

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

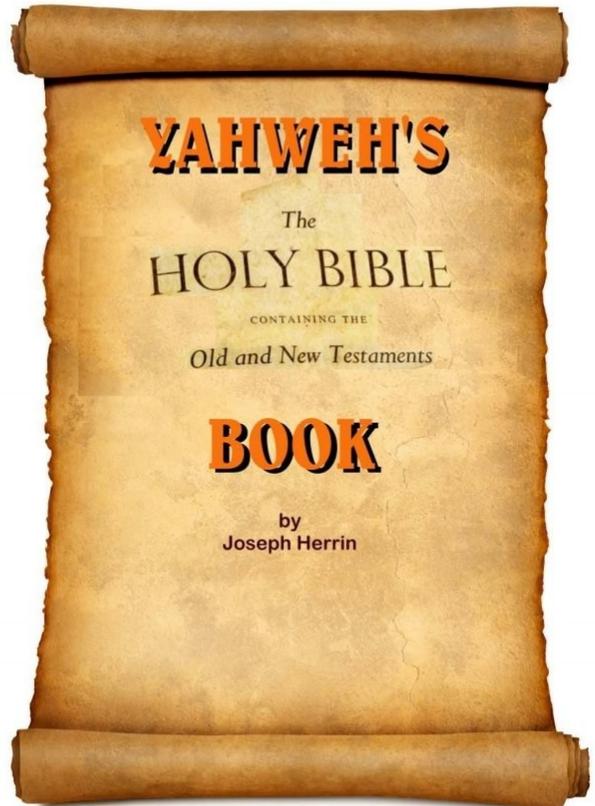
Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.18.6

This edition of the Parables Bookshelf Newsletter series continues the writing *Yahweh's Book*. In this newsletter we will look at the troublesome problem of Bible bias. The men and women who serve as translators and editors of various Bible versions often allow their personal views and beliefs to influence the way in which they translate the word of God. This often leads to serious distortions of the Word of God.

We will also look at the need to be a diligent student of the Bible in order to arrive at the truth.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days,

Joseph Herrin



Food for Thought

“One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed.”

Leonard Ravenhill

“The book to read is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think. No book in the world equals the Bible for that. “

Mccosh

Scripture Memory

James 1:22

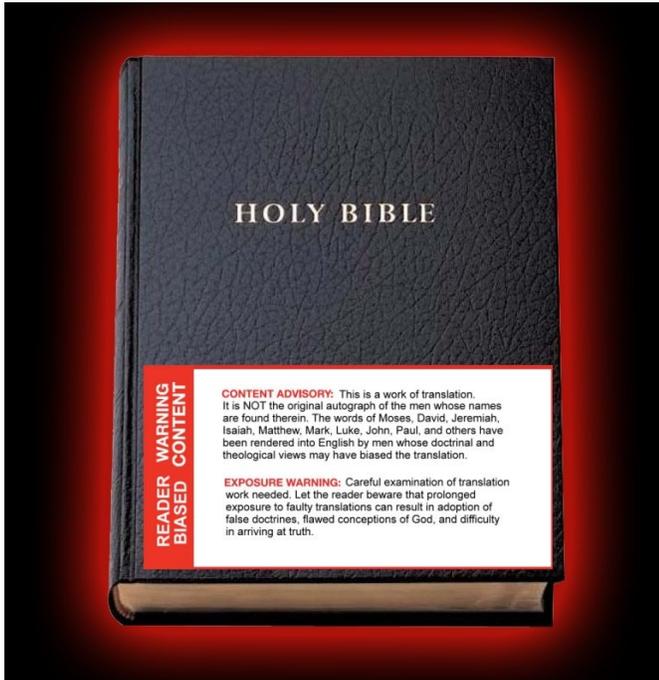
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Parables Newsletter

- Series 1.18.6
- *Yahweh's Book*
- Chapters 11-12

Yahweh's Book

Bible Bias



One of the disturbing facts relative to all existing Bible translations is that they are affected by the bias of the men and women who have labored to produce them. Not all such bias is the result of evil intent, or a lack of Christian character. To a large extent, translation bias is the result of men needing to make judgments about the original author's meaning. Quite logically, men will gravitate toward interpretations of words and phrases that they believe conform to truth. A serious problem is exposed as it is observed that a great many things men believe to be true are in fact false.

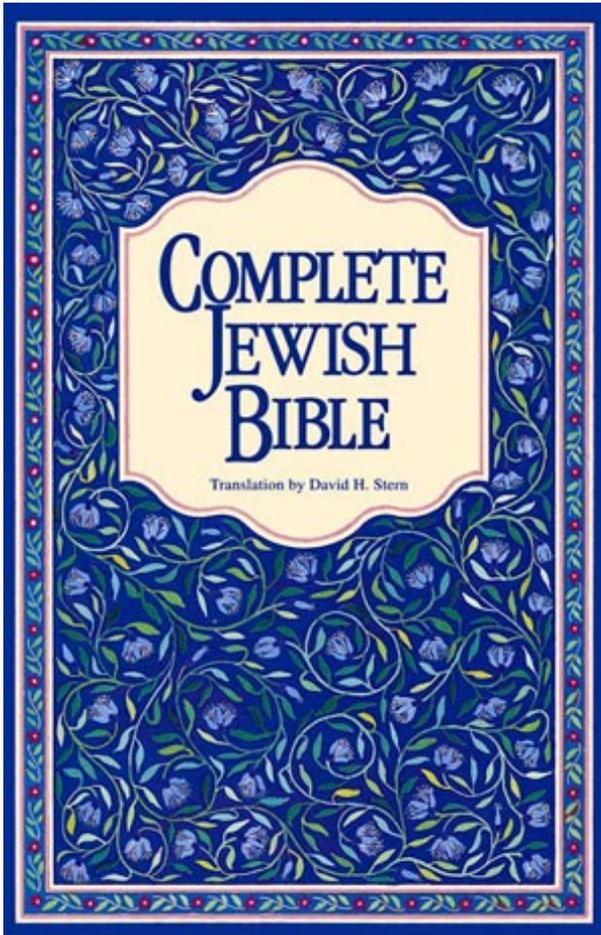
When a Bible translator overlays his beliefs upon the text he is rendering into another language, the result is that errors creep into the Scriptures. It is not possible to translate an ancient book such as the Bible into modern parlance without making a great many judgments about the meaning of the text. If the Bible scholar has a deep and accurate understanding of the subject matter he is translating, then he is greatly helped in arriving at a faithful reproduction of the original documents. If, however, the

Bible scholar does not have a solid understanding of the truths and facts being conveyed, or worse yet, if his understanding is fraught with falsehood, error, and misconceptions, there is a high probability that the Bible version he produces will bear the imprint of his errant beliefs.

