

Practical Effects of Translational Bias

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.' " (Genesis 3:1-3 NASB95)

The modern Protestant Bible in English is comprised of 66 books, authored by dozens of separate writers over a period of perhaps 1,500 years having amazing consistency and agreement. There are thousands of manuscripts of the Apostolic Scriptures (NT) that exist in various languages, mostly in Greek and Latin, produced over perhaps 1,200 years and showing remarkable agreement with each other.

The *Journal of Biblical Literature* reported that as of the year 1967 there were catalogued 81 papyrus manuscripts, 267 uncial (or capital letter) manuscripts, and 2,764 minuscule (small letter) manuscripts containing all or parts of the New Testament. In addition there were 2,143 lectionaries or manuscripts containing pericope selections of the New Testament.¹

Hebrew manuscripts of the Tanach (OT) are fewer but also show remarkable agreement with each other (and the Apostolic Scriptures). Written over a span of some 1,000 years, the agreement is confirmed also from sources such as the Dead Sea Scrolls (Hebrew and Aramaic and dated to in and around the first century C.E.) and the Greek Septuagint (estimated to have been written 300 years B.C.E.).

All in all, by any measurement, the Bible stands alone as a monumental achievement beyond the scope of any one mortal or group of mortals to produce unaided. It is stamped indelibly with an Intelligence much greater than any man's. Nevertheless, there are potential problems with the existing manuscripts including the lack of autographs, time between original writing and oldest manuscripts, textual variants and translational difficulties.

Autographed originals, in the writer's own hand, signed 'Sincerely, Moses' or the like, have not been found and probably don't exist (one possible exception being the stone tablets in the Ark if it is ever found again). In addition to the lack of autographs, the copies in existence come no closer to the original time of writing than hundreds of years. A minimum gap exists of about 400 years for the Tanach (OT) (the estimated time between the completion of Malachi and the writing of the Dead Sea Scrolls), and maybe two hundred years for the Apostolic Writings (NT). In order to understand what God requires from him, modern man is left to depend on copies and translations far removed in time from the first writing. But these problems, though not simple of solution, can be surmounted by using such aides as historical cross references, archeology,

¹Armin J. Panning, "The New American Standard Bible, Is This The Answer?" Essay, from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary web site, [www.wls.wels.net/library/Essays/ Authors/pq/PanningNASB/PanningNASB.pdf](http://www.wls.wels.net/library/Essays/Authors/pq/PanningNASB/PanningNASB.pdf), p. 1.

number and type of manuscripts, age of manuscripts, patristic quotations, and so on. Textual variants are plentiful and potentially harmful to the transmission of the text, but fortunately in the final analysis these comprise only a small amount of text and do not affect the meaning.

...in its publication, *Why So Many Bibles*, the Society states that variant readings comprise only about 1% of the original text. In speaking of this 1% it says: “There are differences of opinion concerning the remainder, but *no important matter of fact and no doctrines are affected by the results of text study of the New Testament.*” (Italics theirs)²

Translation difficulties, on the other hand, present very large potential barriers to understanding, especially if the translator has an excessive bias against one of the biblical languages or cultures. ‘Translational bias’ is defined as the tendency of the translator to have prejudice against, or perhaps simply to be unknowing of, somebody else’s culture or language. The bias can work both ways, either in de-emphasizing a culture or promoting it beyond reason. In particular, there are definite prejudices on the part of some translators against the Hebrew culture, although in modern times the pendulum has started to swing the other way in some quarters towards a prejudice of the Greek.

One of the best (or worst, depending on one’s viewpoint) examples of anti-Hebrew bias is found in the King James Version of Acts 12:4, where the Greek word *pascha*, meaning Passover, is translated as ‘Easter.’

