

How to Perform a Greek Word Study

INTRODUCTION ([skip the intro](#))

A FEW SCRIPTURES ON THE EFFECT OF GOD'S WORD

Deuteronomy 32:46-47+ "Take to your heart all the **words** with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the **words** of this law. "For **it** (God's Word) is not an idle **word** for you; indeed **it** is your life. And by this **word** you shall prolong your days in the land...

Psalms 12:6-note The **words** of the LORD are pure **words**; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.

Psalms 107:20-note He sent His **word** and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.

Proverbs 30:5 Every **word** of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

Matthew 4:4+ "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERYWORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

Luke 1:37ASV+ For no **word** from God shall be void of power.

Jeremiah 15:16+ Thy **words** were found and I ate them, And Thy **words** became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Job 23:12+ I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the **words** of His mouth more than my necessary food. (Job's "secret" for survival)

COMMENTS AND QUOTES ON GREEK AND HEBREW WORD STUDIES

Simple observation of the effects of God's Word in the preceding passages should leave little doubt regarding the incredible benefit of in depth study of individual **words** in their original language. What effects did you observe? (life, healing, shield, nourishment, power, joy and delight, more valuable than our necessary food).

Someone once said that "words are building blocks of thought" and since God uses the words written in the Bible to communicate with us, it follows that a proper understanding of the meaning of His individual Words in the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) is important for a full understanding of His "thoughts" (revelation). Every saint should seek to become competent in doing basic Bible word studies. That is the goal of this page -- to give you a simple method of how to perform studies on Greek words using Web based tools accessible to all. The interested student is referred to more detailed discussions in any number of books on [Hermeneutics](#) (study of the methodological principles of interpretation) ([E.g., see recommended resources](#)). In addition, following the basic introduction to word studies, I have attached a more in depth discussion from Dr Stephen Lewis' seminary notes on Biblical Hermeneutics ([see below](#)). See also the simple study on **The Power of God's Word**.

One of my favorite **Charles Spurgeon** quotes related to the **Word of God** - It is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in scriptural language, and your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord, so that your **blood is 'bibline'** and the **very essence of the Bible flows from you**." (Charles Spurgeon).

Irving Jensen emphasizes the importance of word studies writing that "Just as a great door swings on small hinges, so the important theological statements of the Bible often depend upon even the smallest words, such as prepositions and articles (**Ed**: See [example below](#) using the simple adverb "up") ([BORROW Enjoy Your Bible](#)).

Scott Duvall - Words are like pieces of a puzzle. They fit together to form a story or a paragraph in a letter (i.e., the big picture). Until you know the meaning of certain words, you will not be able to grasp the meaning of the whole passage. Not knowing the meaning of certain words in a passage of Scripture can be compared to the frustrating discovery that you don't have all the pieces to your puzzle. Like individual pieces of a puzzle, words bring the larger picture to life. Words are worth studying! ([BORROW Grasping God's Word A Hands-On Approach](#))

Most of the great doctrines of the Word of God revolve around a single word, such as faith, grace, redemption, justification, gospel, sanctification, etc. It follows that In order to fully understand the meanings the great doctrines of the faith, one needs to study the specific Greek words that are foundational for that specific doctrine. In the present example we will focus on the foundational truth of **redemption**, a vitally important doctrine which permeates Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Keep in mind that when the original text of the Bible was translated into English, some 6,000 different English words were used, but the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts used about 11,280 words according to Irving Jensen (Enjoy Your Bible). So how do you fit 11,280 Greek and Hebrew words into 6,000 English words? The only way is to translate several Greek or Hebrew words with the same English word. An excellent example is the the English word *servant* which in some versions translates up to seven different Greek words, each with a slightly different meaning. Clearly for the most complete understanding of a passage, we need to be able to discover which Greek words were used in that text. Note that the converse is also true -- different English words translate the same Greek word, so we need to be able to identify and understand that Greek word in **context** in order to fully comprehend the passage.

When performing Greek word studies, it is imperative to pay close attention to the **context** in which the word is used, lest we arrive at meaning of the word that was not intended by the Spirit. This caveat should not be surprising, for even in English, context is critical to understand what a given word means. So if I say "*trunk*", what pops into your mind? Now what if the context includes the word "*tree*"? Or what if I am describing a car? Or a big, gray mammal? You get the point. So clearly, you were able to determine the correct meaning of "*trunk*" in each instance by noting the **context**. The same principle applies to Greek Word studies.

Gordon Fee - In any piece of literature, words are the basic building blocks for conveying meaning. In [exegesis](#) it is especially important to remember that words function in a **context**. Therefore, although any given word may have a broad or narrow range of meaning, **the aim of word study** in exegesis is to try to understand as precisely as possible what the author was trying to convey by his use of this word in this context. (BORROW [New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors](#))

Frank Endicott has a humorous [illustration](#) of the importance of **context** in determining the meaning of the simple English word "**up**" -

Consider the word **up**. It is easy to understand up toward the sky or toward the top of a list. But when we waken, why do we wake **up**? At a meeting, why does a topic come **up**, why do participants speak **up**, and why are officers **up** for election? Any why is it up to the secretary to write **up** a report? Often the little word isn't needed, but we use it anyway. We brighten **up** a room, light **up** a cigar, polish **up** the silver, lock **up** the house, and fix **up** the old car. At other times, it has special meanings. People stir **up** trouble, line **up** for tickets, work **up** an appetite, think **up** excuses, get tied **up** in traffic. To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed **up** is special. It may be confusing, but a drain must be opened **up** because it is stopped **up**. We open **up** a store in the morning and close it **up** at night. We seem to be mixed **up** about **up**. To be **up** on the proper use of **up** look **up** the word in your dictionary. In one desk-size dictionary **up** takes **up** half a page, and listed definitions add up to about 40. If you are **up** to it, you might try building **up** a list of the many ways in which **up** is used.. It will take **up** a lot of your time but, if you don't give **up**, you may wind **up** with a thousand.

Robertson McQuilkin gives "An example of the misunderstanding of words from a student who spoke at a Bible college chapel on the verse "*I being in the way, the Lord led me*" (Ge 24:27KJV). She took the expression "*being in the way*" as referring to her own resistance to the will of God. Although she felt she often stubbornly obstructed God's purposes ("*being in the way*") she also felt that God led her despite her obstruction because she was His child! Through the misunderstanding of words, the interpreter came to an opposite meaning of that intended by the author. She concluded that God will lead even when a person resists His will, whereas the verse says He will lead when we follow His precepts. (Borrow [Understanding and applying the Bible](#))

In summary, **Greek and Hebrew word studies** are vitally important in order for us to glean the full meaning of God's Word, but they must be performed with a sense of "reverence and awe" lest one derive a meaning which is not what the Spirit intended in a given passage. Every saint should become conversant with Word Studies that they might be better Bereans (Acts 17:11-note) when using the Greek and Hebrew Lexicons. For example Zodhiates' [Complete Word Study Dictionary](#) has 4 major definitions for the Greek preposition *para* (which basically means "beside") and each of those definitions is subdivided into 2 or more nuances, with several of these "nuances" in turn being subdivided! So you can see how even using the Greek Lexicons can

potentially lead to erroneous interpretation if you select the wrong definition for the passage you are studying!

Duvall - Words are the building blocks of language, connecting like small pieces of a puzzle to bring the larger picture to life. As we grasp the meaning of individual words, we are able to comprehend the meaning of an entire passage. Yet...the meaning of a word is determined by the **context** surrounding that word. **Context determines word meaning just as word meaning helps form the context. When doing word studies, you can clearly see the dynamic interplay between the parts and the whole.** (BORROW [Grasping God's Word A Hands-On Approach](#))

Related Resources:

- Bob Utley - [You Can Understand the Bible](#)

WEB TOOLS FOR PERFORMING A GREEK WORD STUDY

Performing a Greek word study is not as complicated as it looks so do not be intimidated. The steps below should aid you in performing a basic, rewarding word study. Ultimately, the purpose of Greek (or Hebrew) word studies is **KNOW** and to **GROW** that we might "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" and growing in "the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Peter 3:18, cp Jn 17:3, Php 3:10, Eph 4:15). And so as you begin your word study, remember to begin with prayer beseeching our Father to grant that our Teacher, the Holy Spirit might guide us into all truth (Jn 16:13), for **spiritual truth is spiritually revealed by the Spirit** (1Cor 2:10; see [The Bible and Illumination](#)). Remember also that Greek is far more exacting than English and often has several words that may be translated with one English word. Therefore in all Word Studies we must let the **context** guide our interpretation of the meaning of a Greek word in a specific passage ([see another discussion of this point](#)). [How To Do Word Studies](#) has an excellent offsite discussion on Word Studies which goes into more depth than this page, the goal of which is to primarily show you the WEB tools available. So with this introduction let's walk through the steps to do a study using as an example the word **Redemption** in Romans 3:24.

STEP 1: DETERMINE STRONG'S NUMBER

Click this link [Interlinear Bible Search](#)

- Enter** Ro 3:24 in the Search Box - scroll down to see text
- Click on the word you want Strong's number - e.g., click on "justified," "gift," "grace," "redemption," etc
- When you click **redemption** for example the Strong's definition appears beneath the text -- in this case it is **#629 Note** **Transliteration** (apolýtrōsis) (**Transliterate** simply means to spell out the Greek word in the English. Note that some lexicons will substitute a "u" for "y" so in the spelling may be apolutrosis.)
- Note** the box labeled **Origin** - This box has the Strong's Numbers (G575 and G3083) of the words used to make **apolytrois/apolutrosis**. Clicking on these root words can give insights into the meaning of the word you are studying.
- If you want more information on the word click [#629](#)
- Note** the box labeled **Frequency Lists** with **KJV NAS, et al** versions each followed by a number in parentheses = KJV (10) or NAS (10) which represents the total number of times the Greek word **apolutrosis** is used in that translation. You can click on the Bible book names for the **highlighted** uses of **apolytrois/apolutrosis** in that book. For example Click Ephesians in the NAS for the 3 uses in Ephesians:

Ephesians 1:7

In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

Ephesians 1:14

who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the **redemption** of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 4:30

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of **redemption**.

