

The trend today seems to be away from ministers and preachers acquiring and developing a working knowledge of biblical languages. In part this reflects the trend away from full-time theological training towards a preference for part-time and correspondence courses which usually do not include Greek and Hebrew. Even if they are competent in New Testament Greek, however, most preachers know little Hebrew. This article addresses the question of whether the study of biblical Hebrew is a worthwhile pursuit for the Christian preacher. The question is not whether the study of Hebrew is a worthwhile pursuit for *some* individuals with sufficient desire and ability, but whether it is a good or even justifiable use of the minister or preacher's time. After all, there have been many great preachers who have known no Hebrew and apparently been none the worse for it. In an age when several good English translations are available and an increasing number of excellent, evangelical commentaries on the books of the Old Testament, written by good scholars of biblical Hebrew (and Aramaic), is it really necessary for a preacher to know any Hebrew? With all the other demands on a minister's time, can he afford to spend the hours necessary to learn Hebrew? These are not frivolous questions. To address them, it is necessary to say some things about the study of biblical languages in general, and then make some points specific to the study of Hebrew.

## Why Study Biblical Languages?

We can begin with general points about biblical languages since many of the same arguments may be advanced against the study of New Testament Greek as Hebrew: the availability of several accurate English translations, and of good exegetical tools in commentaries, written by evangelical scholars who keep abreast of the latest developments in the study of *koine* Greek.

## Understanding language

The first point is the very general one that preaching is about communication through language, and that all preachers should be interested in how language works, what its limitations are, what it can and cannot reveal, and how to analyse and interpret it. Every preacher, whether he realises it or not, is involved in semantics when he interprets and expounds the Bible. An invaluable tool in understanding how language works is the knowledge of some other language. English-speaking people are notoriously poor with languages, and embarrassed and apathetic about learning them. But if we imagine that every language works like English, we do not understand how language works. This will also mean that we are unlikely to interpret the English Bible correctly. If knowledge of how language works is greatly enhanced by knowing another language, then understanding the Bible will be greatly enhanced by knowing how the biblical languages work.

## Verbal inspiration

In this context, it is worth remembering that God has chosen to communicate through words, indeed ultimately through the Incarnate Word himself. Given that, we cannot pay too much attention or give too much care to understanding the words God has used. As John Currid asks:

The Holy Scriptures were revealed by God through his prophets in Greek and Hebrew (and Aramaic). Why would the pastor as interpreter not want to study God's word in its original linguistic revelation and form? <sup>2</sup>

No doubt some preachers feel that biblical languages put a barrier between us and God. They probably feel that they are interacting more 'directly' with God by reading the Bible in the language they most readily understand. But is this

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really a more direct interaction with God's Word? It might be compared to listening to God through an interpreter, rather than hearing directly. Greek and Hebrew can (and should) be more than interpretative tools, they can become devotional languages as we become more familiar with God's words as they were originally expressed. To use an illustration, no photograph of a great painting, however faithful a reproduction, can ever be a substitute for the original.

If we rely on translations, we can never be entirely sure that the English word in the passage before us has exactly the same semantic range as the word in Greek or Hebrew which lies behind it. Languages do not map precisely onto one another. In Russian (I understand), there is no equivalent to our word for 'blue', but two words depending on whether the blue is light or dark. Words in Greek and Hebrew are both narrower and broader in meaning than any English equivalent and therefore a translation cannot be made by simply substituting one English word for one Hebrew or Greek word. A simple and obvious example of the imperfect mapping of one language onto another is the fact that the English word 'you' is unspecific. In Greek and Hebrew, different words are used if one or several people are addressed, and if they are male or female. How difficult it is to read publicly the beginning of Song of Songs in English, and convey who is speaking to whom. The Hebrew has no such ambiguity. A more significant example is the 'you' in Zephaniah 3:14–17, which is feminine singular, indicating that the 'daughter of Zion' is addressed throughout, a fact obvious in Hebrew, but not in English. More generally, passages in the Bible can be easily misapplied to the singular 'you' when they are in fact addressed to the community of faith in plural. An example of the opposite case, where English is

more specific than Greek or Hebrew is in the case of our two words for 'woman' and 'wife' whereas a single Greek or Hebrew word can mean either, depending on context. One such context is 1 Timothy 3:11, where 'likewise women' might refer to women deacons or the wives of male deacons. A great deal hangs on which interpretation a translator decides upon, but decide he must, one way or the other, and the fact that he has made a choice may not be footnoted. All translations to some extent reflect theological presuppositions, and not always obviously. There is truth in the saying that 'all translations are really condensed commentaries'.

