

Introduction

The Strong's concordance is a very useful tool for studying the scriptures. You can find the Strong's Concordance in most any Bible bookstore. It takes every single word of the King James Version and lists where each word can be found in the scriptures. It is useful for locating Scripture verses that you know the words to, but don't know the book, chapter and verse.

For example, let's say that you know of a verse that says our hairs are numbered. You could look up the word "numbered" in a Strong's Concordance and it would give you a listing of all the verses that contain the word "numbered". You would then find Matthew 10:30, where Jesus said that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered".

Also beside each verse reference there is a number. That number represents a Hebrew word (if in the Old Testament) or Greek word (if in the New Testament). In the back of the book it lists Hebrew and Greek words used to translate the bible into English. Each has a number beside them so that we may only need to know the number to locate a Greek or Hebrew word.

This number is called a *Strong number*. Then we can do a word study by reading the meaning of the original word. Whenever a number is referred to in the Strong's concordance, you can look up the number for yourself in the Strong's Lexicon or other lexicons that use Strong's numbers to verify everything.

One thing to keep in mind is that while the Strong's Concordance is fairly reliable in its lexicon definitions, it is relying on 19th century scholarship. One of the best ways to determine the true meaning of a word is look up that word in a Hebrew or Greek Lexicon to see how it was translated in various places (See below). Also, Hebrew especially has various verb forms, tenses and stems that can have different meanings. The Strong's Lexicon doesn't do much to address this, but others (such as the Brown Driver Briggs that the online concordance uses) have more detailed definitions for each verb stem.

In order to make a proper interpretation of the Biblical text one must view the text from an ancient Hebrew's perspective rather than from our modern western perspective. Even if you do not know Hebrew there are resources available to assist you in your studies of the Hebrew text behind the English translation.

Some of the resources you will need are an English translation of the Bible (such as the King James Version) and a concordance with Strong's dictionary keyed to the

translation you are using such as the Strong's Concise concordance.

To demonstrate this study process let us research the word "rejoice" as found in the King James Version. To begin we look up the word "rejoice" in the concordance. Below is an example of what you will see in the concordance (the verses listed below are only a portion of what is actually found in the concordance). The left column is a portion of the verse containing the word "rejoice" (identified as "r "). The middle column is the verse location and the right column identifies the Strong's number assigned to the Hebrew word translated as "rejoice" in that verse.

REJOICE (192)

ye shall <i>r</i> before the LORD your	Lev 23:40	8055
ye shall <i>r</i> in all that ye put	Deut 12:7	8055
so the LORD will <i>r</i> over you to	Deut 26:83	7797
will again <i>r</i> over thee for good	Deut 30:9	7797
<i>r</i> , O ye nations, with his people	Deut 32:43	7442
with fear, and <i>r</i> with trembling	Ps 2:11	1523
I will <i>r</i> in thy salvation	Ps 9:14	1523
We will <i>r</i> in thy salvation, and in	Ps 20:5	7442
Be glad in the LORD, and <i>r</i>	Ps 32:11	1524
Let mount Zion <i>r</i> , let the	Ps 48:11	8055
yea, let them exceedingly <i>r</i>	Ps 68:3	7797
Let the heavens <i>r</i> , and let the	Ps 96:11	8056
I will <i>r</i> , I will divide Shechem	Ps 108:7	5937
<i>r</i> in Rezin and Remaliah's son	Is 8:6	4885
even them that <i>r</i> in my highness	Is 13:3	5947
as thou didst <i>r</i> at the	Eze 35:15	8057

The first thing we notice in this study is that the King James Version uses the word "rejoice" 192 times (this number is located after the heading "Rejoice") but, it is an English word used to translate several different Hebrew words. In your notebook you will record each of the Strong's numbers.

The next step is to look up each of these numbers in the dictionary in the back of the concordance. Below is what you will find in the concordance for each of these numbers. When we look up the number "1523" we find that the Hebrew word is "guwl" (גוּל) and means to "spin round" (concrete) and is translated in the King James Version as "rejoice", "glad", "joyful", "joy" and "delight" (abstracts). The concrete meaning of the word is what

we are looking for as this would be the more ancient Hebraic meaning of the word and gives a better understanding of what this word implies. Next, go through each of the numbers in our notebook and write in their concrete meanings.

1523. גּוּל guwl {44x}, a primitive root; properly to spin round (under the influence of any violent emotion), i.e. usually rejoice, or (as crying) fear:- rejoice {27x}, glad {10x}, joyful {4x}, joy {2x}, delight {1x}.
1524. גִּיל giyl {10x}, from 1523; a revolution (of time, i.e. an age); also joy:- rejoice {3x}, jou {3x}, gladness {2x}, exceedingly {1x}, of your sort {1x}.
4885. מְשׂוֹס masows {17x}, from 7797; delight, concrete (the cause or object) or abstract (the feeling):- joy {12x} mirth {3x}, rejoice {2x}.
5937. אָלַז alaz {16x}, a primitive root; to jump for joy i.e. exult:- rejoice {12x}, triumph {2x}, joyful {2x}.
5947. אֲלִיז alliyz {7x}, from 5937; exultant:- rejoice {4x}, joyous {3x}.
7442. רָנַן ranan {52x}, a primitive root; properly to creak (or emit a stridulous sound), i.e. to shout (usually for joy):- sing {20x}, rejoice {11x}, sing aloud {4x}, shout {4x}, shout for joy {3x}, sing for joy {2x}, crieth {2x}, cry out {2x}, shout aloud {1x}, misc. {3x}.
7797. שׁוֹס suws {27x}, a primitive root; to be bright, i.e. cheerful:- rejoice {20x}, glad {4x}, greatly {1x}, joy {1x}, mirth {1x}.
8055. שָׂמַח samach {152x}, a primitive root; probably to brighten up i.e. (figuratively) be blithe or gleesome:- rejoice {95x}, glad {45x}, joy {5x}, joyful {2x}, merry {2x}, misc. {3x}.
8056. שָׂמַח sameach {23x}, from 8055; blithe or gleeful:- rejoice {11x}, glad {4x}, joyful {3x}, merry {3x}, merrily {1x}, merryhearted {1x}.
8057. שִׂמְחָה simchah {94x}, from 8056; blithesomeness or glee (religious or festival):- joy {44x}, gladness {31x}, mirth {8x}, rejoice {3x}, rejoicing {2x}, misc. {6x}.