(e) **Note Thayer's Definition** under **Word Definition** This is the abbreviated version of Thayer's original definition.

[Click here](#) for 775 page pdf for **Thayer's** full definitions. [Here is another source](#) of **Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon** on archive.org. [Here is an interesting blog note](#) raising the question of whether Thayer was thoroughly orthodox. Every lexicon is at least in part a product of the lexicon writer's systematic bias and personal interpretation and so it behooves all of us desiring to carry out in depth word studies to approach our study with a mindset like the ancient Bereans

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so** (Acts 17:11+)

LIDDELL-SCOTT-JONES' DEFINITION - Here is the definition of apolutrosis. Liddell-Scott can be useful on many Greek words as it gives the classic or secular Greek uses.

I ransoming, α χμάλῳτων Plu. Pomp. 24 (pl.), cf. J. AJ 12.2.3, Ph. 2.463.

II redemption by payment of ransom, deliverance, Luke 21:28, Romans 3:24, al.; of Nebuchadnezzar's recovery, LXX ([Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#)) Daniel 4:30 c; in NT, redemption, Romans 3:24, al.

ABBOTT-SMITH MANUAL - GREEK LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

† πο -λ τρωσις , -εως ,

(< πολυτρω , to release on payment of ransom, cf. λ τρων),

[in LXX ([Septuagint](#)): Da Daniel 4:30 c *;]

release effected by payment of ransom, redemption, deliverance; metaph., Hebrews 11:35; of deliverance thr. Christ from evil and the consequences of sin: Luke 21:28, Romans 3:24 (Vau., in I) 8:23, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 1:14; Ephesians 4:30, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:15. (On the extent to WH. the word retains the sense of ransom, v. ICC, Romans 3:24, Westc., He., 297 ff.; v. also ICC, Eph., 11; DCG, ii, 605; Cremer, 410; Deiss., LAE, 331; Lft., Notes, 271, 316; Tr., Syn ([TRENCH'S SYNONYMS](#)), § 77.)†

MOULTON AND MILLIGAN - VOCABULARY OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Although there is no entry for apolutrosis, there are entries on many Greek Words. This resource has examples of the uses of Greek words in secular writings and at times can give wonderful insights. The downside is that this resource has more Greek text and thus is not as easy to use if you cannot read Greek. Nevertheless, it does have enough in English to occasionally be of value.

EXTRA ON GREEK VERBS:

Notice in the passage Ro 3:24 ([note](#)) there is a number (5746) after the Greek verb "JUSTIFIED" - Click that number for the verb tense, in this case PRESENT TENSE which generally speaks of continuous action. So one could paraphrase this passage "being continually justified as a gift." You will also note the voice and the mood. As you do your word studies on verbs you will find that the Tense/Voice/Mood can be very enlightening. Let me give you an example to stimulate your interest - enter 1 Peter 1:4 ([note](#)) in the search box above. Then click on the #5772 which corresponds to the Tense/Voice/Mood for "reserved" (tereo). Note that the TENSE of tereo is PERFECT, Now click on the [Simple Guide to Greek Verb Tense, Voice, Mood](#) and you will discover that PERFECT TENSE in simple terms speaks of a past completed action at a point in time with ongoing effect or result. It often gives the sense of permanence. Now go back to the the context of the passage 1 Peter 1:4 ([note](#)) and note what is **RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU** and you see that as a believer you have a "permanent reservation" waiting for you in Heaven! It was reserved for you at a point in time in the past when you first believed in Jesus for Redemption and it is a permanent reservation (i.e., your salvation is "[eternally secure](#)"). No one can take your personal reservation as they might be able to do in a busy hotel on earth! This is not just good news but great news and should encourage you to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus. (cf Php 3:14-[note](#)).

VERB TENSE:

- [present tense](#)

- [aorist tense](#)
- [perfect tense](#)
- [imperfect tense](#)
- [present imperative// present imperative with a negative](#)
- [aorist imperative](#)

VERB VOICE:

- [active voice](#)
- [passive voice](#)
- [middle voice](#)

VERB MOOD:

- [indicative mood](#)
- [imperative mood](#)
- [subjunctive mood](#)
- [optative mood](#)

STEP 2: DETERMINE VINE'S LEXICON DEFINITION

Explanation: Vine's lexicon is the old "classic stand-by" but keep in mind that as with any lexicon, the definitions have some "interpretative bias."

- Click [Vine's Dictionary of NT Words](#)
- Enter **English** word redemption
- Scroll to 629 [πολ τρωσις](#) for the correct definition.

Related Resource: This is an online Pdf that also has OT definitions.

- [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#)

STEP 3: CHECK TRENCH'S SYNONYMS of NEW TESTAMENT

Bishop Trench compared 108 Greek synonyms to help discern their distinctions. While the number of words Trench discusses are limited, in the case of redemption there is an entry. In the alphabetical list below select **R** and then **Redemption** for a discussion of the differences between apolytrolos, katallage and hilasmos.

Click [TRENCH'S SYNONYMS of NEW TESTAMENT](#)

STEP 4: CHECK [GIRDLESTONE'S SYNONYMS OF THE OT](#)

This 1897 work on the Hebrew synonyms examines 127 Hebrew terms (e.g., altar, almighty, atonement, etc). Using the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, Girdlestone explains the relation of the Hebrew word to the corresponding Greek word in the NT. This work is designed to be used by those who understand little or no Hebrew. In the alphabetical list below select **R** and then **Redemption** for a discussion of this doctrine from an OT perspective.

Click [GIRDLESTONE'S SYNONYMS OF THE OT](#)

STEP 5: CHECK THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Type **redemption** or **redeem** in box on [TheFreeDictionary.com](#)

STEP 6: CHECK [A. T. ROBERTSON'S WORD PICTURES](#)

A T Robertson is a renowned Greek New Testament scholar who takes the reader verse-by-verse through the NT using word pictures to help understand the meaning of the Greek words. E.g., enter **redemption** to retrieve 29 results. This resource requires more investigation but can yield useful insights on Greek words. E.g., here is Robertson's note on redemption in Ro 3:24 "A releasing by ransom (apolutrosis — lutrōsis from lutron — lutroō and that from lutron - ransom). God did not set men right out of hand with nothing done about men's sins. We have the words of Jesus that he came to give his life a ransom (lutron) for many (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28). Lutron is common in the papyri as the purchase-money in freeing slaves (Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, pp. 327f.)."

Click [A. T. ROBERTSON'S WORD PICTURES](#)

STEP 7: CHECK [VINCENT'S NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES](#)

Marvin Vincent offers interesting insights that are not found in other resources. He is always worth checking, but remember that he is a "commentary" so be an Acts 17:11 **Berean**. In the case of **redemption**, Vincent has 37 results, so as with Robertson, you will need to take some time to discern which entries are most useful to your word study.

Click [VINCENT'S NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES](#)

STEP 8: EXAMINE GREEK WORD USES IN ALL NT PASSAGES

This exercise was alluded to under [Step 1](#) (Note the box labeled **Frequency Lists**) and can be very useful in aiding one to discern the nuances of meaning of a Greek word. **Click** the Book Name to open all the uses in that book with the English translation of the Greek word highlighted for quick recognition. To examine the context, click the verse and select "Show Context." With some practice and reliance on your Teacher, the Spirit, you can see from the context how the word is "defined."

For example using the information from [Step 1](#) observe each use of **apolutrosis** in the **NAS** version:

Ro 3:24 teaches us that redemption "is in Christ Jesus," (so here redemption speaks of our justification, our past redemption)

Ro 8:23 teaches we are waiting for a (future) "redemption of our body." (so here redemption speaks of glorification, our future redemption).

In 1Corinthians 1:30 we learn that Christ Jesus became to us "redemption."

In Ephesians 1:7 we learn how our redemption was accomplished - "through His blood" and also that it is associated with "forgiveness of our trespasses."

The meaning of redemption in Ephesians 1:14 is not as easy to discern, but in context speaks of our future redemption (glorification) as does Ephesians 4:30. Both these later passages in Ephesians also underscore the assurance of our future redemption (Holy Spirit is the pledge of our inheritance, we were sealed by the Spirit for the day of redemption).

In Colossians 1:14 we again see that Paul closely links redemption with the forgiveness of sins.

In Hebrews 9:15 the writer repeats the truth that redemption cost the death of Jesus and that God has ordained that this redemption is "efficacious" for all who believed under the Old Testament, before Jesus was sacrificed. Amazing Grace indeed!

Hebrews 11:35 speaks of release or deliverance from temporal torture, this passage emphasizing the importance of context in accurate interpretation of meaning of a given Greek word.

STEP 9: IN DEPTH WORD STUDIES

Click for a list of over 2000 in depth definitions of Greek words on this website including many of the more common Greek words. This list will be expanded over time. Scroll down (Control + F) to find the English word **redemption** and the transliterated Greek word **apolutrosis**. See word studies related to redemption - **exagorazo, lutroo, lutrosis**.

Consider doing a search on **preceptaustin.org** for the word you are studying as there are many word studies that may not yet be listed on the in depth study page. Go to the top of this page ([click here](#)) for the preceptaustin.org search box. (Hint: If you know the Strong's # enter it or enter the transliterated Greek word. E.g., 629 [apolytrosis/apolutrosis] yields 12 results. For Hebrew words put a zero in front of the Strong's Number)

For help understanding the Tenses - [See also Simple Greek Chart](#)

STEP 10: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now take the insights you have gleaned and practice re-phrasing the verse by substituting some of the definitions/insights you have gleaned from the above steps. Your goal is to arrive at a better understanding of the verse. A word of caution is in order. You need to be aware (as discussed more below) that many Greek verbs have more than one meaning, so you must be careful that the definition you substitute into the verse makes good sense in context. (See [discussion below regarding the importance of context](#)) Otherwise you might misinterpret the passage.

