Greek and Aramaic, more truth can be learned from the accuracy of the original Word of God.

The Way International is a leader in the utilization of Aramaic language materials in Biblical research. We have published a series of Aramaic research books that make research in the Aramaic text available to students of the Bible who do not have a knowledge of the Aramaic language:

Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament, Volumes I, II, and III
The Concordance to the Peshitta Version of the Aramaic New Testament
English Dictionary Supplement to the Concordance to the Peshitta Version of the
Aramaic New Testament
Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament by William Jennings

Together these books provide the resources needed to study the greatness of God's Word utilizing the Aramaic text. Each of these books has a very useful numbering system designed to help students who do not know the Aramaic language. Each Aramaic word has been assigned a reference number. These numbers are designed to simplify the study of Aramaic in the same way Strong's numbering system works for Greek and Hebrew.

Another item available is The Aramaic New Testament, Estrangelo Script. This is the first Aramaic title that The Way International published and is useful to someone who already has a knowledge of Aramaic since it is not coded to the numbering system.

Following are descriptions of our Aramaic research books that are coded to the numbering system. You will find it beneficial to open each book and look through it as you read these descriptions. You will also find it very helpful to read the introductions to these books.

The *Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament, Volumes I, II, and III*, have the Aramaic text, which reads from right to left, on one page with an English word-by-word translation underneath. Above each Aramaic word is a reference number corresponding to the Aramaic word as it appears in the concordance, the dictionary supplement, and the lexicon. On the opposite page is a literal word-by-word translation of the Aramaic and the King James Version in parallel columns.

A sequence of numbers is frequently placed before the English words in the interlinear translation. These indicate the order in which these English words are to be read when they deviate from simple right-to-left order. Words have also been added to the English translation which have no

corresponding Aramaic word but are needed for the English to make sense. These words are enclosed in square brackets, []. Words in Aramaic which would be superfluous or redundant in English are translated, but enclosed in angle brackets, < >. When two or more Aramaic words are translated by one English word or phrase, the English translation is placed under the Aramaic words and the Aramaic phrase is enclosed by these signs, 「 』.

The Concordance to the Peshitta Version of the Aramaic New Testament is set up alphabetically by Aramaic root words. The associated words derived from each root are located after the root and are indented. Each word is assigned a reference number, a part of speech (or gender for nouns), and an English meaning. The verses for a verb are listed under their inflected forms. At the end of the concordance is an index that allows you to locate any word in the concordance by the reference number. You should be aware that the verse references in this concordance refer to the Peshitta Version of the New Testament. A few discrepancies between verses found in the King James Version and the Peshitta do occur.

The English Dictionary Supplement to the Concordance to the Peshitta Version of the Aramaic New Testament allows you to look up an English word and find one or more equivalent Aramaic words. The reference number is given for each of these Aramaic words and can be used to find the word in the concordance and the lexicon. Then the concordance can be used to find all the uses of this word in the interlinear.

Jennings's *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament* functions like a dictionary. It provides definitions and other information for Aramaic words in the Peshitta Version, and it is keyed to the same numbering system utilized in the other Aramaic books.

To show how this study system is set up, we will examine how to study the word “dispensation” (administration) as used in Ephesians 1:10.

The first step is to either

1. look up Ephesians 1:10 in Volume II of the interlinear (“dispensation” is translated “administration” in the word-by-word translation) or
2. look up the word “administration” in the *English Dictionary Supplement*.

In both of these books you will see that the corresponding Aramaic word is assigned the number 1631.

Once you find the Aramaic word's number, you can look in the index of the concordance (which begins on page 429) to find the page and column where the word's occurrences are listed. The index also shows how to pronounce the Aramaic word. In our example, you can see that word #1631 is on page 69, column b. There you see a list of the occurrences of the Aramaic word translated “administration”: Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2 and 9, and Colossians 1:25.

Now look up these references in the *Aramaic-English Interlinear*, Volume II. You can look at the interlinear translation, read the word-by-word English translation, and refer to the text of the King James Version. For example, Ephesians 3:9 can be found on pages 534-537. There you can see that the King James Version has “the fellowship of the mystery,” and the Aramaic shows “the administration of the mystery,” which is more accurate. Also the Aramaic does not have the phrase “by Jesus Christ” at the end of the verse, just “God who created all [things].” This is also more accurate.

You can gain further insight by studying other words that come from the same root. The concordance is arranged so that the whole family of words is listed together. Everything from #622 on page 68 to the closing horizontal line at the beginning of page 70 is included.

Using the reference number, you can also look up the word in Jennings's lexicon. First look up the word using its reference number, 1631, in the index at the back of the lexicon. It is listed on page 275. There you will see that information about this word is on page 115 of the lexicon. On page 115 you will find the reference number, 1631, beside the entry for the word. Now you can read the definition and other information about the word.

Enjoy using the Aramaic research materials to enhance your understanding of God's Word!