The naive reader of the Holy Scriptures often thinks nothing of the process that was undertaken to transmit the ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts into English. It has been previously noted that some have so little understanding of the original authorship of the Scriptures, and the work of translation, that they mistakenly believe that Christ and His apostles spoke the King's English. Not perceiving the human factor in producing a Bible version in the English language, the ignorant are highly susceptible to being led astray. At the very least, those who fail to recognize the human factor in Bible translation will suffer from a lack of care in maintaining a critical eye that seeks to discern between the thought of the Bible's original authors and the errors introduced by copyists and translators.

Not all Bible bias is the result of good-hearted men failing to comprehend the original intent of the Scriptures. Some men have manifested less integrity in their labors. There are intentional deceivers, and there are men who in their pride believe they can improve upon the message of prophets, evangelists and apostles. I have encountered some truly egregious examples of men making wholesale alterations to the Scriptures in order to make them conform to their particular doctrinal beliefs. A recent example of this is observed in the *Complete Jewish Bible*, a translation produced by David Stern and published in 1989.

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The description for this book states, “The only English translation that expresses the Bible's original and essential Jewishness from Genesis to Revelation. It reconnects Christians to their Jewish roots and Jews to their Messiah.” Such a statement sounds well and good, but along with the “essential Jewishness” that David Stern emphasizes in this translation, he also interjects his belief that Christians are subject to the Law of Moses. As I previously mentioned, this writing series cannot properly address the subject of the Law. I encourage all who have an interest in the purpose, scope, and duration of the Law to read the book *Laying Down the Law*.

David Stern admits in the introductory material at the front of his Bible version that he has made alterations to Paul’s writings to make them more sensible and clear to Christians who are often confused

when they read the apostle’s words relating to the Law of Moses. What David Stern characterizes as confusion are Paul’s many statements that affirm that the Law was given to mankind for a limited duration “until” the promised seed should come that Yahweh promised to Abraham, that seed being Yahshua. Paul in many of his writings, and with numerous arguments, testifies that the Law no longer has jurisdiction over those who are “in Christ.” Paul makes some very plain statements in this matter, such as the following.

Romans 7:4-6

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God... But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

NAS

You cannot be any freer from something than to have died to that to which you were formerly bound. Paul is not preaching lawlessness here, for he plainly states that we were “released from the Law...,” so that we “might be joined to another,” that is, to Christ. Christ becomes our Head, our Sovereign, our Shepherd to guide us in the path of righteousness that Yahweh would have us to walk. The Law contained only shadows of the will of God, but the Holy Spirit can disclose the substance of the Father’s will to those who are in Christ.

One of the ways David Stern hides the apostle Paul’s message of being loosed from the Law is by inconsistently translating the Greek word “nomos.” In Romans chapters 5 and 7, Mr. Stern renders this word as “Torah.” Yet, in chapter 6, sandwiched right between these other passages, he translates

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nomos as “legalism.” Why does he do this? It is because to render the word consistently as “Torah” would have led to the following translation.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under **Torah**, but under grace.

To make the words of Paul conform to his own doctrinal beliefs, David Stern switches up the word here, rendering it as “legalism.” This is not all, however. In Paul’s epistle to the Galatian believers he uses the expression “ergon nomos” which is properly translated as “works of the Law.” Following is how this verse appears in the New American Standard Bible.

Galatians 2:16

Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the **works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the **works of the Law**; since by the **works of the Law** shall no flesh be justified.

Mr. Stern renders “ergon nomos” as “*legalistic observance of Torah commands*.” He gets even more expansive, in his efforts to shape the readers understanding, in the next chapter as he renders the Greek phrase “hupo nomos” (“under Law”) with the thirteen word phrase, “*in subjection to the system which results from perverting the Torah into legalism*.”

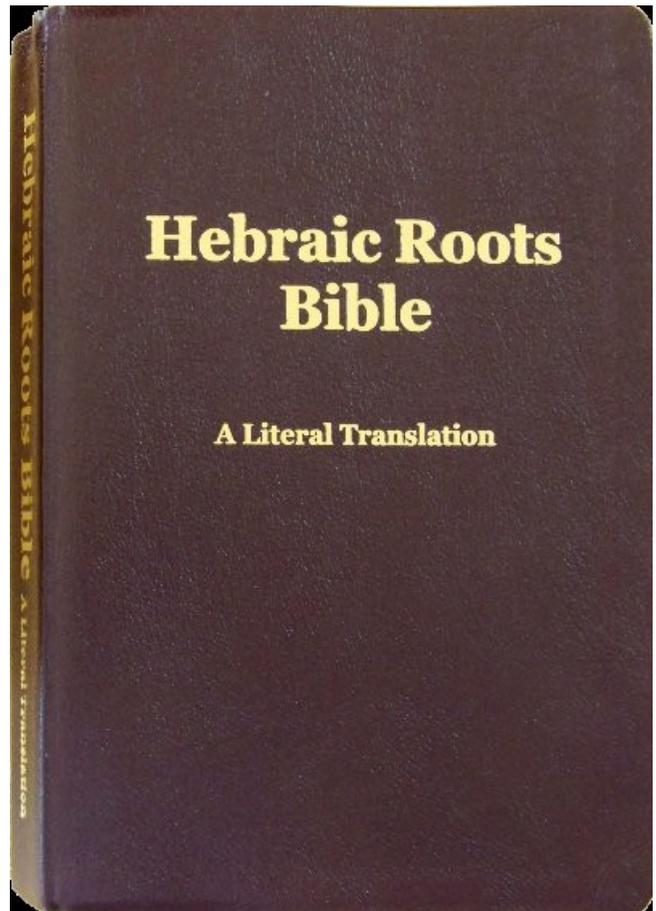
Galatians 3:23

But before faith came, we were kept in custody **under the law**, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

NAS

These are egregious examples of altering the Scriptures to make them conform to one’s doctrinal bias. David Stern is unfaithfully altering the apostle’s words because to translate them accurately leads men and women to conclusions that he does not support.

