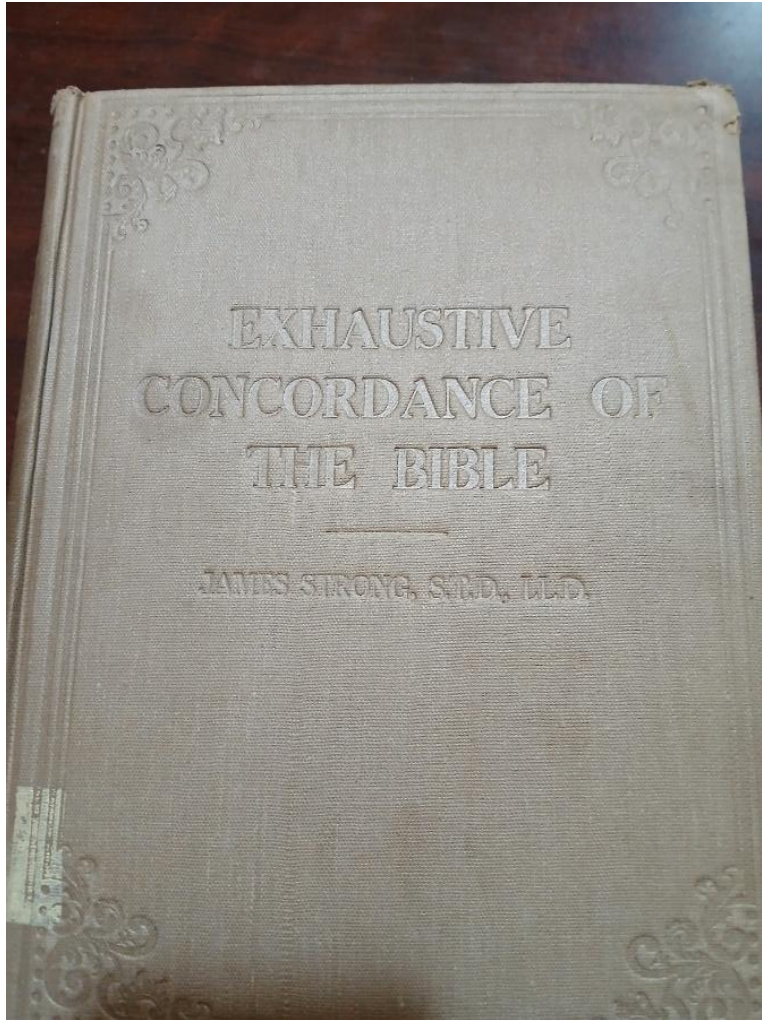




6/6/2026

A Publication of The Old Paths Restoration Ministry
www.facebook.com/theoldpaths

This is a picture of our old 1890 first edition Strong's Concordance! It has helped generations of Bible students trace English words back to Hebrew and Greek entries. James Strong did a remarkable job for his time, and his work is still useful today. It was a monumental and massive work!

“Tools, Truth, and Returning to the Hebrew: Why Strong’s Isn’t Strong Enough”

In this teaching we will look at the tools we use to understand the Hebrew Scriptures, and why some of the most popular ones simply cannot support a Tanakh-only, peshat-driven restorationist worldview.

Most of us began with the **Strong’s Concordance**. It opened doors. It helped us find verses. It gave us our first glimpse of Hebrew.

But Strong’s was never meant to be a Hebrew dictionary, a grammar tool, translation guide or most important....“as a source for doctrine.” It was simply and primarily meant to be a numbering system to help English readers locate words in the King James Version.

Because of that, Strong’s sometimes gives outdated definitions, overly simplified meanings of words, it has a theological bias and there are errors that very much matter in our day. Many of those errors have been incorporated into major theological leanings and a source of doctrine, knowingly or not among many who identify with Christianity. Then we also will have an example where Strong’s gets it right but Christian theology neglects the definition given.

Let’s look at a few examples that are clean, verifiable, and easy for anyone to check.

Example 1 — שָׁחָה (shachah/saha) — Strong’s #7812

Strong’s includes a definition of “**worship**.” But the Hebrew does not mean to worship, it just means to bow down, and even used for bowing down in respect to humans and kings as well. So that definition was added in for theological purposes.