As far as is possible, preachers must strive to ensure that they interact with the word of God and not the word of the translator. This is not to denigrate the work of translators, however: a knowledge of Greek or Hebrew can actually serve to underline, not undermine confidence in a translation. Knowing the underlying Greek or Hebrew often means the preacher can emphasise an English translation. It also means he can have confidence in which sense a particular English word or phrase is used in translation. All the same, a preacher who knows the original languages is unlikely to place too much store by any particular version, appreciating for different reasons features of translations from both the 'literal' and 'dynamic' ends of the spectrum. He will also know that there can be no such thing as a literal translation. J. Hafeman has insightfully pointed out that the proliferation of translations and commentaries makes the need for knowledge of the biblical languages greater, not lesser.<sup>3</sup> Without Greek and Hebrew, the expositor has no basis to assess the merits and demerits of the interpretations of translators and commentators.

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## Traditional Interpretations

The fact that there have been centuries of Bible translation into English is a cause for thanksgiving. All the same, there are inherent dangers in this interpretative tradition. A new translation inevitably builds upon or reacts against its predecessors. Sometimes translators feel unable to ‘tamper with’ cherished translations endorsed by usage within the community of faith. The more well-known and well-loved a passage is, the more reluctant translators (or editors) are to depart from familiar turns of phrase. Isaiah 53 is a good example of this, where even the NIV sounds suspiciously like the AV. Another example is Psalm 46:10, where even the NIV and ESV follow the AV in rendering the (masculine plural) imperative ‘be still’ perpetuating the impression that this verse means ‘cease to be agitated within yourself, reassured that God is in control’. The idea of the verb is to be inactive, not to attain a state of inner peace. The Good News Bible alone goes out on a limb, rendering the phrase ‘stop fighting’. This may ruin many people’s favourite verse of Scripture, but it is a commendable attempt to make the sense of the Hebrew original clearer. The issue is what God meant when he inspired the writing of Psalm 46. Did he intend us to arrive at the traditional understanding suggested by English versions?

## Understanding culture

Another benefit of studying biblical languages – both Greek and Hebrew – is that it reminds us that the Bible was not written yesterday (even if it is important to preach with a degree of immediacy, as though it was). The Bible was written by men, under the inspiration of God, in times and cultures very different from ours. Looking at Scripture through the medium of the original languages puts a helpful distance between us and the text,

reminding us that God’s activity in this world is not confined to our time and culture. This fosters a necessary humility before the living and active word. Practically speaking it helps us to avoid inappropriate readings of Scripture that amount to *eisegesis* (reading into the text) rather than *exegesis*. It is no bad thing for our congregations to realise that there is some distance between them and the text before them. It can serve as a restraint against the ‘promise-box’ approach to Scripture where verses are wrenched from their context and applied to 21st-century circumstances which are completely alien to that context.

## Avoiding pitfalls

The final general point about knowledge of biblical languages is that it teaches us which questions cannot be answered by recourse to those languages. It is common for people who know no Greek or Hebrew to assume that many points of theological controversy or interpretative ambiguity can be solved definitively by a Greek or Hebrew lexicon. Sometimes, one hears the meaning or even the etymology of a Greek or Hebrew word used as a pretext for settling what is essentially a theological issue. Such attempts can often be detected by the caveat, ‘I don’t know any Hebrew, but ...’. An example of this is the use of the fact that the common Hebrew word for God, *elohim*, is plural in form to ‘prove’ the Trinity. It proves nothing one way or the other.

## Why Study Biblical Hebrew?

Having considered reasons why a knowledge of biblical languages is a useful – if not essential – tool for the preacher, we now move to consider the value of learning Hebrew. Many ministers and preachers have an adequate working knowledge of Greek and see the value of it, but do not have any Hebrew.

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Some will only have had the opportunity to learn Greek at Bible College. Others will have decided that, although in an ideal world it would be good to know both biblical languages, the practicalities of life mean that only one can be studied and that it should be the language of the New Testament. Many who study both will find *initially* that Greek is the easier language, because the alphabet is closer to English and many Greek words have made their way into English. With the exceptions of camels and sacks, there is almost no shared vocabulary between English and Hebrew. Faced with such difficulties, why is the learning of Hebrew worthwhile?