David Stern is not the only person to make such alterations to the Scriptures. I have found that those who hold to the belief that Christians are bound to the Law of Moses are particularly predisposed to playing very loose and free with the words of the apostle Paul. Recently a brother in Christ asked my opinion about the Hebraic Roots Bible.



I use the term “cult” very guardedly when referring to religious groups, for the word carries much

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stigma with it. Yet, the word seems befitting the group that produced this Bible translation. On their Q&A page, some of their aberrant beliefs are revealed. Following are two entries that are very troubling.

73. *In this spiritual wilderness time period we are in how do we literally identify the real Laodicean members in YHWHs congregation?*

*Clearly, we are in the Laodicean era of the end time congregation. Laodicean means ruled by the people. We see this attitude permeated in society with social uprisings over the last 3 to 4 years and we also see it in the congregation with many false brethren forsaking elders and leadership. The Laodicean claims he is “rich and made himself rich and is in need of nothing.” These Laodiceans think they have the proper doctrine even though it is false and heresy, and they are blinded to the truth by their pride. The bible states in Mathew 7 “you will know them by their fruits.” The laodicean is bearing no fruit for Yahweh’s kingdom. **Anyone denying the ordained elderhood set up by Yahweh and Yahshua and bringing their own heresies and will not repent but are held up in pride clearly are displaying a Laodicean attitude in which scripture tells us to leave such a one and mark him before the congregation** (Ro 16:17).*

These words reveal that this group believe there is a recognized “elderhood set up by Yahweh and Yahshua.” Of course, the leaders of this group believe they are that “elderhood.” This becomes all the more troubling in light of the following entry on the Q&A page.

69. *Can you have the Holy Spirit in you without the laying on of hands?*

Yahweh is not the author of confusion (I Cor

14:33), but He has a systematic way of transferring the Ruach HaChodesh (Holy Spirit) to others. He uses this as a safeguard so that his spirit will not be transferred to just anybody, but only to those that his true ministers have qualified to have truly repented of their sins and accepted the blood of Yahshua for the forgiveness of those sins. The more we know, the more accountability we have before YHWH (Lk 12:47-48). This is why YHWH does not call everyone today, and give a full knowledge of the truth, so that he can have mercy on their ignorance at a later judgment. Romans 11:32, “For YHWH hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon them all.” This is why the laying on of hands and transferring of the Holy Spirit can only be done by someone who has been ordained and given the authority from YHWH (Jn 20:21-23)...

Think about it. If any baptized member had the ability to transfer YHWH’s spirit, what chaos it would have caused...

*The laying on of hands is part of the baptism ceremony and one of the basic doctrines of the congregation in Heb 6:1-2. **It can only be performed by a qualified Elder, who has been given the authority from YHWH, through ordination, and having hands laid on him.***

Here is a group of men who claim that they alone have the power and authority to transfer Yahweh’s Spirit to other men. This is gross error, and a manifestation of pride. Undoubtedly, such a doctrine serves as a means to control the members of the church. The elders need only declare someone disqualified on any basis they choose to charge the individual who disagrees with them of not being a partaker of the Spirit of Yahweh. After all, they alone are the sole arbiters of such matters.

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In answering the e-mail from the brother in Christ who asked me for my thoughts on this Bible translation, I shared the following.
(<http://www.coyhwh.com/en/bible.php>)

I have found the phrase "Hebraic Roots" to be used as a synonym for "Torah Observant." I have yet to find anyone who claims to be a Hebraic Roots adherent who is not teaching the saints that they must keep the Law of Moses. I would be surprised if this Bible translation does not include some biased translations of Paul's teachings that would render it more "Law friendly."

A second issue I have is with the statement below that is found on this same page.

This complete bible also has the New Testament based on the original Aramaic Peshitta text, the very language that our Savior spoke. The original New Testament was not written in Greek, but Aramaic.

I find difficulty with this statement for many reasons. First, the Peshitta was written in Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic that is distinct from Hebrew. It is somewhat disingenuous to refer to it as the *Aramaic Peshitta*. Most scholars refer to the Peshitta as the *Syriac Peshitta*. The reason for this is that Syriac and Hebrew, though both being dialects of Aramaic, are distinct from one another. It is therefore inaccurate to say that this is "the very language that our Savior spoke."

Thirdly, the statement that "*The original New Testament was not written in Greek, but Aramaic,*" is a belief held only by a small minority of Bible scholars, many of whom are members of groups described as Hebraic Roots, or Messianic congregations. Those who hold to this view are influenced by a bias toward Hebrew and against Greek. The

existing evidence in ancient manuscripts does not support the belief that the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic. The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, and the most complete, are written in Greek. The majority opinion among Bible scholars is that the Peshitta was translated from existing Greek manuscripts into the Syriac language. I think there should at the very least be some acknowledgment of the fact that the claim of the New Testament being written in Aramaic is highly contested. By failing to admit this, those who produced this *Hebraic Roots Bible* version are demonstrating their bias in the matter.

Fourthly, the Peshitta did not include the books 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. These were added centuries later because it was disputed by believers in Syria as to whether these writings ought to be included in the canon of Scripture. It is therefore disingenuous to write as if the Bible as we recognize it today was originally contained in the Peshitta.

As one examines the argument for an original Aramaic New Testament, there are serious obstacles. For one, much of the New Testament was written to Greek speaking Gentiles. Luke wrote both his gospel and the book of Acts, addressing them to Theophilus, which is clearly a Greek name meaning "lover of God." It is likely that Theophilus was not an individual, but a name Luke employed to denote that his writings were for all who were lovers of God. If Luke's audience had been Hebrew speaking people, it seems unlikely that he would have chosen this Greek name to open his writings. Then there are Paul's many epistles, comprising a majority of the books of the New Testament. Paul was sent to the Gentiles, not to the Jews.

