

We can only reconstruct it theoretically. That is there is nothing written in original Semitic. But it's just like the French and Spanish and Italian ~~an~~ have developed out of Latin. We would not say French has developed out of Spanish or Spanish out of French. But they both developed out of Latin.

Hebrew and Aramaic -- they didn't develop out of each other but it is quite plain they both developed out of ? ? They are very similar in many ways.

Yet there are a few vital differences between them. This Aramaic then is very ancient as we should have known from that fact in Genesis. But 50 yrs. ago people were oblivious to that fact. I guess because the critics claimed Gen. was late. Anyway you pick up a critical book of 40 or 50 yrs. ago and they point to a Psalm with some Aramaic words in it, and they say, This Ps. must be late because it has Aramaic words in it! That is a standard critical argument for putting passages that they have Aramaic words in. Actually it can just as well be early as late, and have Aramaic words in it. The Aramaic lang. had a long history. Actually a longer history than Babylonian because although it did not start as early as Babylonian, at least to be written, to this day there are a few groups in the Near East that still speak dialects of Aramaic as their home language.

There's a book written by Lamsa which he claims to be a translation of the Bible out of the original Aramaic. It is nothing of the kind. I have checked a number of the places where the Aramaic gives absolutely no foundation for his translations. He's taken the KJV and made some changes, but there's no Aramaic basis for them. He's been written up in sensational articles in the last 30 yrs., occasionally in newspapers and magazines, and he's published two or three alleged translations of parts of the Bible which have been beautifully published by the Holman Co. in Phila. and rather widely distributed. But it is not what he says at all.

But he was raised speaking Aramaic. They had a dialect of Aramaic, but it is greatly changed from the ancient Aramaic. They had an article in the Sunday Paper 35 yrs. ago called "What Jesus Said on the Cross was not My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me" but My God My God, for this thou hast kept me! This the great native Aramaic Scholar Lamsa said his cry Eloi, Eloi lama sabathanai actually means. That's what these big sensational things showed.

Somebody sent it to the SS Times about 35 yrs. ago and they asked me to write a discussion of it for them. I wrote a discussion taking the Aramaic Bible and showing that the word tsabach is often used in it to mean "forsake" and does not have to mean "keep." A. In certain contexts it could mean keep, but ordinarily it means forsake. I gave the evidence. They published the article and in a few minutes Lamsa was at the door of my apartment! He said if I could find any error in his book he would pay my way to the Near East to show by my talking to the people there that he was right.