

So the fundamental difficulty of all communication introduces a certain amount of complexity into this basic theological matter of understanding what is meant by the fact that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

Thus there is always a problem as to the precise area covered by a word. A word is not a mathematical formula. Words are used in different ways at different times. And there is always the possibility of a shift in the meaning of a word or of an enlargement or a decrease in the area that its meaning covers. This is a matter that can be investigated objectively.

Much confusion in thought comes from the fact that people often fail to realize that a word is normally not a point but an area, that's the area of the word friend in English. It includes just about anybody with whom one is on fairly cordial terms, whether it be a person with whom we have been most intimate over a long period of years, or whether it be one whom we have rarely met. In German, the word friend is restricted to one, to a person with whom one is on most intimate terms, over a period, long period of years, such that he would share his most confidential thoughts with that person. Many whom we in English would refer to as friends the German would call simply good acquaintances. The two words are very similar in meaning but the area of meaning is quite different. Between any two languages the area of meaning often differs strikingly. This makes it extremely hard to translate a translation always to render the same word in one language, by the same word in another. Often the areas of meanings overlap in such way that the meaning that fits in one ~~tran~~ passage is quite out of place in another passage. Sometimes no single word can be found that comes at all near giving the precise area of meaning of the word in the other language, even though the translator understands thoroughly exactly what that area is. Thus interpretation of any document involves a problem as to the areas of the means involved and this is particularly so when one is dealing with translation. It introduces a very considerable amount of complexity into understanding of a document.