Ephesians 3:8

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, ***to preach to the Gentiles*** the unfathomable

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riches of Christ.

Galatians 2:7-8

Seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel *to the uncircumcised*, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also *to the Gentiles*)...

Why would Paul write his epistles to the Greek speaking Gentiles in Aramaic?

After writing to this brother, I looked up some Scriptures in the *Hebraic Roots Bible* to see how they handled Paul's words relating to the Law. I had rightly surmised that they had made unfaithful alterations to the apostle's words.

Romans 7:4-6

4 So that, my brothers, you also were made dead to the (penalty of the) Law through the body of Messiah, for you to become another's, to the One raised from the dead, so that we may bear fruit to Elohim.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members through the Law for the bearing of fruit unto death.

6 But now we have been set free from the penalty of the Torah, having died to that in which we were held, so as for us to serve in newness

[Hebraic Roots Bible]

Note that in verse 4 the editors of this Bible version have put the words (penalty of the) in parentheses, for these words do not appear in Paul's letter to the Romans. These are added to lead the reader to conclude that Paul had something different in mind here than he had elsewhere in this book when he wrote about the Law. Observe also that in verse 6

the phrase "penalty of the" appears again, but this time the editors failed to use parentheses to indicate that these words do not appear in the original manuscripts. The editors did the same thing in the following verse of Scripture.

Romans 6:15

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the *penalty of the* Torah, but under grace? Let it not be!

The italics are mine. They point out that the italicized words do not exist in the original manuscripts. The great inconsistency in translating the Greek word "nomos" (Law) is revealed in the following verses.

Romans 7:6-7

6 But now we have been set free from *the penalty of the Torah*, having died to that in which we were held, so as for us to serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is *the instruction* sin? Let it not be! But I did not know sin except through *the Torah*; for also I did not know lust except the Torah said, "You shall not lust." (Ex. 20:17)

In these two verses the translators have rendered the same Greek word in three different ways:

the penalty of the Torah

the instruction

the Torah

This is an example of translation bias. It is the result of the translators overlaying their doctrinal beliefs on top of the Scriptures, resulting in a transla-

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tion that is unfaithful to the original manuscripts. This is all the more serious because the group producing this Bible version has labeled it "A Literal Translation." There is no evidence of having followed a "literal" translation method in these examples. The writers are adding words to the text that are not present, and they are rendering words inconsistently in passages where Paul consistently used the same Greek word.

Similar examples of translation bias are found when looking at Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Galatians 2:16

16 knowing that a man is not justified by works of (Levitical) Law, but that it is through faith in Yahshua Messiah, we also believed into Messiah Yahshua, that we may be justified by faith in Messiah and not by works of (Levitical) Law, because all flesh will not be justified by works of Law. (Psa. 123:2)

[Hebraic Roots Bible]

The word "Levitical" is inserted here to make it appear that Paul is speaking of something different than the entirety of the Law delivered to Moses for all the people of God. Some groups that advocate the continuance of the authority of the Law in the life of the Christian divide the Law into various divisions, such as the moral law, the law for the Levitical priesthood, and the Law of sacrifices. They then contend that Paul had only that portion of the Law relating to the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices in mind when he spoke of the Christian no longer being under the law. They declare that the moral Law continues to exert authority over the believer. Such a suggestion is readily refuted from a careful examination of Paul's writings.

Romans 7:6-8

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

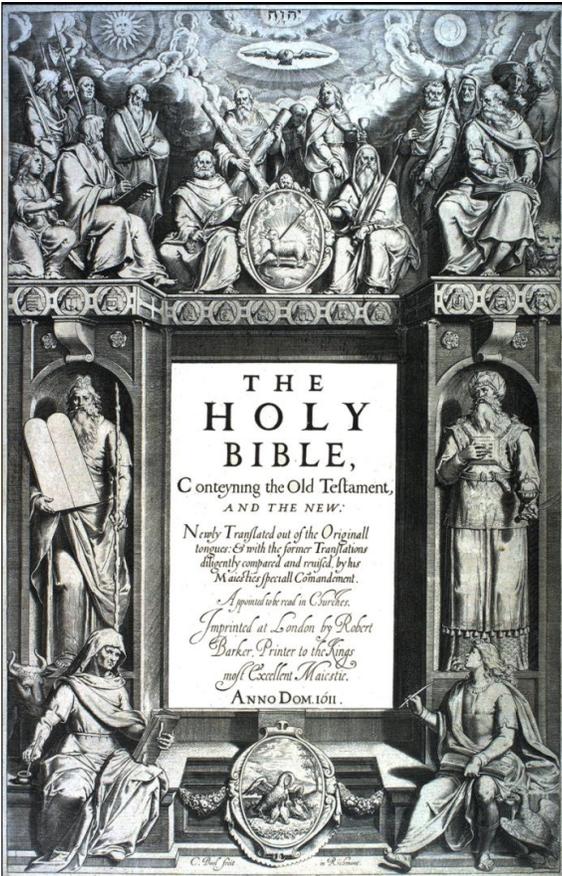
The part of the Law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" is neither the Levitical law, nor the law of sacrifices. It is the moral portion of the law. Indeed, these words are found in the Ten Commandments. It is this moral Law of which Paul declares, "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

Brothers and sisters, these Bible translations ought to come with warning labels such as I have shown in the image at the head of this writing. The naive reader, or the Christian who will not stir himself up to examine all things carefully, will easily be led astray to embrace false doctrine by being unaware of the translation bias that is present.

Translation bias is not a new phenomenon. It has been present for thousands of years. In an earlier post I mentioned a Greek version of the Bible created by Theodotion that Origen included in the Hexapla. Theodotion was a Hellenistic Jewish scholar. He produced a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures around the year 150 A.D.. When Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate, discoursed with Augustine about the Septuagint, he referred to Theodotion in very unflattering terms. Jerome stated, "*Origen borrowed the things which he has added from the edition of a man who, after the passion of Christ, was a Jew and a blasphemer.*" It is Theodotion whom Jerome describes

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as “a Jew and a blasphemer,” for Theodotion denied that Yahshua was the Messiah. Theodotion was also accused of translating the Hebrew into Greek in such a way as to obscure the prophecies of the Messiah that seemed most to speak of Yahshua as the promised one. That is serious, and reprehensible, translation bias.



