



New Testament Expositor



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THE LANGUAGES OF ANCIENT EGYPT

On Friday, May 31, 2024, we entered the mortuary or memorial chapel (TT100 or Theban Tomb 100) of Rekhmire who was an official of the 18th dynasty and New Period Kingdom of Egypt. His actual burial plot is unknown, but a mortuary chapel was built in his honor in the Thebes Necropolis which is on the other side of the Nile River from Luxor. During this period, Thebes was the capital city of the New Kingdom. It is significant that a mortuary chapel was constructed in his honor since such was often reserved for the nobility. He was highly regarded, serving as *vizier* to both Thutmose III (ca. 1504–1450 BCE) and Amenhotep II (ca. 1440–1425 BCE). The *vizier* was second only to the pharaoh, a position like that of Joseph, son of Jacob.

This mortuary chapel is laid out like an upside-down capital letter “T.” When one enters the mortuary temple, there is a vestibule that goes east and west (the horizontal bar of the “T”) with a long corridor extending north (the vertical bar of the “T”). At the end of the long corridor is a false door with an area above it, referred to as a statue niche which some believe had a statue of Rekhmire at one time. False doors were believed to be the Egyptians’ door to the afterlife. The walls are richly painted and illustrated with all kinds of exotic animals, deities, and scenes from Egyptian life. All the scenes from Egyptian life illustrated on the walls are truly astounding, including many aspects of construction which Rekhmire would have overseen. It would be a mistake to assume that Ramses II was the only major builder of Egypt. Thutmose II built many temples, monuments, and tombs. Rekhmire’s mortuary temple is just one example of the construction during his reign.

While examining the numerous scenes in this mortuary chapel, one scene particularly caught my attention. I pointed out to my instructor that this picture alone would dispel the notion that there was no such thing as writing during the days of Moses. My professor commented “Anyone that would argue such a position would be laughed out of the field of archaeology.” I recall claims that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch. But such claims are without merit, and archaeology continues to support this.

The Egyptians wrote using hieroglyphics going back hundreds of years prior to the construction of this mortuary chapel. Some sources claim hieroglyphics first began to appear ca. 3100 BCE, and there is evidence of its use as late as the 4th century CE. (The reading of these hieroglyphics was enabled by the discovery of the Rosetta Stone). But the Egyptians also developed Hieratic, a script used for writing that was developed at about the same period. The Egyptians replaced Hieratic writing with Demotic ca. 600 BCE. Eventually these scripts would give way to Coptic early ca. 100 CE. The Hebrews also had script writing as well. In fact, the oldest writing of Hebrew discovered thus far is referred to as the Gezer Calendar which dates to 10th century BCE. There are other examples of

ancient writings which show that written language was not a problem in the ancient world of Moses.

There were really no barriers for Moses to be able to write anything he sought to record. He certainly had the training: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22 NKJV). Moses had the training, time, resources to write the Pentateuch. In addition, the Old Testament claims he did so (e.g., Josh 8:31; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Neh 13:1; Dan 9:11–13; Mal 4:4). Jesus and the writers of the New Testament claimed he did so (e.g., Mark 12:26; John 5:46–47; 7:19; Rom 10:5). Extra-biblical sources relating to the Old Testament, Inter-Testament, and New Testament periods support the authorship of Moses. In addition to these sources, one finds occurrences of Egyptian terms in the Pentateuch. There are also words in the Pentateuch that are in older forms. There are also ancient customs recorded which match the ANE literature of the period from other lands. These traits and others support the text being written by someone matching the profile of Moses.

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(All pictures by David R. Kenney and should be so designated unless otherwise stipulated)

The Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire looking toward the False Door and Statue Niche.

Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes Necropolis, Egypt (TT1000). Photograph by David R. Kenney, May 31, 2024.



David Kenney– Minister

Josephus, John, and Jesus

In Acts 2, the Scriptures teach God established His church, the new Israel. Those of the Jewish community reject this out of hand; they boldly declare there is no “new” Israel and all teachings to the contrary are not of God. Since these are two ideas that are opposed to one another, how can one know which one is right or, for that matter, is either of them right? Where does one begin? Let us begin with Jesus. Jesus is a historical person, that is, He once lived on this earth and taught people in such a way the world was changed because of Him. Only a complete fool would deny He ever existed. There are many fools in this world, but they are a small lot.