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter () to bring him forth to the people. (Acts 12:4 KJV, parenthesis added)

All other occurrences of this word are translated as ‘passover,’ (28 times), and only once is it translated this way. At the time of the events of Acts 12, Easter did not exist except in various pagan ceremonies, and even if it did exist it most certainly would not have been celebrated or even noticed by the Jews. Herod was, after all, trying to please the Jews (those who were not of the household of the Faith). The concept of Easter, while it probably would have been very appealing to such as Herod, would not have mattered in the slightest to those he was trying to ingratiate himself with. The attempt of the church to replace Passover with Easter didn’t produce fruit until three or four hundred years later. The word ‘Easter’ was obviously inserted by the King James translators in an effort to ignore the Hebrew culture and promote the (then) church’s idea of a replacement Passover.

Translational bias has been a problem since the beginning, before a written text even existed. The serpent in the Genesis text quoted above is obviously prejudiced against what God originally instructed the first man and woman to do concerning fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, and has been so ever since. “Has God said” is a common refrain among those who seek to undermine the authority of the Father throughout history. As Eve shows us, by her adding of the ‘don’t touch’ embellishment to God’s Law (the text records only that God says not to ‘eat,’ although

²Ibid, p. 2, quoting from the American Bible Society publication “Why So Many Bibles?” (The Evangelical Foundation Inc., 1968), page 15

‘touching’ could have been implied), the problem is not limited to writing from God. It is also a problem in hearing His Words directly, and even in reading what is written.

“...we all need a new sense of respect for the Holy Scripture. Believing it to be the veritable word of God, we must exercise all the human pains possible to keep from overlaying it with a gossamer pattern of our own spinning. In each of those cases where human error enters, divine truth is obscured. Let us then steer a straight course through the Holy Bible, neither turning to the left side of heresy nor to the right side of unbridled imagination.”³

Some people, like James Trimm, merely imply that the current translations are somehow deficient for conveying spiritual understanding when publishing texts such as his ‘Hebraic-Roots Version “New Testament.”’ But others have been more forthright in accusing Bible translators of bias so severe that it has robbed the Bible of its meaning, and ‘damages’ the reader spiritually. One person even goes so far as to label problems associated with translational bias as “mistranslations.”

“The Gospels are rife with mistranslations, “But does it really make any difference?” the reader asks. “Even if there are mistranslations here and there, does one really have any difficulty in understanding the words of Jesus? Are there any passages that have been misinterpreted to such an extent that they are potentially damaging to us spiritually?” Unfortunately, the answer is “yes.” In fact, had the Church been provided with a proper Hebraic understanding of the words of Jesus, most theological controversies would never have arisen in the first place.”⁴

It has become fashionable with a number of people in this “Hebrew roots” camp to question the Apostolic Writings because the existing manuscripts are mostly written in Greek. The reasoning goes that since Jesus, and the people He spoke directly to, most assuredly spoke (and the assumption is that they also wrote) in Hebrew, then the Greek is a translation itself and should not be relied upon to make other translations. It is assumed by this camp that the ‘original’ manuscripts must have been in Hebrew, and the translation into Greek has harmed people spiritually. It is also assumed that it would be better to have translations from the supposed Hebrew originals because they would be more spiritually beneficial. These assumptions seem to be based on nothing more than a preference for all things Hebrew rather than sound scholarship, a ‘translational bias’ itself.

In many ways translational bias is unavoidable, especially if we include as translators all who read the Word. There is a certain amount of ‘translational bias’ in all of us because of our backgrounds, education, and frame of reference. Our understanding and our culture influence our perspectives tremendously. So what are the practical effects of translational bias? How does the average person know, apart from an extensive knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and perhaps Latin, whether or not the translation he or she is reading is the correctly translated Word

³Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, Third Revised Edition, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House 1979), p. 290.

⁴David Bivin and Roy Blizzard Jr., *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus, New Insights From a Hebraic Perspective*, Revised Edition, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1994), p. 67.

of God? How can it be certain the translations we have are as He intended His Word to be transmitted? Does translational bias matter as much as some of those in the Hebrew Roots camp and others imply? Is the (presumably) untrained reader damaged spiritually by translational bias?

