

PREFACE

The language of the New Testament is also called *Koinè* and that means 'common'. For it was the common vehicle of the entire then civilized world that had been conquered by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C. It hails back to the Attic dialect, spoken in Athens. Sometimes it is called Hellenic Greek. A flexible language that was capable of incorporating other Greek dialects and various elements of other tongues in the Middle East.

Greek belongs to the family of Indo-European languages, to which group also the Slavic and Germanic languages belong; as well as the Celtic ones along with Sanscrit, Latin and its Roman tongues. To give you an impression, here the following schema.

English	<i>me</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>mother</i>	<i>brother</i>	<i>ten</i>
Dutch	me	is	moeder	broe(de)r	tien
German	mich	ist	Mutter	Bruder	zehn
French	moi/me	est	mère	frère	dix
Sanscrit	ma	asti	matar	bhratar	daca
Persian	ma	asti	matar	bratar	dasa
Greek	me	esti	meter	phrater	deca
Latin	me	est	mater	frater	decem
Anglo-Saxon	me	is	moder	brothor	tien
Old Irish	me	is	mathir	brathir	deich
Lithuanian	mi	esti	mote	broterelis	deszimtis
Russian	menya	jest'	mat'	brat'	desiat'

The Semitic languages, the native tongues of Africa and America, as well as Egyptian, Chinese and Basque; are situated outside of the Indo-European family.

Koinè was spoken by merchants, diplomats and travelers. If one wanted to reach a large audience, that was the vehicle of speech. It is meaningful that the writers of the N.T. employed this way to express themselves. The Hebrew of the O.T. was no longer the language of faith. In fact, Hebrew had already lost its position before the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the O.T.