

Understanding the Bible

How to Study the Bible

Volume 1: Basic Topics

Tom Wilson

A Bible Study Guide

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This e-book was typeset in $\text{\LaTeX}$ using the *memoir* document class. It was formatted to get as much text onto each page as possible. This is because a good PDF reader should allow annotations (highlighting and comments) to be added. So, there is almost no room for the reader's notes on a printed copy.

The back cover caricature of the author was drawn by the well-known artist Jan van Haasteren as a favor to Els Rooswinkel, who maintained a web site dedicated to puzzles with artwork drawn by Jan. I originally created a version of this web site and handed it over to Els, who developed the site far beyond its initial content. In appreciation of my effort, Els asked Jan to draw me.

The latest edition of this e-book is available via <https://thechurchoforlando.org>.

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Preface

Book Origin

There isn't much to how this book came to be: I decided that I need to make a resource to help a new believer. This study guide is an attempt to help you get your Christian life off to a good start. While reading the bible is your foundation, you need to be taught how to study properly. I've presented a few study techniques in a hope to get you off to a good start. Your Christian life is a long haul—you'll find yourself going through peaks and valleys. The valleys are always longer than the peaks.

A good supplement for a beginner is "Through the Bible with Les Feldick". Les is a great teacher and presents right division of the word. Some caveats about his teachings:

1. He does not acknowledge the true bible (the *King James Bible*). He only says that it is better than the others.
2. He gives too much authority to science and other literature.
3. He teaches the gap theory.
4. He teaches that Paul wrote *Hebrews*.
5. He teaches the trinity, which is the traditional teaching of many denominations and sects of Christianity.

In spite of the criticisms, you might not find a better teacher. We stand on the shoulders of those before us; we build upon the truth and discard the errors.

A Bible Study Guide

This book is referred to as "a bible study guide" since it is intended to guide you while you study. Depending on the topic, a study guide may not have much discussion. This is typically true for more advanced topics, where there may be many verses with little explanation. If you feel overwhelmed in this situation, you may be over your head. Give yourself time as you wrestle with the scriptures. A guide is not meant to be a commentary on every given verse.

Typically, I have found most of the scriptures for you and organized them in a way that will help you draw the conclusion that God would have you draw. I don't have everything right, including my limited explanations. So, focus on the scriptures.

To make the guide useful, you should:

- read the larger context around the quoted verses,
- read certain passages again and again,
- search for words and phrases when you study, and
- look at concordance information to learn more (if appropriate).

You are in charge of your maturing. Use the guide as you see fit.

A study guide may have side studies that address necessary background material. These side studies are blocked off from the main material so that they can be skipped or revisited. When a side study ends, it should help you return your focus to the interrupted topic. Advanced side studies often require more work beyond what is presented or they may require you to visit other study guides.

A traffic light may appear in the margin. A **green** light indicates something positive worth noting. When applied to a verse or passage, it is an important scripture that is fundamental to the teaching. A **yellow** light is a warning that something may not be clear. It might highlight that I am giving my opinion, which could easily be wrong. A **red**



light indicates something negative worth noting. It might accompany a quote from a corrupt bible or a tradition that is taught that isn't really the truth of the bible.

A “pointing finger” simply indicates something worth reading in order to help you find important information when skimming pages. A “thumbs up” indicates a positive message. A “thumbs down” indicates a negative one. These are very similar to the yellow, green, and red lights.



The main chapters and appendices have a whirlwind¹ symbol (🌀) in the bottom right corner of each page. This is a hyperlink that takes you to the index of verses. This is an easy way to go that index and look at verses that are elsewhere in the study guide. Hopefully, your PDF viewer has a way to come back to where you jumped from, eventually taking you back to the page where you clicked on the whirlwind.

How to Improve This Book

You should have gotten this book for free with no expectation of giving anything in return. But you can give back to it by suggesting improvements, which might consist of the correction of simple typographical or spelling errors, or better explanations of verses.

You can submit feedback by first contacting me through the “Contact” link at <https://thechurchoforlando.org>. A reply will then ask you for your comments. Similarly, if you have clarifying questions, I might end up supplementing the book as a result.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to something open source or otherwise free. It has been a further motivation for me to make this book freely available. More specifically, I would like to thank everyone involved with

1. Linux, in general,
2. $\LaTeX$ and its numerous packages, Macintosh ports/tools (MacTex, TeXShop, TeXLive, BibDesk), and the $\TeX$ Users Group,
3. $\LaTeX$ Beamer in particular, and
4. the $\LaTeX$ discussion forums, where many of my problems were already solved.

There is no way to list all of the contributors.

We all benefit from a more robust version of this book.

¹The bible describes the Spirit as a whirlwind that could carry a prophet to another place.



Introduction

This study guide is designed to help babes in Christ mature. A babe can be a new believer, but can also include someone who has been saved for some time but hasn't done much reading or studying. Like this introduction, chapters are typically short so that they are easy to complete.

If you attend a church, you will hear teachings that are not focused on where you are in your development. Perhaps, there is a group for new believers that will be more intentional about what you are being taught. When I got saved, I was told to read the book of *John*. Well, I can say now that that is the wrong book to begin with. I went back to the beginning of the bible and read it through, not knowing whether or not that was a good idea.

This study guide is organized into 5 parts to help you get off to a good start. Part I focuses on getting you started in your reading. Part II presents some facts concerning the bible so that you can have God's word in English in the *King James Bible*. Part III provides an overview of the bible to help you understand the vast amounts of material that you are faced with when reading. Part IV is really the focus on this study guide and its successors: how to study the bible. Part V contains appendices with supplemental material.

The *Maturity Curriculum* [5] provides an organization of materials at <https://thechurchoforlando.org>. The organization considers your maturity level so that you can grow in an efficient manner. Many believers are faced with overthrowing traditions that they were taught since they didn't know the right things from the start. The *Maturity Curriculum* is a living document that will be updated along with the web site. There isn't one "right way" to grow, so I present to you one of possibly many ways.

The question that you should keep in your mind is this: How long will you think of yourself as a beginner? You can answer that for yourself, but I'll give you a possible list of things to cross off:

1. I have a *King James Bible* and I know I have God's word in English and can trust what it says.
2. I know that what Paul has written is my doctrine concerning what to believe and how to live.
3. I have read the entire bible once.

You don't need to understand everything in order to achieve these goals. When you have met them all, you will still be reading the bible again and again. But, you will be moving on to the next level in your spiritual growth.

When you first start growing, you might find the desire to seek other books in order to learn the bible. This is a crutch that you can use for a time, but it will create a habit that you will eventually want to abandon. I distinguish the study guides from such books since these study guides are filled with scripture. The intent is to get you to turn to the bible.



Dedication

To Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, without whom nothing would be possible

Colossians 1:16—For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him

To Dahlia, my wife and my helper in all things

Genesis 2:18—And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.

To all the members of the body of Christ

2 Corinthians 13:11—Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Part I

Getting Started

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Confirming Your Salvation

There is nothing more important than your salvation. So, it isn't a bad idea to confirm it. The reason to do this is because there are many churches with many different teachings. If you were taught something besides what you see in this chapter, then you should take note that you have some work to do. Who are you going to believe? What is written here? or someone else that told you what to believe? Some will say that you need to believe in God, or in Jesus. There might be other things that are taught. The bible has your answer. But figuring out what it says will be a challenge.

Let's see what the bible says that happens after you die:

Hebrews 9:27

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

There is a judgment—you will be judged for what you did while you were alive. We will see how your actions are judged in a moment. God wants you to be saved at this judgment:

1 Timothy 2:3-4

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

But you might have some questions, like:

1. Why do I need to be saved?
2. Saved from what?
3. What do I do to be saved?

Why do I need to be saved? So let's see what the bible tells us:

Romans 3:10

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Romans 3:23

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 5:12

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Death is more than dying; it is going to hell. What about that eternal life?



Romans 5:19

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Just as easily as death was passed on to you, so can life be given to you.

Romans 5:8

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 4:25

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

God took your judgment for you. If the punishment has been served, you can go free! So, what do I do?

John 9:31

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Praying won't help you although someone might tell you to pray.

Acts 16:30-31

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

What does "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" mean? Many people say that they believe in Jesus. Believe what?

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Romans 4:5

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

What happens if I believe?

Romans 5:1

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

We have peace, rather than judgment and wrath.

Romans 8:38-39

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is no wrong that you can do for God to take back the gift. Some might teach that you can lose your salvation, but you cannot.

In summary, you are saved by your faith in Jesus Christ—that he died for you since you deserve death. He was resurrected to eternal life and bestows upon you that same eternal life. You did nothing to get saved. You can do nothing to stay saved. You can do nothing to lose that salvation.

Simple Reading

As a new believer, you are faced with reading the bible. Many begin this task enthusiastically, but fizzle out long before finishing. I have asked many Christians, who have been saved for 10 or more years, if they have read the entire bible. Most will say that they have not. Next, regardless of whether they have read the entire bible once, most do not read it regularly either. That sums up where most Christians are in the maturation: They remain babes or children. They are really carnal Christians.

Consider going to school (e.g., college) and not finishing your classes and certainly not getting your degree. You can still get a job, but your options are limited.

You have an opportunity of joining the masses, or leaving them behind by not only reading the bible, but by also studying it.

Isaiah 34:16

16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

“Seek ye out of the book of the LORD”: you have to read the bible.

Nehemiah 8:8

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

They read the book, but they had to discern what it meant. In other words, they had to study it.

2.1 It's a Big Book

There are 1189 chapters in the bible. If you read one chapter a day, it will take you a little more than 3 years and 3 months to read it—or, more simply put, 3.25 years. Some chapters are short; some are long. Some are interesting; some are tedious. This is why most Christians don't finish reading the bible. They can't keep up the daily routine.

Likewise, if you read about 3.25 chapters a day, you can read the bible in a year. This too is too daunting for most. You start out well, but it doesn't take long for the trials of life to get you behind—so far behind, that you will likely quit.

Now, check out this fact: I bought the bible on compact disc (refer to the *Dramatized Audio Bible* [2]). It was a dramatized version with different speakers, sound effects, and some music (this makes it much easier to listen to than simply a narrator). There were 64 discs with approximately 70 minutes on each. So, by listening to a little more than one hour a day, you can complete the bible in a little more than 2 months. I acknowledge that it is one thing to listen to the discs; it is another to focus and follow along. Also, someone is saying all of the hard-to-pronounce names for you!

You need to read the bible. You need to make a reading plan. Appendix A provides some example reading plans. Don't worry about your plan falling apart, but focus on not quitting. Don't worry about understanding everything that you read. Don't worry about remembering everything that you read. Focus on finishing.



Do you know what you will do when you finish the bible? You are going to read it again. You should be reading the bible for the rest of your life. That does not mean that you need to read it from cover to cover each time. As you mature and learn to study, you'll read the parts of the bible that are appropriate for what you are studying.

Matthew 4:4

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Just as you eat food, you need to live by the word of God. Since you are unfamiliar with the bible's content, you need to read and re-read it to become familiar with it.

2.2 It's Sometimes Repetitive

Sometimes the bible is repetitive. As you mature, you will be glad that it is this way. When you are less mature, you might say to yourself: "Didn't I read this already?" For example, we read Matthew 4:4 above. This verse says the same thing:

Luke 4:4

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Both of these verse quote something from earlier in the bible:

Deuteronomy 8:3

3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Of course, that verse has more in it than the verses that referenced it.

