The video interview of Professor David Flusser by Dr. Roy Blizzard, is one of the most

informative video interviews I have seen in recent times. Professor Flusser, is one of the

foremost scholars who has an extensive knowledge of the Greek New Testament. In the

interview, he was asked: "as a Jew in the first century just what language did Jesus speak?"

Professor Flusser stated that Jesus spoke Hebrew in response to the question he was asked.

Professor Flusser notes that many scholars believe Jesus spoke Greek, however, that is

improbable. Jesus knew both languages of the land, he knew Hebrew and he knew Aramaic,

however, Jesus spoke Hebrew when he delivered his messages, when he taught the people, he

taught them in Hebrew. All the parables in rabbinic literature are in Hebrew. The Aramaic words

which are in the New Testament are in Mark's Gospel, Professor Flusser expressed his doubts

that these Aramaic words were in the original teachings of Jesus. However, even if Jesus used

some Aramaic words in his teachings, those words were at the same time translated into Hebrew.

Hebrew had been the established language dating back to the period of the Maccabees. The

apocryphal book of Ben Sira was written in Hebrew. The Dead Sea Scrolls were written in

Hebrew, and all Jewish prayers are in Hebrew except the Kaddish, also there are no Aramaic

words in the Talmud. There is therefore no merit to the idea that Jesus spoke Greek.

The language spoken by Jesus makes a great difference in the understanding of his teachings. In

order to have a proper understanding of his teachings, one must have an understanding of the

development of the Hebrew in the time of Jesus, since there are differences in ancient Hebrew,

and the Hebrew of Jesus' time, and the Hebrew of the rabbinic periods. Professor Flusser states,

"It is even possible that the Hebrew which is behind the Gospel is a mixture of a kind of

synthesis between the biblical Hebrew and the high Hebrew of his day." In the beatitudes in

Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The expression "poor in spirit", according to Flusser, has its background in the Greek which means poor or poor hearers. In order to understand the meaning of this expression, one has to know that is was verbally translated from Greek, and then one has to know what was its meaning in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This expression appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls and it is a self designation of the Essenes. Professor Flusser states that if one understands what the expression means in the Greek and the Dead Sea Scrolls, then one would be able to understand that the expression poor in spirit does not mean the proletariat but in fact the expression "poor in spirit" means the "the poor who have the Holy Spirit.". This can only be possible when one has knowledge of the Hebrew background.

The most surprising thing I have heard from the Flusser interview is that Professor Flusser seems to have a high degree of respect for Jesus. When Professor Flusser's views are compared with the many Jews who have rejected Jesus, his teachings and his claims, he has a different perspective. Professor Flusser writes, "It is impossible to define Jesus' personality and Jesus' claims completely clearly because he is unique in the whole world. But one thing is clear: that he was both a Jewish teacher and Jewish leader and that he is seen having a special contact between himself and God and that he thought that he will return as the savior." Professor Flusser sees Jesus as a unique person, a teacher and a Jewish leader who believed that he had a special relationship with God. Professor Flusser speaks of the words of Jesus as a hidden treasure and notes that it is important to study his teachings; especially since the world is in such turmoil today. Professor Flusser notes in the interview "The purified Judaism of Jesus is one of the few hopes…probably the only hope to live in our world." Jesus recognized he had a special task to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and to bring together those who receive his message.