In reading Luke’s gospel, I take special notice of the historical markers in his writing, how diligent he was in his historical presentation (Matthew, Mark, and John do similar). In chapter 1, Luke writes about the birth of John the Baptist (as he is commonly identified). John played a significant role in God’s gospel message proclamation. The first century historian, Josephus, mentions him. The following is an extract from that historian:

Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod’s suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God’s displeasure to him. (Antiquities 18.5.2; E-Sword).

John the Baptist is just one of Luke’s historical markers that can be tested and verified (or denounced as untruthful). Josephus was wrong about the purpose of John’s baptism (as Luke 3 and Matthew 3 make clear), but that does not lessen the historicity of his existence. Josephus also says something about Jesus (more on this later in the article).

Jewish Scriptures and Prophecy

Even with Josephus’s historical validation in place, how can one know the truth of God on whether the church is the new Israel or not? Lately, I have been spending a good bit of

time reading a rabbinic anthologized commentary on Isaiah 40-53 to get an accurate sense of what they claim is the prophetic message of the Messiah talked about in these 14 chapters. Taking that information and then comparing it with the New Testament.

Am I sure I am right, and they are not?

That question is important because in Mark 14, the supreme religious council disputed all things associate with Jesus and asked, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven*” (Mark 14:61-62; ASV).

Jesus’ answer brought the contentious relationship between Him and those of the religious community to a clashing head. Their response was immediate, and they moved to have Him executed. What they thought was an ending exclamation point to a life and teaching they opposed turned out to be just the beginning. Less than two months later, in Jerusalem, Peter and the apostles stood up and declared that Jesus was *not* dead but was very much alive. Peter said, ... *him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it ... This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses* (Acts 2:23-24, 32).

Before Jesus was killed by the Jewish community, He expressly declared He was the fulfillment of Scripture. *Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil* (Matt. 5:17). Since Jesus was the fulfillment of the Scriptures and the Jewish community rejected that claim, how can we know we are right?

Consider the evidence Jesus presented in John 5 as a good approach with which to begin.

The Lord knew His credibility was impeccable, but He also knew there was a need for supporting evidence (John 5:30-31). His first piece of evidence was John. *Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth* (5:33-35). Remembering the quote from Josephus earlier, John’s integrity was without dispute, and Jesus did not fail to use him as evidence for who He (Jesus) claimed to be. He did so because He knew the people accepted him. Jesus’ second piece of evidence was the miraculous signs. That which Jesus did was indisputable, without parallel. *And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands?* (Mark 6:2). Jesus’ third piece of evidence was the Father of glory. *And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form* (5:37). This can be understood in one or two ways (perhaps both), the second being more likely. First, they of the community did not hear the Father when He spoke from heaven, as in Matthew 3, 17, and John 12. The more probable interpretation is from John 6:44-45, wherein Jesus made it clear why they did not come to Him: *No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto*

me. In other words, they refused to be taught by the Father even though His words were read every sabbath. A fourth piece of evidence, related to the third, is the effort/work they put into searching the Scriptures. *Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life* (5:39-40). Notice how this is illustrated later in the Gospel when Nicodemus asked, *Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet* (7:51-52). This illustrates the ease at which one can search and not find what is in front of them because they are looking for something different. Maybe that's the problem, someone is look for something rather than allowing the Scripture to tell them something. Finally, a fifth piece of evidence Jesus presented is that they don't have the love of the Father in them and because of this they don't even believe Moses. *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves...For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?* (5:42, 46-47).

Credible Witness

The pieces of evidence considered presumes the biblical record is a credible witness. A few things about this. First, since there are no extant autographs, the New Testament is the product of manuscripts copied through the many years. Conservative scholars are emphatic, "There is no point in disputing that we have the original text when the vast majority of textual evidence points in the same direction—at least 90 percent (or more) of the text." (Stanley Porter, How We Got the Bible, p. 25). Second, regarding archeology, Nelson Glueck once said, "As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible" (A General Introduction to the Bible, p. 381).

This brings us back to Josephus, the historian who wrote of John. Of Jesus, he wrote:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, (9) those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (10) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day. (Antq. 18.3.3 E-Sword)

Some are quick to point out that Josephus could not have possibly written this because Josephus, as a man loyal to the Jewish faith, would not have used language like this to speak of Jesus when he knew well what they thought of Him. Consequently, this pericope must be must be an interpolation (an insertion into the original text). Is there evidence of such? There is not. Since there is no evidence of such, and Luke

(Matthew, Mark, and John) presents evidence of His existence and teaching, coupled with the words of Josephus affirming existence, what will one do with the evidence? For some evidence means nothing. They are looking for something rather than allowing the evidence to tell them something (refer back to the remarks on John 5:31ff).