You will find passages that retell something important. For example, Paul's salvation story is in Acts 9, Acts 22, and Acts 26. The events of Jesus' ministry are often repeated in *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, and sometimes in *John*. There are reasons that these things are repeated. You will also find similar content in *1 and 2 Kings* and *1 and 2 Chronicles*.

Don't skip over the repeated material. Read it all.

2.3 It's Not Always Chronological

There are many parts of the bible that are chronological, but there are parts that are not. The ordering of books in the bible often follow a chronology, but there are those that follow a doctrinal ordering. For example, Paul's letters (*Romans* through *Philemon*) have a doctrinal order.

Job is the first book of the bible written. But it is grouped well down your table of contents for doctrinal reasons. *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Esther* are post-exile (historical) books (i.e., when Israel was taken out of the land). *Hosea* through *Habakkuk* are pre-exile (prophetic) books. If you read the bible in the order of the table of contents (which you should), you might get confused by the lack of chronology.

Hang in there. As you mature, it will all get cleared up.

Learn Your Bible's English

A common complaint of carnal Christians is that the *King James Bible* (KJB) contains old English that they cannot understand. So, they look for a “better” translation. However, God’s word in English is only in the KJB (we will better understand that later in this guide).

So, you need to learn the English of the bible. It really isn’t all that hard. Christians have been doing that for over 400 years. Carnal Christians have been avoiding that for only a little over 100 years.

The most common problem is using the British spelling of words rather than the American spelling. This is more of an issue when searching for words. Here are some examples: behaviour, colour, defence, endeavour, favour, honour, labour(er), licence, musick, neighbour, pretence, publick(ly), recompence, rumour, saviour, savour, and vapour. Many words that we think of as one word are really two words: “any thing”, “every thing”, “every where”, “to day”, “to morrow”, “to night”, “for ever”, and “for evermore”. We would probably say “a house”, but the bible says “an house”.

Numbers are always spelled out. Sometimes a number can appear in two ways: for example, 70 can appear as (1) “seventy” and (2) “threescore and ten”. Sometimes the order of numbers can be reversed: for example, (1) “five and thirty” and (2) “thirty and five”:

Genesis 11:12

12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:

1 Kings 22:42

42 Jehoshaphat *was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

Sometimes two words can written out separately and other times they can be compounded into one: e.g., “sweetsmelling” and “sweet smelling”:

Ephesians 5:2

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Song of Solomon 5:13

13 His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, *as* sweet flowers: his lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

While you will find the word “penny”, don’t expect to find the word “dollar”. Besides “penny”, you will find “pence” and “pennyworth”.

Now, the pet-peeve of many carnal Christians is the usage of the pronouns “thee”, “thine”, “thou”, and “thy”. But, these pronouns do you a great service: They highlight that the *you* referred to is singular. The plural forms of *you* appears as “ye”, “you”, “your”, or “yours”. Corrupt bibles accomplish the same thing through footnotes or parenthetical words (e.g., writing “singular”). Here is a great example:



John 3:7

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Jesus was speaking unto Nicodemus when he said “thee”, but when he said “ye”, he was referring to all of Israel. I use the easy reminder: “**t** comes before **y**” (alphabetically) just as “**singular** comes before **plural**” (in a numerical sense).

While you will find *here*, *there*, and *where*, you may also have to get used to these words: hence(forth), hither(to), nigh, thence, thither, whence, and whither. Come on! These are not hard to understand.



Paying Attention to Pronouns

Even if you get used to the “thee vs. ye” that was mentioned in the last chapter, you will have to learn to pay attention to pronouns. Along the lines of the example at the end of the last chapter, here is a similar one that is really different:

Matthew 16:19

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Matthew 18:18

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

You may want to see more verses before and after each of these. In the first verse, Jesus is talking to Peter. He refers to him using “thee” and “thou”. In the second verse, Jesus is talking to his 12 apostles. He refers to them using “you” and “ye”. But Peter and the 12 are told almost the same thing. The conclusion: Peter has independent authority whereas the apostles as a group have similar authority.

Here is a similar situation:

Luke 22:31-32

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:
32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

“Thee/thy/thou” (in verse 32) is referring to “Simon” (or Peter). “You” (in verse 31) is referring to all of the apostles, as suggested by “thy brethren” (or the previous context in verse 30, which is not shown).

Here is a different example with a larger context:

Psalms 82:1-8

1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.
2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.
5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
6 I have said, Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the most High.
7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

God refers to the gods (or angels) with “ye/you” in verses 2, 6, and 7. But, you encounter “them/they” in verses 4 and 5. These pronouns refer to the poor and needy. In verse 8, “thou” refers to God.

Pronoun usage is really quite simple. A pronoun should have an antecedent. It isn’t always easy to locate it. Here’s a good example:



Acts 2:1-2

- 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Who are “they”? Many will say all of the believers. But how many people can fit in the house that is mentioned? If you go back to chapter 1, you find that the last group mentioned is the 12 apostles (the 11 plus Matthias).

Here is a tougher example:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4

- 1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.
- 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
- 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.
- 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Paul is writing to believers. He refers to them using “ye/you/yourselves” in verses 1, 2, and 4. But in verse 3, he says “they/them”. To whom does he refer? You won’t find the antecedent in the previous chapter. In this case, “they” essentially means “not us”, or unbelievers (i.e., those in darkness).

Here is the final example and it is controversial:

Genesis 1:26-27

- 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
- 27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

When people see “us” in verse 26, they will say this is referring to the “trinity” (a teaching that says that God is 3 persons). Of course, there is no precedent in the chapter (nor the whole bible for that matter). Yet it is the common explanation throughout most of Christianity. However, verse 27 should steer you away from that explanation. God created man in **his own** image—not **their own** image. So, who is the “us”? The answer is *angels*. There is certainly no mention of angels in Genesis 1. However, other parts of the bible can defend that angels already exist at this point and they too have God’s image.

There are 3 other “us” passages (Genesis 3:22, Genesis 11:7, and Isaiah 6:8) and they all have the same explanation. We will briefly discuss who God is in a later chapter. *Angels* is an advanced bible topic (you could refer to *The Biblical Angels* study guide [7], but you maybe overwhelmed by it) and most of Christianity does not understand them.



Who's Who

In this chapter, we will understand some things about names in the bible. I am not going to create a list of the names in the bible nor am I going to try to explain who each person in the bible is.

First, some people have more than one name in the bible. For some, their names were changed: Abram → Abraham, Sarai → Sarah, Jacob → Israel, Job → Jashub. Sometimes, someone had a different name in another language: Joseph: Zaphnathpaaneah, Daniel: Belteshazzar, and Paul: Saul. For those with multiple names, it can be harder to search for verses involving those persons. Another example is Peter; he is also called *Simon* and *Cephas*.

The most common problem for younger Christians is dealing with a name from the old and new testaments. The old testament names were typically written in Hebrew; the new testament names were typically written in Greek. In English, they are often different: Elijah (OT): Elias (NT), Elisha: Eliseus, Isaiah: Esaias, Hosea: Osee, Sarah: Sara. A strange example is Noah: Noah/Noe—both occur in the NT. Joshua is a Hebrew name, but it appears as “Jesus” in the NT:

Hebrews 4:8

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

This refers to Joshua in the OT.

The bigger problem is when two different people have the same name and they lived at the same time:

2 Kings 1:17-18

17 So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

The first Jehoram was the son of Ahaziah and he reigned over the northern house of Israel. The second Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat and he reigned over the southern house of Judah. Yikes!

How many Johns were there in the NT? (1) John the Baptist, (2) John the apostle, and (3) John Mark. How many Marys were there? (1) Mary the mother of Jesus, (2) Mary Magdalene, (3) Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, (4) Mary the wife of Cleophas, (5) Mary the sister of Martha, (6) Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, and (7) Mary of Rome.

The Internet is not a good place to find truth. However, searching the Internet for clarification of names is often safe.



Who Is God?

So, who is God? Well, this is essentially what the entire bible is about. And this is also a point of great controversy! Is God a person? or three persons (called the *trinity*)? I think that the former is correct, and thus God is referred to by singular pronouns. As you read and learn, you are going to have to figure this out for yourself.

Some brief points about God. I think the bible tells us that God is a person:

Hebrews 1:1-3

- 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
- 3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

That is a passage full of pronouns. Verse 3 says that God's Son (Jesus) is the express image of **his** (God's) person.

We also have this:

1 Corinthians 8:6

- 6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

This says that only the Father is called God (once God has a Son, God is then called "the Father").

God is a Spirit, which means that he is invisible:

John 4:24

- 24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

1 Timothy 1:17

- 17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

God made a creation, and it cannot contain him:

2 Chronicles 6:18

- 18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

Yet, he wants to dwell on the earth with men. How is going to do that? He is going to make an image for himself. This is the image spoken of in the beginning of the bible:

Genesis 1:27

27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

That image is called the **LORD** in the OT. The LORD became Jesus (called the Son of God), who is explicitly said to be God's image:

2 Corinthians 4:4

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Colossians 1:15

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

God has a Spirit, called the Spirit of God. Just as God has a Spirit, so does man. God's Spirit can commune with man's spirit once that man is saved. Just as man's spirit isn't a person, neither is God's Spirit (although that Spirit is personified).

Now, you will hear the trinity taught by most churches. You can receive this teaching if you would like but at least listen carefully to what you are told. The trinity is founded on this verse:

1 John 5:7

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

The desire is to change the verse to say "... and these three **persons** are one **God**." Yet, it doesn't say that (nor does any other verse in scripture). And remember that we have a verse that says that God is a person.

You will find that God is called "God the Father", but you will not find the following phrases in the bible: "God the Son" or "God the Spirit" (or, "God the Holy Ghost"). You might also hear the "first/second/third person of the trinity". If you point out that "trinity" is not in the bible, someone will likely say that **Godhead** is. Thus, you might also hear the "first/second/third person of the Godhead". However, *Godhead* doesn't mean "trinity".

Some will say that Jesus is the eternal (or everlasting) Son. But scripture doesn't call him that. It calls him the "everlasting Father":

Isaiah 9:6

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

I'll stop there. There is a more advanced teachings on this topic: *The Revelation of God* study guide [11]. Let the verses tell you who God is. But you must be prepared to be overwhelmed by the trinity teaching. And, if you don't believe it, you will be likely ridiculed (which is common for so many in the scripture as they stand for any truth).

Part II

Bible Facts

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This part gives you some important bible facts. God's word has four pillars upon which it stands: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation. From this, we can know which bible is the English bible. Finally, it is important to know to whom various parts of the bible are written. Much of this material comes from *The English Bible* study guide [10] (an intermediate level study).

The Four Pillars of God's Word

Some quick statements about the bible:

Psalms 19:7-8	KJB
7 The law of the LORD <i>is</i> perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD <i>is</i> sure, making wise the simple.	
8 The statutes of the LORD <i>are</i> right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD <i>is</i> pure, enlightening the eyes.	

Psalms 33:4	KJB
4 For the word of the LORD <i>is</i> right; and all his works <i>are done</i> in truth.	

John 17:17	KJB
17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.	

Next we will look 4 very important aspects of God's word. We will call them **pillars**: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation.

7.1 Revelation

Revelation is the revealing or unveiling of something not-yet-known. Revelation is what we call God's communication of information to man. Let's see what some verses tell us:¹

Hebrews 1:1	KJB
1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,	

While God spake to men through prophets, he has to initially reveal the message to the prophet. That can happen through a vision or dream:

Numbers 12:6	KJB
6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, <i>I</i> the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, <i>and</i> will speak unto him in a dream.	

