

An invaluable tool in studying the Bible is a good concordance. The concordances found in most Bibles are inadequate. *Strong's Concordance* is one of the most versatile because other reference works are "keyed" into *Strong's* numbering system.

A concordance lists every word in the Bible and where it is found; it is thus useful when locating a verse when only a word or two is remembered. However, a concordance used together with a Greek dictionary can open up many other avenues of study.

Suppose, for example, you want to study the word "hell" in the NT. When you look the word up in *Strong's*, you will see every listing for "hell" in the King James Version (23 times). You will also note that beside each passage is "Strong's number," a number which refers to the Greek dictionary in the back of the concordance. This number identifies the specific Greek word from which the English translation "hell" came.

For example, "*thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*" (Acts 2:27) has the number "86" beside it. When you look that number up in the Greek dictionary, you will see the word "hades." The definition reads, "unseen, i.e., 'Hades' or the place (state) of departed souls."

On the other hand, the reference to "*fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Mt 10:28) has the number "1067" beside it. This number in the Greek dictionary is the word "geenna." The definition reads, "valley of (the son of) Hinnom; gehenna (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerus., used (fig.) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment."

The KJV did not distinguish "hades" from "gehenna"; the translators used the same word "hell" to translate them both. Thus, Jesus never went to "hell" (to Satan's abode). His soul went to "hades" but did not stay there, for He was resurrected and then ascended into heaven.

Using the above process, you will also note that "hell" in 2 Pet 2:4 is numbered "5020" and comes from the word "tartaroo," "(the deepest abyss of Hades); to incarcerate in eternal torment."

So, by using a concordance we learn the proper meaning of the passages where the term "hell" is found. We also learn from the concordance that of the twelve times "Gehenna" is referred to in the NT, Jesus is the speaker *eleven times*.

Brethren, let's use the tools at our disposal to become better Bible students.