STEP 11: USE OF THE AMPLIFIED VERSION

Note that the technique of re-phrasing the verse using the insights gleaned from your word study is in a sense what is done in the translation known as the **Amplified Version** (see literalness of this version). For this reason, I often use the **Amplified translation** as a "mini-lexicon" or "mini-commentary." Note that the passages in the **Amplified Version** which are marked by **parentheses sign ()** indicate a definition of the preceding word or phrase, while **brackets []** represent in effect clarifying words or comments that are not actually expressed in the original Greek or Hebrew. The brackets function much like **ITALICS** in the NAS For example, Romans 3:24 in the **Amplified Version** reads...

[All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (**His unmerited favor and mercy**), through the redemption which is **[provided]** in Christ Jesus,

"**All**" and "**provided**" are in **brackets** and thus are not words found in the original Greek manuscript but are added by the translator for clarification. On the other hand "**grace**" is followed by a **parenthesis** which gives a simple definition of grace. There is nothing helpful in the **Amplified Version** regarding "**redemption**" in this verse, but just to show you how the Amplified Version can occasionally be helpful type in 1Cor 1:30 in the query box below and note the "definition" in parenthesis following the word "**redemption**" (Notice that there are actually four mini-comments in this one verse -- the point is this -- if you have time, don't forget to check the Amplified Version).

Enter Verse AMP

STEP 12: Miscellaneous Resources

- Reference Search page has a number of search engines which can aid study of a specific word or topic.
- Torrey's Topical Textbook - can be a veritable useful -- see [Torrey's Topic "Redemption"](#)
- See the [NIDNTT discussion of agorazo](#)
- See my online discussion of [agorazo](#)

- When searching a sermon or long documents where the specific term you are studying is not readily visible, utilize the "Find" feature of Internet Explorer. Let's practice utilizing the "Find" feature. First, let's do a search on the Spurgeon Archive ([Main Menu](#)). In order to search this website (and no other site) enter the following address into your Google search box - site:www.spurgeon.org and add the term (or terms) you would like to search for the Spurgeon Archive. For example let's search for redemption by placing the following words in the Google search box - "redemption site:www.spurgeon.org" (minus the quotes). This search retrieves over 400 hits on the Spurgeon Archive with the word redemption but let's focus on the first hit ([Particular Redemption](#) = first hit as of 9/10/11). Note that the word Redemption is not highlighted in this lengthy sermon - you can quickly locate every use of redemption by pressing the CONTROL (Ctrl) Key (far left lower row) and the letter F on the keyboard which opens a box labeled Find in the toolbar. Now type Redemption in the "Find" box and hit Next which shows us we have 24 uses of "redemption" in this sermon (all highlighted in yellow). Now simply click "Next" to view each of your hits until you come to a hit you find informative.
- [How to do Word Studies \(online\)](#) - performing and applying word studies
- [Grasping God's Word A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible](#) - J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hays - BORROW THIS BOOK - user friendly book with 25 pages dedicated to word studies - recommended!
- Borrow [Understanding and applying the Bible](#) - Robertson McQuilkin - Chapter 9 has 26 pages of well written instructions on how to perform word studies.
- Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#) by Zodhiates, Spiros - There are a number of Greek Lexicons available but in my opinion this is one of the best.
- See instructions on how to effectively use the 3 volume fully accessible online NIDNTT
- [Winer's A Grammar of the New Testament Greek](#) - online

GREEK WORD STUDY UTILIZING WEB RESOURCES ADDITIONAL COMMENTS Using "Redemption" in Ro 3:24 As An Example

Let's look at **Romans 3:24** with the goal of determining all we can about the word **Redemption** and then "plug" that information back into the context of the verse to increase our understanding. As discussed Greek is far more exacting than English and often has several words that may be translated with one English word. In our example there are two two Greek words translated **redemption**, **lutrosis** and **apolutrosis**. From [Step 1](#) we have determined the word Paul uses in Ro 3:24 is **apolutrosis**, Strong's number 629. From [Step 1](#) we see that Thayer's brief definition of **apolutrosis** is " a releasing effected by payment of ransom (a) redemption, deliverance (b) liberation procured by the payment of a ransom". Now take this definition and "insert it" into Ro 3:24 to "amplify" the meaning. And so we might read it as " being justified as a gift by His grace through the [*release, deliverance or liberation effected by paying a ransom*] which is in Christ Jesus."

In [Step 2](#) if we enter Strong's Number (629) Vine's lexicon gives us a more detailed definition with several parts. Vine writes that **apolutrosis** is...

a strengthened form of No. 1 (lutrosis), lit., "a releasing, for (i.e., on payment of) a ransom." It is used of

(a) "deliverance" from physical torture, Hebrews 11:35 , see [DELIVER](#) , B, No. 1;

(b) the deliverance of the people of God at the coming of Christ with His glorified saints, "in a cloud with power and great glory," Luke 21:28 , a "redemption" to be accomplished at the "outshining of His Parousia," 2 Thessalonians 2:8 , i.e., at His second advent;

(c) forgiveness and justification, "redemption" as the result of expiation, deliverance from the guilt of sins, Romans 3:24 , "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" Ephesians 1:7 , defined as "the forgiveness of our trespasses," RV; so Colossians 1:14 , "the forgiveness of our sins," indicating both the liberation from the guilt and doom of sin and the introduction into a life of liberty, "newness of life" (Romans 6:4); Hebrews 9:15 , "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant," RV, here "redemption of" is equivalent to "redemption from," the genitive case being used of the object from which the "redemption" is effected, not from the consequence of the transgressions, but from the transgressions themselves;

(d) the deliverance of the believer from the presence and power of sin, and of his body from bondage to corruption, at the coming (the Parousia in its inception) of the Lord Jesus, Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians

1:30; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30 . See also [PROPITIATION](#).

From Vine's definition of **apolutrosis** we can see that a given Greek word may have more than one meaning depending on the **context** so one cannot "mechanically" insert the lexicon definitions into a passage without being certain that definition corresponds to the context. To be sure performing accurate Greek word studies does some practice and careful attention to the context. In Vine's definition of apolutrosis, Vine helps us determine the best definition is **(c)** because he lists Ro 3:24 with that definition. And so combining Thayer and Vine, we might read Ro 3:24 as

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** [*release, deliverance or liberation effected by paying a ransom*] [*deliverance from the guilt of sins*] which is in Christ Jesus."

Now let's look at the information obtained from [Step 1](#) which also has Thayer's full definition.

2. everywhere in the N. T. metaphorically, viz. deliverance effected through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God and the merited penalty of sin: Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14 (cf. *ἐξαγοράζω* , *γοράζω* , *λυτρόω* , etc. (and [Trench](#) , § lxxvii.)); *πολύτρωσιν* ν ... *παράβασεων* deliverance from the penalty of transgressions, effected through their expiation, Hebrews 9:15 (cf. Delitzsch at the passage and Fritzsche on Romans, vol. ii., p. 178); *μέρα πολυτρώσεως* , the last day, when consummate liberation is experienced from the sin still lingering even in the regenerate, and from all the ills and troubles of this life, Ephesians 4:30; in the same sense the word is apparently to be taken in 1 Corinthians 1:30 (where Christ himself is said to be redemption, i. e. the author of redemption, the one without whom we could have none), and is to be taken in the phrase *πολύτρωσιν* ζ *περιποιήσεως* , Ephesians 1:14, the redemption which will come to his possession, or to the men who are God's own through Christ (cf. Meyer at the passage); *το σώματος* , deliverance of the body from frailty and mortality, Romans 8:23 ([Winer 's Grammar](#), 187 (176)); deliverance from the hatred and persecutions of enemies by the return of Christ from heaven, Luke 21:28, cf. Luke 18:7f; deliverance or release from torture, Hebrews 11:35.

Does Thayer's extended definition give us any additional information on **apolutrosis**? There would seem to be some additional information in Thayer's note that apolutrosis means "*deliverance effected through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God and the merited penalty of sin*" so that we might amplify Ro 3:24 as

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** [*release, deliverance or liberation effected by paying a ransom*] [*deliverance from the guilt of sins*] [*a deliverance effected through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God and the merited penalty of sin*] which is in Christ Jesus."

As discussed above **Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament** has an entry for [Redemption](#) which provides additional discussion of the nuances of the Greek noun **apolutrosis**. Notice that on the same page as [Trench's](#) article, StudyLight.org has a list of "**Additional Links**" (on right side) which you may find helpful. If there is an entry in the [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#) (and there is one for [Redeem, Redemption](#)) it is an excellent resource. Notice also under the Lexicons, [Girdlestone's Synonyms of the Old Testament](#), has an entry for [Redemption](#).

A T Robertson comments that "**redemption**" signifies

"A releasing by ransom (*apo* , *lutrosis* from *lutroo* and that from *lutron*, ransom). God did not set men right out of hand with nothing done about men's sins. We have the words of Jesus that he came to give his life a ransom (*lutron*) for many (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28). *Lutron* is common in the papyri as the purchase-money in freeing slaves." **Robertson's** comment on "**redemption**" suggests that prior to being redeemed we were "**slaves**". If one is a slave, what is one logical "**W**" question? **Who** was the master? Are you beginning to get a better understanding of what **redemption** means? By the way did you observe the cross references (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28)? Vine's definition helps complete the picture of **redemption** explaining that we were subject to or enslaved to the **power of sin** or in other words **Sin** is personified as our "**master**" (our "lord", our "king"). It follows that **redemption** is the price paid to deliver, release or ransom those who by grace through faith receive Christ (their Redeemer) from the **power of sin** in this present life and one day future in glory even from the **presence (and pleasure) of sin**. Thus the deliverance brought about by the **redemption in Christ Jesus** has a present and a future aspect (and these truths would come out even more clearly if we had studied all 10 uses of "**apolutrosis**" in context). (**Related study - Three Tenses of Salvation**)

CONCLUSION

After performing this exercise, have you gained any added sense of what Paul is teaching in Romans 3:24? Admittedly, my

amplified version is somewhat cumbersome, but hopefully you begin to see the potential value that Greek word studies using free WEB tools can achieve. Your answer will also depends to an extent on your experience with **Inductive Bible Study** and the use of the **"5W'S & H"** (asking Who? What? Where? Why? When? How?) Obviously not every passage will allow you to ask all of these questions. Don't come to the text with questions made up. Let the text (and context) guide your questions. Note how taking time to interrogate the text slows you down and helps you meditate [Click how to meditate on Scripture] on the passage. Based on what we have determined to this point about **apolutrosis**, here are some examples of the type of questions you might ask...