Abraham “shachah” before men. **Genesis 23:7 “Then Abraham rose and *bowed down* to the people of the land, the Hittites.” Genesis 23:12 “And Abraham *bowed down* before the people of the land.”**

David “shachah” before Saul. **1 Samuel 24:8 “Then David bowed with his face to the ground and *prostrated himself* before Saul.” 1 Samuel 20:4 “David... fell on his face to the ground and *bowed* three times.”**

It is not inherently a religious act as is suppose by Christianity and as defined by the Strongs. So when looking up the term “bowed” in the Strongs, one of the definitions is to “worship,” which is not a Hebrew definition, it is an addition to the Hebrew meaning. Strong’s inserts a Christian category — “worship” — that the Hebrew word itself does not carry in its true meaning.

Example 2 — עולם (olam) — Strong's #5769**

This is a clean, simple example that exposes Christian bias clearly. Strong's often interprets the Hebrew term *olam* as: “forever” or “eternal” or “everlasting”

But in Hebrew, *olam* means:

- a long duration
- an age
- something that is hidden or beyond the horizon
- an indefinite time

It does **not** inherently mean “eternal” in the Greek sense and in NT theology.

This is why phrases like: “eternal punishment,” or “eternal fire,” are **Christian theological readings**, not Hebrew meanings. These examples are clean, easy to verify, and perfectly illustrate the problem.

Example 3 — אֱלֹהִים (elohim) — Strong's #430

Christianity treats this term only as a divine name or title (God), but the Hebrew usage even includes human beings, judges, rulers, heavenly beings, and Yahweh depending on context. This is an example where Christian theology neglects when the Strong's actually gets it correct.

Elohim Used of Human Judges: “...then his master shall bring him to the *elohim*.” (Exodus 21:6) “...the case of both parties shall come before the *elohim*.” (Exodus 22:8–9)

Here the Hebrew term, *elohim* refers to:

- human judges
- acting as representatives of Yahweh's justice

Elohim Used of Idols: “For all the *elohim* of the nations are idols...” (Psalm 96:5)

Even carved images are called **elohim** because the word is a **category**, not a rank.

Elohim Used of Angels: “You made him a little lower than the *elohim*.” (Psalm 8:5)

The true Hebrew text says **elohim**, not “angels.” The Greek Septuagint changed it to “angels,” and Christian Bibles followed the Greek rather than the Hebrew!

But the Hebrew text is clear!

Human beings can = elohim

Angels can = elohim

Heavenly beings can = elohim

Idols can = elohim

Again, the category can even be “non-physical beings,” not just Yahweh or “gods,” as is always portrayed in Christian theology. Christian tradition overlooks these and other such texts of the Hebrew Scriptures while also overlooking the full definition given by Strongs. It destroys the Trinity of deities if we find out that the term elohim can also apply to humans, angels and others of the unseen world. There are many, many (e)lohim, not just one, not just two or three but many. But there is one Most High (E)lohim.

Context is what determines meaning — not theology.

Why Most Christian Dictionaries Cannot Support a Tanakh-Only Restorationist Worldview

Many of the “great dictionaries” people use today — even expensive ones — were produced thru backgrounds academically Christian. And thus, there is always going to be a theological twist to the meanings.

That means:

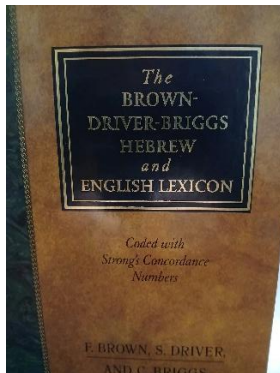
- NT theology influences the OT definitions
- Christian “Christology” bleeds backwards into Hebrew word meanings of their Lexicons
- Greek categories shape Hebrew meanings in their Dictionaries
- Doctrinal beliefs override the peshat meanings of the words or text
- “prophecy fulfillment” stains their lexicon entries
- Trinitarian ideas twist simple Hebrew terms that if left alone would be Hebraically accurate

This is why a restorationist must be careful. Even the best Christian dictionaries carry Christian categories into Hebrew words. We have in our library most all of the major Lexicons and Dictionaries being used by students and scholars alike. But we only use them as supplemental aids since we do not adhere nor agree with much of their theological stance. It doesn’t mean they are completely without truth, for they still do serve their purpose in our studies, but they are not the first lexicons that we reach for.

