

Aldrich - (indistinct) a few decades

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Dillard Exactly. And then I've been interested in languages and we've a bunch of them there.

Aldrich That's an interesting thing. How crucial is the knowledge of Hebrew? for a really thorough investigation of the OT?

AAM I would say that a thorough investigation of the OT is impossible without a real knowledge of Hebrew and of Aramaic, because part of the OT is in Aramaic, and even there if we're to fully understand them, there is much in the Egyptian hieroglyphics and in the Babylonian cuneiform that throws light on various concepts and meaning of words and the whole cultural background which enters into our understanding of the OT.

Aldrich Let's come back to that in a moment. Right now we'll have to take a another break for a public service service announcement and I'll ~~ask~~ you other two gentlemen maybe speak to the whole idea leave

of how Hebrew language is different than our contemporary American English and what kind of mental changes one has to go through in order to really get into it. I studied a little bit of Hebrew and it was totally different for me, because all my other languages were Indo-European languages. Even the Greek is much closer to us. In Hebrew the whole tense structure was just abolished; it was almost like a whole new world to me. Let's come back to that in minute.'

Aldrich So what about the difference between Hebrew thought and language and our contemporary thought and language.

Dillard your questions are very dear to my own interest because of my own general interest in languages. If you ask someone who wants to study OT, why study Hebrew? He has to do that, otherwise he's left to the tyranny of the experts as between him and the text as a translator

Aldrich Can't Hebrew be adequately translated into English?

Dillard You get different answers on that. One of the principles that is used in modern linguistic theory, particularly in translation theory is that it is possible to say in any language what is said in another. That is to say, I can say in English what is said in the Biblical text. It's usually going to take me more words, but just because Hebrew has only two tenses and English has however many does not mean that Hebrew is not interested in time, they just spoke of it a different way. They might use prepositional phrases or adverbs or some other meaning. But what is said in Hebrew can be said in English although in translating, particularly when you stay close to the text you're always going to lose a little bit, and you're always going to add a little bit.

TVT Yes, I think the concepts can be gleaned. The concepts can be gleaned even though the exact words cannot be given a word for word equation. There's where our students often run into their difficulty.