We now have a more concrete Hebraic understanding of these Hebrew words as seen below.

- 1523 guwl spin round
 1524 giyl revolution
 4885 masows an object of delight
 5937 alaz jump
 5947 aliyz exalt (lift up)
 7442 ranan shout
 7797 suws bright

- 8055 samach bright
 8056 sameach blithe
 8057 simchah religious festival

Notice that the Hebrew word "simchah" (#8057) is derived from "sameach" (#8056) which in turn is derived from "samach" (#8055) being the primitive root to the other two. All three of these words have the three letters S, M and Ch in common, the original root and all three will be related in meaning. Therefore we can see that a "religious festival" is a "bright" time and a time of blithe or glee. We also find a similar relationship between "guwl" (#1523) and "giyl" (#1524), both meaning to go around in a circle.

We can now do a study on the actual Hebrew words themselves. If we wanted to study the Hebrew word "guwl" (#1523) we can look up every place in the Bible where this occurs. To do this we look at the dictionary entry for this Hebrew word and write down all translations for this word; rejoice, glad, joyful, delight. The number in brackets after each word tells you how many times this Hebrew word is translated with that English word. For example, the Hebrew word "guwl" is translated as "joyful" 4 times. We can go back into the concordance and look up the word "joyful" and scan down the right column looking for the 4 times the number 1523 appears in the abbreviated example below.

JOYFUL (25)

king, and went unto their tents j	1Kin 8:66	8056
for the LORD had made them j	Ezr 6:22	8055
And my soul shall be j in the	Ps 35:9	1523
to be a j mother of children	Ps 113:9	8056
of Zion be j in their King	Ps 149:2	1523
In the day of prosperity be j	Eccl 7:14	2896
and be j, O earth	Is 49:13	1523
make them j in my house of prayer	Is 56:7	8055
my soul shall be j in my God	Is 61:10	1523

We can now look up the verses above containing the word "guwl" (#1523) and read them interjecting our new understanding of the Hebrew word behind the English translation.

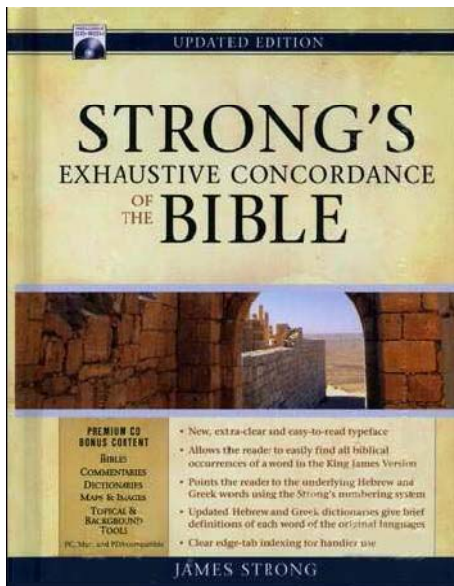
Psalm 35:9 *And my soul shall "spin around" in the LORD: It shall rejoice in his salvation.*

How to use a Strong's Concordance

Psalms 149:2 *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion "spin around" in their King.*

Isaiah 49:13 *Sing, O heavens; and "spin around", O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.*

Isaiah 61:10 *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall "spin around" in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*



Tips

1) Italics in most translations do not indicate emphasis but omission. The italicized words do not occur in the Hebrew text but rather were added by the translators in an attempt to clarify the meanings. Try reading a text without the italicized words to get the force of the original text.

2) The personal name of God, Jehovah, or more properly, Yahweh, is normally translated "LORD," with each letter capitalized. Adonai, the term of respect, "Lord," or as we would say, "sir," is spelled "Lord" with only the first letter capitalized. The generic name for God, "Elohim," is always translated, "God." Note, for instance, the translations of Genesis 1 and 2 and the careful distinction made in the use of the names of God.

3) All except a small portion of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, but Jeremiah 10:11, Daniel 2:4 to 7:28 and Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26 were evidently recorded in the Chaldean (or Aramaic) language. It is closely related to Hebrew, but different.

4) If you are looking for a more comprehensive explanation of a Hebrew or Greek word, you can buy a Greek or Hebrew Lexicon.

5) Nowadays a lot of Bible software is available that makes use of the Strong Numbers.

A good internet site is: <http://blueletterbible.org>

See also <http://www.petersteffens.com/links.html>