2 Samuel 7:4	KJB
4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,	

1 Kings 12:22	KJB
22 But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying,	

¹A powerful way to learn from the bible is simply to read many related verses. I will often present many verses without saying very much about each one.



Some verses say that God told prophets what to say (or write). It was as if God himself spoke. This concept eliminates the unbeliever's view that the bible contains man's ideas and thoughts.

2 Samuel 23:2	KJB
2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word <i>was</i> in my tongue.	

Numbers 22:38	KJB
38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.	

Galatians 1:11-12	KJB
11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught <i>it</i> , but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.	

Ephesians 3:3	KJB
3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,	

As you read the bible you will learn that God has given revelation in the following ways: Face-to-face discussion, speaking by a voice, dreams, visions, messages delivered by angels, his finger writing in stone, and a hand writing on a wall.

7.2 Inspiration

Inspiration is the communication of ideas into the minds of men by God through his Spirit. We can know that God has communicated things to men that were written down for others to read. We can know what he wants us to do and not do. We can also know God through his word!

2 Timothy 3:16-17	KJB
16 All scripture <i>is</i> given by inspiration of God, and <i>is</i> profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.	

2 Peter 1:20-21	KJB
20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake <i>as they were</i> moved by the Holy Ghost.	

Psalms 45:1	KJB
1 My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue <i>is</i> the pen of a ready writer.	

Matthew 22:31	KJB
31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,	

Write it down in a book:

Exodus 34:27	KJB
27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.	

Deuteronomy 31:24-26	KJB
24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, 25 That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.	

Joshua 24:26	KJB
26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that <i>was</i> by the sanctuary of the LORD.	

1 Samuel 10:25	KJB
25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote <i>it</i> in a book, and laid <i>it</i> up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.	

7.3 Illumination

Illumination is God-given understanding of what God said. Just reading God's word does not guarantee understanding. Study is required. Also, faith is required to believe what you read (or heard). Likewise, lack of faith will hinder illumination. Illumination enables the power of God's word in our lives.

Numbers 16:28	KJB
28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for <i>I have</i> not <i>done them</i> of mine own mind.	

John 14:26	KJB
26 But the Comforter, <i>which is</i> the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.	

Luke 24:45	KJB
45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,	

Exodus 31:1-5	KJB
1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones, to set <i>them</i> , and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.	

Ecclesiastes 12:12	KJB
12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books <i>there is</i> no end; and much study <i>is</i> a weariness of the flesh.	

Romans 15:4	KJB
4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.	

7.4 Preservation

Preservation is God's method for keeping his revelation to man forever. This is achieved by writing down what was inspired and then copying it, not only for retaining it, but also for distributing it. Copying God's word does not disqualify it from being God's word. Only changing God's word does that.

Isaiah 30:8	KJB
8 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:	

Luke 21:33	KJB
33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.	

Psalms 33:11	KJB
11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.	



Proverbs 25:1	KJB
1 These <i>are</i> also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.	

Joshua 8:32	KJB
32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.	

Each synagogue had the scriptures—they had copies:

Acts 15:21	KJB
21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.	

Acts 17:1-2	KJB
1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:	
2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,	

God's translated word is still God's word:

Acts 22:2	KJB
2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)	

Esther 1:22	KJB
22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that <i>it</i> should be published according to the language of every people.	

The English Bible

This chapter provides only a brief discussion of the English bible. This is probably the most important topic of your new walk with God. An extensive study of the topic appears in the *The English Bible* study guide [10]. When you hear someone teach about the bible itself, make sure that they are using verses to justify what they are saying.

The bible tells us not to add or take away from God's word:

Deuteronomy 12:32	KJB
32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.	

God's word is pure, or uncorrupted:

Proverbs 30:5-6	KJB
5 Every word of God <i>is</i> pure: he <i>is</i> a shield unto them that put their trust in him.	
6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.	

The point of that is that a bible with errors in it is **not** God's word. I will show you can find one error in most corrupt bibles.

8.1 Attacking God's Word

The bible provides the prime examples of how God's word is attacked. See what God said and how Satan attacked it:

Genesis 2:16-17	KJB
16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:	
17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.	

Genesis 3:1	KJB
1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?	

Satan **questioned** what God said.

Genesis 3:2	KJB
2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:	

The woman **omitted** "freely" from what God said.

Genesis 3:3	KJB
3 But of the fruit of the tree which <i>is</i> in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.	



Next, the woman **added** “neither shall ye touch it”. Then, she **changed** “surely” to “lest” (i.e., perhaps).

Genesis 3:4	KJB
4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:	

Satan **contradicted** God's word (i.e., he indirectly said that God was a liar).

8.2 The Source Text

Bible translation mostly comes down to the source text (did you start with God's word before translation began?). The proper source texts are called the *Majority Text*. The improper source texts are called the *Minority Text*. Most bibles come from the latter. A particular subset of the Majority Text is called the *Received Text*, commonly referred to as *Textus Receptus*, which is the Latin name.

God tells us to find his word (because he also said that he will preserve his word):

Isaiah 34:16	KJB
16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.	

There were 6 predecessors to the *King James Bible* (KJB), making it the seventh English bible:

Psalms 12:6	KJB
6 The words of the LORD <i>are</i> pure words: <i>as</i> silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.	

The KJB has had 5 editions (1611, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769), but no revisions (which would mean that the translation was changed). These types of changes were made:

1. A font or typography change from Gothic to Roman,
2. corrections to typographical printing errors (there were about 400 of these),
3. spelling and word usage changes due to maturing English standards,
4. capitalization changes, and
5. the removal of the apocryphal books.

With all of these editorial changes, the translation remained the same as in the first edition. This is important since some people teach that we need to continue to **revise** the translation.

8.3 Spotting a Counterfeit

It is easy to spot most bibles that come from the wrong source text. I call it the “Mark 1, 2, 3 Test”. Just look at what the next passage says:

Mark 1:2-3	KJB
2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.	
3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.	

Verse 2 references Malachi 3:1:

Malachi 3:1	KJB
1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.	

Verse 3 references Isaiah 40:3:

Isaiah 40:3	KJB
3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.	

Here's an example corrupt bible, the *New International Version* (NIV):

Mark 1:2-3	NIV
2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" [a]___	
3 "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" [b]	
footnotes: [a] Malachi 3:1, [b] Isaiah 40:3	

Notice that the two quoted verses are specifically said to be in *Isaiah*. The translation is correct, it is the source text that has been changed. Someone did what the bible said not to do. Do not change God's word!

For those that pass the test above, there is also the "Acts 1, 2, 3, 4 Test":

Acts 12:3-4	KJB
3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)	
4 And when he had apprehended him, he put <i>him</i> in prison, and delivered <i>him</i> to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.	

The word that must appear is *Easter* (rather than *passover*).

By Whom and To Whom

Is everything written in the bible actually written to you? As you grow, you will conclude that there are things written that you don't do. For example, we do not perform animal sacrifices today. Are we being disobedient, or is there a reason why we ignore some commands from God? It needs to be the latter and we need to have a reason that is founded in scripture. This problem is resolved by understanding to whom certain books of the bible were written. We can also figure that out by understanding by whom the books were written.

2 Timothy 2:15	KJB
15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.	

This says that we are to divide the word of truth (i.e., the bible). This doesn't mean dividing truth from error because the true bible doesn't have any errors in it. So, we are to divide some parts of the bible from other parts of the bible.

Table 9.1 shows the books of the bible. They are color coded with the verse above in mind.

Table 9.1: The books of the bible can be divided into useful groups.

Genesis	2 Kings	Isaiah	Nahum	Romans	Titus
Exodus	1 Chronicles	Jeremiah	Habakkuk	1 Corinthians	Philemon
Leviticus	2 Chronicles	Lamentations	Zephaniah	2 Corinthians	Hebrews
Numbers	Ezra	Ezekiel	Haggai	Galatians	James
Deuteronomy	Nehemiah	Daniel	Zechariah	Ephesians	1 Peter
Joshua	Esther	Hosea	Malachi	Philippians	2 Peter
Judges	Job	Joel	Matthew	Colossians	1 John
Ruth	Psalms	Amos	Mark	1 Thessalonians	2 John
1 Samuel	Proverbs	Obadiah	Luke	2 Thessalonians	3 John
2 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Jonah	John	1 Timothy	Jude
1 Kings	Song of Solomon	Micah	Acts	2 Timothy	Revelation

All of the books in red belong to the old testament. All of these books were written to Israel and they are mostly about Israel. The beginning of *Genesis* helps Jews understand where their nation came from.

The remainder of the books are in the new testament, and this is where right division is the most important. All of the books in yellow are written to Israel. They further the teachings of the old testament.

All of the books in green are written to our church today. They are written to both Jews and Gentiles, although most sloppily say they are written only to the Gentiles. This isn't too sloppy since they are all written by Paul and he is said to be the apostle to the Gentiles. The first word of each of Paul's books is "Paul". That makes it easy! Check that out for yourself.

The book of *Acts*, which is the only book in blue, has content pertaining to both Israel and Gentiles. But even this can be rightly divided.

The other books are written by many different authors, but they are all to Israel. Here is one example:



James 1:1	KJB
1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.	

Those that do not rightly divide will tell you that you spiritually belong to one of the tribes. This is nonsense. God is making it clear that he is not talking to you today out of the book of *James*. It is not always easy to figure out the audience of many of the books, but it will get easier as you mature.

One thing that you will find is that some of the same words are used in the green books and the yellow books. Here are some examples: apostle, baptism, church, gospel, saint, and elect. The thing to anticipate is that there are different apostles preaching different gospels which are forming different churches. A more advanced study focuses on these distinctions: *Respecting Distinctions* study guide [6].



Part III

Bible Overview

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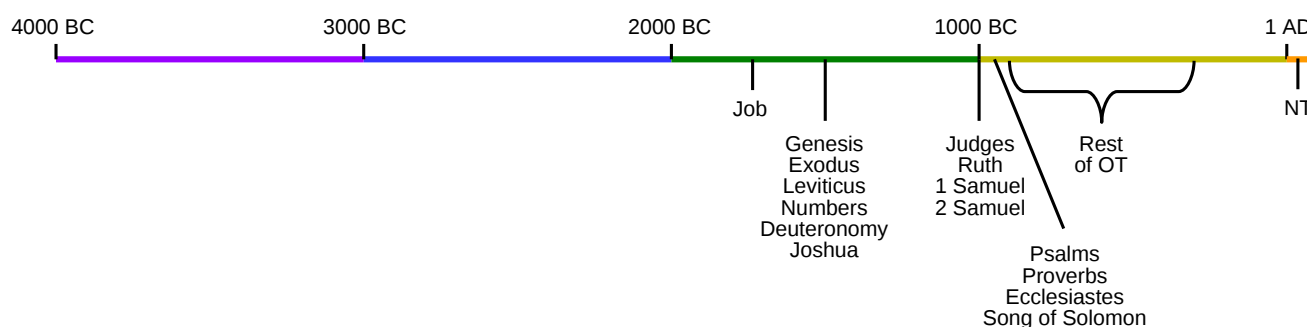
This part provides summaries of the bible. It begins with an overview of the whole bible. Then, it gives summaries for important parts of the bible. This might help you understand parts that you skip over or have trouble understanding when you read.