King James Bible

Perhaps the most widely known example of translation bias is that observed in the writing of the *King James Bible*. In giving the English translators the charge to produce a new Bible translation, King James listed 15 rules that the translators were to follow. Following are the first four rules delivered to the translators, and printed in all of the early copies of the *King James Bible*.

1. *The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.*

2. *The names of the prophets, and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained as near as may be, accordingly as they are vulgarly used.*

3. *The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, namely, as the word church not to be translated congregation &c.*

4. *When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of faith.*

None of these rules express a motive to create an excellent and accurate translation of Bible in English. Rather, each of these rules manifest the bias of man. King James wanted to preserve that which was familiar, and in harmony with the orthodox practice and teachings of the Anglican Church. Rather than following a well devised naming convention that could have brought order to the confusion found in the Bishop's Bible, the translators were told to keep that which was familiar and common (vulgar). The ecclesiastical (religious) words preferred by the Anglican church were also to be maintained. The Greek word “eklessia” was to be translated as “church” rather than “congregation.” The Greek word “baptizo” was not to be translated at all, for the word means “to fully submerge, or immerse” and the Anglican church practiced sprinkling. The word was transliterated instead of being translated. That is to say, it was carried over in its essentially Greek form rather than its proper meaning being given in English.

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All of these rules put restrictions on the translators, hindering them from producing a Bible version that was integrally faithful to the existing Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. One of the more offensive examples of translation bias in the King James Bible is found in the following verse from the book of Acts.

Acts 12:4

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

KJV

The Greek word being translated here is "Pascha," which is properly translated as "Passover." This Greek word occurs 29 times in the New Testament, and in 28 of its occurrences the KJV translators rendered it as "Passover." There was no justifiable reason to translate the word "Pascha" as "Easter" here. Nevertheless, the Anglican Church held Easter as its highest holy day of the year, and it seemed expedient to have this holiday mentioned somewhere in the Bible, even if the translators had to insert the word where it did not belong. I do not know of another Bible version that has rendered the Greek word "Pascha" as "Easter." Even the New King James Bible has corrected this verse to read "Passover."

I could cite a great many more examples of translation bias, for there is not an English Bible version in existence that does not contain examples of this type of error. I do not suspect any malice, or evil intent, where most of this type of bias is found. It is the natural consequence of men translating according to their understanding

and beliefs. Some translators have given a faithful rendering of a word into English even when they thought it was wrong or did not understand why a particular word was used, but the natural impulse of the human heart is to be faithful to what one believes.

It is needful for Christians to apply themselves to the study of the Scriptures, testing everything carefully. The prudent disciple of Christ will recognize the corrupting influence of man and apply themselves to dividing between that which is true and that which is false.

Priceless Quest



II Timothy 2:15

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

[Amplified Bible]

If what has been shared in this teaching series has caused you to be daunted by all of the obstacles that hinder arriving at the true knowledge of the word of God, I have a word of exhortation for you. Yahweh never intended for spiritual truth to come easily to His people. It is well within Yahweh's ability to have preserved a

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flawless text of the Scriptures down to this day, but He chose not to do so. Instead, He has permitted His words to be obscured by thousands of years of creeping error, the result of the fallibility of copyists and the shortcomings of translators.

The fact that no perfect copy of the Bible exists, either in the original languages, or in translations to other tongues, requires that those who love truth must work to obtain it. Those who demonstrate the most diligence, as a workman that needs not be ashamed, will be rewarded with discoveries and revelations that men of lesser ambition only dream about.

In the writing *Divorced From Truth* I wrote about the excuses men often give regarding Bible study. What was shared is worth repeating.

It requires patient study to rightly divide the word of God. I know Christian men who have spent hundreds, and even thousands of dollars, upon some hobby. Men who are hunting, fishing, automobile, stereo, ham radio, sports, and bicycling enthusiasts have often spent a great deal of money, devoted great amounts of time, and educated themselves to become both knowledgeable and skillful in the area of their interest. Yet these same men will often argue that they are unable to apply the same attention to the study of Scriptures.

People of God, the truth is that men will pursue that which is important to them. Our actions reveal what is in our hearts. If a man will buy a fishing boat costing thousands of dollars, a truck to pull it with, equip it with rods and reels and bait and tackle, and spend the money for li-

censes and fuel; if he will read the fishing magazines, and study where the fish are, when they are feeding, what they are biting; if he will find others with similar interests and spend hours conversing with them, learning new things, and increasing his knowledge and skill, but will not apply the same devotion to study of the Bible, it is not because he is incapable, or does not have the skills necessary. It is because he does not have the desire.

Christ did not go down to the local seminary, or university to choose His disciples. He chose fishermen, a tax collector, a political zealot, and other common men. These men traded a passion for other things for a passion for knowing God. This led them to apply themselves with great devotion to new interests. We read of these men:

Acts 6:4

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

These men did not reason that they lacked the ability to study the word of God in order to teach it accurately. They did not say, "I am a fisherman, not a Bible scholar." They became Bible scholars, devoting themselves to its study and teaching, relying upon the Spirit of Christ to instruct them as they did so, and they were able to lay a foundation upon which the church of God could be firmly established.

There is no less need in this hour for men and women to manifest a similar devotion to Christ and to the study of His word.

[End Excerpt]

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Solomon speaks in magnificent terms of the pursuit of wisdom and understanding. He uses analogies that evoke images of hunting for buried treasure, of passionately crying out to God to be granted that wisdom which an ardent soul fervently desires. Solomon demonstrates that the acquisition of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are the most worthy of pursuits, and should involve a man's entire being.

Proverbs 2:1-5

My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of Yahweh, and find the knowledge of God.

Do not these words reveal that the pursuit of the knowledge of God should be embraced with an unflinching resolve that will not be turned back?