### The classical bias

The priority given to Greek over Hebrew is not simply a pragmatic matter. Nor does the priority given to Greek simply reflect the view that the New Testament takes precedence over the Old. It results as much from the classical basis of education in the Western world. Since the Renaissance, Latin and Greek have been the foundation of Western education. The works of pagan authors such as Homer and Horace have been as central to European learning as the New Testament. Even the works of the Puritans (who believed a preacher should be tri-lingual) abound with illustrations drawn from Greek and Latin pagan histories. Going back before the Reformation, the influence of platonic and neo-platonic philosophy did not predispose the Church Fathers to value the Hebrew Scriptures. The study of Hebrew has certainly been hindered by anti-semitism in European culture, and the church has not always remained uninfluenced by this. The church has, at times, been embarrassed by, if not ashamed of, its Jewish ancestry.

It is also hard to avoid the suspicion that underlying the priority given to Greek in the church is a fear that the Hebrew Scriptures are insufficiently

'Christian' and this is symptomatic of a wider devaluing of the Old Testament within the Christian tradition. It is also possible that some evangelicals have regarded Old Testament study as the playground of liberals and to remain evangelical, we must remain focused on the New. The surge of interest in the Old Testament from evangelical scholars in recent decades is most welcome in redressing this imbalance, and in stimulating interest in the first three-quarters of the Bible. All the same, there is perhaps a degree of closet dispensationalism even in the Reformed community when it comes to learning biblical Hebrew.

The 'classical bias' has meant that historically, New Testament Greek has been viewed through the lens of classical Greek, rather than through the lens of Hebrew or Aramaic, the first language(s) of all but one of the New Testament authors. The first port of call for understanding the meaning of a word in New Testament Greek should not be Aristotle or Plato, but the Septuagint, to see which Hebrew word (or words) may lie behind the choice of Greek word. This can be found relatively easily, for example, from Abbot-Smith's *Greek Lexicon of New Testament* (first published in 1921, but still in print), which helpfully indicates how New Testament Greek words are used in the Septuagint. This insight will be incomprehensible, however, without some knowledge of Hebrew.

We must also be clear about the value of the Septuagint. I have heard it said that so long as a preacher knows Greek and has the Septuagint, he does not need any Hebrew. Such a view gives the Septuagint priority over the Masoretic text. It also ignores the fact that the Septuagint is a translation, at times not a very accurate one, and one in which the translation approach varies from book to book. From this point of view, the Septuagint offers no

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more help than a translation of the Old Testament into any other language. It may be argued that the New Testament writers were often happy to quote from the Septuagint and, at times, appear to have preferred it to the Masoretic text. In their circumstances, however, writing to Greek-speakers used to the Greek Scriptures, to quote from the most widely-used available translation was not as loaded a decision as it may seem today. The thought-world of the New Testament authors – all but one of whom were Jewish – was palpably semitic, as evidenced by many Hebraic turns of phrase reflected even in their Greek (even Luke’s Greek is heavily influenced by Hebrew idiom, transmitted through the Septuagint). When James says that Elijah ‘prayed with prayer’ (Jas 5:17) he is using a Hebrew or Aramaic idiom. Terms like ‘God of grace’ (= gracious God), ‘God of all comfort’ (= all-comforting God) or ‘sons of thunder’ (= thunderous men) may produce interesting interpretations from the preacher who knows only Greek, but the preacher who knows a little Hebrew recognises simply a Semitic preference for using the ‘construct chain’ in place of adjectives.

### The language of Jesus

It is far from mere sentimentality to remember that the Hebrew Scriptures are those which the Lord Jesus heard read, and read from himself, in the Synagogue (e.g. Lk. 4:17). When he spoke of the ‘Law, the Prophets and the Psalms’ (Lk. 24:44), he was using almost exactly the words still found on the spines of the Hebrew Bible. And when he referred to all the murders from Abel to Zechariah (Lk. 11:51), he was saying something like ‘all the murders from Genesis to Revelation’ at a time when the Scriptures began with Genesis and ended with 2 Chronicles, as the Hebrew Bible does today (the Septuagint does not). These are the Scriptures from which not a single *yodh* (not *iota*, as the ESV has!) or