- **"What** do we need to be released or delivered from?"
- **"What** was the ransom payment that effected the release or deliverance?"
- **"Who** paid the ransom?"
- **"How** was the ransom paid?"

As discussed earlier, as you practice inserting the "amplified definition" into the original verse, remember that Greek words may have several meanings and inserting the correct definition is critically dependent on the context (text that comes before and after). Like good word studies, the "art" of interrogating the text (interrogate with 5W'S & H) takes some practice, but it is a skill well worth the effort, so **"Be diligent** to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." (2Ti 2:15-note) Remember that Word Studies are like prospecting for gold -- the more diligently you look, the more likely you are to find those priceless "nuggets" of truth hidden in God's Living and Active Word.

If you have never done an original language (Greek or Hebrew) word studies, please do not be overwhelmed by this exercise. You can often glean very helpful insights by examining the basic Strong's and Vine's definitions, a maneuver that can be performed quickly using the Reference Search page. The more you practice using the search tools the easier you will find the process. You will also find that the means to the end is more than worth the effort. While not every in depth word study will yield profound insights, rest assured that God will always reward your diligence and desire when your goal for doing these more in depth studies is to know Him (Jn 17:3, cp Phil 3:10,11-note). Finally, one of the most satisfying benefits of carrying out Word Studies is that you will discover truth for yourself and as any INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY student will testify, there is no joy like the joy of Spirit taught, self-discovery in the study of God's Word.

GREEK WORD STUDY RESOURCES ONLINE

NOTE - All of these resources can be borrowed from archive.org. This list also includes resources to help study the Bible.

See also the [list of Word Study Resources](#)

[The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#) by Zodhiates, Spiros - This is my "go to" resource for Greek word studies. One on the best lexicons for laymen. Highly Recommended for Greek Word Studies to aid your interpretation of a passage.

[Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) by Friberg, Timothy. Shorter definitions than Zodhiates but does an excellent job in summarizing the various nuances of a specific Greek word. One of my favorites.

[NIDNTT - The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#) - Click for discussion of this resource which is available online with all 3 volumes (representing the full set) on the same link. This resource is fully accessible with no time limit or requirement to borrow and with full copy and paste functionality.

[Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) by Gingrich, F. Wilbur. Similar to Friberg but shorter definitions. Gingrich however gives more Scriptures for each nuance, whereas Friberg generally gives only one representative Scripture.

[The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament](#) by Rogers, Cleon - This book is a gold mine of little gems on individual Greek words in any NT passage you are studying. If you have time it is always worth checking out! I use it in my [Greek word studies](#) all the time.

[Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#) by Richards, Larry, [33 ratings](#) It does not go into great depth on the Greek or Hebrew words but does have some excellent insights.

[Expository dictionary of Bible words : word studies for key English Bible words based on-](#) Stephen Renn

[Word meanings in the New Testament](#) - Matthew-Revelation by Ralph Earle. Strictly speaking this is not a lexicon, but it offers

insights on select words in a verse by verse format (but not every verse is included in the analysis). This resource is worth checking if you have time as it can occasionally give some wonderful insights on a specific Greek word.

[New Testament Words](#) - William Barclay - [59 ratings](#) very interesting resource - covers about 70 NT Greek words in Barclay's unique style. On page 289 there is a helpful index of English words with the corresponding Greek word, in turn followed by the places Barclay described them in [New Testament Words](#) and in his Daily Study Bible series ([see list of DSB commentaries here](#)). E.g., take the Greek word for "Covetousness" which is *pleonexia* and is found in [New Testament Words](#) on page 61 and pp 233-235 and is also described in the Daily Study Bible entries for : [Mark 7:14-23](#); [Ro 1:28-32](#); [Eph. 4:17-24](#); [Col. 3:5](#). So you can click the [DSB commentary on Mark 7](#) and scroll down to [Mark 7:14](#) to see Barclay's entry for *pleonexia* which concludes "*Pleonexia (G4124) is that lust for having which is in the heart of the man who sees happiness in things instead of in God.*" Interesting!

[Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : based on semantic domains](#) - Louw Nida. Brief but nice definitions. Not easy to use - you need to know some Greek. Classifies Greek words into 93 "semantic domains" (see list on page XXV) and if you can categorize the word you are looking for in one of the domains, it can help find the specific word you are interested in.

[Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#) (TDNT) - Classic ("Little Kittel") work summarizing the 10 volume set by Kittel. For most of us the abridged definition is "more than enough!"

[A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature \(BDAG\)](#); by Bauer, Walter, More detailed definitions but need to know Greek. [Zodhiates](#) and [Friberg](#) are much easier to use.

[Liddell and Scott's Greek-English lexicon, abridged : the little Liddell](#) by Liddell, Henry George. The abridged version. You need to know Greek to use.

[Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament](#) (Volume 1 - A thru E); [Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament](#) (Volume 3- P thru ...) Volume 2 not available. I do not find this adds much to the easier to use resources like [Zodhiates](#) and [Friberg](#).

[A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament](#) by Souter, Alexander. Brief definitions. Need to know some Greek. Not that helpful.

[Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#) - pdf. The old standby. You can also borrow [Vine's complete expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words](#)

[New Testament Words in Today's Language](#) by Detzler, Wayne A - Wonderful resource to supplement word studies. [3 ratings](#) THIS IS A SLEEPER!

[So That's What it Means](#) - This is another book formerly titled "**Theological Wordbook**" edited by **Charles Swindoll**. It is now under this new title [So That's What it Means](#) and can be borrowed - it is more like a dictionary than a lexicon but the comments are superb! The contributors include DKC—Donald K. Campbell, WGJ—Wendell G. Johnston, JAW—John A. Witmer, JFW—John F. Walvoord

[Christian Words](#) By: Turner, Nigel, Published: 1980 - >500 pages. An interesting, unique resource on Greek words (no Hebrew) with extensive bibliography. For an example see "[Abba](#)" and "[Alleluia](#)" - "*In Christian vocabulary Alleluia is a heavenly song, a chant of saints in the bliss of Paradise, echoed on earth as joyful seasons.*" One caution is he uses the Apocryphal writings extensively - I am not sure of his theological persuasion.

[Zondervan NASB exhaustive concordance](#) - 1589 pages

[Pocket dictionary for the study of New Testament Greek](#) by DeMoss, Matthew S. If you want to dig a little deeper into Greek. [66 ratings](#)

[Synonyms of the New Testament](#) by Trench, Richard Chenevix

MORE ON ORIGINAL LANGUAGE WORD STUDY Dr Stephen Lewis

The following excerpt is a more technical discussion of Word Studies from a seminary course by **Dr Stephen Lewis** entitled

[Bible 405: Hermeneutics: — The Study of the Interpretation of Scriptures — \(click for Pdf of the entire study\)](#)

I. MEANING OF WORDS (LEXICOLOGY) ([goto I](#))

II. HOW TO DO A WORD STUDY ([goto II](#))

III. HOW TO DO A FULL-BLOWN WORD STUDY WORKING WITH THE GREEK AND HEBREW ([goto III](#))

IV. FORMS OF WORDS (MORPHOLOGY) & FUNCTIONS OF WORDS (PARTS OF SPEECH) ([goto IV](#))

V. RELATIONSHIPS OF WORDS (SYNTAX) ([goto V](#))

VI. SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES IN GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION ([goto VI](#))

HERMENEUTICS AND THE GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION

Grammatical interpretation presupposes the legitimacy of the normal, literal, customary, usual sense of words and sentences, which in turn is based on the basic principles of logic and communication.

I. MEANING OF WORDS (LEXICOLOGY)

Lexicology is a study of how word meanings are determined. At least four factors influence the meaning of a word: etymology, usage, synonyms and antonyms, and context.

A. Discover the Etymology of the Words - Etymology refers to the root derivation and development of words. In etymology the aim of the student is to get back to the root meaning of a word and to view the word's development in order to see if and how these two factors help determine its meaning.

1. Sometimes the original (root) meaning of a word gives a clue to the meaning in the biblical text. For example, the Hebrew word *hebel* (01892) used in Ecclesiastes 37 times and translated "vanity" or "futility," originally meant "breath" or "vapor," and thus in Ecclesiastes it means that which is transient or valueless.

2. Sometimes seeing the component parts of a word helps determine its meaning.

a. The English word "hippopotamus" is derived from two Latin words-- "hippo" for horse and "potamus" for river--and thus this animal is a kind of river horse.

b. The Greek word "ekklesia" (church) comes from "ek" (out of) and "kalein" (to call or summon), and thus it refers to those who are called out from the unsaved to form a group of believers. Originally *ekklesia* referred to an assembly of citizens in a Greek community who were summoned by a town crier for transacting public business. How then are we to understand the words church in the wilderness" in Acts 7:38?

3. Sometimes a word in its development or history takes on an entirely different meaning From what it originally meant.

a. Nice - Latin "nescius" = ignorant

b. Kaphar (03722) = covering (Hebrew) atonement

c. Eirene = peace from; peace of mind; well being; peace with God

4. Sometimes a word means something entirely different from its component parts (the whole is not the same as the sum of its parts).

a. Broadcast = casting seeds widely (originally)

b. Dandelion = (French) = lion's tooth

c. Aletheia = not hidden = truth

5. **(Caution)** A biblical word should not be explained on the basis of its English etymology. For example, the biblical word "holy" is not derived from the English word "healthy" and therefore "holy" in its etymology does not mean being spiritually healthy. Nor does the Greek word "dunamis" (power) mean dynamite. Instead it means a dynamic, active, living force.

