



Concordances and Lexicons

Concordance: an alphabetical index of all the principle words in the Bible and linked to the word in the original language.

Lexicon: similar to a dictionary; it is an alphabetical arrangement of the words in a language with their definitions

When the Bible was translated into English, the original Old Testament texts were in Hebrew and some Aramaic and the original New Testament texts were in Greek. As a result, when certain words were translated into English, they lost some of their shades of meaning. A lexicon can help to find the real meaning of the original word after you have found the original word or words in the concordance.

Recommendations:

- *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (includes lexicons or dictionaries)
- *Young's Analytical Concordance* (includes lexicons or dictionaries)
- *Englishman's Hebrew-Chaldee Concordance of Old Testament*
- *Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*
- On-Line Bible (free software for computers)

The most commonly used concordances are *Young's Concordance* and *Strong's Concordance*. Both of these concordances relate to the Authorised or King James Version of the Bible. Similar concordances are available for the New King James Version and the New International Version. Other smaller concordances are available, but they are

not as thorough. You will also find concordances online.

Young's Concordance contains an alphabetical listing of almost all the words in the Bible, giving the original Hebrew or Greek words, together with their literal meaning and "transliteration" (the original word expressed in English letters). It also contains an index lexicon, which gives all the ways that each word is translated.

Here is a typical entry in *Young's Concordance*:

QUICK -

1. *Alive, living* *chai*

Num. 16. 30 and they go down quick into the pit: then
Psa. 55. 15 (and) let them go down quick into hell: for
124. 3 they had swallowed us up quick, when th.

2. *Quickening, life giving, preserving* *michyah*

Lev. 13. 10 and (there be) quick raw flesh in the rising
13. 24 the quick (flesh) that burneth have a white

3. *To live, have life* *zao*

Acts 10. 42 he...(to be) the Judge of quick and dead
2 Tim 4. 1 who shall judge the quick and the dead
Heb. 4. 12 the word of God (is) quick, and powerful
1 Pe. 4. 5 is ready to judge the quick and the dead

Strong's Concordance contains an alphabetical listing of all the words in the Bible together with a number which is used in the lexicon at the back to give the meaning.

QUICK (10)

Lev 13:10 there be **q** raw flesh in the rising 2416+4241
13:24 the **q** flesh that burneth have a white 4241
Nu 16:30 them, and they go down **q** into the pit 2416
Ps 55:15 and let them go down **q** into hell: 2416
124:3 they had swallowed us up **q**, when their 2416
Isa 11: 3 shall make him of **q** understanding in 7306
Ac 10:42 was ordained of God to be the Judge of **q** 2198
2 Ti 4: 1 who shall judge the **q** and the dead at his 2198
Heb 4: 12 For the word of God is **q**, and powerful, 2198
1 Pe 4: 5 account to him that is ready to judge the **q** 2198

The *Strong's* lexicon also gives the pronunciation. For example:

4241 mihya, n.f. GK: 4695 (2421), saving of a life; raw flesh; food, sustenance; relief, recovering:- reviving (2), preserve life (1), quick raw (+2416) (1), quick (1), recover (1), sustenance (1), victuals (1)

An example of the Index-Lexicon

CHAI
alive 29
live (adj) 3
lively 1
living 73
living thing 4
man living 1
quick 3
raw 6
running 7
springing 1
thing living 1
life 2
of life 4

It is a matter of personal preference which concordance to use. *Young's* tends to be easier to use, but *Strong's* gives more information.

If you have access to a computer, the *Online Bible* is a very useful tool to have. It is based on the *Strong's* numbering system. It is more useful than either *Young's* or *Strong's* in that it can search for combinations of words or phrases in addition to individual words. The Authorised Version *Online Bible* can be copied freely. If you would like a copy, please ask your tutor.

When to use a concordance

• TO LOCATE A VERSE

A concordance is useful when trying to locate a verse when you can only remember just a phrase or word. For example, where does it say "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

In this phrase pick the most uncommon word, to reduce the number of references you will need to look at. Try "forsaken". If you do not find it under "forsaken", look at related words, like "forsake".