A Full Bible Overview

The majority of the bible is written to and about the nation of Israel. While all of the bible is for our learning, very little of it is written to us as instruction. The inability of today's church to understand this simple concept keeps it from maturing the way God intends. This overview will help you understand the basics of the bible toward that necessary end. As you read this, open to the table of contents of your bible to see all of the names of the books.

10.1 The Old Testament

Around 1500 BC, God made the nation of Israel. The people who would become that nation had a book about one of their ancestors: the book of *Job*. It may have been written about 200 years earlier. That book tells them about Satan and the creation. After God formed the nation, he had their leader Moses write the first 5 books of the bible: *Genesis* through *Deuteronomy*. The following timeline helps us see the context of when some books were approximately written.



The book of *Genesis* told Israel why God formed them into a nation. *Genesis* covers about 2300 years of history from Adam until Joseph. God created the heavens, the earth, and all things therein in 6 days. On the sixth day, God created man and put him in charge of the earth. Afterward, Satan tempted man to sin and he did. This brought death into the world, but man did not die physically immediately. God promised a redeemer who would bring man back to God.

Satan attempted to prevent this redeemer from coming by an unusual angelic intervention where mankind was corrupted by fallen angels (also called *devils*). Just before all godly men were corrupted or killed, God sent a flood whereby he saved only a righteous man named Noah and his family.

When God started over with Noah after the flood, man rebelled again by building the tower of Babel. God confused the language of man, forcing the people to scatter as he originally intended. As they scattered, they formed nations. However, the major consequence was that God assigned angels, called *gods*, over these nations since it was man's desire to worship them rather than him. All the earth was steeped in idolatry and forsaken by God.

However, God called a man named Abram (later renamed *Abraham*) out of idolatry. Abraham obeyed God and God made a covenant with him. Through Abraham's descendants, God promised to bless (or save) all other nations.



The remainder of *Genesis* tells the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons. At the end of the book, Jacob's family was in Egypt.

The book of *Exodus* begins with the story of Moses and tells how the people of Israel were in bondage. Through many signs and wonders, God freed his people and judged the gods (or, devils) of Egypt. God made another covenant, called the "law", with the people of Israel. This did not do away with Abraham's covenant, but added to it. However, this covenant required Israel to do many things or be punished.

Exodus through *Deuteronomy* describe the law and many stories involving Israel, especially their journey to the promised land (called *Canaan*). Chapter 26 of *Leviticus* foretells Israel's future and much of the old testament. It predicts Israel's disobedience and the chastisements that will follow. These are:

1. oppression by neighboring peoples (written about in *Judges*, *Ruth*, and *1 & 2 Samuel*)
2. drought and famine (written about in *1 Kings* and *1 Chronicles*)
3. attacks by animals (written about in *2 Kings* and *2 Chronicles*)
4. reduction of Israel's borders (written about in *2 Kings* and *2 Chronicles*)
5. captivity by other nations (written about in some of the prophetic books: *Isaiah* through *Zephaniah*)

The book of *Joshua* tells of Israel possessing the promised land of Canaan. Israel did not rid the land of the wicked people of the land and that set in motion the first chastisement.

In between the first and second chastisements, Israel experienced what God intended for the nation to be while under kings David and Solomon. God made yet another covenant with David and his descendants. This covenant said that David's descendants would rule forever. This would be fulfilled through Jesus. Several books coincide with this time: *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Song of Solomon*. But Israel continued to break the law covenant. This gave Satan authority over God's people in spite of God trying to restore them.

Eventually, Israel was carried off into captivity. However, while in captivity, God encouraged the people that they would return. The books of *Jeremiah*, *Lamentations*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel* were then written. *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel* promised a new covenant that would replace the old law covenant. The old covenant only brought condemnation; the new covenant would bring the ability to keep the law.

Daniel provided a timeline of when restoration will happen. However, it was to come with further chastisement. The timeline tells of 70 weeks of years, or 490 years. During the first 49 years, Jerusalem would be rebuilt. During the next 400+ years, there would be no communication from God. God had already written everything Israel needed to know by the prophets. Jesus would come at the end of this time. The final 7 years, which is still in our future, will be tribulation where unbelieving Jews will be killed, leaving only believing Jews to rule over the nations. Many of the prophetic books also talk about this time.

As Israel returned from captivity, God spoke to them by the last remaining prophetic books (*Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*) and a few other historical books (*Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Esther*). Then God spoke to the nation no more until the new testament books.

10.2 The New Testament

When the new testament books began (*Matthew* through *John*), Israel should have expected their Messiah (i.e., Jesus) and the end of the 490 years spoken of in *Daniel*. After the $49 + 434 = 483$ years, their Messiah was supposed to die. Jesus began his ministry 3 and half years earlier. His coming and arrival was announced by John the Baptist.

But the nation was hard hearted and unbelieving. They rejected their Messiah and killed him. The great news was that God resurrected Jesus and the nation still had a chance. The book of *Acts* tells us of that last chance. But the nation was still in unbelief and rejected that last offer of the kingdom in chapter 7 of *Acts*.

What was God going to do now? His plan to bless the world depended on Israel being converted and saved, and taking salvation to the other nations. Without Israel, the world was without hope—because God said so.

But God revealed a mystery that was not spoken of in the old testament nor in the accounts of Jesus' ministry (*Matthew* through *John*). God brought salvation to the Gentiles (i.e., other nations) without Israel being involved. This salvation did not use Israel's law covenant (either old or new). God used the nation's chief enemy Saul (also called Paul) to bring that message of grace. Paul traveled much of the known world bringing salvation to both Gentile and Jew in the remainder of *Acts*. He wrote the books of *Romans* through *Philemon* to us. These are the few non-Jewish books mentioned at the beginning of this overview that are written to us.

Paul tells us how God was forming a heavenly people, rather than an earthly one (like Israel). We are the means of God retaking the heavens and casting out the devils that reside there now. Paul tells us of a time in the future when our church will be taken up to our home. Once that happens, God will return to his prophetic program involving Israel. Then he will fulfill all his remaining promises to them.



Israel will finally experience that awful 7-year tribulation spoken of by Daniel and many other prophets. The remainder of the new testament, *Hebrews* through *Revelation*, will help the believing Jews survive that time. Most of these books were written after Israel rejected the kingdom in the past, but they will be relevant to Israel in the future.

The book of *Revelation* as well as a few other old testament books tell us about a 1000-year reign of Jesus on the earth. During this time, a holy nation Israel will be a priesthood to the nations of the world. Those nations will be under the law like Israel was. They will learn that they need a savior in spite of Jesus being present on the earth. All will be forced to keep the law because a righteous ruler is in charge. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will deceive the unbelievers into rebelling like Adam and Eve did. However, God will stop that rebellion and rid his creation of sin forevermore.

There will be eternity with God for all believers, but eternal punishment for those that did not believe.

The Promise

The time period called “The Promise” essentially aligns with the book of *Genesis*. I will divide the time period into two parts: (1) before Abram/Abraham and (2) Abraham and afterward. I will also give more attention to the first part, even though it is only 11 of the 50 chapters. This is because the first time period is important to us today and the second time period less so.

Most believers used to be Gentiles. Even if you were a Jew, God isn’t dealing with Israel today. If you are saved, you are in his church—the body of Christ. There is neither Gentile nor Jew in the church, since that identity distinction is not important today.

Genesis is a book of beginnings. It was written by Moses more than 2000 years after the first events. Obviously, God has told him what to write.

11.1 Genesis 1-11

Chapter 1 tells of God creating the heaven and the earth and all things therein. Most of the details of creation are not in the account; they lie scattered throughout the bible. That makes studying the creation an advanced study (see the *The Biblical Creation* study guide [8] if you are feeling brave). The information given provides patterns for time in history (see the *Biblical Time* study guide [4]). Something not revealed in the creation account is the creation of the angels. They were created on the second day (this is another advanced topic: see the *The Biblical Angels* study guide [7]).

Chapter 2 completes the last day of creation and then gives further details about the creation of man and woman. Many of the places named would have been familiar to Moses’ audience rather than Adam and his immediate descendants. This is because many of the names mentioned came from people born generations after Adam.

Chapter 3 tells of man’s fall by disobeying God’s commandment. Woman, who is not yet named Eve, is tricked by an angel, simply referred to as “the serpent”. We typically call him the devil or Satan. Satan sinned because of his pride and he tricks the woman into eat of the tree, which she and Adam were commanded not to eat. Because of their sin, death entered into the world, condemning all of Adam’s descendants to die. God pronounced judgments upon Satan, the woman, and Adam. It was at this point that the woman was named *Eve*. God has a remedy for man’s plight.

Chapter 4 tells of Adam and Eve’s two sons, Cain and Abel. They were adults who knew how to bring sacrifices to God. Abel brought was God instructed. But Cain demonstrated the religion that plagues most of mankind throughout history: he brought his works to God. Cain killed his brother, who was the first martyr.

Chapter 5 provides a genealogy from Adam to Noah. In it, we learn of a man, Enoch, that God took such that he didn’t die. During Noah’s life, God flooded the earth. It brought an end to the over 1650 years that the ground was cursed.

Chapter 6 tells us about that flood. Before the flood came, angels had come to the earth to have children with women. Their intent was to prevent the promised seed from coming. They may not have known that they gave up their immortality to accomplish this. They allowed them to die in the flood with the majority of mankind. But God told Noah to build an ark in order to save all that got aboard.

Chapters 7 and 8 give details about the flood event. Chapter 9 tells how God told Noah similar commands as he gave to Adam. God started over with man. He said that he would never flood the earth again.



Chapters 10 and 11 are intertwined. Chapter 10 lists the descendants of Noah's three sons. These descendants become the beginning of the nations, or Gentiles. Chapter 11 tells the event at a city called Babel that brought about the distinct nations. Through another rebellion, God judged men by confusing them with many languages (or tongues). This caused man to scatter upon the earth. Another problem began at Babel: idolatry. At the end of the chapter, we see another genealogy taking us to Abram.

11.2 Genesis 12-50

The remainder of *Genesis* is devoted to the stories of Abraham and his descendants. Because of the rebellion of man, God made a covenant with Abraham. That covenant said that God would bless those who blessed Abraham and curse those who cursed him. This would be the means of God bringing salvation to the rebellious nations. God would make Abraham into many nations, but one nation would belong to him.

Abraham has a miraculous son named Isaac. His stories begin in chapter 21. Not too much concerns Isaac, other than the promise to Abraham would be through Isaac. He has two sons: Esau and Jacob. It is Jacob through whom the promise would come. His stories begin in chapter 25.

Much more focus is given to Jacob, whom God renames Israel. His 12 sons will become the 12 tribes of Israel. Much attention is given to Joseph, whose stories begin in chapter 37. Perhaps it was Satan's plan to separate Israel's family. But God drove them all to be with Joseph.

The book of *Genesis* ends with Israel and his sons in Egypt. All appears well, but God had warned Abraham that his descendants would be in bondage many years later.

11.3 Job

In between the end of *Genesis* and the beginning of *Exodus* is a gap of time. During that gap, the events in the book of *Job* occur. Job was an Israelite, and he pictured the nation (that didn't exist yet) going through the tribulation, which is far in the future. Job was persecuted by Satan and greatly afflicted. He was visited by three friends, who had an imperfect view of God and assume Job has committed some sin deserving his punishment. In the end, God delivers Job from his trial and restores what he had lost.