6. For other examples of how Greek words have changed and how they have taken on new meanings in the

B. Discover the Usage of the Words

1. Importance of Usage - Often the etymology of a word does not help us discover the meaning of that word. Therefore we need to consider its current established usage by the writer and other writers. This practice is called "usus iouendi" (use by the one speaking--or writing).

a. The word "trunk" comes from the Old English word "tronke" meaning box. But that understanding of the etymology doesn't indicate what a given writer, means by the word. Trunk may mean (a) the main part of a tree, (b) the torso of the human body or the thorax of an insect, (c) the shaft of a column, (d) a large piece of luggage, (e) the luggage compartment of a car, (f) the part of the cabin of a boat that projects over the deck, (g) the proboscis of the elephant, (h) men's shorts (plural), (i) a circuit between two telephone exchanges, etc. The way the writer uses the word--not its etymology--tells the reader what he means by it.

b. The Greek word "pneuma" (spirit) is derived from "pneo" (to breathe), but in the Bible the word "pneuma" only occasionally means breath. What other meaning does it have?

2. Kinds of Usage

a. Usage by the same writer in the same book. Ask, How does he use this word elsewhere in this book? For example, does the word "prophets" in Ephesians 2:20 refer to Old Testament prophets or New Testament prophets?

b. Usage by the same writer in his other books. For example, study John's usage of "light" and "darkness" in his Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation.

c. Usage by other writers in the Bible.

(1) How do other writers use "almah" (virgin) in Isaiah 7:14?

(2) The Greek word "stoicheia" (elements) means basic components of the universe in II Peter 3:10; elementary or basic truths in Hebrews 5:12; and simplistic teachings or outward acts of religion in Galatians 4:3,9 and Colossians 2:8,20.

d. Usage by other writers (contemporary and otherwise) outside the Bible.

(1) O.T. Ugaritic and Aramaic

(2) N.T.

Classical Greek

Papyrus

LXX

Josephus and Philo

C. Discover the Meanings of Similar and Opposite Words (Synonyms and Antonyms)

1. SYNONYMS - Seeing how a word differs from its synonyms can help narrow down the meaning of a given word.

a. In the phrase "commandments and teachings of men" (Colossians 2:22-note), "commandments" suggests laws to be obeyed and "teachings" (i.e., doctrines) imply truth to be believed, and both pertain to man-devised ceremonies which are encumbrances.

b. In Romans 14:13 an "obstacle" (proskomma) means a slight offense, something that disturbs another, whereas a "stumbling block" (skandalon) means a more serious kind of offense, something causing another to fall.

c. What synonyms are evident in Colossians 1:9-12-note, Col 1:21-23-note?

d. For other examples of synonyms see Unger, Principles of Expository Preaching, pp. 126-27 (see page 4a) and Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics, pp. 191-202. Also see Girdlestone's [Synonyms of the Old Testament Their Bearing on Christian Faith and](#)

[Practice \(online\)](#) (eg, see [Index of subjects](#)) and [Trench's New Testament Synonyms \(online\)](#).

2. ANTONYMS - Seeing how a word differs from its exact or near opposite can help determine its meaning.

a. In Romans 8:4-9 does "flesh" (**sarx**) mean the physical body or the sinful nature? The answer is found by noting how it contrasts with the word "spirit."

b. Does "death" in Romans 6:23 mean physical death or spiritual death?

D. Consider the Context

How does context differ from usage? Usage pertains to a use of a word or phrase by an author or author in varied contexts, whereas context refers to the material which precedes and follows the word or phrase.

Considering the context is extremely important for, three reasons (a) Words, phrases, and clauses have multiple meanings (e.g., "trunk," "by the trunk," "bug," "he bugged him," each has several meanings), and thus examining how they are used in the context can help determine the meaning. **(b)** Thoughts are usually expressed by a series of words or sentences, that is, in association not isolation. Thus "the meaning of any particular element is nearly always controlled by what precedes and what follows" (Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, p. 100). **(c)** Often false interpretations arise from ignoring the context. For example, "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thy inheritance" (Psalm 2:8) is often misapplied by missionaries and others. What does the context suggest for its meaning?

Several kinds of contexts should be considered.

1. The immediate context. Often the sentence in which the word is used clarifies the meaning.

a. What does "**faith**" mean in each of these verses? Jude 3; Galatians 1:23, Romans 3:3, Romans 1:17; Ephesians 2:8, James 2:19,20

b. Does "**salvation**" or "**saved**" always mean **deliverance from sin**? See below for the various meanings of the word "Salvation".

1. Safety or deliverance from difficult circumstances.
2. Physical health.
3. Israel's national release from oppression by many enemies.
4. Deliverance from the penalty of sin by the substitutionary death of Christ.
5. Find deliverance from the presence of sin. Verses

Look up the following verses and for each verse write the number for the definition that best describes the meaning of the word "salvation" or "saved" in that verse. Ex 14:13, Luke 1:71, 18:42 ("made you well" is literally "saved you"), John 3:17, Acts 15:11, 16:30, 27:20, Ro 5:9, 13:11, Phil 1:19, James 5:15 ("restore" is literally "saved")

c. The word "**law**" has several meanings, which can be ascertained from the way it is used in the sentence.

- Romans 2:14b; 8:2 = a principle
- John 1:17,45 = the Pentateuch
- Matthew 22:40 = All the OT except the Prophets
- Romans 2:12; 8:3 = the Mosaic system

d. "**In the last days**" (and "the last hour") is often assumed to refer to the same period of time. But note how its usage in its immediate contexts determine its meaning:

Hebrews 1:2; 1John 2:18; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3

e. The Greek word "**parousia**" is often assumed to refer always to the Rapture. But the contexts where it occurs show how its etymological meaning of "presence" relates to one of three things:

- The personal presence of individuals (1Cor 16:17; 2Cor 7:6-7;10:10; Phil 1:26; 2:12).
- Christ's presence in the air at the Rapture (1Corinthians 15:23; 1Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15;

5:23; 2Th. 2:1; Jas 5:7-8; 2Pe 3:4; 1Jn 2:28).

- Christ's presence on the earth with His saints immediately after the Tribulation (Mt 24:3,27,37,39; 2Th 2:8-9; 2Pe 1:16; 3:12).

2. The context of the paragraph or chapter. Sometimes the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence is clarified only by the paragraph or chapter in which it occurs. For example:

- a. John 7:39 explains John 7:37-38.
- b. John 1:21 explains John 1:20.
- c. Hebrews 7:21 explains Hebrews 7:20.
- d. Does "fire" in Matthew 3:11 ("baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire") mean spiritual dynamics? See how fire is used in verses 10 and 12.
- e. When Paul says in I Corinthians 10:23 that "all things are lawful," does he include such things as murder, and adultery? The chapter context answers the question; see
- f. Anacoluthons (parenthetical statements) need to be kept in mind in understanding the thought of a paragraph. For example, Romans 2:13-15 are parenthetical, and thus 2:16 continues the thought of 2:12.

3. The context of the book. Sometimes the scope and purpose of the book as a whole must be seen in order to clarify certain words or phrases.

- a. For example, does I John 3:6-10 mean that a Christian never sins?
- b. Understanding that the Book of James emphasizes evidences of true faith helps us understand his discussion of faith and works in James 2:12-25.
- c. Sometimes the purpose of a book is explicitly stated, as in the following: Luke 1:4; John 20:31; Philemon 17; I Timothy 3:14-15; II Peter 1:13; I John 5:13; Jude 3-4; Revelation 1:19. Other times the purpose is determined by inference (based on statements or emphases in the book), as in Matthew; I Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:1-4; Hebrews 2:6; 6:1,11; 10:23,35-36.

4. The context of parallel passages.

Parallel passages may be verbal parallels (in which the same or similar words, phrases, or sentences occur) or idea parallels (in which the same or similar ideas are expressed but in different words). For example, the word "hate" in Luke 14:26 is clarified by the parallel passage in Matthew 10:37. Close parallels exist between Kings and Chronicles, between the accounts in the Gospels, between Romans and Galatians, between Ephesians and Colossians, between II Peter and Jude, between Daniel and Revelation, and between single passages (e.g., cf. Isaiah 2:2-4 with Micah 4:1-3; cf. Romans 4:3 with Hebrews 11:8-10,11-19; and cf. Matthew 11:12 with Luke 16:16 and John 16:15).

5. The context of the entire Bible (the analogy of faith).

Galatians 5:4, "you have fallen from grace," may seem to teach that a Christian can lose his salvation. But this would contradict the entire tenor of Scripture, which is inspired by God "who cannot lie." The same is true of Philippians 2:12 which may at first glance seem to suggest that a person can attain salvation by works.

The corollaries of this principle are these: (a) An obscure or ambiguous text should never be interpreted in such a way as to make it contradict a plain one. For example, "baptized for the dead" in I Corinthians 15:29 should not be interpreted to mean that a person can be saved after he has died. This would contradict the plain teaching of Titus 3:5, etc. (b) A complex, ingenious, or devious interpretation should not be given preference over the simple and more natural explanation. For example, how should Matthew 16:28 be interpreted? (c) The Old Testament sheds light on the New Testament (e.g., Cain, Balaam, and Korah in Jude 11) and vice versa.

II. HOW TO DO A WORD STUDY

A. The Bible was originally written in three languages. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with Aramaic (a closely related language) being used to write parts of Daniel, Ezra, and a verse in Jeremiah. The New Testament was written entirely in Greek. When we do a word study, we want to determine the meaning of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word which underlies the word used in the verse we are studying. This can be done in at least three ways.

1. Commentaries - The simplest way to find out the meaning of a word in a particular verse is to look up the discussion of that verse in two or three commentaries. A good commentary should give you an explanation for any significant word in the verse you are studying.

2. Word Study Books - Another way to find out the meaning of a word is to look it up in a word study book. A very complete tool for the Old Testament is the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, edited by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., and B. K. Waltke (2 vols.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980). A similar tool for the New Testament is the New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, edited by Colin Brown (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975-78).

A briefer and far less expensive option is the Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words by W. E. Vine (various publishers). Some editions of this book also have a limited number of Old Testament word studies included, as well.

