
Translations of the Bible



Week 5: Using Scripture

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Different Kinds of Bibles

- A **reference Bible** has cross-references in the side or center margin, or at the bottom of the page, in addition to notes like in the NKJV about other manuscripts.
- A **study Bible** has more extensive notes at the bottom of the page which explain certain issues in the text. They also usually provide introductory remarks on every book of the Bible and book outlines.
 - Most study Bibles are also reference Bibles, that is, they have study notes at the bottom of the page *as well as* reference notes in the margins or center column.
- The NET Bible is an example of a study Bible with 60,000 notes. The notes are classified in three ways:
 - **tn** represent translator's notes, explaining why a particular translation was chosen, and alternatives.
 - **sn** study notes to explain the historical and cultural information or other important background information.
 - **tc** marks text critical notes about alternative readings found in other manuscripts.

A Good Study Bible?

1. I do not advocate for the Scofield Study Bible. It errs in the opening notes about the creation account. It advocates a certain kind of dispensationalism which has been clarified in the last 50-100 years to avoid misunderstanding by those who do not hold to dispensationalism—which we do hold.
2. The MacArthur Study Bible, in any of its translations, is a very good conservative, evangelical study Bible.
 - NKJV was the text for the original edition, about 1997.
 - Then followed NASB, ESV, NIV and LSB.
3. There are more popular ones, like the ESV Study Bible. It advances Covenant Theology, which I believe incorrectly explains the role of the nation of Israel in the Scriptural story-line.
4. There are others that are denomination-specific.
5. I have been reading the Biblical Theological Study Bible in NIV, and for \$25 on Amazon it is a good value. Its notes often reflect a certain theological bent or theological “fad” (like its comments in Mark on the “new exodus.”). Other times it is more even-handed, presenting two or more views.
6. Other suggestions? Always remember, the best Bible is a read Bible!!

Tools for Word Study: Old School

- Study Bibles are a first-line tool in the study of God's word. They help answer basic questions about the text, show you cross-references that you can use to understand the text better, and sometimes give introductions to historical or theological topics that are helpful.
- But there are many more tools that you can use in the study of God's word.
- One is a **concordance** in which you look up every use of a word in the Bible, either in English or Hebrew/Greek. Compare all the ways the word is used.
 - A simple concordance is just a list of all words in the Bible, with each word followed by the verses where you can find it. If you have any text, including the Bible, you can write a simple computer program to generate a concordance.

Tools for Word Study: Old School

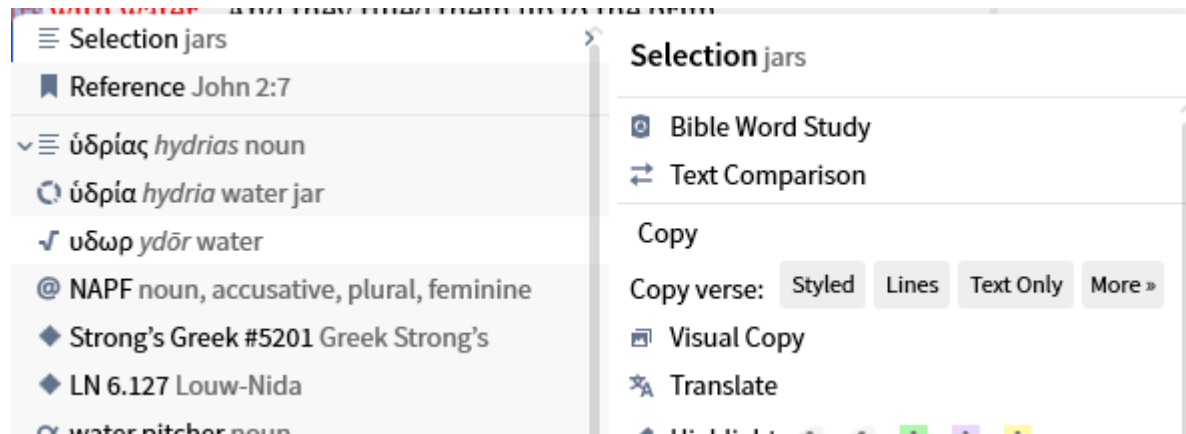
- **Dictionary** – most accessible is an English dictionary like Webster’s, but this lacks a direct connection to the original Greek or Hebrew text.
- Better are the dictionaries that pastors and theologians use, such as these in **Greek**:
 - Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
 - Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- And these for **Hebrew**:
 - Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000.
 - Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- To use these well, you need some original language training.