Israel and the Law

12.1 Exodus

The book of *Exodus* begins with the story of Moses and tells how the people of Israel were in bondage. As a baby, Moses was preserved through a time where the baby boys of Israel were being killed. This, of course, is a picture of something similar that happened when Jesus was a young child. Moses was raised by Pharaoh's daughter and thus was on a course that would put him in Pharaoh's court.

As an adult, Moses was protecting his fellow Israelites and killed an Egyptian. This caused him to flee to Midian. There, he married and had a family. He had the miraculous experience at the burning bush. God gave Moses two signs to show to Israel and a third sign if they did not believe. It is here the God establishes that Israel will be a people that require signs.

Moses returned to Egypt to lead the people out of bondage. God sent Moses' brother Aaron to help him. Moses and Aaron judged Pharaoh, Egypt, and Egypt's gods through ten plagues. Pharaoh finally let the people after his own firstborn son was killed.

God instituted an important event called the *passover*. Israel were told to kill a lamb and put the blood on the door. By doing this, it protected them from the angels who were sent to kill the firstborn.

The LORD led the people out of Egypt while veiling himself with a pillar of cloud during the day and with a pillar of fire during the night. While Israel fled, God parted the Red Sea to allow Israel to pass through. He destroyed Pharaoh's army as they followed by closing the waters upon them.

While in the wilderness, the LORD takes care of the people by feeding them bread from heaven and providing water from a rock. He led them to Mount Sinai where he gave them ten commandments and the law.

The book then iterates many of the laws that Israel would have. God made a covenant with the people. This covenant is the law covenant and is called the old covenant later in the bible. The book also details a tabernacle (or tent) and the furniture within it.

Moses broke the two tables of ten commandments as he came down the mountain because of Israel's rebellion in building a golden calf. Eventually, two new copies of the tables are made. These two events portray Jesus' two comings. In his first coming, he was broken and died. In his second, he will be glorious. This is demonstrated with Moses' face glowing on the second occasion. The remainder of the book describes the building of the tabernacle and its furniture.

12.2 Leviticus

The book of *Leviticus* is a challenging book for beginners. It is filled with laws and duties for the priests and Levites (one of the tribes of Israel dedicated to God).

Two prominent teachings are (1) Israel's appointed times and (2) foretold chastisements due to their disobedience. The appointed times were supposed to teach Israel what God was doing on a time schedule. Leviticus 23 details these appointed times. Leviticus 26 details the chastisements of the law covenant. The five chastisements were to correct Israel when they disobeyed. The details of the chapter lay out the content of the rest of the old testament and some of the new testament.



12.3 Numbers

The book of *Numbers* is called such because the people are numbered at the beginning of the book and toward the end. The first numbering indicates how many people came out of Egypt. The second numbering indicates the number in the next generation after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

This book has a mixture of interesting stories and tedious accounts. The predominate event is when Israel sent twelve spies into Canaan. Of the twelve, only two trusted in God to lead the people in victoriously. As a result of the people's complaining, God does not take the people into the promised land. God curses the rebels to die in the wilderness.

Moses disobeyed the LORD and was told that he would not go into the promised land.

12.4 Deuteronomy

The book of *Deuteronomy* tells of the next generation coming to the promised land. The people are taken to the land east of the Jordan. Israel fought against and defeated two kings. Two and half tribes decide to dwell in that land.

Much of the material in this book recounts to the new generation what happened with the previous one. Chapter 28 repeats much of the content of Leviticus 26, where God promised chastisements for Israel's disobedience.

Joshua was chosen to replace Moses in order to lead the people into the land. Moses went up a mountain in order to see the promised land, but he died there and buried in a nearby valley by the LORD (most likely, this was done by angels).

12.5 Joshua

The book of *Joshua* tells us about Israel conquering the promised land. Significant material is devoted to crossing the Jordan and the defeat of Jericho. This is soon followed by Israel's disobedience and punishment.

As Israel warred against the people of the land, they were destroying the giants that remained in the land. Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still in the sky and God made it happen. This was done to finish the battle that was on-going.

As Israel possessed the land, it was divided to the tribes by lot. The tribes were supposed to rid their territory of the inhabitants that were there. Many did not and this resulted in severe consequences as foretold by the LORD. As the conquest neared its end, the eastern tribes returned home. Israel was now in the promised land, but all was not well.

12.6 Judges and Ruth

The book of *Judges* fulfills the first chastisement spoken of in Leviticus 26. Because of Israel's idolatry, God sent neighboring peoples against Israel. Israel would be oppressed and would cry out to God to be delivered. So, God would raise up a judge, or military leader, to deliver the people from oppression. While the judge lived, there was peace. Once the judge died, Israel returned to their idolatry. The process repeated several times.

The most notable judges are Gideon and Samson. These two have longer accounts and are accompanied by some miraculous things. Of all of the judges, only Samson was also an avenger of the people. These judges depict the LORD, who will be both a deliverer and an avenger when he comes as Jesus Christ.

The book of *Ruth* occurs during the time of the judges. It is misunderstood as a love story, but is a story of redemption instead. It depicts the kinsmen redeemer, which is what Jesus will be when the LORD comes as a Jew in the new testament.

Becoming a Kingdom

After the first chastisement during the time of the judges ended, there was a reprieve where Israel got to experience what the promised kingdom would be like. Due to idolatry, the kingdom was divided and deteriorated. The remaining chastisements came in a series that culminated in Israel's exile. See Section 12.2 for information on the chastisements.

13.1 1 and 2 Samuel

1 Samuel opens with the story of Samuel, who is said to be the last judge. He judged Israel during the oppression by the Philistines. At that time, Israel demanded a king so that they would be like the other nations. God had a plan for Israel to have a king, but the time was not yet. God made Saul king since his choice was not yet ready.

Saul started out well, but eventually disobeyed God to the point that God said that he would take the kingdom away from him. During Saul's reign, David was chosen to be the next king. He was God's choice to begin with. Eventually, Saul died and David was made the king. This mirrors how Ishmael came before Isaac, which was simply Satan's attempt to thwart God's plan.

Many of David's stories are told. One of the most important ones is that God made a covenant with David which said that David's descendants would sit on Israel's throne forever. The book of *Psalms* contains details and prayers of David during this time.

13.2 1 and 2 Kings

These books capture stories of Israel's kings. The first begins with David's life coming to an end. Solomon was chosen to reign next. Solomon was blessed with great wisdom from God. He ruled the nation wisely, but didn't do the same in his own life. God's temple was built during Solomon's reign. But Solomon became ensnared in idolatry due to his marrying many foreign wives. God promised to divide the kingdom after Solomon's death.

The remainder of the two books capture the stories of the kings in both kingdoms. The southern kingdom was the true kingdom where David's descendants reigned. The northern kingdom was a false kingdom where different dynasties reigned. The second and third chastisements prophesied in Leviticus 26 took place. Elijah brought the second, and Elisha brought the third.

Also, during this time, the writing prophets wrote their many books. Near the end of *2 Kings*, the northern kingdom was carried away by Assyria. This was the fourth chastisement. At the end of the book, the southern kingdom was carried into exile by Babylon. This was the fifth chastisement.

13.3 1 and 2 Chronicles

These books have many parallel accounts for *1 and 2 Samuel* and *1 and 2 Kings*. *1 Chronicles* begins with many genealogies. Eventually, it provides the history narrative starting with the death of Saul. Although there are many parallel accounts, there are details that are unique in both of these books.



13.4 Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon

These books contain a variety of information, but what people do not understand today is that these books contain a lot of prophecy for Israel to get through the tribulation. That is why *Job* is placed with these books. *Job* is summarized in Section 11.3.



The Prophets

The “prophets” refers to many books written by prophets, where the books are named after the prophets. These prophets prophecy the following:

1. What God was going to do to Israel in the near-term, culminating in the exile.
2. What God was going to do to the nations fighting against Israel.
3. What God was going to do to both in the long-term, culminating in the tribulation.

Some of the prophets are mentioned in the historical books about the kings, but many are not. Some of the prophets spoke to the northern kingdom, but most spoke to the southern kingdom. These books are filled with symbolic language which makes them difficult to understand. They essentially fulfill the fourth and fifth chastisements mentioned in Leviticus 26. See Section 12.2 for information on the chastisements.

Isaiah wrote the largest book and is considered to be one of the major prophets (along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, although Daniel's book isn't that long). He was a prophet to the southern kingdom, along with Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Hosea, Amos, and Jonah were prophets of the northern kingdom. The remaining prophets wrote during or after the exile. We will discuss them in the next chapter.



Exile and Return

15.1 Exile

The exile of Israel is captured in the ends of *2 Kings* and *2 Chronicles*, as well as in four prophets' books. *Jeremiah* tells of the coming doom by Babylon against Jerusalem. Jeremiah experienced the destruction of the city while remaining in it. He told the people what God wanted them to do, but many would not listen. He also wrote the book of *Lamentations*, which laments the destruction of the city.

Ezekiel describes the many prophecies given to Ezekiel. He was taken away in the second of three sieges of Jerusalem. He prophesied to the captives while the city was destroyed. He also wrote about the hope that Israel would have after the exile.

Jeremiah and *Ezekiel* promised a new covenant that would replace the old law covenant. The old covenant only brought condemnation; the new covenant would bring the ability to keep the law. It was intended that Israel remain under the law.

Daniel has many stories of Daniel. He was taken away in the first of three sieges of Jerusalem. He wrote about God was going to Israel after the exile ended. Many of his prophecies are about the tribulation, and these align with the book of *Revelation*.

One of Daniel's prophecies provides a timeline of when restoration will happen. However, it was to come with further chastisement. The timeline tells of 70 weeks of years, or 490 years. The 69th week ended with Jesus' crucifixion. The final 7 years, which is still in our future, will be tribulation where unbelieving Jews will be killed, leaving only believing Jews to rule over the nations.

15.2 Return from Exile

There are three historical books and three prophetic books that align with the return from exile. *Ezra* captures details of the return. It focuses on the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the sacrifices. *Nehemiah* has more details of the return and focuses on rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. *Esther* captures a story where Esther married a Gentile king. Through this relationship, she was able to save her people from being destroyed by a man that hated them.

The three prophetic books told Israel what God wanted from the people now that they were back in the land. This focused on how the leadership was corrupt. *Haggai* commanded the people to rebuild the temple. *Zechariah* and *Malachi* have prophecies of Jesus' coming. Then God spoke to the nation no more until the new testament books.



Messiah Comes

The new testament begins with the arrival of Israel's Messiah, Jesus, who is also called the *Christ*. The books of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John* capture the stories of Jesus' ministry. Each of the four accounts has a purpose and an audience. Because of that, you find details in one account but not in another. As you mature, you might take on understanding these subtleties.

Jesus called the nation to be the kingdom of priests that they were meant to be since they were called out of Egypt. While many follow Jesus, most do not. But Jesus accomplished what he came to do, including dying on the cross for his people. After his miraculous resurrection, he strengthened his followers to continue what he started. There was still a chance for Israel to rule the world.

Jesus' ministry is very much misunderstood today. He wasn't ministering to the rest of the world and he makes that clear on many occasions. But church tradition cannot separate what God was doing with Israel then and what he is doing without them now.



An Interruption by a Mystery

17.1 Acts

The book of *Acts* continues where the accounts of Jesus ministry left off. God was still trying to get Israel to receive the kingdom. The book of *Acts* tells us of that last chance. But the nation was still in unbelief and rejected that last offer of the kingdom in chapter 7 of *Acts*.