3. Concordance Studies - A third way to find out the meaning of a word in a particular verse is to do a concordance study. An English concordance lists all or most of the occurrences of a particular English word in the Bible. The verses are usually listed in the order in which they appear in the Bible. The basic procedure for study is to look up each of the verses in which the target word appears, determining the possible meanings for the word, and then make a decision--based on the context of the verses being studied--about the meaning to assign to the word in that verse.

B. SELECTING WORDS TO STUDY - Three principles are useful in helping you choose words on which you will want to do major word studies.

1. Select words known beforehand, or recognizable by context, to be theologically "loaded."

2. Select words which will obviously make a difference in the passage's meaning, but which seem ambiguous or unclear.

3. Select words which are repeated or which emerge as motifs.

C. FORMS IN WHICH NEW TESTAMENT WORDS APPEARS - In the various tools which you will be using to do word Studies, the target word can be written in three different ways.

1. The English word itself may be used.

2. The Greek word may be transliterated. That is, the Greek word is written using letters of the English alphabet.

3. The Greek word is written using the letters of the Greek alphabet. The Greek word--whether written in the letters of the Greek alphabet or transliterated into English letters--may appear in either its **contextual** form or its **lexical** form. Which form is used depends on which tool you are using.

a. Contextual form - Greek words may have various prefixes or suffixes, so the spelling may differ slightly in different contexts.

b. Lexical form - One fixed form (i.e., spelling) has been traditionally been selected for listing Greek words in the lexicons (dictionaries). This is the form listed in the back of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance or listed in Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

D. UNDERSTANDING CONCORDANCES - As was mentioned earlier, our goal is to determine the meaning of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word which underlies the English word in the verse we are studying. Since we must depend on English concordances, a few things need to be kept in mind.

1. Translation Differences

On the one hand, several different English words may be used to translate one word in the original language. For example, in Titus 2:2,6 the Greek "sophronein" occurs. This can be translated "to be sensible" (NASB), "to be self-controlled" (NIV), to "be sober-minded"

(NKJV). or "to be temperate" (NKJV). Even within a translation, more than one English word may be used for the same original word (e.g., "sober-minded" and "temperate" in the preceding example).

On the other hand, the opposite situation may also occur. That is, more than one word in the original languages can be translated by the same English word. For example, in the KJV alone, the English verb "dwell" is used to translate 31 different Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words!

2. Choosing the Right Concordance

In light of these translation differences, two things become important. First, we need, if possible, to use a concordance which is keyed to the translation we are studying. Or, we need to have available a copy of the translation to which the concordance is keyed. For example, if we are studying in the NIV, but our concordance is based on the KJV, then we will need to have a copy of the KJV Bible on hand so we can quickly look up the correct English word in the concordance.

3. Finding the Right Verses to Study

Second, we need a way to determine which word in the original languages is being used. Fortunately, this is relatively simple to do (see V.). Once we know the original word, then we only need to look up those verses in which this word is used, not all the verses in which other original words are used. This greatly simplifies our job and also guarantees much greater accuracy in our results.

E. PROCEDURE FOR A CONCORDANCE STUDY

STEP 1: Locate the other verses in which this same Hebrew / Aramaic / Greek word is used. There are several ways to do this, depending on which concordance you use. Detailed instructions for three different concordances are provided in IV.

STEP 2: Classify these verses into major categories of use. The same word may have a somewhat different meaning, depending on the context in which it is used. Remember that the meaning of a word depends on its context. For instance, the English word "run" can have many meanings. You can say that paint "runs" down a wall or that you will "run" a classified add; and you can refer to a "run" on a bank, a long "run" of a Broadway play, or a 10K "run" for charity.

STEP 3: Determine the category which best fits the word in the verse you are studying. After you have listed all the possible categories of meaning, go back to the verse you are studying. Which of these possible meanings is most appropriate for the word in the context of your verse? This is the category of meaning you will choose for the word in your verse.

STEP 4: Write up the results of your study. Briefly list the possible meanings of the word and the preferred meaning for it in the verse you studying. Then explain how that meaning affects the interpretation of your passage.

NB: To do a more thorough word study, there are a couple of other steps you can take.

STEP 5: Look up the word in Vine's Expository Dictionary or another word study book. Summarize the information given there. See how the author's categories compare with yours, and note which category he chooses for your target verse. (See Appendix B.)

STEP 6: Look up the verse in two or three good commentaries. See if the meaning these authors have assigned to the word agrees with what you have chosen for it.

F. HOW TO USE DIFFERENT CONCORDANCES

1. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance by James Strong (various publishers).

- a. Look up the English word in Strong's. (Note that Strong's is based on the KJV).
- b. Find the listing of the verse you are studying and note the number next to it on the right side of the column. This number refers to the specific Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic word which is used. If you wish, you can turn to the back index to find out what the original word actually is.

c. Mark the other verses in the list in Strong's which have this number next to them. (If it is a verb, you may also need to look under other spellings of the verb: keep, kept, keepeth.) These are the verses you will want to look up as you do your concordance study.

2. Young's Analytical Concordance by Robert Young (Eerdmans and various publishers).

- a. Look up the English word in Young's. (Note that Young's is based on the KJV.)
- b. Locate the listing of the verse you are studying. Note that Young's already lists words in groups according to which Hebrew / Aramaic / Greek word is used. That is, the has already gathered into one list the verses which use the original language word you are studying.
- c. These are the verses you will want to look up as you do your concordance study.

3. The Word Study New Testament by Ralph D. Winter (2 vols. Pasadena, Ca: William Carey Library, 1972).

- a. This two volume set gives you clear directions for use. Briefly, you look up the verse in Volume 1. This is a KJV Bible with a code number written over most of the words. You then look up that number in Volume 2, which is a concordance. There you will find a handy list of every New Testament verse which uses that Greek word.
- b. These are the verses you will want to look up for your word study.
- c. If you are looking up a New Testament word, this is the most accurate tool you can use for concordance studies. The concordance (which is a specially marked edition of the classic Englishman's Greek Concordance) lists all the times this Greek word occurs in the New Testament, no matter how it is translated into English.

G. HOW TO USE LEXICONS AND WORD STUDY BOOKS

1. Lexicons

- a. A lexicon is a dictionary.
- b. The most useful one for New Testament studies is: Walter Bauer. A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature. 5th ed. Trans. by W. F. Arndt. F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker 2nd English ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979.
- c. It gives not only all the possible meanings of a Greek word; it also gives the Scripture references where the word is used with that meaning.
- d. To use it, look up the Greek word in Strong's and then find this word in the lexicon. Or, use the numbering system in The Word Study New Testament to quickly find the exact page on which the Greek word is located.

2. Word study Books

- a. **W. E. Vine. Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** (various publishers).
 - 1) Vine's lists the word in English according to the King James Version.
 - 2) Look up the Greek word in Strong's and then find this word under the English listing in Vine's
 - 3) Be sure to note whether you are dealing with a noun, verb, adjective, etc.
 - 4) Vine's is also helpful for synonyms, since several similar words (all translated by the same English word) are often listed under each English heading.
- b. **Colin Brown, ed. The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology**. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78.
 - 1) This is a word study book which often gives lengthy discussions of different words.
 - 2) Note that although you do look up the word in English, the English is not keyed to a single Bible version.
 - 3) For this reason, the fastest way to look up a discussion is to use the Greek word index

at the end of Volume 3.

a) Look up the transliterated form of the Greek word (i.e., the form written in English letters), which you got from the back of Strong's.

b) The volume and page numbers of the primary discussion of the Greek word will be given in bold print next to this word in Brown's index.

III. HOW TO DO A FULL-BLOWN WORD STUDY WORKING WITH THE GREEK AND HEBREW

The necessity for studying important words will become more obvious as you spend more time working through various passages and learn that many of the key interpretational problems in Scriptures stem from lack of clarity of definition. Thus, I have included this summary to help those of you who would like more in-depth material to work with.

A. This first section will deal with how to do brief overview studies of words using some of the languages tools that are available to you.

1. First, identify the Hebrew or Greek words you wish to study that lie behind the English translation you are using. This can be done through Young's or Strong's Concordances, the Word Study New Testament (WSNT), or you may use a Hebrew or Greek Interlinear.

[If you have taken Hebrew or Greek classes, then look up as many of the important words as you have time for in the "lexicons" (a fancy word for dictionary; specifically BDB {Brown, Driver, and Briggs} or BAGD {Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker}). Cf. Fee, New Testament Exegesis, 83-93 and especially "How to Use Bauer," 87-89 for a very helpful explanation and example of how to do short word studies.]

2. For particularly important words, you might try to use Englishman's Hebrew Concordance or Englishman's Greek Concordance or WSNT to find all the occurrences of that word in the OT or NT.

N. B.: There are several concordances that allow you to do this more directly in the original language, and they usually put those terms in the context of the original language. But: One needs to be realistic about his or her limitations in this area. Many know enough to be dangerous, but not enough to impress those who is seriously interested in the languages.

3. Look up the references and see how the word is used in various contexts. List out those occurrences that use the word in basically the same way. Try to specify as clearly as possible how the word is used in this passage. Use your English concordances to find English synonyms for the Greek word used in this text--i.e. other ways in which this term could be translated.

[There are some simple overview of terms to be found in texts such as Girdlestone's [Synonyms of the Old Testament](#) or [Trench's Synonyms of the NT](#) that can be helpful, though some information gleaned from these works may be dated. You may well find your own thoughts on the usage of a given term in context to be adequate.]

B. For a very critical word or two, you might want to do a moderate length, full-dress word study (8-10 hours worth of study). To do this on your own you might include all or most of the following.

1. Etymology.

(Often this is not too significant, but this area may need to be researched if it is a particularly rare word. Although few words in the NT are truly singular terms [technical term: hapax legomena], such concerns are more common in the OT. Useful sources might include BDB, L&S, BAGD.)