Sources available upon request.

Ron Thomas

The Reality of Salvation

A young boy at a baseball picnic sprinted to the pool as fast as he could following the potluck meal. Free swimming was available for everyone that played baseball that spring and that young man was not going to be denied the opportunity to get in the pool as fast as he could. Little did he know that the area of the pool he jumped into was too deep for a novice swimmer and the boy quickly became in grave danger and could not maintain himself and started sinking. Thankfully a parent was already at the pool to prepare and saw what was going on with the boy. She quickly jumped into the pool and got the overanxious boy to the edge of the pool where he could get out and catch his breath.

Reality was, if the woman did not get the boy out of the water when she did, the child would have drowned. Thankfully salvation was available to this child through the alertness of an adult. Many people upon this earth have faced near death experiences. Salvation has come to those that faced near death and unfortunately for some near death turned into death as salvation was not meant to be. Many people have been rescued from water, fires, wrecks and natural disasters. Sadly, not all were saved from tragic events.

Salvation is needed by every person that walks the earth. The needed salvation is not from earthly events, but it is salvation from self and separation from God. It is indeed salvation from an experience that will cause eternal death. I will one day leave this earth through death. This is certain. It is the case that after my death, I will need salvation. I can only attain that saving power before I die. This can only happen through Christ Jesus and Him crucified. Salvation can be mine if I am to be saved.

"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). The reality of the need for salvation is because there is a reality of sin. I have sinned and fallen from what God would have me to be. I would like to do what is right in the sight of God and even though I want to do right, I quickly find myself doing what is not acceptable in his sight. I think, say and do things that He would not be pleased with.

All of mankind has fallen short of the greatness and glory of God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Because we are sinners, we deserve to die. God through his great love has provided a way that I might live. "For the wages of sin is death but, the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23). Salvation has become necessary for mankind because of sin. Adam and Eve were separated from God eternally because of their sin (Genesis 3). Through the death burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus it has become a reality.

Continued on Pg. 4– Salvation

AREA EVENTS UPCOMING

March 7-8 Youth Rally North End Church of Christ 1301 West Virginia Ave. ,Parkersburg WV 26104, P- 304-422-0489

March 8 Ladies Day, Hannah Colley, Sandyville Senior Center 29 Gilmore Dr. , Sandyville WV 25275

March 9-13 Gospel Meeting Ken Forest, Reader Church of Christ 78 Eight Mile Road, Reader WV 26167 P-304-386-4546

March 15-16 Centennial Celebration New Matamoros Church of Christ Duncan Drive, New Matamoros OH 45676

March 16-20 Freed Hardeman Lectures, Freed Hardeman University, 158 East Main Street Henderson, TN 38340, 1-800-FHU-FHU1

March 30-April 3 Memphis School of Preaching Lectures, 3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd, Memphis, TN, P- 901-751-2242

April 6-9 Gospel Meeting, Allen Webster, Rio Grande Church of Christ, 568 State Route 325, Rio Grande, OH 45674; P- 740-245-9130

April 12 Ladies Day, Teresa Cleveland and Gina Sexton, My Sisters Keeper, Rio Grande Church of Christ, 568 State Route 325, Rio Grande, OH 45674; P-740-245-9130

April 27-30 Gospel Meeting Scott Judge, Greenville Church of Christ 4599 Children's Home-Bradford Rd. Greenville, OH 45331, P-937-548-4467

House to House- Special Issue

Total depravity. Unconditional election. Limited atonement. Irresistible grace. Perseverance of the saints. Calvinism is not in the Bible; it is false doctrine. Yet our communities are full of people who have been taught these doctrines and are basing their eternities on them. They need the Bible's simple teaching to set them free. Soul-winners reached out to us and requested this topic. Contact us before **April 11** to add this special issue to your print schedule.

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**Continued from page 3- Salvation**

Without salvation, man would not have been able to return to a relationship with God. Without Jesus, man would have eternal separation from God. Because of Jesus, man can go back to God. The Apostle Paul states, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). I may escape dangerous situations in this life and avoid near death. I will never escape the God and He is the only one that can offer eternal salvation. Have you prepared to meet God in a state of having SALVATION.

Scott M. Judge, Minister- Elm Grove Church of Christ

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech¹ you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.