But God revealed a mystery that was not spoken of in the old testament nor in the accounts of Jesus' ministry (*Matthew* through *John*). God brought salvation to the Gentiles (i.e., other nations) without Israel being involved. This salvation did not use Israel's law covenant (either old or new). God used the nation's chief enemy Saul (also called Paul) to bring that message of grace. Paul traveled much of the known world bringing salvation to both Gentile and Jew in the remainder of *Acts*.

Technically, *Acts* is part of prophecy since it is not written by Paul. It has historical information about Paul's apostleship, but not the doctrine of it. It might be easier to view the book as not fully part of either program. This is why Table 9.1 set it apart from the other books of the bible.

17.2 Paul's Epistles

Paul wrote the books, or epistles, of *Romans* through *Philemon* to us. Paul tells us so many things that are quite different from the rest of the bible. Most of the bible talks about law and ceremonial system of worship. But you find such things in Paul's letters.

Paul's letters should be the focus of the church today. But sadly the church has fallen for the wiles of the devil as the seek to mix prophecy and mystery, or law and grace. This is the doctrine of devils spoken of in the bible.

He tells us how God has been forming a heavenly people, rather than an earthly one (like Israel). In the future, we will be the means of God retaking the heavens and casting out the devils that reside there now. Paul tells us of a time when our church will be taken up to our home. Once that happens, God will return to his prophetic program involving Israel. Then he will fulfill all his remaining promises to them.



A Return to Prophecy

Once God is through with the interruption to prophecy, he will return to it. That is the focus of books *Hebrews* through *Revelation*. These help Israel understand what Jesus was doing and what they should be doing in the future. Israel will finally experience that awful 7-year tribulation spoken of by Daniel and many other prophets. Most of these books were written after Israel rejected the kingdom in the past, but they will be relevant to Israel in the future.

The book of *Revelation* as well as a few other old testament books tell us about a 1000-year reign of Jesus on the earth (this follows the tribulation). During this time, a holy nation Israel will be a priesthood to the nations of the world. Those nations will be under the law like Israel was. They will learn that they need a savior in spite of Jesus being present on the earth. All will be forced to keep the law because a righteous ruler is in charge. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will deceive the unbelievers into rebelling like Adam and Eve did. However, God will stop that rebellion and rid his creation of sin forevermore.

There will be eternity with God for all believers, but eternal punishment for those that did not believe.



Part IV

Learning How to Study

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This part presents you with a variety of techniques for studying the bible. Intermixed are word studies from books that are important to your early foundation. Don't be surprised if you have to look up some words in the dictionary. More so, don't be surprised if you have change the definition that comes to mind when the bible uses a definition that you are not thinking of.

Notes and Cross-References

If you have a hard-bound bible, you most likely have notes and cross-references intermixed with the bible verses. There are some very plain bibles that do not have these. If you use an on-line bible application, these will exist but access to them might vary. Let's focus on a hard-bound bible first.

19.1 Zondervan KJV Study Bible

Figure 19.1 will demonstrate some examples of notes and cross-references using pictures from actual hard-bound bibles. Notes are typically at the bottom of a page. Figure 19.1(a) shows the notes and cross-references for the *Zondervan KJV Study Bible* [12] (note that the KJB isn't a version, but this publisher doesn't understand that). The top right of the figure shows the verses for Acts 2:1-4. The bottom of the figure shows the notes. In this case, there is a note for Acts 2:1.

1:22 ^b ver. 8; John 15:27; ch. 4:33 1:23 ^a ch. 15:22 1:24 ^a 1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chr. 28:9; 29:17; Jer. 11:20; 17:10; ch. 15:8; Rev. 2:23 1:25 ^a ver. 17 2:1 ^a Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:9; ch. 20:16 ^b ch. 1:14 2:2 ^a ch. 4:31 2:4 ^a ch. 1:5 ^b Mark 16:17; ch. 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30; 13:1; 14:2	The gift of the Holy Spirit 2 And when ^athe day of Pentecost was fully come, ^bthey were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and ^ait filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And ^athey were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began ^bto speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
tures nd af- ianic. of the Luke	2:1 <i>day of Pentecost.</i> The 50th day after the sabbath of passover week (Lev 23:15–16), thus the first day of the week. Pentecost is also called the feast of weeks (Deut 16:10), the feast of harvest (Ex 23:16) and the day of the firstfruits (Num 28:26). <i>they were all with one accord.</i> The nearest antecedent of “they” is the 11 apostles (plus Matthias), but the reference is probably to all those mentioned in 1:13–15. <i>in one place.</i> Evidently not the upstairs room where they were staying (1:13) but perhaps some place in the temple precincts, for the apostles were “continually in the temple” when it was open (Luke 24:53; see note there).

(a) *Zondervan KJV Study Bible*

<u>30 A.D.</u> <i>a</i> Ps. 109:6-8 <i>b</i> John 15:27 Acts 15:22 <i>c</i> 1 Sam. 16:7 1 Chron. 28:9 Ps. 139:1-12 Jer. 20:12 <i>d</i> Isa. 43:10 John 15:16 <i>e</i> Prov. 16:33 <i>f</i> Ex. 34:22 Lev. 23:15 Num. 28:26 Deut. 16:16 2 Chron. 8:13	CHAPTER 2 And when the day of ²Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty ^gwind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all ^hfilled with the ³Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other ⁱtongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
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(b) *The Common Man's Reference Bible*

Figure 19.1: Some notes and cross-references for Acts 2:1-4 from two different bibles. The bible publishers determine the content of these materials. (a) The notes and cross-references from the *Zondervan KJV Study Bible*. (b) The cross-references from *The Common Man's Reference Bible*.

Usually, the notes are like footnotes: the main text will have a number inserted into the text that will link you to the notes below. Alternatively, the verse number could be given in the notes area. In this case, most of the notes are correct (in my opinion). The note comments on the “they” of verse 1 (this was an example of pronoun usage in Chapter 4), making it a useful note.

Figure 19.1(a) shows cross-references on the left side of the figure. Verse 1 has superscript letters ^a and ^b. Cross-reference ^a is for “the day of Pentecost” and gives old references to Lev. 23:15, Deut. 16:9, and ch. 20:16. Cross-reference ^b is for “they” and simply links you to chapter 1, verse 14. I think this cross-reference is wrong: it should be the last verse of chapter 1.

19.2 The Common Man’s Reference Bible

The other example bible is *The Common Man’s Reference Bible* [9]. Figure 19.1(b) shows the Acts 2:1-4 on the right and the cross-references on the left. Verse 1 has the superscript ¹ on “Pentecost”. Here are the cross-references: Ex. 34:22, Lev. 23:15; Num. 28:26, Deu. 16:16, and 2 Chron. 8:13. There are obviously more references than the previous example and only 1 cross-reference is in common. You can say that Deut. 16:9 and Deu. 16:16 are essentially the same.

“Pentecost” also has superscript ² on it. But this is a reference to the notes. Figure 19.1(c) shows the associated notes. The note is highly opinionated, but is essentially correct.

²Pentecost is a Jewish feast day; it is not a denomination. Acts 2 is a major battleground for the heresies of baptismal regeneration and speaking in an unknown tongue as the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. There are several facts that are ignored by the heretics of these two false beliefs. Jews and proselytes of Judaism were waiting for the promise of the Father; there were no Christians present anywhere. No one was praying for the gift of the Holy Ghost and there was no baptism of fire (tongues *LIKE AS* of fire). There were no unknown tongues because every tongue was a known language. Only the twelve Apostles spoke in tongues and there is no record that any of the converts spoke in tongues. The Apostle Peter was addressing the house of Israel and the gospel of the grace of God was not mentioned by Peter. The theme of his message to the Jews was the murder of their Messiah.

(c) *The Common Man’s Reference Bible*

Figure 19.1: (Continued) (c) The notes from *The Common Man’s Reference Bible*.

19.3 e-Sword X

Figure 19.2 shows the cross-references in the application *e-Sword X* [3]. There are even more here than in either of the hard-bound bibles. Each cross-reference can be clicked on to see the reference passage. It is also possible to see commentaries (which are essentially the same as notes). No example commentary is shown.

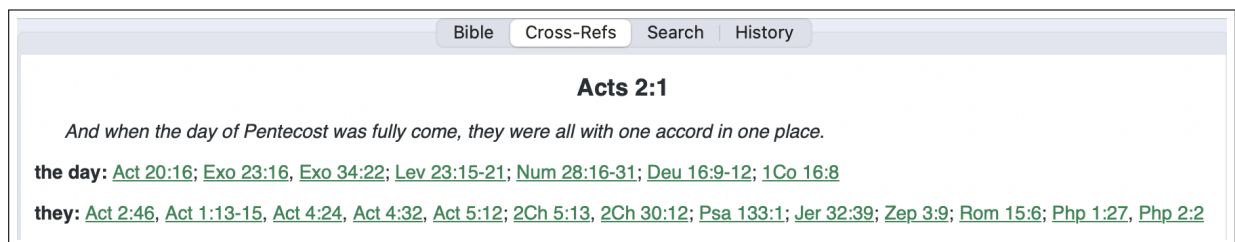


Figure 19.2: Cross-references for Acts 2:1 in *e-Sword X*.

Conclusion

Cross-references can be very helpful when studying. They point you to related verses, but the relationships aren’t always clear. For example, one reference might take you to a verse using the same word. Another might take you to a passage that explains the verse.

Notes can also be helpful, but they aren’t scripture (you’re not studying the notes). However, notes are often incorrect because they are almost always carnal in nature. But for simpler topics, they can often be correct.



Word Studies in *Genesis*

As you read the bible, you are going to encounter words that you don't know. The easy thing to do is to not do anything and just to keep on reading. While that sounds silly, that will probably happen if you find yourself stopping to find out what many words mean. Consider these words that occur in *Genesis*: asswaged, kine, strakes, and wot.¹ Some will complain that these are archaic words and will look for a bible with modern English (unfortunately, for them, there is no other bible in English that is God's word). It is easier to expand your vocabulary by looking such words up in the dictionary. If a word is not used frequently, the dictionary is really the only way to understand what it means. When a word occurs enough times, there may be better ways to understand the meaning. We will demonstrate that throughout this part.

A dictionary is a good source for word definitions, but the dictionary is not truth. The dictionary tells us many definitions for a word, regardless of whether the definitions occur in the bible. This is more likely to happen if you consult a current dictionary. Such can contain some definitions that were not appropriate 400 years ago when the *King James Bible* was translated. Another option is to get an older dictionary, preferably one from the late 1600s or early 1700s. One dictionary that is free and on-line is *American Dictionary of the English Language* [1] (also known as *Webster's Dictionary 1828*).

This chapter provides word studies for several words in the book of *Genesis*. These words occur enough times that you can find multiple verses for them. Some of these will demonstrate that the bible is using a definition that is different than the dictionary's. We must strive to use the definitions that the bible uses.

We will provide a sample verse from *Genesis* for each word to be studied. The words are presented in the order in which they appear in *Genesis*: light, replenish, meet, serpent, desire, repent, Gentile, and tempt.

20.1 Light

We will begin with the word *light*. While this might appear to be an easy-to-understand word, let's see that there is more meaning to it than you might think. If you go to the dictionary, you will find that *light* is a noun, adjective, and a verb (thus, there are various definitions). Let's see how it is used:

Genesis 1:3-5

- 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
- 4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
- 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Here, *light* is a noun. The dictionary gives 26 definitions for the word! Let's not iterate those here, but let me give the first definition:

¹ The next chapter will discuss how to search for these words.