2. Classical Greek usage is important to gain a view of the background of the term in its original languages. It often allows us to see some of its more concrete usage's, while the NT tends to use terms in more theological or metaphorical usage's. (Sources: L&S; generally covers anything prior to the second century BC) The key in this step is to identify the various categories of usage a word can take.

3. **The Septuagint** (i.e. LXX) allows us to see how the Greeks around 250-150 BC used various terms as they translated the OT. (Source: Hatch and Redpath [H&R], although a knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew is helpful to use this too.) Write down the Hebrew words most often translated by the Greek word under study, along with any illustrations from non-metaphorical examples. Try to identify any differences from how the word was used in the classical language (i.e., are there any new or omitted categories of meaning?).

4. **Koine** (literally "common") is the name of the Greek in which the NT was written). (Source for word studies:

Moulton and Milligan [M&M].) How does the Koine compare or differ from classical Greek or the LXX?

5. NT: How often and where are the majority of these occurrences found? Can you form various categories of usage's (especially separating literal and metaphorical usage's, if appropriate).

- a. Survey all of the NT occurrences.
- b. Categorize the word according to its usage. ("Probe the circles of context")
 - 1) First make a list of the categories of meaning found in the whole NT. (For an example of how this is done, see BAGD.)
 - 2) Then do the same for all the writings by that particular author (this is important especially if the writer wrote several different books or a large amount of material [e.g. Luke].
 - 3) Do the same for the author's use in the particular book in which the studied word occurs.
 - 4) Finally, identify the meaning in the passage at hand.
- c. Finally, write out a couple of sentences of what the term means in this particular paragraph or text.

6. Finally, consult BAGD, Kittel (TDNT), or the New International Dictionary for NT Theology (NIDNTT edited by Colin Brown). Kittel and Brown are particularly significant works that can be consulted on virtually any word in the NT. They are masterful works, but they must be used with discretion since they reflect various theological biases--often not amenable to conservative thinkers. The solution is to do some comparative work, after you have done the technical work and see how your conclusions line up with theirs. This does not mean they are wrong all the time. It is probably best for you, in full-blown word studies, to look to these sources last, for then you are better able to evaluate their work based on your own.

Lastly, you should check a good commentary to see how they have understood the word.

N.B.: your ability use such tools and perform such in depth study depends upon the skills you have developed and the time you have available for study. One can obviously go into great depth if one wishes and spend several years doing an authoritative word study. The result of a series of such studies--in the form of scholarly articles, doctoral dissertations, and books--is found in works such as Kittel and NIDNTT. Even the busy Christian worker should to a study like this on an important word from time to time. It will build a background of understanding in one's mind as well as develop "biblical theology" in one's mind.

C. After you have done what your skill and / or time allows concerning your inductive study, you might wish to read the articles for other key word in NIDNTT, Kittel. Theological Wordbook of the OT (TWOT), Theological Dictionary of the OT (TDOT, Botterwick & Winggren, though this work has yet to be completed in the English language). Should you feel lost in such works, you may want to simply consult Vine's Expository Dictionary which does on occasion include selected OT words in the more recent editions. While the work is old and has been surpassed due to some questionable methodology, it will still add much to your work. Be honest with your own abilities and try to build upon them. At the same time, it will be helpful to your own growth to challenge your knowledge by working in texts that will push you.

IV. FORMS OF WORDS (MORPHOLOGY) AND FUNCTIONS OF WORDS (PARTS OF SPEECH)

A. Morphology

Morphology refers to the way words are "inflected," that is, formed or put together (e.g., with something at the beginning of the word--a prefix, or at the end of the word--a suffix, or in the middle). Adding an "s" at the end of the noun "fuse" makes it plural, but adding "re" at the beginning of "fuse" makes it the verb "refuse," or changing the "e" at the end to "al" makes it a noun "refusal." "He" means that the pronoun is in the nominative case, but "him" is in the accusative case. "Eat" is a verb in the present tense but when the "e" is transferred to the end, it becomes "ate" and is in the past tense. In Greek and Hebrew the meanings of words are changed similarly by inflections at the beginning, middle, or end. Thus morphology is an important part of the grammatical approach to interpretation, which seeks to give attention to every detail of the Scriptures because of their verbal inspiration.

B. Parts of Speech

The parts of speech refer to the function of words in a sentence.

1. What are the parts of speech?

The eight parts are these, grouped in two families - noun & verb

PARTS	WHAT THEY DO	HOW THEY VARY
NOUN FAMILY		
Nouns	As subjects they identify what or who is discussed. As objects (of verbs or prepositions) they identify the recipient of the action or mode of being.	Case (can be nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, or vocative) Number (can be singular or plural) Gender (can be masculine or feminine)
Pronouns	They are substitutes for nouns and refer to persons or things named or understood	Case, Number, Gender
Adjectives	They describe nouns.	To agree with the nouns they modify in case, number, and gender.
Prepositions	They point to means (through or by), position (in, out, over, under, etc.), origin (from), possession (of), etc.	
VERB FAMILY		
Verbs	They assert something about what the subject is or does.	Tense (past present, or future) Voice (active or passive) Mood (indicative or subjunctive) Person (first, second, or third) Number (singular or plural) See also Simple Greek Chart
Adverbs	They modify verbs (or other adverbs or adjectives), telling how (manner or quality), when (time), where (place), how much (degree), or why (purpose or result).	
Conjunctions	They are connectives, joining words, phrases, or clauses, to show connection (and), continuation (and, then), contrast (but, except), inference (then, so, therefore), explanation (for instance), cause (because, for), intensity (besides, even), or addition (also).	

Particles	They express a negative (not, nor), interrogation (why), affirmation (certainly, indeed), or exclamation (surely, oh, etc.)	
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2. Why know the parts of speech?

The grammatical function of a word in a phrase or sentence often helps determine its meaning. For example, by itself the word "cutting" could be a noun, verb, or adjective. Which is it in each of these sentences?

- a. The cutting of the grass took time.
- b. He was cutting the grass.
- c. He made a cutting remark.

3. How do the parts of speech help in Bible hermeneutics?

The following are a few examples of how knowing certain facts about the parts of speech in phrases and sentences in the Bible can be helpful in interpretation.

- a. In Job 21 :2-3a the verbs "listen" and "bear" (with me) are in the plural and the pronoun "you" is in the plural, and so Job is addressing the three friends. But in Job 21:3b "you" is singular and so he is speaking to Zophar.
- b. In Matthew 6, the nouns, pronouns, and verbs in verse 1 are plural, those in verses 2-4 are singular, those in verse 5 are plural, in verse 6 singular, in verses 7-16 plural, and in verses 17-18 singular.
- c. Romans 12:1-19 is all in the plural, but in verses 20-21 Paul switches to the singular.
- d. The singular "seed" in contrast to the plural "seeds" is important in Paul's argument in Galatians 3:16.
- e. In Ephesians 2:8 the gender is important in determining what the word "that" (which is the gift of God) refers to. Does it refer to grace, or to faith, or to salvation?
- f. In Ephesians 2:20 the phrase "the apostles and prophets" has only the one article "the." It is not repeated before the word "prophets." Therefore there is one foundation consisting of both apostles and prophets, not two foundations.
- g. But the genitive case in which "the apostles and prophets" occurs could be a possessive genitive (the Ephesians had the same foundation the apostles and prophets had), or subjective (the foundation they laid), or appositional (the foundation which consists of the apostles and prophets). Though the Greek wording does not indicate which kind of genitive it is, the latter is more probable.
- h. Does I Corinthians 3:9 mean that we are workers along with God or that as workers together with each other we belong to God? The answer is the latter because the phrase "of God" in Greek is in the genitive (possessive) case. It reads literally, "Of God we are fellow workers."
- i. In Revelation 3:10 the Greek preposition "ek" means "out from," not "out through," and thus is a strong argument for the pretribulation rapture. (See Jeffrey L. Townsend, "The Rapture in Revelation 3:10," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 [July 1981: 252-66].)
- j. The antecedent of the pronoun "he" in Daniel 9:27 is "the prince who is to come" (in v. 26), not the Messiah. Thus the one who will make a covenant with many is the Antichrist (the view of premillennialism), not Christ (the view of amillennialism).
- k. In Ephesians 2:13-22 the aorist (past) tense is used for what has been accomplished by the death of Christ were brought near," v. 13; "made both groups into one," v. 14; "broke down the barrier," v. 14; "preached peace," v. 17); but the present tense is used for the

effect of that death for believers ("establishing peace," v. 15; "we have," v. 18; "being fitted together," v. 21; "is growing," v. 21; "are being built together," v.22).

l. The present tense may refer to something that is permanently true (e.g., "in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form," Colossians 2:9), or continuous ("we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," Philippians 3:20), or repeated ("when you see a cloud ... you say," Luke 12:54), or habitual ("No one who is born of God sins," I John 3:9), or the future ("They divide my garments," Psalm 22:18).

m. In Romans 3:23 the first verb "have sinned" is in the aorist tense (undefined past action) and could therefore be rendered "all sin" to express gnomic or proverbial action which is true at any time. The second verb "fall short" is in the present tense and should be rendered "are continually coming short" or "come short" (Dana and Glaze, Interpreting the New Testament, pp. 152-53).

n. The perfect tense in Hebrew expresses completed action, whether past, present, or future (but usually past). (The imperfect expresses incomplete action.) Why then is the perfect often used when speaking of prophetic events? Be-cause those events are so certain of fulfillment (of being com-pleted) that the perfect tense is very appropriate. This is called the "prophetic perfect." These verbs are often translated in the past tense, as, for example, in Isaiah 53:2-9.

o. The importance of conjunctions is seen in Ephesians 4:11. The first four occurrences of the word "and" is the same Greek word ("kai"), but the fifth occurrence of "and" (between "Pastors" and "teachers") is a different word ("de"), and can best be rendered by a hyphen ("pastor-teachers").

p. The conjunctions "for" and "therefore" are important in in-terpretation. "For" introduces a reason for the preceding statement(s). In Romans 8, "for" (Greek, "gar") occurs fif-teen times. And in Romans 1:15-18 one reason builds on another: Paul was "eager to preach the gospel" (v. 14), "for" he was "not ashamed" (v. 15), "for it is the power of God to salvation" (v. 16), "for in it the righteousness of God is revealed" (v. 17).

