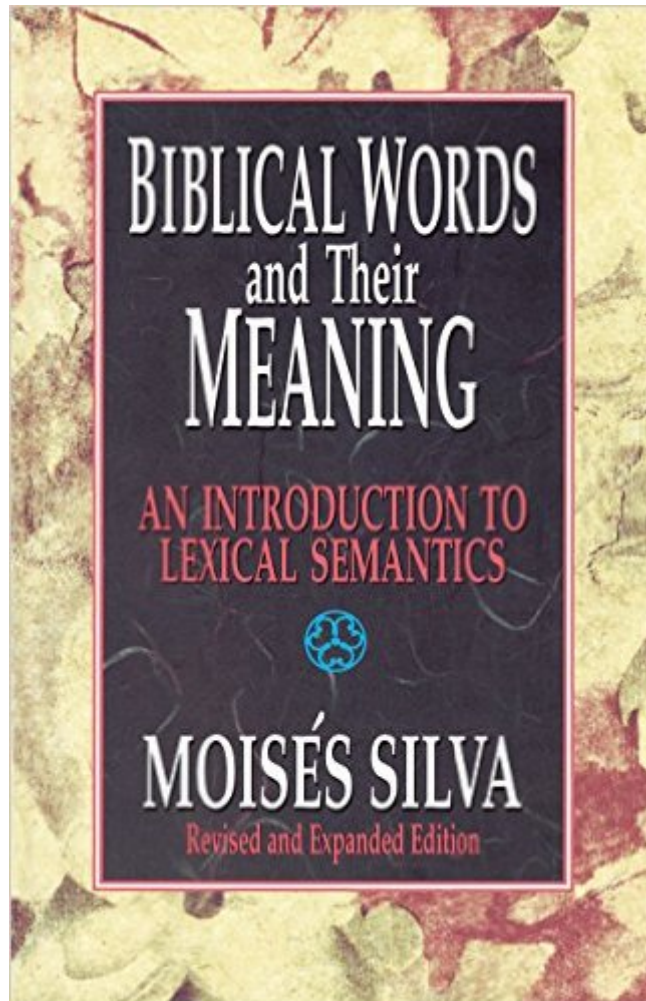


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Biblical Words And Their Meaning: An Introduction To Lexical Semantics



Synopsis

When first published in 1983, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* broke new ground by introducing to students of the Bible the principles of linguistics, in particular, on lexical semantics -- that branch that focuses on the meaning of individual words. Silva's structural approach provides the interpreter with an important lexical tool for more responsible understanding of the biblical text and more effective use of standard exegetical resources. This revised edition includes a bibliographical essay by Silva, "Recent Developments in Semantics," and an appendix by Karen H. Jobes, "Distinguishing the Meaning of Greek Verbs in the Semantic Domain for Worship," that provides the reader with a substantive example of lexical study.

Book Information

File Size: 2393 KB

Print Length: 228 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Up to 5 simultaneous devices, per publisher limits

Publisher: Zondervan; Rev Exp edition (May 11, 2010)

Publication Date: May 11, 2010

Sold by:Â HarperCollins Publishing

Language: English

ASIN: B000S1M7CA

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #202,298 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #55

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Customer Reviews

It was my good fortune to have first encountered the study of semantics in an undergraduate level class. The text was James Barr's *Semantics of the Biblical Language* which by coincidence is the takeoff point of this book by Moises Silva. What Barr does is to criticize the *Theological Dictionary*

of the New Testament_ for confusing word meaning with a history of ideas. Silva's goal in this book is the "relatively modest goal" of establishing principals and methods for "determining the most accurate English equivalents to biblical words."I cannot help but smile at Silva's depiction of his enterprise as "relatively modest." Already in the first chapter Silva wants to maintain a distinction between etymology and semantic change. The former refers to origins; the latter refers to developments of a word. One might easily guess that Silva prefers the synchronic meaning of a term, how it is used in its present context. This leads Silva to consider semantic change in the Septuagint and within the New Testament. Then it is on to a discussion of Saussure's terms *langue* (the linguistic system) and *parole* (actual speech). Many readers will begin to see here that determining what constitutes an accurate translation is surely the subject of critical thinking. What is the relationship of words such as walk and run? At this point Silva prefers three basic categories for synonyms: objective, emotive, and sociological. In chapter 6, called "Determining Meanings," Silva outlines a method for understanding any text "remote from us in time" in order to reassemble a world around the text. Look at the immediate text. Look at the chapters which record the discussion of the term at hand. Look at the writer's teaching in general.

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