We have copied a small part of the reference for "FORSAKE, to" from *Young's*:

(There are nine words that have been translated "forsake". We have reproduced the entry for the eighth word because it contains the references we are interested in.)

8. *To leave down in, egkataleipw egkatataleipo.*
Matt 27. 46 My God! my God! why hast thou forsa.
Mark 15. 34 My God! my God! why hast thou forsa.
2 Co. 4. 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down
2 Ti. 4. 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having lov
4. 16 but all (men) forsook me (I pray God)
Heb. 10. 25 Not forsaking the assembling of our-
13. 5 I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee

You will see that the quotation we are looking for is either *Matthew 27:26* or *Mark 15:34*.

Strong's works in a similar way, but uses a numbering system that refers back to a lexicon in the back, to find the original word.

• TO DISCOVER THE MEANING OF AN OBSCURE WORD

It is useful when you are unsure what a certain passage is trying to say. For example, *Genesis 25:27* says that "Jacob was a plain man." This certainly does not mean that he dwelt in the plains.

Nor does it indicate a lack of good looks. Nor can the word be taken to imply a rather characterless individual -- he was anything but that! The concordance quickly resolves doubts here. Nine times the same word is translated "perfect", and a closely associated word is uniformly rendered "integrity".

TIP 3

Use a concordance and lexicon to help understand obscure words and discover how words are used in other contexts.

So the picture of Jacob's character which emerges is that of a remarkably fine man. It is permissible to believe that for a while during succeeding years Jacob did not live up to the abnormally high standards of his early days, but he won in the end through learning to depend on God instead of upon himself.

• TO FIND OUT HOW A WORD IS USED IN OTHER CONTEXTS

What does "time and chance" mean in *Ecclesiastes 9:11*? Does it mean that things happen in our lives that are not controlled by God?

The fact that no other similar idea can be traced anywhere else in Scripture surely ought to have aroused misgivings in many minds, especially when there is such opposite teaching in the Gospels: "Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (*Matthew 10:29,30*).

Recourse to the concordance quickly supplies a remarkable group of seven passages (*Genesis 32:1, Exodus 5:3, 1 Samuel 10:5; 22:18, 1 Kings 2:29, Isaiah 64:5 and 53:6*) where the same Hebrew root is used, not regarding that which happens unplanned or uncontrolled, but of deliberate action -- in most of them, God's action. Then what confidence can be placed in the idea that there are many small unimportant occurrences which happen by chance, as though they are too trivial for the Almighty or the angels of His power to have any truck with. Indeed, a careful re-reading of the text in question will make clear that it is not speaking of the trivialities of experience, but of life and death, the most important issues of all!

The Role of Prophecy

More than one-third of the Bible contains prophecy. And in both the Old and New Testaments, prophecy includes both *direction* for believers and *prediction* of the future. The prophets not only acted as God's moral voice to humanity, both good and bad, but they were also inspired by God to speak of important events before they came to pass. This latter feature also acts to confirm that God is a God of history and to comfort believers that providence is still operative.

God can predict the future because He is all-knowing (omniscient) and because he is not locked to time in the same way we are. Romans 4:17 affirms that God can call "those things which do not exist as though they did," and Isaiah 46:10 describes God as being able to declare "the end from the beginning" and "from ancient times things that are not yet done." That God can do so remains one of the greatest testimonies to the divine origin of the Bible.

Example of Fulfilled Prophecy: Daniel 2

Prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's Image

Daniel 2:31-35 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the winds carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Interpretation (given later of the Book of Daniel):

HEAD OF GOLD:	Babylon
BREAST & ARMS OF SILVER:	Medo-Persia
BELLY & THIGHS OF BRONZE:	Greece
LEGS OF IRON:	Rome
FEET PARTLY OF IRON AND PARTLY OF CLAY:	Mixture of strong & weak nations
THE STONE CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS:	Christ and his Kingdom

The Two-Fold Purpose of Prophecy

Forthtelling (direction): According to 1 Corinthians 14, prophecy involves edification, exhortation, and comfort (14:3), conviction and conversion (14:24,25) and instruction (14:31).