even stroke of the pen distinguishing the letter *beth* from *kaph* (for example) can be removed (Mt. 5:18). These are the Scriptures from which Jesus taught the apostles to preach about him (Lk. 24:45). And these were the Scriptures which Jesus learned in Hebrew. I often encourage students in the early stages of learning Hebrew to remember that the Lord himself had to learn the alphabet they are learning. As a first-century Galilean, Jesus would probably have been a competent Greek-speaker, as is suggested by his use of the word ‘hypocrite’ in its strict Greek sense of an ‘actor’ (Hebrew has no equivalent term). A study of the words of Jesus which are transliterated in the Gospels (e.g. ‘*talitha qumi*’, Mk 5:41) indicates that his everyday speech was in Aramaic (a sister language to Hebrew). In all probability, he read and quoted the Scriptures in Hebrew and preached and explained them in Aramaic. The living Lord Jesus graciously speaks to people today in whatever their native language is (the significance of Acts 26:14), but he was neither an Englishman nor a Greek. This is not to suggest that attempts to translate Jesus’ words ‘back into’ Aramaic take us nearer to his teaching than the Greek version of his words we have in the gospels, but that those Greek words are best interpreted with an understanding the language(s) Jesus used and of the Scriptures he used. (For an example of this, see the discussion of John 4:23, below.) It is right to argue that the text of the New Testament we have is in Greek and should be studied in that language. By the same token, the text of the Old Testament we have is in Hebrew with a little Aramaic and should be studied in those languages. We must go further and say that New Testament Greek is best studied with an understanding of Hebrew. Old Testament Hebrew does not benefit in the same way from a knowledge of Greek.

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## Hebrew is not Greek

There are other, more specific and practical reasons why a knowledge of Hebrew is more than desirable for a preacher. A preacher's approach to a Greek text should differ from his approach to a Hebrew text. Greek and Hebrew are not just different languages, but belong to different continents and different language families. Nowhere is this more apparent than with respect to tenses. Greek abounds in tenses (much to the chagrin of the student) which tend to give a specific time reference. Strictly speaking, Hebrew has no tenses at all. Therefore, Greek is more precise about time than Hebrew. Similarly, Greek verbs are precise with respect to mood: a simple statement of fact, a doubtful assertion, a wish or command are differentiated. In Hebrew, all these ideas can be conveyed by the same verbal form. Such distinctions as in Greek between the present and aorist imperatives (often indicating continuous versus once and-for-all commands), or between commands not to begin and to cease from an action, are alien to Hebrew. English lies somewhere between the complexity of Greek and the flexibility of Hebrew. A preacher who knows Greek but no Hebrew will be unaware of the temporal ambiguity of Hebrew verbs. If he approaches the Old Testament through the Septuagint, he may assume that Hebrew verbs are as temporally specific as Greek. On a more general level, he is likely to attach too precise a significance to individual words, whereas in Hebrew the sentence (or at least, the clause) is the basic semantic unit, not the word. Words derive their meaning from context much more in Hebrew than in Greek or English.

### Untranslatable terms

There are some untranslatable terms in the Old Testament, often theologically significant terms,

such as *hesed*, variously rendered 'mercy' 'loving-kindness', and so on. In such translations, the essential quality of covenant loyalty is missing (as is the connection with the 'grace' of the New Testament). Several words from the 'mn group, such as '*emeth* and '*emunah* are often wrongly understood as referring to a quality of objective truthfulness rather than personal faithfulness or reliability, which is nearer the mark. When the widow of Zarephath declared that the word of YHWH in Elijah's mouth was truth ('*emeth*), she meant it was reliable (1 Kgs 17:24) because Elijah was a man of God. To illustrate: in our society a journalist who accurately reports the facts might be considered 'true'. To a Hebrew, however, if that man was also a drunkard who cheated on his wife, he was not 'true'. A good example of the difference this makes in biblical interpretation is found in Psalm 145:18, 'YHWH is near to all who call upon him ... in truth'. Our western notion of truth (classically derived) suggests that calling on God in truth means calling upon him as he actually is (in truth). The meaning of '*emeth* here is much closer to 'sincerity' or 'faithfulness'. We must call upon God with a sincere heart and faithfully (not compromised by also worshipping idols). Along with *hesed*, '*emeth* is a strongly covenantal term (cf. Exod. 34:6). Now consider Jesus' statement that those who worship God must worship 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24). The word in the Greek text of John's Gospel is *aletheia*. We might gauge Jesus' meaning by recourse to the range of meaning of *aletheia* (truthfulness, reality, dependability, uprightness) in a Lexicon of New Testament Greek, which draws on the works of Homer and Aristotle, as well as Philo, Josephus and Early Christian writings. Or we can note that this word is usually used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word '*emeth*. The question is not which Hebrew or Aramaic word Jesus may have used (for