The implications are of great moment, because if translational bias is such a large issue, it reflects on God's ability to deliver a text that is essentially free of corruption and plainly sets down His requirements for His children. This would make it impossible to live a life pleasing to God, unless He chose to communicate directly. If, as David Biven and others say, translational bias has so thoroughly corrupted the translations that "spiritual damage" will befall any who rely on them to determine the will of God for their lives, then what hope does a man have that he can accurately live his life in a God-pleasing fashion? Is God incapable of delivering His Word to us uncorrupted? Is it correct to say, in the face the aforementioned evidence for the unity, consistency, and agreement of what we now have, that translational bias has kept us from properly learning and doing the message from God?

One piece of evidence put forth by the 'mistranslation' sect of the Hebraic roots camp is offered by James Trimm in the 'Hebrew Roots Version' of the Bible he claims to have translated. Setting aside for the moment some of the other problems with Mr. Trimm swirling around currently, a look at his translation of Matthew 19:24 (cf. Mark 10:25 and Luke 18:25) shows only a slightly different reading than the translators of the NASB and other versions have used. Trimm prefers to use an Aramaic manuscript which has a word for camel that can also mean (according to him) a large rope. The NASB version of Matthew 19:24 is rendered as follows:

"Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

James Trimm's version substitutes the words "large rope" for camel.

"And again I tell you; It is easier to pass a large rope through the eye of the needle, than to bring the rich into the Kingdom of Heaven."

The problem is, even if the 'large rope' were the correct translation, **it doesn't affect the meaning**. Obviously, no matter what imagery is used the idea is still conveyed that riches cause great difficulty when trying to enter the kingdom of heaven. In this example there doesn't seem to be a great deal of 'spiritual harm' generated.

But Trimm also takes exception to the translation in Matthew 26:6 and Mark 14:3 of Simon as a leper, using Leviticus 13:46 as backup to say that, "As any Bible student knows, lepers were not permitted to live in the city."⁵ He thinks that the Aramaic words for 'jar merchant' and 'leper' are confused here, and that given the fact of the expensive jar of oil being broken and poured out on Jesus it is more likely that Simon was a jar merchant than a leper. The trouble is, even if we grant Trimm's proposition, how does this change the meaning, except perhaps to clear up what appears to be a violation of the residency requirements of a leper? In fact, the house of Simon

⁵James Trimm, *Hebraic Roots Version "New Testament,"* (Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism, Hurst, TX), page VII.

could have been outside of Bethany proper as Scripture dictates, or the phrase ‘outside the camp’ in Leviticus 13:46 could be interpreted as ‘outside of Jerusalem’ or have still another meaning beyond the scope of this discussion. The practical effects, again, of this supposed translational bias are neutral at best and certainly do not ‘damage’ the reader spiritually.

In a third example of what ends up being specious and incomplete reasoning is his objection to the term ‘eunuch’ in Matthew 19:12 and Acts 8:26f.

“For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.” (Matthew 19:12 NASB95)

So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, (Acts 8:27 NASB95)

Trimm doesn’t think the term eunuch fits, seemingly because of his self-confessed limited understanding rather than some textual variant or translational error. If he had only read a couple of verses previous to that of Matthew 19:12 (verses 3 through 11), he would see that the Master and Messiah is making a point about marriage and the kingdom, where the word eunuch is most probably used to describe an unmarried (and by association childless) person. The Ethiopian eunuch was likely “made (a eunuch) by men.” While he may not have been accepted (Deuteronomy 23:1) into the nation of Israel (he was heading back to Ethiopia), that does not mean something else could have happened. For instance, he could have been outside the Temple similar to the one “beating his breast” and asking for mercy in Luke 18:13. Or there could also be another understanding of what is meant in Deuteronomy 23:1 when it is said that the eunuch “shall not enter the assembly of the Lord.” If this means ‘salvation’ then many people are going to be left by the wayside, because in Deuteronomy 23:2 it says that people of “illegitimate birth” (non-Jewish mothers) and their descendants are also excluded. If it doesn’t mean ‘salvation’ as Trimm seems to think it does (equating being a Jew with entry into the kingdom), then the use of the word by Jesus and the writers of Matthew and Acts is perfectly acceptable, and it is the understanding of James Trimm that needs to be augmented, not the translation.

