Anyone can do an Old Testament word study without having any knowledge of Hebrew. Fortunately, most if not all concordances and interlinear Bibles published today are keyed to a numbering system. In the 19th century James Strong developed a numbering system for all of the Hebrew and Aramaic words found in the Hebrew Bible. Recently Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III have developed a new numbering system to take in to consideration recent developments in Hebrew etymology. Using either numbering system will allow one to move from the English word to the original Hebrew.

This guide will take you step by step through the process of doing a word study without ever having to know the Hebrew alphabet, using either the Goodrick/Kohlenberger numbering system or the Strong's numbering system. Specific reference works will be mentioned in this guide, but keep in mind that there are often a number of different works that are organised in a similar manner and can also be used.

Step 1: Select a word from an English translation and identify the Hebrew/Aramaic original word.

Let's take the passage in Genesis 6:9 where it states that "Noah was a righteous man . . ." Someone could decide to do a word study on the word "righteous." To locate the Hebrew original, one can consult an analytical concordance.

A good concordance is:

Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance, 2nd ed. Edited by Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999 [REF 220.5 2081C G655 N734 1999]; or the 1st edition: *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance.* Edited by Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. [REF 220.5 2083 G655 1990].

This concordance is an index of the New International Version of the Bible, listing all of the words that occur in this translation in alphabetical order. Under each word is a list of all of the verses that contain that word, along with a line from each verse so that we can see the word in its immediate context. At the end of each line opposite the verse is the Goodrick/Kohlenberger (G/K) number.

If we look up the word "righteous" we find it on p. 959. The number in parentheses after the heading is 303, which represents the number of times that the word "righteous" is found in the NIV. Below the heading we see a list of all of the verses in the NIV that contain this word. Opposite each verse is a number for the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word. If we skim down the list to locate Genesis 6:9, we discover that the number for the Hebrew word which has been translated as "righteous" in this verse is number 7404. This is the unique number that Goodrick and Kohlenberger have assigned to this word.

We can now turn to the last section of this concordance. At the end of the concordance is a table that lists the corresponding Strong number for each G/K number. If we look up number 7404 in the list we see that the Strong number equivalent is number 6662. We now have the G/K number and the Strong number and are ready for step 2.

Step 2: Determine the meaning of the Hebrew/Aramaic original word.

The NIV Exhaustive Concordance contains a Hebrew to English and Greek to English index and lexicon (dictionary). If we turn to the Hebrew to English index-lexicon, we can look up the number 7404 (the G/K number) on p. 1478 to discover that the Hebrew word is *saddiyq*. This word occurs 206 times in the Old Testament and is usually translated as righteous or innocent. This give you a basic definition of the word. However, you should probably consult a more substantial lexicon or dictionary to determine the precise meaning of the word as it is used in your text. To do this you can consult one of several Hebrew concordances to see how the word is used in other verses in Scripture and to discover where one can find more information on the word in question.

Now that you have the Hebrew word and the Goodrick/Kohlenberger and Strong numbers for that word, you can consult

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Hebrew concordances, lexicons and dictionaries to determine the meaning of the word. A very good, modern Hebrew English

concordance is:

Kohlenberger III, John R. and James A. Swanson. *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament: With the New International Version*. Grand Rapids: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1998. [REF 221.44 K79 1998].

Using our example of the word "righteous" as found in Genesis 6:9, the first step is to use the G/K number, 7404, to find the word in the concordance, since it is organized by the Hebrew word. We find number 7404, saddiq, on p. 1356, complete with a list of all of the verses in the Old Testament that contain this Hebrew word. If you want, you could actually refer to a number of these verses to determine for yourself how the word is used in the Old Testament. Eventually, you will want to refer to a Hebrew lexicon or a dictionary. To do that, you can refer to the last section of the *Hebrew English Concordance*, entitled *A Concise Hebrew-English Dictionary to the Old Testament*, found on p. 2071. Look up the G/K number, 7404, and you will find it on p. 2156. After the brief definition, you will usually see four sets of abbreviations, referring you to other references works.

In the case of number 7404, saddiq, the first reference is S: 6662. This is the Strong number, which can be used to locate your word in a number of reference works. More will be stated later in this guide on these works.

The second reference is B: 843A. This is a reference *The New Brown – Driver – Briggs – Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* [REF 221.4403 B877 1979]. It is a well known Hebrew-English lexicon based on a German work by William Gesenius and edited by Francis Brown. If we turn to p. 843 of the *Hebrew-English Lexicon*, we find a lengthy definition for the word "saddiq."

The third reference is K: 793C. This is a reference to the *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, edited by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner [REF 221.4403 L679 1958]. The word "saddiq" is found on p. 793.

The fourth reference is H: 303A, a reference to *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by William Holladay [REF 221.4403 H733 1971]. This work is actually based on the above work by Koehler and Baumgartner. The word "saddiq" is found on p. 303.

To augment your research you could also refer to the following reference works: the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* [REF 221.3 N532 1997], which is organized according to the Goodrick/Kohlenberger number; the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* [REF 221.44 T391 1980], organized by the Strong number (index at the end of the volume); the *New Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies* [REF 221.44 W754 1987], which is keyed to the Strong number and the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, or a commentary dealing with your Scripture passage to make sure you haven't missed anything.

You have now moved from the English word in the NIV, to an NIV concordance, to a Goodrick/Kohlenberger and/or Strong number, to a Hebrew English concordance, to Hebrew-English lexicons, without having to take a semester or two of Hebrew.