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all we know he might have spoken to the woman in Greek); the question is what Jesus meant by whatever word he used. Speaking as a first-century Palestinian Jew to a Samaritan woman, his meaning is likely to reflect a common heritage of Old Testament ideas and their Semitic thought-world. The Old Testament concept of *'emeth* strongly suggests the idea of sincerity and faithfulness here. The Lord was not telling the Samaritan woman that God must be worshipped according to some objective truth which the Jews had and the Samaritans did not (as v. 22 might suggest), but that God must be worshipped in sincerity of heart and faithfulness of life – the kind of life that the Samaritan woman was not living. This interpretation may not commend itself to every reader. The point however, is that without an understanding of the Hebrew idea of *'emeth*, this entire interpretative possibility will be difficult to evaluate, and probably overlooked.

Another point about untranslatable terms (whether Hebrew or Greek) is that they cannot be translated by the same English word in all contexts (despite attempts to do so!). So, their frequency is obscured in translation and often it is not clear that one is dealing with the same word even in the same passage.

### Untranslatable stylistic features

It is not just the meaning of individual words which is difficult to convey in English. Many of the characteristic literary features of Hebrew are lost in translation. The Hebrew fondness for repeating words and roots is seldom ever apparent in English versions. Psalm 121 is a poem constructed around the shades of meaning of the word *'keep'* (shamar) but very few English translations have the courage to do justice to this (the ESV is the exception). It will not be apparent that the root *sh-w-b* – 'return'

occurs twelve times in the first chapter of Ruth, because it cannot be translated 'return' in all cases. Nevertheless, it is a significant factor in the interpretation of that chapter. The Babel narrative in Genesis 11:1-9 abounds in the repetition of similar sounding words: 'build' (*bmb*), 'brick' (*lbnb*), 'confuse' (*bl*), 'Babylon' (*bb*). This is not simply a matter of style: the author is using assonance to convey something of the meaning of the story, demonstrating that God's judgement upon the building of Babel was not arbitrary, but an inevitable consequence of and appropriate response to what humanity had done.

### Conclusions: challenges and encouragements

In the few examples above, I have attempted to adumbrate something of the richness of the Scriptures in biblical Hebrew and to suggest that knowledge of Hebrew can be a powerful resource for the preacher. I have also tried to indicate some of the exegetical limitations of knowing no Hebrew. Let us now return to the question of whether it is desirable or practical to suggest that those who teach from the Scriptures in our churches can be expected to learn Hebrew. Let us consider some of the arguments against this.

Many (if not most) of the people who confidently assert that Hebrew is an unnecessary and time-consuming luxury for a preacher or pastor are speaking from a position of ignorance: they know no Hebrew themselves and are in no position to assess the benefits of knowing Hebrew and the limitations of not knowing Hebrew. David Baker finds, significantly, that those who are already (or have been) in pastoral ministry tend to get better grades in biblical language study. He surmises that those in ministry 'are able to see an immediate and practical use for their language study and so motivate themselves toward study'. They most

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readily appreciate the need for Hebrew and understand the limitations of knowing no Hebrew.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, it is impossible to make a case against the importance of knowing Hebrew which does not also apply to Greek. If the availability of good English translations renders the need for Hebrew redundant, this applies just as much to the need for New Testament Greek. If the increasing availability of scholarly, evangelical commentaries on the Old Testament diminishes the need for preachers to know Hebrew, then the greater availability of New Testament commentaries makes the need for a knowledge of Greek even less important! The converse is true, of course: the increasing number of commentaries makes the need for biblical languages more pressing, otherwise it is impossible to interact intelligently with linguistic discussions in those commentaries. A further point in favour of learning Hebrew is that whereas the Old Testament can be studied adequately without any knowledge of Greek, the New Testament cannot be studied adequately without some knowledge of Hebrew. The Old Testament is the foundation on which the New is built and the writers of the New were steeped in the thought-world of the Old Testament. This applies even to Luke, whose phraseology is deeply influenced by the Septuagint, itself reflecting the Hebrew cast of the Old Testament.