In this and other evidence presented by Trimm there does not seem to be any confirmation of the claim that the English translations from the Greek are somehow ‘damaging’ to the reader’s spirituality as Biven suggests. The meaning of these examples is clear with a little study and Scripture comparison. As a matter of fact, a little study and Scripture comparison is an excellent way to resolve many of the supposed ‘translational bias’ problems of the Word. Most theological problems could be eliminated by reading the text, if the text itself was actually the problem. But David Biven has another opinion.

“The truth is that one can keep reading the Bible forever, and the Bible will not tell him the meaning of these difficult passages. They can be understood only when translated back into Hebrew.”⁶

⁶Bivin and Blizzard Jr., p. 3

It is true that the follower of God should consult other resources and listen to other opinions when attempting to understand the Word. It is also true that there are cultural, language, and literary differences that should be taken into account in any worthwhile study. But to say that the Author of Language and Creator of Tongues has somehow fallen down on the job in failing to preserve and deliver His Word to His children in whatever language they speak is a stretch of no mean proportions.

Biven offers the example of Matthew 11:12 in support of his ‘spiritually damaging’ hypothesis.

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. (Matthew 11:12 NASB95)

He states that, “There seems to be no satisfactory explanation of this verse even in scholarly literature.”⁷ Then he goes on to suggest an “old rabbinic interpretation” of Micah 2:13 discovered by Professor David Flusser provides the answer to the puzzle. This rabbinic interpretation speaks of a shepherd who “breaks out” his sheep from a temporary pen made of stones. While agreement is made that a rabbinic interpretation of another part of Scripture could shed light on this text, this does not support the claim of Biven that ‘spiritual damage’ would result from an incomplete understanding of these verses. He seems to contradict his previous statement here that mere “reading (of) the Bible forever will not tell him the meaning of these difficult passages,” because he uses another part of the Bible to explain the text in question (Scripture does interpret Scripture, even if there is some translational bias in there). Jesus in Luke 13:24 even points to the beginning of an alternate understanding, without resorting to ‘forcing’ the text into the position of a mistranslation.

“Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24 NASB95)

The word “strive” (μ , agonizomai) meaning to ‘struggle,’ ‘contend,’ ‘fight,’ or ‘endeavor with tremendous zeal’ points to another type of “violence” that seems to fit more with the context of Matthew 11:12ff than that put forth by Biven, without the need to see ‘spiritually damaging translational bias.’ If only Mr. Biven had stayed with trying to help explain the text by understanding Hebrew idioms, and not strayed into the area of opening up God’s Word to doubt, we would be more indebted to him for his insights. Many of his explanations for difficult passages may have some good thinking in them, but we need to be very careful of broadcasting ideas that cast aspersions on the ability of God to preserve His Word.

“To the captious spirit, predisposed to find and magnify difficulties in the divine revelation, the biblical discrepancies will be great stumblingblocks, and occasions of disobedience and cavil. But to the serious inquirer, who desires to “know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xiii, 11), a faithful study of these discrepancies will

⁷Biven and Blizzard Jr., p. 85.

disclose hidden harmonies and undesigned coincidences which will convince him that these multiform Scriptures are truly the word of God.”⁸

Difficulties in translation or any other area are not improved or eliminated by insisting that the only meaningful text is that framed in the Hebrew language (or any other language), either. The nation of Israel received handwritten tablets direct from God (it is not known what language) and the record shows it did not help with obedience. Moses was even present to relay and interpret God’s writing (and speaking), but was constantly confronted with hostility and stubborn refusal to obey anyway. The prophets spoke to the failure of Israel to obey over and over, and it didn’t seem to matter that the language used to chastise them was the ‘proper’ language or not. Jesus quoted the Hebrew Scriptures extensively, speaking in what was probably Hebrew or Aramaic, and many believed, but many more continued in their rebellion, up to and including executing the bearer of the message. It seems plain that obedience to God’s Word doesn’t derive from the accuracy of the delivery but the receptivity of the heart. As Walter Kaiser has said (speaking of the Law but surely applicable to all of the Word),