Dictionary Definition: light

1. That ethereal agent or matter which makes objects perceptible to the sense of seeing, but the particles of which are separately invisible. It is now generally believed that light is a fluid, or real matter, existing independent of other substances, with properties peculiar to itself. Its velocity is astonishing, as it passes through a space of nearly twelve millions of miles in a minute. Light, when decomposed, is found to consist of rays differently colored; as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The sun is the principal source of light in the solar system; but light is also emitted from bodies ignited, or in combustion, and is reflected from enlightened bodies, as the moon. Light is also emitted from certain putrefying substances. It is usually united with heat, but it exists also independent of it.

As complicated as that sounds, this is probably what you think the word means. I'll say that this is what we might call **physical light**—the light that enables us to see.

But there is another verse that will shed more “light” on this verse:

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5

- 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.
- 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Notice that many of the same words are used in verse 5 and in the *Genesis* passage: light, day, darkness, and night. So, there is a **spiritual light**—the light that enables us to discern truth. This verse suggests something similar:

Matthew 5:16

- 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

People don't emit physical light, so this is spiritual light.

Physical light is given to the earth later during creation:

Genesis 1:14-18

- 14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
- 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
- 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.
- 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
- 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good.

The light on the first day could have been both physical and spiritual since this passage has similar language as the earlier one did. It might also include this definition:

Dictionary Definition: light (continued)

15. In Scripture, God, the source of knowledge.

1 John 1:5

- 5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

A lot more could be said in a deeper study, but that is good enough for now.

20.2 Replenish

There is an unfortunate teaching that exists called “the Gap Theory”. It teaches that there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. It says that a large period of time occurred where the angels were on the earth and rebelled against God. This isn't a true teaching as it is simply refuted by this verse:

Exodus 20:11

11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

When teaching the gap theory, this verse is often used in support of it:

Genesis 1:28

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The argument is that *replenish* means “to fill **again**”. But let’s go to the dictionary:

Dictionary Definition: replenish

1. To fill; to stock with numbers or abundance.
2. To finish; to complete. [Not in use.]

The first definition means *to fill*. While we don’t think of that definition today, it is the definition that the bible is using. It is a more advanced study, but you can investigate the (Hebrew) word that the English word comes from. It is translated as *fill* here:

Genesis 1:22

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

20.3 Meet

Let’s look at this verse:

Genesis 2:18

18 And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Some will teach that God made Adam a “help-meet” (as if it were a hyphenated noun). But, that is not what it says. The dictionary has definitions for an adjective and a verb. Let’s look at the former:

Dictionary Definition: meet (adjective)

Fit; suitable; proper; qualified; convenient; adapted, as to a use or purpose.

So, *meet* simply means *suitable*. Read the sentence again, substituting the definition instead.

Let’s see two other example verses:

Ezra 4:14

14 Now because we have maintenance from *the king’s* palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king’s dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king;

2 Timothy 2:21

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, *and* prepared unto every good work.

20.4 Serpent

Now, let’s see a verse that has horrible explanations:

Genesis 3:1

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

You might say, “Wow, a talking snake!” Some will say that the devil made the snake talk, or that he entered into the snake to make it talk.

Someone giving the first explanation might reference this:

Numbers 22:27-30	
27	And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.
28	And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?
29	And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.
30	And the ass said unto Balaam, <i>Am</i> not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since <i>I was</i> thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

Here, we are told that the LORD opened the mouth of the ass.

Someone giving the second explanation might reference this:

Luke 22:3	
3	Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

Let’s see what the dictionary says:

Dictionary Definition: serpent

1. An animal of the order of Serpentes, [creepers, crawlers,] Of the class of Amphibia. Serpents are amphibious animals, breathing through the mouth by means of lungs only; having tapering bodies, without a distinct neck; the jaws not articulated, but dilatable, and without feet, fins or ears.
2. In astronomy, a constellation of the northern hemisphere, containing, according to the British catalogue, sixty-four stars.
3. An instrument of music, serving as a base to the cornet or small shawm, to sustain a chorus of singers in a large edifice.
4. Figuratively, a subtil or malicious person.
5. In mythology, a symbol of the sun.

Most will use definition #1—it’s a snake. Definition #4 is closer.

Let’s find a verse that explains it:

Revelation 12:9	
9	And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

So, the serpent is Satan, who is a fallen angel! If you study angels, you will learn that they are immortal men.² So, the woman (Eve) is talking to a man, not a snake.

Is a serpent ever a snake? Yes:

Numbers 21:6-7	
6	And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.
7	Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

You need to get comfortable with the way that God speaks to us through his word. Jesus is called the “Lamb of God”:

John 1:29	
29	The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Surely, you don’t think Jesus is really a lamb!

²Angels is an advanced study topic; see *The Biblical Angels* [7].



20.5 Desire

Genesis 3:16

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

What does *desire* mean? Surely this is an easy one. Let's see what the dictionary says (we want the noun, not the verb):

Dictionary Definition: desire (noun)

1. An emotion or excitement of the mind, directed to the attainment or possession of an object from which pleasure, sensual, intellectual or spiritual, is expected; a passion excited by the love of an object, or uneasiness at the want of it, and directed to its attainment or possession.
2. A prayer or request to obtain.
3. The object of desire; that which is desired.
4. Love; affection.
5. Appetite; lust.

Aren't some of these dictionary definitions (like #1) overwhelming? Some want to use definition #4.

But, let's see another example from the bible:

Genesis 4:7

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Notice the words "desire" and "rule over" in both verses. This suggests a negative desire (a consuming one). It is an improper desire, requiring it to be subdued or ruled over. This is a good example of using the bible to clarify a definition. Trust your *King James Bible*!

20.6 Repent

Genesis 6:6-7

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

What does it mean for God to repent? The verse seems to suggest that it "grieved him" But is that what it means? Many teach that *repent* means to be sorry for sin, but surely that can't be true here!

The dictionary says:

Dictionary Definition: repent

1. To feel pain, sorrow or regret for something done or spoken; as, to repent that we have lost much time in idleness or sensual pleasure; to repent that we have injured or wounded the feelings of a friend.
2. To express sorrow for something past.
3. To change the mind in consequence of the inconvenience or injury done by past conduct.
4. Applied to the Supreme Being, to change the course of providential dealings.
5. In theology, to sorrow or be pained for sin, as a violation of God's holy law, a dishonor to his character and government, and the foulest ingratitude to a Being of infinite benevolence.

While definition #1 might seem appropriate, it appears that the end of verse 6 communicates that God was grieved. You might want definition #4 because of how it is worded. As far a #5 goes, any time you see religious words like "theology", be ready to dismiss such definitions. The bible has no theology in it and usually speaks negatively about religion.

Let's see another usage of the word:

Exodus 13:17

17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

This says that the people would **turn** and go back. In other words, they would change their mind (and action). In this case, it would be a result of fear, but often it is a result of sorrow.

So, it suggests that God changed his mind. Perhaps he did change his course of action by sending the flood. Let's see another example of God repenting (only relevant verses are shown):

1 Samuel 15:11

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

1 Samuel 15:28-29

28 And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou.
29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent.

1 Samuel 15:35

35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Let's see what else the bible says:

2 Corinthians 7:9-10

9 Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.
10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Godly sorrow changes your mind about what God says. You accept what he says rather than reject it.

But notice this:

Matthew 27:3-5

3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.
5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

As 2 Corinthians 7:10 says: the sorrow of the world worketh death.

God often changes his mind with respect to the sin that men are committing. Likewise, God can repent of the judgment that he pronounces against them when they repent!

20.7 Gentile

This next word is pretty easy, but it is one you should understand the meaning of.

Genesis 10:5

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

Let's see what the dictionary says:

Dictionary Definition: Gentile

In the scriptures, a pagan; a worshipper of false gods; any person not a Jew or a christian; a heathen.

This definition is fraught with trouble. Essentially, a Gentile is a person from a nation other than Israel. It has nothing to do with being a Christian or not. While Gentiles typically did worship other gods, that is not what defined them. They were generally thought of as heathen by Israel (we will visit that word in Chapter 24). This is a good example of the dictionary having good and bad information in it.

While it is possible that you might be a Jew (or Israeli), most readers of this study guide will be Gentiles. This is important because we need to understand who our apostle is:

Romans 11:13

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

This was written by Paul. What you will also need to come to understand is that Israel is not a favored, or set apart, nation today. So, Paul is their apostle too. However, Israel did have apostles before they lost God's favor. These concepts are discussed in Part III.

20.8 Tempt

Genesis 22:1

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*.

Is God trying to get Abraham to sin? What else could *tempt* mean? It is important that we understand words clearly, so that we don't accuse, or blaspheme, God.

Let's go to the dictionary to see what it says:

Dictionary Definition: tempt

1. To incite or solicit to an evil act; to entice to something wrong by presenting arguments that are plausible or convincing, or by the offer of some pleasure or apparent advantage as the inducement.
2. To provoke; to incite.
3. To solicit; to draw; without the notion of evil.
4. To try; to venture on; to attempt.
5. In Scripture, to try; to prove; to put to trial for proof.

This is what most people think temptation is:

1 Corinthians 7:5

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

John 8:6

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*.

Hebrews 4:15

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, *yet* without sin.

But thorough study looks at many verses:

James 1:13-14

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:
14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

So, God does not tempt, or entice, anyone to sin. So definition #4 or #5 is appropriate for Genesis 22:1.

And we are not to tempt God:

Exodus 17:7

7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Numbers 14:22

22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

Many words have more than one definition. We need to find the right definition. Using scripture is the way to accomplish that.

Searching the Bible

One way to grow as a Christian is to search the bible for things that you want to know. This is particularly useful if you read a verse that you don't understand. The idea will be to search the bible for other verses that might help you explain the one that you are struggling with.

Let's see that the bible even tells us to search the scriptures:

John 5:39

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Here is another:

Acts 17:10-11

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.
11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Being a "Berean" is actually more advanced than people think. The point here is that someone is teaching you something about the bible. A "Berean" doesn't just find verses; he has to understand what they teach in order to confirm or reject what was taught.

Most immature Christians confirm a teaching by what they already know. When they do this and reject a truth, they harden their hearts due to unbelief. We won't worry about being a Berean in this study guide. Let's just focus on searching the scriptures. To do that you will need a computer with a bible application or access to a web page that can search for you.

We won't focus on querying services (e.g., Siri, Google, AI) or anything else. You might achieve even more using them. But be forewarned: AI doesn't have HG! That means that an artificial intelligence service does not have the Holy Ghost. If an AI could truly think, it would present you with perfect answers from the scriptures. All that they can do is present a mess of tradition that is out there on the Internet.

21.1 Simple Searches

Many times, your searches are simple. An example might be that you remember a name like Noah, but you can't remember where you read about him. So you search for "Noah" and find out that the name is mentioned 53 times in 46 verses. Your search results should show you the actual verses and so you can skim through them to find what you were looking for. Perhaps, you just wanted to know which book his story is in.

You can complicate a simple search in the following ways:

- Make the searching case-sensitive: So "noah" won't find "Noah"
- Allow partial matches: so "noah" finds: Noah, Manoah, Zanoah, and Janoah
- Search for phrases: Noah was
- Search for multiple words: Noah (and) Shem
- Search for any words: Noah (or) Shem



- Search for any of the above while excluding words: Noah (and not) ark
- Limit which books are searched: e.g., old testament, new testament, specific book

How the options are chosen and how the words in the parentheses are specified will differ across applications. There can be even more complicated yet more powerful methods. What you probably won't find is a way to have a word be in one verse and another word in the next verse (or some other close context).

