

Grace OPC High School Sunday Class Teaching Notes			
Year:	1 of 4		Date: Week 5
Quarter:	2 of 4	Bible Study/Survey	
Lesson Title:	Concordances and Language Tools		
Lesson Purpose:	To understand the use and dangers of concordances and language tools.		

## 1. Introduction

God did not give us a systematized scripture, but one that is very organic and down to earth. As we seek to understand His word it is useful to be able to quickly find and compare texts of scripture to others that are similar. Therefore concordances were written which allow us to both find scripture verses and do comparative word studies.

The apostle Paul did not write in Modern English, but in Greek. And Moses wrote in Hebrew. Most Christians today do not understand these languages, thus the phrase, “It’s all Greek to me.” There are some tools that can offer some level of insight into the deeper meaning of the original languages, but the untrained student can be set on the wrong track by a misunderstanding of a word, or by taking it out of context. Caution is to be exercised in the use of language tools by untrained students.

## 2. Types of Concordances

### • **General Concordance**

A general concordance such as Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible takes the words of a version of the Bible (King James in the case of Strong’s) and shows all the verses where an English word is found. They will also often have a numbering system to link the words to the specific Greek or Hebrew word from the underlying original language text. This number can be looked up in the back where there is usually a numerically organized Greek and Hebrew Lexicon.

Concordances are often used to find a verse. If you know some of the words in a verse but don’t know where the verse is, you can quickly look those words up in a concordance and find the verse you want.

Another use for a general concordance is word studies. The concordance can be used to look up all the occurrences of a word such as “love” in the Bible, and then the student can examine the verses to work up a biblical definition for love. The danger of doing this is that there are several different Greek words that are translated “love”, and there are also times where one of these Greek words is translated as something other than “love”. The study will still be useful but it is best to use an Englishman’s concordance to do the work.

### • **Englishman’s concordance**

The Englishman’s concordance allows the user to do word studies in the original languages without knowing the language. These concordances list all the occurrences of Greek and Hebrew words in the Bible while still tying them to their English translations. The user can then look up a word in English and then finding the exact Greek or Hebrew word, look up all the uses of that word in the bible.

- **Topical Concordance**

Topical concordances guide the user to a set of verses dealing with a topic. Nave's Topical Bible is a classic that is reasonably reliable. Thompson Chain Reference Bibles also allow for topical study but you may find that you disagree with Thompson on some topics.

[Below from Naves Topical Bible]

### **Geology**

- *General scriptures concerning*  
*Genesis 1:9,10; 1 Samuel 2:8; 2 Samuel 22:16; Job 12:8,9; 28:9-11; Psalms 18:15; 24:1,2; 104:5-13; 136:6; Proverbs 30:4; Jeremiah 31:37; Habakkuk 3:9; 2Pe 3:5-7]*
- See CREATION
- See EARTH
- See METEOROLOGY
- See ASTRONOMY
- See also HOT SPRINGS

### **3. Language Tools**

- **Lexicons**

Lexicons are works that give the meaning of Greek words in English. They often give a range of meanings that all apply to the word in question. It is the responsibility of the student to understand enough Greek or Hebrew to know which of the meanings fits in the context of the passage.

#### **05108** *peri,cwroj ou f surrounding region 1.80*

*1.80 peri,cwroj, ou f: an area or region around or near some central or focal point - 'surrounding region.' avpe,steilan eivj o[lhn th.n peri,cwron evkei,nhn 'and they sent into all the surrounding region' Mt 14.35. In certain contexts, however, peri,cwroj may include not only the surrounding region but also the point of reference, for example, th/j pericw,rou tw/n Gerashnw/n 'the Gerasenes and the people living around them' Lk 8.37. In a context such as Mt 3.5, h` peri,cwroj tou/ Vlorda,nou, it is difficult to speak of 'the area surrounding the Jordan River,' since a river is not like a city which would constitute a center. Accordingly, one must often translate h` peri,cwroj tou/ Vlorda,nou as 'the land on both sides of the River Jordan.'*

- **Interlinear Bibles**

Interlinear Bibles give an English gloss for the Greek or Hebrew word directly under that word in the text. These can be useful for examining the original language grammar construction. In both Hebrew and Greek the word order is significant, sentences out of the normal word order should be examined closely noting which word was moved to the front of the sentence because it has greater importance.

1 John 3:1 i;dete potaph.n avga,phn de,dwken h`mi/n o` path.r i[na te,kna  
Behold what manner of love has given to us the Father so that children

qeou/ klhqw/men dia. tou/to o` ko,smoj ouv ginw,skei u`ma/j o[ti  
of God we might be called. Through these things the world does not know us because

ouvk e;gnw auvto,n  
they do not know Him.

- **Greek and Hebrew grammar books**

Greek and Hebrew grammar books are very useful to the student who knows some of the original languages. Much like in English we often need to be reminded of the rules of grammar. Often the use of certain phrases or grammatical constructions has a specific meaning, which these works will help the student to unlock.

#### 4. **The Danger of Language Tools and Concordances**

The danger of both language tools and concordances is that the student who does not understand the original languages could end up with some very strange results from his study. It is critical to note that the end understanding of a passage should never be in contradiction to the meaning of the same passage in a major translation. The major translations that we have of the scriptures are very good and faithful and should be used as the primary guide for the student.

Another danger associated with language tools and topical concordances is that some of the presuppositions of the authors will come out in the work and shade the meanings to one side of an issue or another. For example, part of Strong's definition of the Greek word for "baptism" is, "a rite of immersion in water as commanded by Christ". Dr. Strong clearly had opinions concerning the correct mode of baptism that he incorporated in his work. Others believe strongly that Biblical evidence favors baptism by washing or sprinkling and not by immersion and present that view in their works. The Westminster Confession seems to allow latitude on the subject: "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person." WCF 28.3

#### 5. **Conclusions**

- Concordances come in three major types: general, Englishman's, and topical.
  - General concordances allow us to look up verses quickly and to do English language word studies.
  - Englishman's concordances allow us to do original language word studies without needing to know the original languages.
  - Topical concordances allow the student to study topics in the scriptures and do topical studies.
- Language tools allow the student some access to deeper meanings of Greek and Hebrew words.
- Special care must be taken in using original language tools as a lack of knowledge of Greek and Hebrew grammar and usage can hinder the student in finding the correct meaning of a word for a text.