

7. WORD AND CONCEPT STUDIES

Part 2: Observation – “How is the passage communicated?”

How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament

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Spring 2019

Goal: Clarify the meaning of key words, phrases, and concepts.

1. The Need for Word and Concept Studies

- a. Word meaning is context specific.
- b. Why study concepts and not just words?

2. An Overview of Word Study Tools

- a. Concordance:
 - Key tool: Kohlenberger, John R., III, and James A. Swanson. *The Hebrew-English Concordance of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998. (linked to both Strong's & Goodrick/Kohlenberger [G/K] numbers).
- b. Lexicon:
 - Key tool: Mounce, William D., ed. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. (linked to both Strong's & Goodrick/Kohlenberger [G/K] numbers)
- c. Theological wordbook:
 - Key tool: VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997. (linked to both Strong's & Goodrick/Kohlenberger [G/K] numbers)
 - Key tool: Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Rev. 1 vol. ed. Chicago: Moody, 2003). (linked only to Strong's numbers)

3. Principles for Doing Word Studies

- a. **The history and makeup of a word are not reliable guides to meaning.**
 - Past usage is not necessarily equivalent to current usage.

- Similar roots do not necessarily have similar meaning (though the Hebrew authors can play with words).
- Comparative languages are unreliable guides.

b. Usage in context determines meaning.

- Context is king.
- Look out for idioms.
- Assigned meanings must not be too limited.

c. Authorial, historical, geographical, and formal correspondence matter when determining meaning.

- Authorial correspondence.
- Historical correspondence.
- Geographical correspondence.
- Generic or formal correspondence.

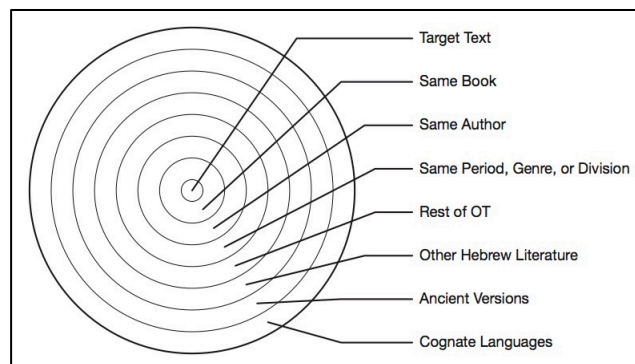
4. How to Do a Word or Concept Study

a. Choose a Hebrew word to study.

- Study words or phrases that are theologically significant or crucial to a passage's understanding.
- Study words or phrases that are puzzling or unclear.
- Study words or phrases that have figurative meanings.
- Study words or phrases that are apparent synonyms or antonyms.
- Study words or phrases that are repeated and/or clearly central to the meaning of a passage.
- Study words or phrases that are infrequent.

b. Discover the range of meaning for your Hebrew word (external data).

- Generate a list of texts.
- Categorize meanings.
- Catalogue and assess your data.
- Expand your assessment to include the concept.



c. Determine the meaning of your Hebrew word in the target text (internal assessment).

- What does the immediate literary context clarify about your word's meaning (what comes before and after)?
- Does your author use the same term elsewhere in the book?
- Do other OT authors appropriate the term in similar settings or when addressing similar issues?
- Does the NT ever quote or allude to your text in a way that clarifies meaning?
- Does your author use the word in a different manner from the way others do?

Categorized Meanings of זָרַע ("Seed") in OT

		<i>Human</i>					<i>Plant</i>	<i>Animal</i>
		A. Natural Seed	B. Special Natural Seed: Old Covenant Nation	C. Unique Seed	D. Special Natural Seed Phys Restored: Return to YHWH, Stage 1—Old <u>Cov</u> Nation / New <u>Cov</u> Engagement	E. Special Natural & Adopted Seed Spiritually Reconciled: Return to YHWH, Stage 2—New <u>Cov</u> People		
1	Gen 1:11–12, 29						6	
2	3:15							1 (figurative)
3	4:25		1(sg)?? Eve, <u>contr</u> Cain	1(sg) woman ??				
4	7:3							1
5	8:22						1	
6	9:9	1(pl) Noah						
7	12:7		1(pl) Abe					