Why BDB and HALOT Rise Above the Rest

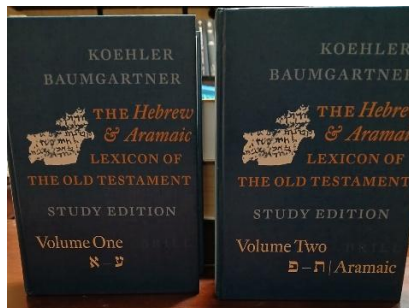
These are the two lexicons that actually help you return to the Hebrew itself. These two from our library are the first Lexicons we would reach for in understanding Hebrew word meanings.

BDB — Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon



- Hebrew-first
- root-based
- uses real biblical usage
- minimal theological bias
- still one of the best tools ever produced
- A great replacement for the Strong's concordance

HALOT Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament

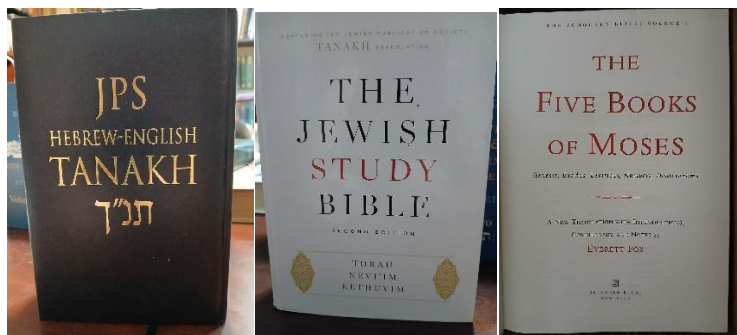


- modern
- academically rigorous
- uses comparative Semitics
- uses Dead Sea Scrolls
- no Christian doctrinal agenda
- the gold standard

HALOT: This tool defines Hebrew words by **Hebrew usage**, not English tradition. But it is very much Hebrew based and one needs to be fluent in Hebrew to understand it, although we have found a few tricks to get around it and thus it is usable for us.

Not pictured is The Even-Shoshan Concordance which is one of the best but.....it is Hebrew only with no English translation. It is the one most Hebrew speaking Jews in Israel might use as they do not need the English translation at all. But it is extremely accurate, yet extremely difficult without Hebrew fluency. If a person were to learn Hebrew, this is a must have in their library and in the studies of the Tanakh word meanings.

There are also better English Scripture translations that will help English readers get closer to the Hebrew when they can't use lexicons: We own the following Tanakh versions that we use almost exclusively although we own almost every bible version ever published in hardcopy as well as other Tanakh versions, if not digital versions. But the following are very good accurate translations from the Hebrew into the English that can aid a student in understanding the more accurate renderings of the Hebrew word meanings in English. Although they do not use the restored names of the Creator as is common among Jewish publications.



JPS Hebrew English Tanakh — the most reliable Jewish translation.
The Jewish Study Bible 2nd edition, with brief commentary.
Schocken Bible Torah only (by Everett Fox)

The Restorationist Approach to Hebrew Words Here is the heart of this teaching:

- 1. Hebrew words must be defined by Hebrew usage — not English tradition.**
- 2. Context decides the meaning — not theology.**
- 3. Peshat (plain meaning) comes before interpretation.**
- 4. Let the Tanakh define its own words. Use Hebrew dictionaries to help.**
- 5. Tools are servants, not masters.**

It is vital for your understanding of the Hebrew language to learn the Hebrew language. If you are young enough to learn how to speak, read and write Hebrew, it is one of the most important things to acquire in your life. Hebrew should be taught in every school across the United States. It is the language of the Scriptures. We must return to:

- Hebrew grammar
- Hebrew context
- Hebrew worldview
- Hebrew categories
- Hebrew usage

If you can ever accomplish understanding the Hebrew language in your life you will have a deeper understanding of Yahweh's ways and will surpass the knowledge of those who do not. In order to understand Yahweh's ways we will never get there following Greek philosophy and Christian theology. For they are the antithesis of the Tanakh and the truth of Yah. Strong's is a good starting point — but it should never be the finish line. Strong's is not strong enough.

The weekly Shabbath invites us to slow down, to return to the foundations, and to let the Hebrew Scriptures speak in their own voice. Tools are good servants but can be bad masters. May we be faithful stewards of the text, humble students of the language, and seekers of the plain meaning that Yahweh gave Israel.

Shalom!