In another writing I spoke of the effort men have expended in the pursuit of gold. The obstacles overcome, and the perseverance manifested by many men as they have sought that which is highly valued in this world is legendary. Of how much greater value are the secrets of the Al-

mighty? Following is an excerpt from the book *The Divine Quest*.



Chilkoot Pass, 1898

Consider how much effort man has expended in his search for gold, this perishable metal that is precious to man. Wars have been fought over gold and entire nations have given themselves to the pursuit of it. Men have risked life and limb to recover gold that was lost in ancient shipwrecks. Men and women have cast all to the wind and embarked with great rigor and under the harshest of conditions when they have merely heard a rumor of gold.

There are many incredible tales of men who have sought for gold. Vast migrations of men have ensued when gold was discovered in some remote area. It is reported that in 1897-1898 that 20,000 to 30,000 men traversed the Chilkoot Pass on their way to the Yukon gold fields of Canada. A more remote area for prospecting can hardly be imagined. The Chilkoot Pass was it-

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self over 500 miles from the gold fields, yet its rigors are typical of the hardships men and women endured in their search for this prized metal.

The Chilkoot Trail stretches for 33 miles from Dyea to Lake Bennett. The Trail was rough, steep, and snow covered. The destination was Lake Bennett where the prospectors would have to build a boat to travel 550 miles down river to Dawson and the gold fields. The Canadian government knew that many hardships lay ahead for the gold seekers, and they required each person to carry a ton of goods up the pass, enough to last them approximately one year. This had the benefit of saving many lives, but it was an arduous task.

On average a man could carry about seventy pounds worth of supplies on his back, and this required that he would have to make the journey up and down the pass about thirty times. It took an average of several months for each man to carry his quota up the mountainous terrain. With all the trips back and forth along the trail, some men had to walk upwards of 2,000 miles, and half of this walk was with a heavy load on their back. All told, some gold seekers traveled nearly 5,000 miles from their homes to get to the gold fields.

The summit of the pass was reached with a final climb up 1,200 steps that were cut into the ice. These were called the “golden stairs.” The gold seeker had to leave his supplies at the top of the pass and mark his spot with a tall stake so that he could find it in the deep snow that was falling. Over seventy feet of snow was recorded in the years mentioned, and at one point the snow built up so deep along the trail that when a few

warm days occurred in April a tremendous avalanche occurred that buried 63 people. As soon as the bodies were dug out and carried downhill, the trek began again.

All this time men and women were having to live in the most primitive of accommodations. They slept in tents in the frigid weather, and lived on the most basic of diets. Once the prospectors reached the lake with their supplies they had to build a boat which was a task most had never done before. Trees for miles around the lake were cut down, and each board had to be hand sawn using a whipsaw, a two man saw, and this was more back breaking labor. This was no small boat that had to be constructed, for it had to carry a ton of supplies. Many men worked in teams and were therefore transporting two tons of goods.

How were men able to bring themselves to endure such rigors? They had their eye on the prize set before them. They dreamed of gold and all that it could buy them. How much greater is the prize that lies ahead of the overcomer in Christ? It is of immeasurably greater value. Should we not be willing to endure some hardship as we pursue this faith which Yahweh so highly esteems? The apostle Paul stated that the suffering that is the portion of the saints in Christ is not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in the ages to come.

There were those among the gold seekers who traveled the Chilkoot Pass on the way to the Yukon who became millionaires. The satisfaction that was theirs upon receiving the prize they sought was made all the sweeter as they recounted the arduous path they trod to attain it.

Yahweh's Book

There were also many men and women who arrived at the Pass, and upon seeing the great difficulty of it, they turned back and returned home. Those who endured had a satisfaction that could not be bought. I can imagine them telling their children and grandchildren of the struggle, the suffering, and the final victory they achieved. Yet all this was merely in pursuit of the gold that perishes.

[End Excerpt]

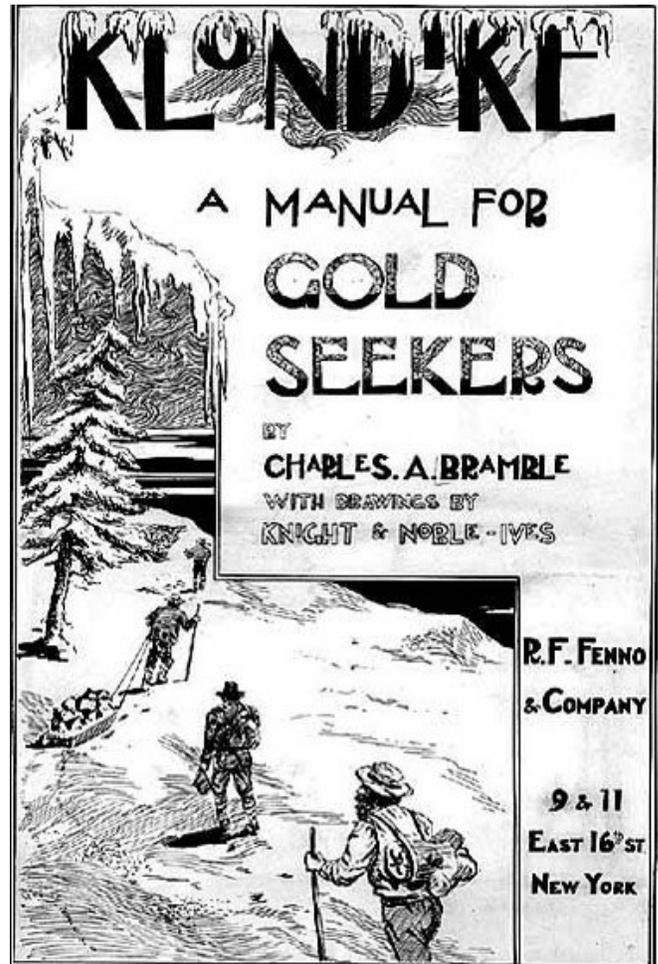
How much do you value truth? What estimate do you place upon the apprehension of the mysteries of God? What are you willing to expend in order to uncover the treasures of darkness and to obtain the hidden wealth of secret places?