"That (The Law) is not where the problem ever existed, for Israel or the Church: The problem always was with people, not the Law."⁹

Practically speaking, there are tools the untrained person possesses that can help counter translational bias. For instance, the number of scholars working to make the translation can mitigate a large portion of the effects of translational bias and act in favor of an accurate rendering of the text. Over 100 scholars worked on the New International Version. Close to 50 worked on the King James Version. The jacket of the New American Standard Bible states that, “58 consecrated and dedicated scholars” worked at translating it.¹⁰ It is said that 70 Jewish scholars worked on the Septuagint. Granted, with a small number of people, agreement could be legislated and controlled (and sometimes is), and thus a translation produced that is false even if homogenized. But the likelihood of this happening is remote given the skeptical and critical nature of scholars, especially when the translation is exposed to the probable skepticism and criticism of *other* scholars. While the number of scholars alone is not in itself a guarantee of bias free translating, it still helps to curb personal excesses and encourage a more accurate rendering.

Another, related, tool or technique that can be used to counteract or mitigate translational bias, if it were really ‘the’ problem, is that of comparing translations. Many English translations from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible have been produced over the past few hundred years, as well as multitudes of translations into other languages.

“It has been estimated that since the appearance of the KJV in 1611, there have been published in the English language no less than 30 versions of the entire Bible, 75-80 New Testaments, and upwards of 150 parts of Scripture, and that estimate does not take into

⁸Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics, A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1978), p. 532.

⁹Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Place of Law and Good Works in Evangelical Christianity*, in *A Time to Speak: The Evangelical-Jewish Encounter*, ed. A. James Rudin and Marvin R. Wilson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 132. Quoted by Marvin R. Wilson in the book “Our Father Abraham” (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989), page 28.

¹⁰*New American Standard Bible*, (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation Book House, Inc., 1971, p. IV)

account the numerous translations included in the growing list of commentaries that exist.”¹¹

So many translations have been produced, in fact, that it is equivalent to having one’s own university on the living room bookshelf. There is no hiding of personal doctrinal bias in the searching light of company such as this.

But the weightiest fact bearing on the inability of translational bias to truly affect the understanding of the Word is that the foundation for all of the books is the first five, known as the Torah. The Torah was the first ‘canon’ (a Greek word meaning ‘rule’ or ‘standard’) by which any additional writing, or any prophet or preacher, was always measured.

“You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2 NASB95, cf. Deuteronomy 12:32)

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. (Isaiah 8:20 NASB95)

This foundation was itself subject to the bedrock of God’s direct Word, spoken to Moses and inscribed on stone. All the prophet’s messages point back to it. The Wisdom Books contemplate some aspect or aspects of understanding from it.

God, speaking directly to Moses, and giving him a written record (in summary fashion) of His conversation to him, established the primary “rule” (canon) for all subsequent revelation. What would be written by the prophets (including Moses) would by necessity have to align itself with the Torah given at Sinai. The measuring stick of Scripture was handed to Moses when God wrote upon the prepared tablets.¹²

John the Baptist and Jesus called the nation of Israel to repentance, meaning that people should live lives in submission to it, unfettered by the traditions of men which added requirements or subtracted meaning from it. All of the other Apostolic Writings extol the virtues and blessings of following it, and expect the true child of God to live by it. The Revelation describes those who hold to the testimony of both the Messiah and His Word. Stephen, in Acts 7, refers to the so-called Old Testament as ‘living oracles.’

“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. (Acts 7:38 NASB95)

The principle of all Scripture being based on the Torah is illustrated further in a rabbinic anecdote recorded in the Talmud. According to this anecdote, a gentile approached a rabbi by the name of Shammai and asked to be converted, but to teach him the Torah while standing on

¹¹Panning, p. 1

¹²Tim Hegg, , *How We Got Our Bible, An Introductory Course*, (self-published course syllabus: Tacoma, WA 2004), page 120.

one foot. Shammai chased him away. The same gentile then went to another rabbi named Hillel, and posed the same statement and question combination. Hillel took up the challenge by responding, “that which you hate, don’t do to others. That is the entire Torah, the rest is simply explanation (commentary). Go and learn it!”¹³ These two rabbis were born the generation before Jesus, showing that some of the principles taught by Jesus were not that new, after all.

