

Learning Languages

<< [Scripture](#)

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For the average person, the most difficult barrier to understanding the Scriptures is that they were originally written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Learning these languages is the most time consuming method of studying Scripture ... but it is also the most rewarding. Many words and concepts in one language can be very difficult to translate into another language. By learning these concepts in the original language with all of the subtle meanings attached to it, a deeper understanding can be attained within a passage. We should not forget that Hebrew is a noun poor language which challenges translators when moving to a language like English which is rich in nouns.

The problem with translations into one's own language is that it often comes with the translator's own theological interpretation mixed in with it. This theology can be hidden by the choice of wording used in translating and by the addition of words and concepts not found in the original language. Even when we use a literal translation of the Scriptures, sometimes accuracy and precision are given up to make the translation more easily read and understood to reach the largest number of people. Inaccuracy can cause the weight and meaning of a passage to be softened or sometimes lost. When we look at the original language, we get exactly what is there without any additions or subtractions by translators.

One difficulty that exists in reading the original languages is that we do not have the original manuscripts that were written. Instead, we are working with copies of copies. During the copying process, slight variations have come into existence where words, phrases, and entire passages are added, lost, or modified. This is especially true with the Greek texts. This usually does not effect the meaning of a passage. When it does, we must try to determine what wording is closest to the original.