V. RELATIONSHIPS OF WORDS (SYNTAX)

The word **Syntax** comes from the Greek "syntassein," which means "to place in order together." According to Webster's Dictionary, syntax is "the way in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences." It is a branch of grammar. Single words by themselves seldom convey a complete thought. For example, the words "man," "hard," "ball," and "hit" do not convey a meaningful specific thought. Therefore they need to be put together. But the way they are arranged can change the meaning.

A. Phrases - A phrase consists of a short grammatical group of words without a verb. Examples of prepositional phrases from Colossians 1:2 are "of Jesus Christ," "by the will of God," "to the saints," "at Colossae," "from God the Father." An example of an adverbial phrase is "whether thrones or Dominions" (Colossians 1:16). An example of a participial phrase is "having made peace" (Colossians 1:20). An example of an interpretive question pertaining to a prepositional phrase is in Ephesians 1:4: Should "in love" go with verse 4 or with verse 5?

B. Clauses - A clause is a grammatical unit of words comprised of a subject and predicate (e.g., "the blood ... cleanses," "Christ died," "who has qualified us," "so that you may walk").

Clauses are either dependent or independent. Dependent clauses "depend" on an independent clause (e.g., "We give thanks ... since we heard of your faith"). Dependent clauses are of various kinds:

Causal: "We give thanks . . . because of the hope laid up" (Colossians 1:3,5).

Concessive: "Even though I am absent in body . . . I am with you in spirit " (Colossians 2:5).

Comparative: "As you have received. . . so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6).

Conditional: "If you have died with Christ . . . why do you submit yours lives?" (Colossians 2:20).

Purpose: "We pray for you ... so that you may walk. . . worthy" (Colossians 1:10).

Result: "Pray ... so that we may speak forth" (Colossians 4:3).

Temporal: "When He had disarmed. . . He made a public display" (Colossians 2:15).

Kinds of Clauses and Sentences - Indicate which kind of dependent clauses are in these complex sentences (whether Causal, Concessive, Conditional, Comparative, Purpose, Result, Temporal).

1. "Children be obedient ... for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Colossians 3:20).
2. "If you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking (Colossians 3:1).
3. "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self" (Colossians 3:9).
4. "I say this in order that no one may delude you" (Colossians 2:4).
5. "When you were dead ... He made you alive" (Colossians 2:13).
6. "Let your speech always be with grace ... so that you may know (Colossians 4:6).
7. "Epaphras (is) always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers that you may stand perfect" (Colossians 4:12).

C. Sentences

1. Sentences, as to their structure, may be Simple, Compound, or Complex.

A Simple sentence has only one independent clause (a subject and a predicate [verb]). For example, "Set your mind on the things above" (Colossians 3:2).

A Compound sentence has at least two independent (and coordinate) clauses. For example, "You laid aside the old self ... and (you) have put on the new self" (Colossians 3:9-10).

A Complex sentence has at least one independent and one dependent clause.

2. Indicate whether the following sentences are simple, compound, or complex.

1. "Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them" (Colossians 3:19).
2. "When Christ ... is revealed, then you also will be revealed" (Colossians 3:4).
3. "Put on a heart of compassion" (Colossians 3:12).
4. "Let the peace of Christ rule ... and be thankful" (Colossians 3:15).
5. "You have been made complete... and He is the head" (Colossians 2:10).
6. "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders" (Colossians 4:5).
7. "In them you also once walked, when you were living in them" (Colossians 3:7).

3. Sentences, as to their purposes, may be as follows:

A statement: to assert a fact, opinion, complaint, emotion, observation, etc. (indicative mood)

A question: to raise an inquiry (interrogatory mood)

A command: to give an order or charge (imperative mood)

A request: to ask for something (optative mood)

A wish: to express a desire (subjunctive mood)

a. In the interpretation of certain verses it is important to note whether they are statements, commands, or questions, etc. For example:

(1) Is John 5:39 a statement or a command?

(2) Is John 12:27 a statement or a question?

b. The importance of noting the various aspects of syntax (word relationships) is seen in Acts 2:38.

D. Word Order and Repetition

The order of words is also significant in Bible interpretation. In Greek, emphasis can be given to words, phrases, or clauses by placing them at the beginning of a sentence (and sometimes at the end) in contrast to the normal word order of subject, verb, and object. For example, "in Christ" is at the beginning of Ephesians 2:13 and thus is emphasized. In I Corinthians 1:17 the negative idea is emphasized by the word "not" being placed at the beginning.

In Hebrew the normal word order is verb, subject, object. Thus if the subject or the object comes first, that is emphasized. For example, in Isaiah 1:14 the order is object, verb, subject, thus stressing the object: "Your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts I (literally, my soul) hate."

Emphasis in Hebrew is also given by repetition, for example, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3).

VI. SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES IN GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION

A. Procedure in Discovering the Meaning of a Word

1. Discover the etymology of the word.

2. Discover the usage of the word.

- a. By the same writer in the same book.
- b. By the same writer in other books.
- c. By other writers in the Bible.
- d. By other writers (contemporary and otherwise) outside the Bible.

3. Discover how synonyms and antonyms are used.

4. Consider the context.

- a. The immediate context.
- b. The context of the paragraph or chapter.
- c. The context of the book.
- d. The context of parallel passages.
- e. The context of the entire Bible.

5. Decide which one of several possible meanings best fits the thought of the passage.

B. Procedures for Discovering the Meaning of a Sentence

1. Analyze the sentence and its elements, noting its parts of speech, the kind of sentence it is, the kinds of clauses it has, and the word order.
2. Discover the meaning of each key word (see the five points above under "A") and how they contribute to the meaning of the sentence.
3. Consider the influence of each part of the sentence on the thought of the whole.

See full article - it is excellent - [Bible 405: Hermeneutics: The Study of the Interpretation of Scriptures \(click for Pdf of the entire study\)](#)

GREEK WORD STUDY WORKSHEET: INSIGHTS	
Transliterated Greek Word (Step 1)	
Strong's Number (Step 1)	

Insights from Word Origin (Step 1)	
Brief Thayer's Definition (Step 1)	
Insights from other verses using the same Greek word (Step 2)	
Vine's Defintion (Step 3)	
Insights from Robertson's Word Pictures (Step 4)	
In Depth Greek Word Studies Preceptaustin.org (Step 5) click	
Insights from Amplified Version (Step 6)	
Insights from Definition of the English Word in English Dictionary click	
Miscellaneous Resources click	
Substitute Your Insights into the Verse to "Amplify" the Meaning (Step 6)	

RELATED RESOURCES

- Greek Word Studies expanding listing of links to in depth Greek Word Studies on this website
- [Englishman's Greek \(offsite\)](#) - course for laymen to help understand Greek
- [How to do Word Studies \(offsite\)](#) - guidelines on performing and applying word studies
- Greek Quick Reference Guide: Summary of Greek Verb Parsing (Tense, Voice, Mood)
- It's Greek to Me: collection of links to various sources related to language studies

- Reference Search: Multiple search engines on one page to facilitate Word Studies
- [How to Do a Word Study - Sam Storms](#) - In the last section of his discussion Storms has an interesting summary of what he calls "fallacies and pitfalls" in the study of words. It is worth reading although I do not agree with everything he says. E.g., he says ekklesia is often said to mean "called out ones" but he disagrees and says it simply means "congregation," but I think clearly saints are "called out" from the world and into the Body of Christ the Church, which is not depicted by the definition "congregation."

Excerpt: A critical step in the exegetical process is the study of selected words determined to be especially significant for the understanding of a text. **Contrary to widespread opinion, one need not have a mastery of Greek in order to ascertain the meaning of the important words in a text of Scripture.** This lesson is designed to assist the student who has only a rudimentary knowledge of Greek (i.e., someone who is acquainted with the Greek alphabet) and is therefore largely restricted to the various English translations (or, at best, to the use of an interlinear)....

Overview of principles for the study of word usage in the NT: Consider the sentence, Jim is green. It could mean: 1) Jim is green in color. Perhaps he is covered with paint. 2) Jim is jealous. Perhaps he has been bitten by the green-eyed monster. 3) Jim is a new-comer, a rookie. Or 4) Jim is sick. He looks a little green around the gills. How does one determine the meaning of such a statement? Several factors must be considered:

(1) The meaning of a word may often be determined by noting the author's own definition (cf. Heb 5:14; 2Ti 3:17).

(2) Occasionally a word is defined by a qualifying phrase or editorial comment (cf. John 2:19; 7:37-39; Eph. 1:7).

(3) The grammatical construction is often helpful. In Mt. 5:13 we know that **moraino** means "to be tasteless" and not "to become foolish" (as in Ro 1:22), because of its grammatical relation to "salt" in the text.

(4) Examine the contextual antitheses and contrasts (cf. Ro 8:5-8 where "flesh" does not mean the physical body because of the way it is contrasted with "Spirit"). ([Sam Storms](#))

Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

- Observation: What does it say?
- Interpretation: What does it mean?
- Application: How do I respond?
- Bob Smith's well written, online book [Basics of Bible Interpretation](#)

Read (or sing) the words of two of Fanny Crosby's hymns below:

[Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It!](#)

Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child and forever I am.

Redeemed and with the Price of Blood

Redeemed, and with the price of blood,
Which Thou hast shed for me,
I stand, a monument of grace,
A witness, Lord, for Thee.
Redeemed, I'll tell it o'er and o'er;
Redeemed my song shall be,
My watchword through the vale of death,
My passport home to Thee.

Below are James Gray's great lyrics

Nor Silver Nor Gold

I am redeemed, but not with silver,
I am bought, but not with gold;
Bought with a price, the blood of Jesus,
Precious price of love untold.
Nor silver nor gold hath obtained my redemption,
Nor riches of earth could have saved my poor soul;
The blood of the cross is my only foundation,
The death of my Savior now maketh me whole.