Catalogued Meanings of זָרַע (“Seed”) in OT

Category	Texts	Totals
A. Plant seed or seed-time	Gen 1:11–12[4x], 29[2x]; 8:22; 47:19, 23–24; Exod 16:31; Lev 11:37–38; 26:5, 16; 27:16[2x], 30; Num 11:7; 20:5; 24:7; Deut 11:10; 14:22; 22:9; 28:38; 1 Sam 8:15; 1 Kgs 18:32; Jer 2:21 (figurative for C.3); 35:7, 9; Ezek 17:5[2x] (figurative for C.3); Isa 5:10; 17:11; 23:3; 30:23; 55:10; Amos 9:13; Hag 2:19; Zech 8:12; Ps 126:6; Job 39:12; Eccl 11:6.	43 (18.78%)
B. Animal natural seed	Gen 3:15 (figurative for humans displaying serpent-like hostility to God); 7:3; Jer 31:27.	3 (1.31%)
C. Human seed		
C.1. Male semen	Lev 15:16–18, 32; 22:4; 19:20; Num 5:13. [Other potentials: 1 Kgs 11:14; Ezek 43:19; Dan 9:1.]	7 (3.06%)
C.2. Human natural seed, all-inclusive	Gen 9:9; 15:3; 16:10; 17:12; 19:32, 34; 21:13; 38:8–9[3x]; 46:6–7; 48:11, 19; Exod 28:43; 30:21; Lev 18:20–21; 20:2–4; 21:15, 17, 21; 22:3–4, 13; Num 5:28; 14:24; 17:5[16:40]; 18:19; 25:13; Deut 28:46, 59; 30:19; 31:21; Josh 24:3; 1 Sam 1:11; 2:20; 20:42[2x]; 24:22[21]; 2 Sam 4:8; 1 Kings 2:33, 33 [or C.3]; 11:14 [or C.1], 39 [or C.3]; 2 Kings 5:27; 11:1; 17:20; 25:25; Jer 7:15; 22:28, 30; 29:32; 36:31; 41:1; 49:10; Ezek 17:13; 43:19 [or C.1]; Isa 1:4; 14:20; 57:3–4; Mal 2:3, 15; Ruth 4:12 [or C.5]; Pss 21:11[10]; 22:31[30]; 25:13 [or C.3]; 37:25–26, 28; Job 5:25; 21:8; Dan 1:3; 9:1 [or C.1]; Esth 6:13; 9:27–28, 31; 10:3; Ezra 2:59; 9:2; Neh 7:61; 9:2; 2 Chr 22:10. [Also texts concerning “seed” of Jacob/Israel as covenant community: Gen 28:4, 13–14; 32:13; 35:12; 48:4; Ezek 20:5; 44:22; Isa 45:19; Pss 22:24[23]; 106:27; Esth 6:13; 9:27–28, 31. Other potentials: Gen 15:5; 2 Sam 22:51; Prov 11:21.]	87 (37.99%)
C.3. Human special natural seed, subset 1: usually old covenant community pre-exile in direct fulfillment of Abrahamic promises of land	Gen 4:25; 12:7; 13:15–16[3x] [or C.6]; 15:5 [or C.1 or 6], 13 [or C.6], 18 [or C.6]; 17:7–10[5x], 19; 21:12; 22:17; 24:7; 26:3–4[3x], 4 [or C.5], 24; 28:4, 13–14, 14 [or C.5]; 32:13; 35:12; 48:4; Exod 32:13[2x]; 33:1; Deut 1:8; 4:37; 10:15; 11:9; 34:4; Ezek 20:5; 44:22; Isa 41:8 [or C.6]; 45:19; 48:19; Pss 22:24[23][2x]; 105:6; 106:27; Neh 9:8 [or C.6]; 1 Chr 16:13; 2 Chr 20:7. [Also Gen 46:6–7 concerning Jacob’s children brought to Egypt; Jer 2:21 and Ezek 17:5[2x] where plant “seed” is used figuratively for the nation; and Esth 6:13; 9:27–28, 31, all regarding Jewish lineage. Other potentials: 1 Kgs 2:33; 11:39; Pss 25:13; 112:2.]	49 (21.40%)
C.4. Human special natural seed, subset 2: usually old covenant community in stage 1 of restoration—physical return to the land	Jer 23:8 [or C.6]; 30:10 [or C.6]; 31:27 [or C.6]; 46:27 [or C.6]; Isa 43:5 [or C.6]. [Other potentials: Deut 30:6; Isa 44:3; 45:25; Ps 18:51[50]; Neh 9:8.]	5 (2.18%)
C.5. Human special natural seed, subset 3: unique, singular natural seed	Gen 3:15; 22:17–18; 24:60; 2 Sam 7:12; 22:51 [or C.2]; Jer 33:26; Isa 6:13 [or C.6]; 1 Chr 17:11. [Other potentials: Gen 26:4; 28:14; Ruth 4:12; Pss 18:51[50]; 89:5, 30, 37[4, 29, 36].	9 (3.93%)
C.6. Human special natural and adopted seed united by faith, subset 4: usually new covenant community is stage 2 of restoration—spiritual reconciliation with God	Deut 30:6 [or C.4]; Jer 31:36–37; 33:22, 26[2x]; Isa 44:3 [or C.4]; 45:25 [or C.4]; 53:10; 54:3; 59:21[3x]; 61:9[2x]; 65:9, 23; 66:22; Pss 18:51[50] [or C.4 or 5]; 69:37[36]; 89:5[4] [or C.5], 30[29] [or C.5], 37[36] [or C.5]; 102:29[28]; 112:2 [or C.4]; Prov 11:21 [or C.2]. [Other potentials: Gen 13:15–16; 15:5, 13, 18; Isa 6:13; 41:8; 43:5; Jer 23:8; 30:10; 31:27; 46:27	26 (11.35%)
TOTAL		229