Some would concede that a knowledge of Hebrew is certainly desirable, but that for many preachers it is impractical to acquire. The time involved and the difficulty of learning the language place it beyond the grasp of many. Several things can be said in answer to this. First, Hebrew is not so difficult as many think. The problem in many areas is not degree of difficulty but strangeness to the English-speaker. Hebrew does not present the conceptual difficulties that Greek does, once its initial

strangeness is overcome. I would argue that Hebrew is actually an easier language to learn than Greek. Secondly, it needs to be stated that a little Hebrew is a useful exegetical tool. For sure, to know Hebrew well enough to be able to read and understand the Masoretic text requires years of work. But this is not the issue. Few preachers can read the New Testament in Greek, but have enough Greek to use as an exegetical tool. Some are probably discouraged from persevering in learning Hebrew because their sights are set too high and they want to reach a high level of competence in too short a time. A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, but a little knowledge used with humility can be a valuable and practically useful thing.

This is undoubtedly a controversial point to make, but the question might be asked whether a minister who is too busy to engage with biblical languages is, in fact, too busy. The trend away from the acquisition of biblical languages suggests a shift in ministerial priorities away from a deep and time-consuming interaction with God's Word. We live in a pragmatic age in which the exacting discipline of wrestling with God's Word does not produce the kind of instant results in church life which are sought today. This raises wider questions about the role of Word-based ministry which are outside the scope of this discussion. It is important to see the issue of biblical language learning as part of this wider discussion, however.

This brings us finally to a reconsideration of our Reformation heritage. What really happened in the 16th century? Did the reformed church merely replace theology according to Aquinas with theology according to Luther and Calvin? Or did the Reformers rediscover the Bible? A paradigmatic figure is Tyndale. On the one hand, he wanted to give the ordinary man and woman the Scriptures in



their own, everyday language (as Luther had done for German speakers). To do this, however, he had to become highly competent in Greek and Hebrew. The Reformers and their heirs understood that it was the Scriptures in their original languages which had set the church free and they therefore understood the central importance of the continued study of Greek and Hebrew by future generations of ministers. If we believe in the constant need for reformation then the study of God's Word in its original languages will be deemed essential. If being 'reformed' or 'evangelical' means merely preserving and perpetuating the thought of great men of bygone times, then we will view the study of Greek and Hebrew as a dispensable luxury.

Luther said that the biblical languages are 'the sheath containing the sword of the Spirit'. I would use a slightly different metaphor. Wisdom and skill will always be needed to wield the sword of God's word, but that word understood in the original languages is a sharper, keener, more lively and active blade.

1. During the preparation of this paper, I have benefited from the comments of biblical-language teaching colleagues at the London Theological Seminary: Philip Eveson, Robert Strivens and David Bond.
2. Currid (2006), p. 81
3. S. Hafeman, 'Why use Biblical Languages in Preaching?', *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 3 (1999), pp. 86–89, cited in Currid (2006), p. 82
4. Baker (1998), p. 171

## Further Reading

- David W. Baker, 'Studying the Original Texts: Effective Learning and Teaching of Biblical Hebrew', in Richard S. Hess & Gordon J. Wenham (eds.), *Make the Old Testament Live: From curriculum to classroom*, Grand Rapids & Cambridge (Eerdmans), 1998, pp. 161–172
- James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, London (SCM Press), 1961
- John D. Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages*, Fearn, Ross-shire (Christian Focus Publications; Mentor), 2006
- Philip H. Eveson, 'The Biblical Languages: Their Use and Abuse in the Ministry', part 1, *Foundations* 10 (May 1983), pp. 1–6; part 2, *Foundations* 11 (November 1983), pp. 27–37
- Susan Anne Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, Carlisle (Paternoster Press), 2003
- Gareth Lloyd-Jones *The Discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: A third language*, Manchester (M. U. P.), 1983
- Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus*, Sheffield (Sheffield Academic Press; The Biblical Seminar 69), 2000
- John Piper, 'Brothers, Bitzer was a Banker', in *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A plea to pastors for radical ministry*, Nashville (Broadman & Holman), 2002, pp. 81–88.