Foretelling (prediction): Prophecy also warns man regarding his failure and need for repentance and salvation at the hand of God, while at the same time confirming the certainty of God's plan (see Hebrews 11:7).

NOTE: PROPHECY IS NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF SATISFYING IDLE CURIOSITY ABOUT FUTURE EVENTS OR TO MAKE HUMANS INTO PROPHETS, BUT TO REVEAL THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE BIBLE AND TO ASSIST BELIEVERS TO ACT IN FAITH, TO BE MOVED WITH FEAR AND TO MAKE SUCH PREPARATIONS THAT WILL SAVE THEM AND THEIR HOUSEHOLD.

The unusual Jewish history

Whatever we may think about the Jews, we cannot deny that they exist, and that they have a very long and a very strange history.

In the days of Jesus Christ there was a thriving Jewish nation in the land of Israel.

Hundreds of years earlier the nation had been independent, but before Jesus was born it became a part of the Roman Empire. The Jews did not take kindly to being ruled by foreigners. For many years the country seethed with discontent and rebellion.

Between A.D. 66 and A.D. 135 the Jews fought three fierce wars of independence. But each time they were defeated, and by A.D. 135 the Romans had had enough trouble. They were determined to stop these revolts once and for all.

The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and plundered the Temple in A.D. 70. The scene is pictured on the triumphal Arch of Titus in Rome. The seven-branched candlestick was taken from the Temple.

With typical Roman thoroughness they utterly destroyed Jerusalem and ploughed up its site. Then they erased its name from their maps, and scattered all the inhabitants of Judea (the main part of the land of Israel) around the Roman Empire.

And that, thought the Romans, was that.

But they were wrong. For century after century the Jews survived as a nation without a country. Wherever they went they were hated, treated as an inferior race, and made to live in ghettos. For seventeen centuries, on and off, the exiled Jews were persecuted, massacred, or made to flee for their lives from one country to another. Yet somehow they survived it all.

Then, at the end of the last century, nearly eighteen hundred years after their ancestors were exiled from it, a few Jews began to trickle back to their homeland. Within the twentieth century the Jewish population of the land of Israel has risen from a few thousand to several million. By 1948 the Jews there felt sufficiently powerful to proclaim their independence. The following year the sovereign State of Israel was admitted to membership of the United Nations.

History written in advance

With this brief summary of Jewish history in mind, look at what the Old Testament said would happen to the Jews. As you read the following passages, ask yourself: "Are these prophecies vaguely worded, or are they clear and plain? And have they been fulfilled, or not?"

1. The Jews would be scattered all over the world, hated, persecuted, and driven from country to country.

Deuteronomy 28:37 and 64-66 "And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations where the LORD will drive you... Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known -- wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trem-

bling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of ilfe."

2. Meanwhile, their land, once so fruitful, would lie desolate.

Leviticus 26:33,34 "I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths."

3. They would survive all these troubles, and would actually outlive their persecutors.

Jeremiah 30:11 "For I am with you, says the LORD, to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished."

Hosea 3:4,5 "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days."

4. Eventually, while still disobeying God, they would go back to their own land again.

Ezekiel 11:17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'"

These verses are typical of all Old Testament teaching about the future of Israel. Everyone, believer and unbeliever alike, agrees that the Old Testament was written before the time of Christ. Consequently, it is absolutely certain that these prophecies about the Jews were written hundreds of years before they were fulfilled.

PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING PROPHECY

- Note exactly to whom or to what the passage refers. Is the prophecy forthtelling or foretelling? Is it directed to comfort and edification, or is it speaking about the future?
- Is it using symbols to portray its message or is it speaking directly?
- How would the people of the day interpreted it? Remember that it should have made sense to the original readers.
- A prophet's message often had an application and fulfilment in his own day, as well as in a future time.
- Analyse the passage in terms of history, context and its literal meaning.

The prophecies about the exile of the Jews were not fulfilled until the second century after Christ. The prophecies about their wanderings were fulfilled continuously from the second to the nineteenth centuries. And the prophecies about the return of the Jews to their homeland were not fulfilled until the twentieth century.