Danger of Word Study Tools

- There is a danger with these tools: you can begin to consider yourself an “expert” and ignore what your teachers or pastors say about a text.
 - For example, Strong’s definitions are often lacking in quality or comprehensiveness.
- You might even say something like, “Of all these definitions, I like this one the best, so that is what God must mean in this particular verse.”
- Most of us are not experts on word semantics and all the contexts in the Bible in which various words are found. Plus, it simply does not matter what you *like*. It is the author’s intention we must seek, not the reader’s preference.

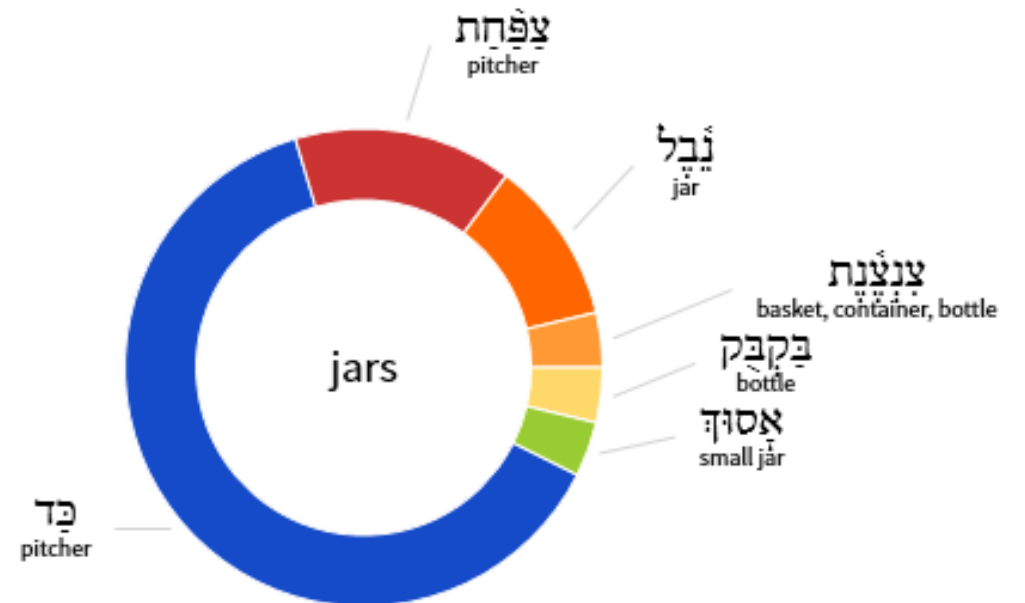
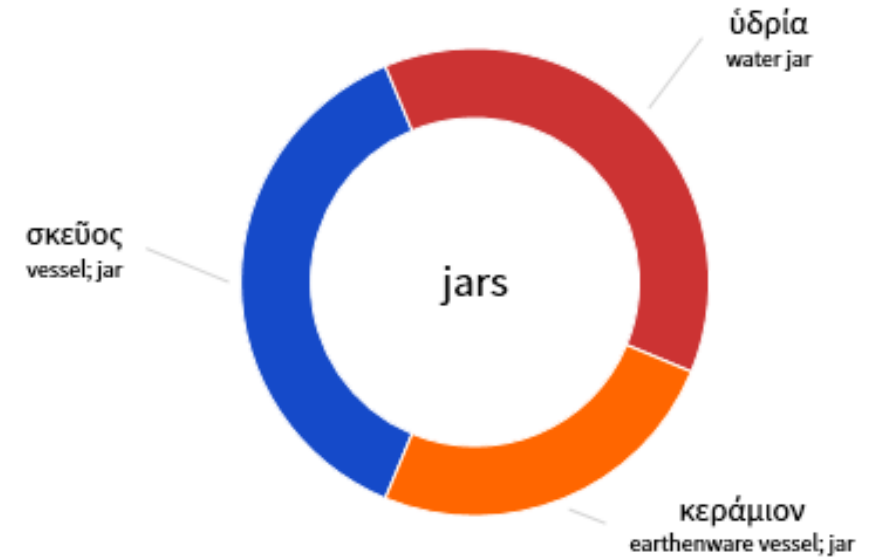
Tools for Word Study: Modern

- Very few people use a concordance in codex form today. Most everyone uses Google 😊 or another online tool like biblegateway.com. Better yet, I recommend the use of Accordance or Logos Bible software for serious study. With it, you can do a word study very easily.
- Take the word ‘jars’ in John 1:47. Right click it, click “Selection” on the left and “Bible Word Study” on the right.



