“What Do You Think of The Message Bible?”

I’ve seen some articles online claiming that *The Message* Bible is not true to the original Greek and that it is secretly part of the New Age Movement. I enjoy reading it and I have not felt that it is heretical. Do you have a comment?

Thanks for your letter. I’ve also heard some rather negative things about *The Message* Bible. However, there is at least one Probe staff member who also enjoys reading *The Message* – so you’re not alone there! I’m afraid that I personally don’t know much about it. I really doubt that it is part of the New Age Movement or Neo-paganism. Probably *The Message* is intended to be something more like a paraphrase of the Bible (like The Living Bible), rather than a translation (like the NASB or NET Bible). This CAN (and usually DOES) result in much more interpretative freedom for the one doing the paraphrasing (in this case, Eugene Peterson). Thus, the choice of words *may not always accurately reflect the Hebrew and Greek texts.* It’s important to bear this in mind. But this does NOT mean that it’s secretly purveying New Age philosophy.

I think that *The Message* could be a great resource for reading, but I don’t think it would be best for studying the Bible. If your goal is devotional reading, it’s probably great. If your goal is to get (as best you can) at the original meaning of the text, you’re better off reading the NASB or NET Bible. Of course, it’s best of all if you can read Hebrew and Greek! But not many people can. At any rate, there’s certainly nothing wrong with reading *The Message*. And if you like reading it, more power to you!

Hope this helps a bit.

Shalom in Christ,

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