

Lives 1st Gatherings *Things to Explore & Discuss*

The Languages of the Bible

By Jim Myers

The Bible has been translated into approximately 3,756 languages: ¹

- The full Bible into 756 languages.
- The New Testament into 1,726 languages.
- Smaller portions into 1,274 other languages.

I am an American and the words in my Bible are written in English.

- Today there are around 86 countries with English as the official language or second language.
- English is spoken by nearly 2 billion people across the globe, and the figure is rapidly increasing.²

How Words Work

BHC Linguistic Model

A word is a symbol or group of symbols with an attached bundle of associations, which are a product of the Source's culture, time period, location, and personal experiences.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_translations

² <https://wordprime.com/countries-with-english-as-the-official-language/>

Symbols

The **Primary Symbols** are **the letters of the alphabet of a language**. The ancient language of the *Christian Old Testament* (*Jewish Tanakh*) was **Hebrew**. The ancient language of the *Christian New Testament* was **Greek**.

Hebrew Alphabet



Greek Alphabet



Development of the Paleo-Hebrew script and the Square Jewish script.³

The Hebrew letters above are found in column 14 below. Numbers 1-13 track the changes in the ways the letters were written. Greek and English letters have also evolved.



1. Phoenician script - inscription from Kara-tepe. (Cylcia, 8th century BCE).
2. Moabite stela of king Mesha (circa 850 BCE).
3. Paleo-Hebrew script from the 8th century BCE.
4. Siloam Inscription (circa 700 BCE). 5. Lahirish ostrakon (6th century BCE).
6. Elephantine papyri (circa 400 BCE).

³ https://www.oocities.org/gali_al_bulgari/Hebrew_Scripts.html

7. Contemporary Samaritan script.
8. Temple Scroll from Qumran (2nd century BCE).
9. DSS (100 BCE).
10. Nabatean script (circa 50 BCE).
11. Square Jewish script from the 9th - 10th centuries CE (Oriental style).
12. Square Jewish script from the 13th - 15th centuries CE (Sefaradic style).
13. Square Jewish script from the 14th - 15th centuries CE (Ashkenazic style).
14. Contemporary square Jewish script.



- The **Source** is the author or speaker of the words.
- The **Receptor** is the reader or hearer of the words.

Culture

- *Culture is the whole behavior and technology of any people that is passed on from generation to generation. Culture consists of the knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, religions, customs, concepts, habits, skills, institutions, and any other capabilities of a given people in a given period.*⁴

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>

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- *A culture is more than a set of rules to guide behavior; it is a comprehensive worldview and a way of relating to one's fellow human beings. Like all complex cultures, Jewish culture does not spell everything out literally, but leaves much to inference. A culture's strength lies not only in what it says, but also in what it chooses not to say, and this too must be learned.*⁵

Time Periods & Places

- The lifetime of the Source.
- The places the Source lived and produced the communication experience we are exploring.

Belief Models

- Belief Models attach meanings to symbols.
- [Go to Guide #002.](#)

Review

1. We use the **BHC Linguistic Model** to guide us as we work with words.
2. The words of the Bible are now written in 3,756 different symbols.
3. There are thousands of bundles of associations attached to those symbols.
4. English symbols can be read by many people around the world.
5. People who can read English do not all have the same bundles of associations to the words.
6. English translations do not all have the same books in them.

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⁵ *TESHUVAH: A Guide for the Newly Observant Jew* by Adin Steinsaltz © 1982 by The Domino Press, Jerusalem Israel. Translation © 1987 by The Free Press, a division of Macmillan, Inc., New York, NY; p. 10.