Logos Offers Greek and Hebrew Results

- You can click each section of the ring graph and it will show you all the verses that use a certain original language word translated to *jar* in the Bible.
- We see three Greek words are translated as “jar” in the ESV. There are six words in Hebrew that are translated as “jar.”



Studying to Find the Meaning

- Diagramming
 - Simple phrase or block diagramming.
 - Arcing.
 - Full sentence diagramming.
- Finding the limits of the passage (paragraph, pericope).
- Understanding the main point of the paragraph and the supporting sub-points.
- Writing topic and assertion statements
 - What is the text about?
 - What is it asserting about that thing it is about?
- What does the text mean? How does it apply to you? To others?

Using Commentaries to Aid Your Study

- Some advocate waiting until later in the study process to use a commentary.
 - I am in this camp. I believe it is best to spend some time “soaking” in the text: reading it repeatedly in several translations, praying over it, studying it, etc. This will make your commentary work much more effective.
- Others advocate using a commentary very early in the study process.
 - Do not reinvent the wheel.
 - But you do have to ingest the text in a meaningful way, not just a surface way where you “regurgitate it.”
- Have you read or used a commentary before?
- How to find good commentaries? Ask your pastor or other experienced Bible teachers.
 - There are good single-volume commentaries. One I have used is [MacDonald’s Believer’s Bible Commentary](#).
 - There is a good two-volume commentary on the Bible by [Walvoord and Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#).
 - Both are available in Logos, as well as many others.
 - There are good commentaries for every book of the Bible. See for example <https://dbts.edu/basic-library-booklist/>.

Scripture Engagement

- After translating a Bible, translators are concerned that their work will actually be put to use.
- Scripture Engagement is a part of Bible translation and missions work which seeks to encourage the intentional, systematic, ongoing use of Scripture. It applies to people individually and churches corporately.
- It comes after translation and distribution. It has to do with **using** the Bible—reading it, studying it, teaching it, and memorizing it so that people’s lives will be transformed.
- Help with Bible intake: read, hear, meditate, memorize. This includes literacy training so that people can read.
- Help with Bible practice: living out the words of the Bible.
- Help with Bible teaching: creating and using Sunday school material, devotional material, sermon material, various media like audio recordings, videos.

So, you could...

- Translate the Bible or be a translation consultant.
- Be a pastor in a local church or a missionary starting new churches and using the Bible in that language.
- Be a Sunday school teacher.
- Distribute the Bible in print or electronically.
- Write/translate solid Sunday school curriculum or devotional material for a whole group of churches.
- Serve in a support capacity for a Bible translation society.

- Or, just read, study, memorize, meditate, and pray with your Bible and with people in your family and church!

Expand...

- See the [Bibles International Scripture Engagement introduction](#)

Homework Due Week 6

- **Analyze another passage like you did in the prior assignment.** Follow the pattern in my sample based on John 5:3-4. You can find it in Canvas in Files. It is called JohnCh5Vv3to4TranslationComparison.pdf.
- Select a passage from the following list—different than the one you selected for last week—or another passage approved by the instructor, and explain why the text is translated differently in the various translations. Do you prefer one over the other and why?
- Use one of the following passages: Luke 17:21, Mal 2:16, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 6:13, Acts 8:37, 1 John 5:7-8, Romans 16:7, Matthew 17:21.
- Submit your analysis in Canvas.

Homework Due Week 6

- You have selected the person you will do your final project on, gathered resources, and taken notes on those resources, and written an outline.
- **Now, write a first draft of your final project and get feedback from the instructor. Submit in Canvas and receive feedback from instructor to prepare the final draft.**