

tell us much because they are brief inscriptions but we can gather a good many facts from them. We don't much about South Arabia as explorers can't go far into it. A few have flown over it and some have gone in there disguised but we know enough to know it was highly developed and a great irrigation project--the great land of the incense production, wealthy land at that time and the Queen of Sheba came from that area to see Solomon. She came from one of the greatest developed areas at that time but it later fell into degeneration and the language entirely disappeared. It is related to North Arabia but somewhat different and the writing system is entirely different.

Ethiopia--of the five Semetic languages, the least important is probably the Ethiopian because we have less material than any of the others--meaning the ancient Ethiopian, the language which was written in ancient times. A true Semetic language, however, and some early translations of the Bible in it which are of great importance.

Number 3 is the Hebrew language and (a) is early evidence. An early evidence of our OT and according to our view, some of it was written as early as the 12th and 13th century BC. Nothing like as early as the Accadian language. Some Hebrew earlier than that time other than Biblical Hebrew. There are a few inscriptions earlier and a few words in Babylonian tablets--words spoken by people in Canaan which proves to us that the language was Hebrew spoken in Canaan when Abraham got there and it is not a language he brought to Canaan as it was there. No proof as to the language Abraham did speak but he came into Canaan where Canaanite was spoken and he took it over although it was not spoken in Ur. We don't know much about early dialects in Hebrew--Phoenician is the same as Hebrew with a different dialect. Little early Hebrew aside from that which we have in the Bible.

The history of the study of Hebrew was carried on by the Rabbis mostly. The Jews were interested but they no longer spoke it except as an exercise because the Sacred books were in Hebrew so they would talk it a little bit--had prayers in Hebrew, read the Bible in Heb. and the Aramic they used was only a translation. The Sacred Scripture was in Hebrew so they kept up the knowledge of Hebrew and they passed it on. The Jews were interested so they could keep the Bible as it was so they tried to build a hedge about the Scripture. These men were called Masseretes because they tried to build the hedge or What they copied we call the Masseretic text and they tried to pass this on to us absolutely accurate.