Word Meanings

- The purpose of word studies
- Definitions
- Range of meaning
- Potential pitfalls
- How to do word studies

Purpose of Word Studies

In word studies, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing…

“It may say yes in English, but in Greek, that means no!”

Purpose of Word Studies

“Interpreters must deliberately pursue what the original words of a passage meant at the time they were written in the context in which they occur” (Klein 184-185).
- Original words (textual criticism)
- Time they were written (not earlier or later)
- Context in which they occur (literary context is final arbiter of meaning)
Definitions

- **Denotation** = dictionary definition of a word
- **Connotation** = cultural associations of a word

Definitions

- **Denotation** = dictionary definition of a word (Think “D”.)
- **Connotation** = cultural associations of a word (“Think “C”.)

Range of Meaning

- save
- collect
- except
- rescue
- put right with God
- release from demonic possession
- heal
  - σωζω (sozo)
Potential Pitfalls

- Bringing foreign meanings into Hebrew or Greek (Gen. 2:18; Romans 1:16; 12:2).

- Word-concept fallacy
  - Same word always = same concept (wrong!)
  - Sozo in Matthew 1:21; 8:25; 9:21
  - Sarx in Luke 24:39; John 1:14; Rom. 9:8; Heb. 5:7; Rom. 8:13

- Illegitimate totality transfer - idea that the whole range of meaning of a word applies in any given instance of the word (wrong!).
Potential Pitfalls

- Bringing foreign meanings into Hebrew or Greek (Romans 1:16; 12:2).
- Word-concept fallacy
- Illegitimate totality transfer
- **Root fallacy** - idea that the roots of the word always determine its meaning (wrong!)
  - “Prevent” in KJV (1 Thess. 4:15)
  - “Worship (Greek proskuneo)

Potential Pitfalls

- Bringing foreign meanings into Hebrew or Greek (Romans 1:16; 12:2).
- Word-concept fallacy
- Illegitimate totality transfer
- Root fallacy
- **Anachronism** - a meaning that doesn’t fit the time and place the work was written.

How to Do Word Studies

- Select words that require detailed analysis.
- Determine the range of meaning.
  - Use concordances to do your own study of how the word is used.
  - Used lexicons and theological dictionaries to explain the word further.
- Select the meaning that best fits the context.
Doing a Concordance Study

• If you know Greek or Hebrew, use a Greek or Hebrew concordance.
• If you can look up a Greek or Hebrew word (by interlinear Bible or Strong’s number), try the *Englishman’s Greek or Hebrew Concordance*.
• If you can’t, use an exhaustive concordance with lexicons.

Doing a Concordance Study

• See handout 4.1 for instructions.
• See handout 10.6 for an example: “confidence” in Hebrews 10:19 (NRSV).

Doing a Word Study Using Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance

• Word to study: “opened” in Heb. 10:20 (NRSV).
• Look up the word in KJV ⇒ “consecrated.”
• Look up “consecrated” in Strong’s concordance and find Hebrews 10:20....
Doing a Word Study Using Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance

- Using the Strong’s number (1457), look up the word in the Greek lexicon in the back of Strong’s concordance....
Doing a Word Study Using Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

- The word is εγκαινιζω (egkainizo).
- Write down the words used to translate that Greek word in the KJV → consecrate, dedicate.
- Then look up “consecrate” and “dedicate” in the concordance, writing down any verses that use Greek word number 1457.
Doing a Word Study Using Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance

- You now have a list of all the instances of the Greek word *egkainizo* in the NT:
  - Hebrews 10:20 (translated “consecrated” in KJV)
  - Hebrews 9:18 (translated “dedicated” in KJV)
- Look up these verses to get an idea of the range of meaning of this word in the NT.
- Then consider what it means in your passage.
- Check lexicons and theological dictionaries.

Word Study of *Koinonos*

- “Partners” (NRSV) in Heb. 10:33. KJV has “companions”.