Proverbs 25:2

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

Isaiah 45:3

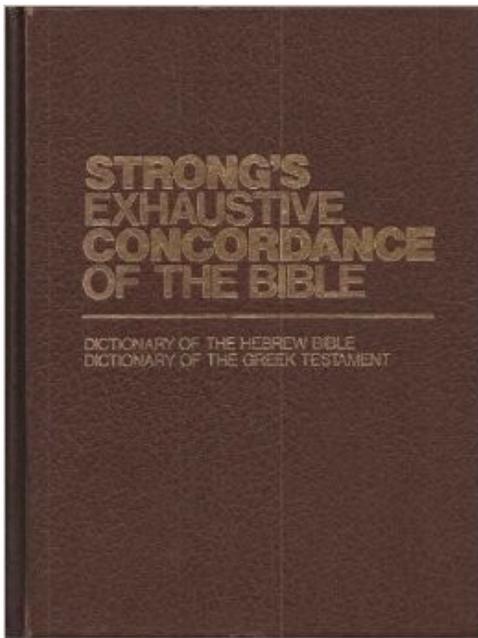
“I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden wealth of secret places...”



Guidebook for Klondike Gold Seekers

Even as men who seek for gold and hidden treasure have tools to use to aid in the acquisition of that which they seek, so too will the man or woman who seeks to uncover the mysteries of God hidden in His word be benefitted by making skillful use of the proper tools. In this age of computers and the Internet, there are a great many resources available to aid in the quest for learning. In my early years I did not have computer based tools available to me. The personal computer had not yet been developed. What I did have, I made ready use of.

Parables Bookshelf



Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

One of the books that I often employed in my study of the Scriptures was *Strong's Concordance*. This hefty book lists every occurrence of every Hebrew and Greek word in the Bible. In its early days, it was keyed to the King James Version of the Bible. Now you can find a *Strong's Concordance* keyed to a much wider assortment of Bible translations, including the *New King James Bible*, *New American Standard Bible*, and the *New International Version*.

When a reader first opens a copy of *Strong's Concordance*, understanding how to use it may appear difficult, but it is actually quite simple with a little coaching. *Strong's Concordance* is divided into two main sections. The first section is the concordance. The second section consists of Hebrew and Greek dictionaries. Following is a page image from the concordance section.



Suppose you were reading through the King James Bible and you came across the word “sorcerers” in Revelation 21:8. If you wanted to know what word was used in the original Bible manuscripts you would look up the word in the concordance where all words found in the KJV Bible are listed alphabetically. Note in the expanded shot that there are six occurrences of the word “sorcerers” in the KJV Bible. They are listed in the order in which they appear. The concordance provides a snippet of each verse where the word is found, as well as the book, chapter, and verse reference.

To the far right is a number that identifies the word listing in the Hebrew or Greek dictionary at the back of the *Strong's Concordance*. The Bible student using this reference needs to be aware that the Hebrew and Greek dictionaries both start with the number 1 and advance from there. If for example you see the number 5332, as is observed next to the Revelation 21:8 reference above, you would need to determine if this word is in the Hebrew dictionary, or the Greek dictionary. As long as you understand that the Old Testament books were written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek, and you know which books belong to each testament, you should have no problem.

Yahweh's Book

As a child growing up I remember attending children's church where we were taught a song that recited all 66 books of Bible in the order in which they appear. Because I was taught this song, I can still recite the books of the Bible in order to this day. This made it quite easy for me to recognize which books belonged to the Old Testament, and which ones were in the New Testament. In children's church we frequently held Bible drills where the teacher would call out a Bible reference and the first child who could find the passage in their Bible would stand up and read it. I was very competitive as a child, and practiced looking up passages in the Bible. Some children had an advantage by having Bibles with tabs to indicate where the various books of the Bible were, but I did not need them as I could find the books very quickly.

As a youth, I did occasionally get confused when doing Bible studies, and would look up a word number in the wrong dictionary in *Strong's Concordance*. This could lead to confusing results. For example, if I were to look up the number 5332 in the Hebrew Dictionary section of *Strong's Concordance* I would find the following listing:

OT:5332

netsach (nay'-tsakh); probably identical with OT:5331, through the idea of brilliancy of color; juice of the grape (as blood red):

KJV - blood, strength.

This definition has nothing to do with sorcery. In order to find the proper definition I would first have to recognize that the book of Revelation is in the New Testament. Since the New Testament was written in Greek, I should look

for the number 5332 in the Greek dictionary, not in the Hebrew dictionary. Upon doing so, I would find the following entry.

NT:5332

pharmakeus (far-mak-yoos'); from pharmakon (a drug, i.e. spell-giving potion); a druggist ("pharmacist") or poisoner, i.e. (by extension) a magician:

KJV - sorcerer.

It is easy to see what a powerful Bible study tool this reference book can be. Much revelation can be gleaned from observing the Greek word that is translated into English as "sorcerers." It is the same word that the Greeks used to describe a pharmacist, or druggist. Hmmm..... Discoveries such as this can lead to much insight, both into ancient times, as well as the present.

It should be noted that EVERY word in the King James Bible is found in *Strong's Concordance*. That is why it is called an "Exhaustive" concordance. If you had a mind to do so, you could look up every occurrence of the English words "a," "the," "if," or "and." There are thousands of listings for each word which would make it quite tedious to look them all up.

A more practical use of *Strong's Concordance* might be to look up the original words translated as "God almighty" that are found in Genesis 48:3.

Genesis 48:3

And Jacob said unto Joseph, **God Almighty** appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan,

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and blessed me...

KJV

As a youth, this was the type of thing that captured my interest. I wanted to know the names of God and what they mean. By looking up the words “God,” and “Almighty” in the concordance section of Strong’s reference work, I would be informed that these are the Hebrew words 410 and 7706.

OT:410

'el (ale); shortened from OT:352; strength; as adjective, mighty; especially the Almighty (but used also of any deity):

KJV - God (god), goodly, great, idol, might (-y one), power, strong. Compare names in "-el."