Speaking of Jesus, He also summarizes the whole of the Torah by a similar statement recorded in several places in the Apostolic Writings.

“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12 NASB95)

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:36-40 NASB95)

Jesus also summarized the instructions of God (Torah) in another way when He said, “Love others as I have loved you” (John 13:34, paraphrased, cf. John 15:12).

God’s Word has always been filtered through the understanding of man, since it was first given in the Garden of Eden. The copying and translation processes of the Word of God have been filtered through the human understanding of the copiers and translators since Moses was told to write them down. In fact, it could be said that the translational bias possibilities go all the way back to when God talked with the first person, and come all the way down to the current reader. But the only ‘spiritual damage’ that occurs to a reader of the Word is the damage to the prideful carnality and sinfulness of the soul when contemplating the awesomely pure and holy words of the Lord of Hosts.

The people who want to insist on a Hebrew original for the Apostolic Writings (NT) imply that somehow God has missed the boat in delivering His Words to man in a way that can be easily understood. If one blindly accepts this proposition there is indeed much ‘spiritual damage’ that occurs, starting with fostering a lack of trust in God’s abilities. If God allowed the failings of human translators to get in the way of the living oracles, then they are robbed of their effectiveness. It is the heart without faith that will look for any excuse to avoid obedience to the will and authority of the Father, starting with impugning the veracity of the written oracle in whatever version it is published. Even an autographed original in Hebrew without textual variants, or even tablets of stone written by the finger of God, will not help such a one.

“Different people look for different things in the Ten Commandments. Some are looking for divine guidance, some for a code of living. But most people are looking for loopholes.”¹⁴

¹³Shabbos 31A.

¹⁴Humorist Sam Levenson

Fortunately, for the person without scholarly training in biblical languages, the practical effects of translational bias, real or imagined, are surmountable. Many dedicated scholars have worked long and hard, some of them even suffering death (at the hands of the ‘church’), to translate the Living Oracles into as many languages as are spoken. The efforts of these people can be compared one to another to keep the inevitable discrepancies to a non-damaging minimum. Correct language doesn’t automatically improve one’s ability to accept or obey anyway, even if that language is spoken by God Himself.

The Torah also remains as the first canon, the rule and guide for interpretation of the balance of the message of the Gospel. If this canon is returned to the average follower of God, dusted off of the cluttering and obscuring effects of translational biases such as Dispensationalism or Covenant Theology, or even the ‘Hebrew Roots’ thinking, then whatever shadow of spiritual damage that might be present in a translation is dissolved in the pure light of the Source.

The heart of faith, filled with love and trust, responding to what is preserved and presented, hearing and doing what God says for it to hear and to do, beating the breast and asking for God to have mercy on a sinner, will always understand the will of his or her Father.

Faith is not a blind acceptance of what we are unable to prove, but the sure and steady belief that what we are unable to fully explain may still be true, especially if God has declared it so....

Yet in this search for answers, by faith we proceed with the knowledge that there are answers to the nagging questions we have. Moreover, we believe that the word of God, as we now have it, is sufficient in every way for faith and *halachah* (walking).¹⁵

Our Father encourages all of His children to ‘labor’ and ‘be diligent’ to obey His Word.

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth. (2 Timothy 2:15 Amplified New Testament)

That God’s Word has lost its’ effectiveness is, of course, not the case, given the large number of people who have come to an intimate relationship with the Father over the millennia. It seems obvious that the heart of faith can discover, in any language, what His Father requires of him. Whether the Spanish word for Jesus (pronounced ‘hey-soos’) is used or the Hebrew word (Yeshua or Y’hoshua), the sacrifice He made for man comes through loud and clear. His request, for a man to give back all that he has in return, is understandable and reasonable, no matter the grammar and syntax.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11 NASB95)

¹⁵Hegg, page 78, parenthesis added.