



Did You Know? Over 2000 languages today still have no Bible?

Linguists study unwritten languages. They listen carefully to interesting, unusual sounds, and write them all down.

But how can anyone write an unwritten language?

Here's how it works:

Linguists don't use the English alphabet. Instead, they write with the *International Phonetic Alphabet*. It has one symbol for every sound possible to human beings. This is how John 3:16 (NKJV) looks in the International Phonetic Alphabet:

foɹ ɡad soʊ lʌvd ɜn wɜrld ʒæt hi
geiv hiz onli bigatn sɒn ʒæt huɛvər
bilivz in him sʊd nat peɪɪs bɒt
hæv evəˈlæsiŋ laɪf

Write John 3:16, one word in each blank, underneath each phonetic word. Can you figure out which phonetic symbols represent our English sounds?

Be a Linguist ↓

Listen carefully. Can you hear the difference between the first two vowels? How is the "o" in "for" different from the "o" in "God?" Look in a mirror. You don't even open your mouth the same way for each one, do you? What about the "o" in the next word, "so?" Is it the same as either of the first two? Now, what about the "o" in "Son?" How is it different from the first two? You have found three different sounds and phonetic symbols for our English letter "o!"