OT:7706

Shadday (shad-dah'-ee); from OT:7703; the Almighty:

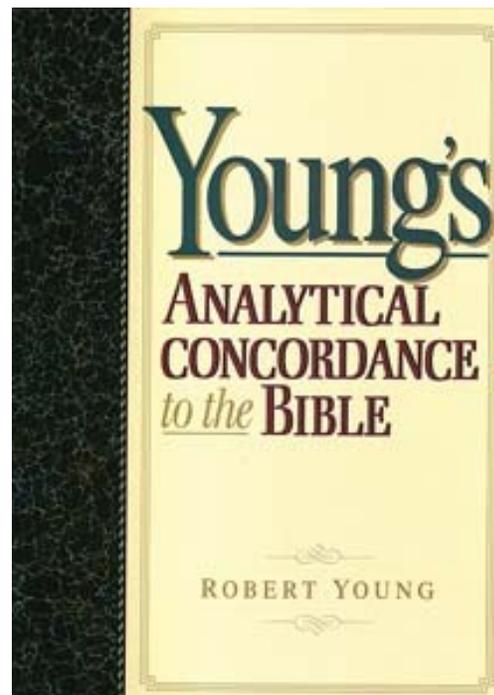
KJV - Almighty.

You will note that in many occurrences, the KJV Bible translators rendered a single Hebrew or Greek word with a great variety of English words. The Hebrew word “el,” aside from being translated as “God,” was also translated as “god (lower case),” “goodly,” “great,” “idol,” “might,” “mighty one,” “power,” and “strong.” The Hebrew word “Shadday,” however, was translated with only one English word.

By looking up the words “God” and “Almighty” in *Strong’s Concordance* I can see that Jacob told his son Joseph that “El Shadday” appeared

to him. That discovery could form the basis for further study. I may want to look up every place that the Hebrew word “Shadday” appears to see if I can glean some further insight into its usage and meaning. What I would discover is that this word appears 48 times in the Old Testament, and in every instance it is used as a reference to Yahweh. No one else in the Bible is called “Shadday.”

As wonderful as Strong’s Concordance is, it can be somewhat lacking in the word definition department. The Bible student in many instances will wish that he had a more robust definition of a Hebrew or Greek word. To look for further insight a Bible student could look at *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible*.



Young’s Concordance is very similar to Strong’s, but his word definitions provide shades of meaning that at times vary from Strong’s reference work. I was not aware of Young’s Concordance when I was a youth, and

Yahweh's Book

never had access to one. I discovered it existed when I came across an old copy some years back. This book was published in 1879 by the same man who produced *Young's Literal Translation of the Bible*, itself a wonderful study resource. Young's concordance predates Strong's which was first published in 1890.

For even more expansive definitions of Hebrew and Greek words that appear in the Bible, a dedicated *Bible Dictionary* is helpful. There are a great many of these available. As a youth, the one I used was *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. This book was authored by William Edwy Vine and first published as a four volume set in 1940. The word "expository" means "to expound, or explain." Vine only produced a New Testament dictionary as he was a Greek scholar. Vine's Dictionary is sold today with both Old Testament and New Testament words, but the Old Testament definitions are the work of other men.

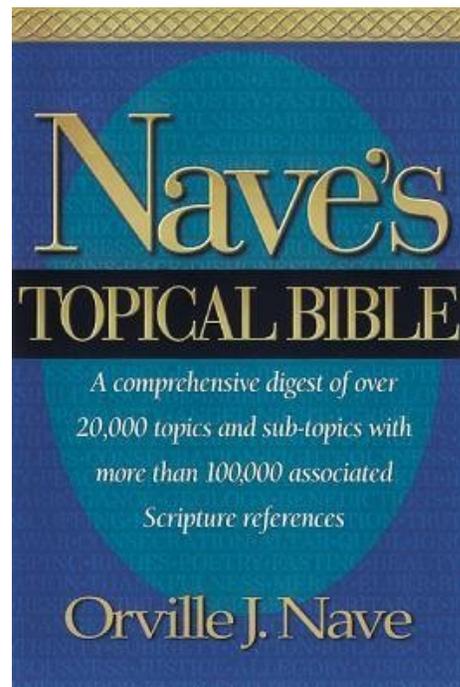
To get an idea of how much fuller the word definitions are in *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, following is the entry for the Greek word "pharmakia," which is translated into English as "sorcery."

Sorcery:

(Eng., "pharmacy," etc.) primarily signified "the use of medicine, drugs, spells;" then, "poisoning;" then, "sorcery," Galatians 5:20, RV, "sorcery" (AV, "witchcraft"), mentioned as one of "the works of the flesh." See also Revelation 9:21; 18:23. In the Septuagint., Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18; Isaiah 47:9, 12. In "sorcery," the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of

various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the applicant or patient from the attention and power of demons, but actually to impress the applicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer.

An additional tool I used from the time of my teenage years was *Halley's Bible Handbook*. This book provides a wealth of historical and contextual information about the Bible. It is also highly illustrated, containing maps and color photos of various places and objects named in the Scriptures. Dr. Henry H. Halley was an author, minister, and Bible lecturer. He was first ordained to ministry in 1898 and had a penchant for memorizing passages of Scripture. Dr. Halley could recite from memory entire books of the Bible. He was often called upon to provide recitations. He would begin by sharing background information about a book of the Bible, and then proceed to recite the book from memory. This introductory information formed the basis for his *Bible Handbook*.



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Another Bible study resource I found to be indispensable in my youth was *Nave's Topical Bible*. Orville James Nave lived from 1841-1917. He served as a chaplain in the United States Army for many years. He spent fourteen years seeking to classify everything found in the Bible. His book contains 20,000 topic headings that list everything from "salvation" to "ropes." I prefer to do topical studies of the Bible, and found a work like this immensely helpful.

These resources are still available today as printed books. I recommend them highly to anyone wanting to study the Scriptures. Beyond these Bible study tools there exists a wealth of additional resource works.

It is no longer necessary for me to carry around a stack of massive books when I want to study the Scriptures. All of these resources, and many more, can be found in one place by purchasing Bible study software, or by downloading some of the excellent free resources available online. The subject of computer based Bible study will be addressed in the next chapter.

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PARABLES PRECEPT— Famous Hymns: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' Name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!
Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!
Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Written by Edward Perronet, 1780