21.2 Dayspring

Consider this verse:

Luke 1:78
78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

Is that comparing dayspring to morning? It sounds like it. You want to know if “dayspring” occurs anywhere else in order to try to understand what the verse is saying. After you search, you find there are two verses—the other one is:

Job 38:12
12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; <i>and</i> caused the dayspring to know his place;

You try one more search: “day (and) spring” since “dayspring” looks like a compound word. This gets you three more verses. Here are two of them:

Judges 19:25
25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

1 Samuel 9:26
26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

Both of these seem to have something to do with *morning*.

Ok, but why does the verse in *Luke* say what it says. The larger context to the verse makes it sound like it is talking about someone. You could keep searching, but it would be quicker to look at the cross references for the verse (refer back to Chapter 19 for that). Of the several that you might see, you might see these two verses listed:

Malachi 4:2
2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Revelation 22:16
16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, <i>and</i> the bright and morning star.

The original verse as well as these two verses are talking about Jesus. That might not be apparent to you yet, but this is where bible study can take you. There is a reason why these descriptions are used, and it is all part of the revelation of who God is in the bible.

Don't worry if you don't understand all of these verses. We are only trying to learn searching techniques.

21.3 Godhead

Let's say that you encountered this verse:

Acts 17:29
29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

You wondered what it meant, and so you asked someone. That person told you that it meant “trinity” (because the word “trinity” isn’t in the bible).

You decided to check it out like you are supposed to. The dictionary will tell you that it means “divinity”. When you search the bible for the word, you get two more verses:

Romans 1:20
20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, <i>even</i> his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Colossians 2:9
9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

You should wonder if these actually help. It can be frustrating to see more verses that you also don’t understand.

But “Godhead” sounds like a compound word, so you might try the little trick that we just learned (i.e., look for “God” (and) “head”). When you search the whole bible, you get 26 results. Since “Godhead” only occurred in the new testament, you could decide to start there. Now there are only 3 verses. Let’s see the first two:

1 Corinthians 11:3
3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman <i>is</i> the man; and the head of Christ <i>is</i> God.

1 Corinthians 11:7
7 For a man indeed ought not to cover <i>his</i> head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

If you read the context of these, you might conclude that it is talking about an authority structure. And it is God who is the head of all things. It is not a synonym for God, but a reference to him and his governance.

When you grow and learn to study, you will understand that Acts 17:29 and Romans 1:20 are talking about God and not two other people in a trinity. Colossians 2:9 is talking about Jesus and how God and his authority dwell within Jesus (would it make sense to say that Jesus dwells within Jesus?).

Don’t expect tough topics like this to make sense right away. However, it is when you are young and naive that you get duped by a bad explanation that you will cling to for years to come.

21.4 The Finger of God

You read this passage:

Luke 11:14-20
14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.
15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.
16 And others, tempting <i>him</i> , sought of him a sign from heaven.
17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house <i>divided</i> against a house falleth.
18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.
19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast <i>them</i> out? therefore shall they be your judges.
20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

What is “the finger of God” in verse 20? The first thing that you might do is to look at the cross references. Here are two that you might see:

Exodus 8:19
19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This <i>is</i> the finger of God: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Matthew 12:28

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

As is usually the case, you need to go to each verse and see what the verses around it say. When you read the *Matthew* passage containing the verse, you will notice that it is much like Luke 11:20. In fact it is a parallel account (we will discuss that in Chapter 23).

The two passages are defining a meaning with in the bible: “the finger of God” is “the Spirit of God”. Wow, that is fantastic! That definition is going to help with the other verses.

If we search for “finger of God”, we get Luke 11:20, Exodus 8:19 (above), and these two verses:

Exodus 31:18

18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Deuteronomy 9:10

10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

In all of these verses, it is appropriate to substitute “the Spirit of God” in order to gain understanding. The Spirit of God wrote the ten commandments tables in the same way that it enabled men to write scripture. If you want to imagine something more miraculous, you could lean on one more verse that is harder to find. To find it you need to search for “finger” and wade through the results:

Daniel 5:5

5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

In this case, the Spirit of God manifested a visible hand that wrote on the wall. Perhaps that happened with the writing of the ten commandments. We shouldn’t ever get bogged down in what the bible doesn’t fully tell us.



Word Studies in *Luke*

In this chapter, we will look at some words in the book of *Luke*. You should search for these words just to see how often and where they occur in the bible.

22.1 Prophet

If you search, the word “prophet” (and its forms) occurs over 450 times.

Luke 1:70

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

So, what does the dictionary say it means?

Dictionary Definition: prophet

1. One that foretells future events; a predictor; a foreteller.
2. In Scripture, a person illuminated, inspired or instructed by God to announce future events; as Moses, Elijah, David, Isaiah.
3. An interpreter; one that explains or communicates sentiments.
4. One who pretends to foretell; an imposter; as a false prophet.

So, we will see that definition #2 is the relevant one.

We should also note that a woman can be a prophet, or a prophetess:

Luke 2:36

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

As the predominate definition says, God would put his spirit upon a prophet in order for him to speak what God want him to say:

Numbers 11:29

29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, *and* that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

God could also speak to a prophet through a vision or dream:

Numbers 12:6

6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream.

A prophet was required to say what God told him:



Deuteronomy 18:20

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

Definition #4 isn't a very good definition. The word "prophet" doesn't suggest a false prophet—that's what the adjective "false" is for:

Luke 6:26

26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

A prophet was also called a "seer":

1 Samuel 9:9

9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

This would be someone who "sees" (through a vision or dream).

22.2 Publican

Luke 3:12

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

So, what is a publican?

Dictionary Definition: publican

1. A collector of toll or tribute. Among the Romans, a publican was a farmer of the taxes and public revenues, and the inferior officers of this class were deemed oppressive.
2. The keeper of a public house; an innkeeper.

Definition #1, a tax collector, seems to be the one that occurs in the bible. It only appears in *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. Let's see the word in another passage:

Luke 5:27-30

27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.
 28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.
 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.
 30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Matthew, or Levi, was one of Jesus' disciples (refer Matthew 9:9-13 to see his name as "Matthew"). The scripture notes that he was a publican. It also equates such an office with sinners. The word *harlot* is used likewise:

Matthew 21:32

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

A tax collector wasn't necessarily a sinful office, but in those times it was often corrupt. It was associated with the heathen government of Rome.

22.3 Synagogue

Luke 4:14-16

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.
 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

This says that Jesus taught in the synagogues. So, what is a synagogue?

Dictionary Definition: synagogue

1. A congregation or assembly of Jews, met for the purpose of worship or the performance of religious rites.
2. The house appropriated to the religious worship of the Jews.
3. The court of the seventy elders among the Jews, called the great synagogue.

This word mostly occurs in *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, and *Acts*. Definition #1 seems appropriate. The word suggests the place that the people met more so than the people themselves.

In the passage above, Luke drew attention to Jesus being in the synagogues often: “as his custom was”. He said something similar of Paul: “as his manner was”:

Acts 17:1-2

- 1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:
- 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Paul never uses this word in his writings. So, a synagogue is a Jewish place of learning; it is not a church for us. Here is the only time the word occurs in the old testament:

Psalms 74:8

- 8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

Thus, it appears to be a place.

22.4 Disciple

Luke 6:13

- 13 And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

The word *disciple* can be both a noun and a verb. Let's see the definition for the noun:

Dictionary Definition: disciple (noun)

1. A learner; a scholar; one who receives or professes to receive instruction from another; as the disciples of Plato.
2. A follower; an adherent to the doctrines of another. Hence the constant attendants of Christ were called his disciples; and hence all Christians are called his disciples, as they profess to learn and receive his doctrines and precepts.

In the new testament, the word only occurs in *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, and *Acts*. It also occurs once in the old testament.

The word is never used by Paul. So, are not Christians disciples? Do we not follow Jesus? Yes, we do, but we are not described using the word *disciple*. We are described by one of it's meanings: a follower. Let's see several examples:

1 Corinthians 4:16

- 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

1 Corinthians 11:1

- 1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

We follow Jesus by following Paul.



Ephesians 5:1

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Philippians 3:17

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

Paul said “followers of us” here because he wrote the letter with others.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

So, we are disciples, but we are not described using that word. This is one of the many ways that God sets the church today apart from believers in other times.

22.5 Jew**Luke 7:3**

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

So, is a Jew just another term for an Israelite?

Dictionary Definition: Jew

A Hebrew or Israelite.

The dictionary says *yes*. But, let's get confirmation of that. One way to do that is to find a verse that has two of the three words to see if it equates them. Here's one:

Jeremiah 34:9

9 That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, *being* an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, *to wit*, of a Jew his brother.

So this says that a *Hebrew* is a *Jew*.

This example is split across two verses:

1 Samuel 13:19-20

19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears
20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

So this says that a *Hebrew* is an *Israelite*.

The word *Jew* derives from *Judah*. But let's see where the word first occurs in the bible:

2 Kings 16:6

6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

It would be a lot of work to understand the context of the passage. But, this verse occurs after the northern house of Israel has been carried away by Assyria. Only the southern kingdom remained. It was typically called the house of Judah. The first verse of this passage mentions Judah:

2 Kings 16:1

1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

However, the definition of *Jew* expanded to include all of Israel:

Luke 23:3
3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest <i>it</i> .

Jesus is certainly king of all of Israel (because he intended to unite the two divided houses).

22.6 Pharisee

Luke 5:17
17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was <i>present</i> to heal them.

So, what is a Pharisee?

Dictionary Definition: Pharisee

One of a sect among the Jews, whose religion consisted in a strict observance of rites and ceremonies and of the traditions of the elders, and whose pretended holiness led them to separate themselves as a sect, considering themselves as more righteous than other Jews.

The word occurs many times in *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, and *Acts*. It essentially described a group of Jews who were very dedicated to the laws and traditions. Paul was one:

Acts 26:5
5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Philippians 3:5
5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, <i>of</i> the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

That was the only time Paul used the word in his letters.

It is typically thought that no Pharisees believed God:

Luke 7:30
30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Nicodemus appears in the book of *John*. He was a Pharisee that believed. And there were others that believed:

Acts 15:5
5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command <i>them</i> to keep the law of Moses.

22.7 Sadducee

Luke 20:27
27 Then came to <i>him</i> certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

So what is a Sadducee? Well, it doesn't appear in the old dictionary that we are using. Another dictionary tells us:

A member of a Palestinian sect, consisting mainly of priests and aristocrats, that flourished from the 1st century b.c. to the 1st century a.d. and differed from the Pharisees chiefly in its literal interpretation of the Bible, rejection of oral laws and traditions, and denial of an afterlife and the coming of the Messiah.

This word occurs predominately in *Matthew* and *Acts*.

Matthew 3:7

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Acts 23:6-8

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

We might think of them as religious but liberal. They didn't believe in a number of things that the bible clearly teaches.

You could think of the Pharisees and Sadducees in a similar way that you might view Republicans and Democrats. And not everyone belongs to one of the two major groups.

Parallel Accounts

While you are reading, you will come across a passage that you think you read before. You probably had read it before because the bible contains parallel accounts of things that are important. The accounts of Jesus ministry (i.e., *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*) are the most common places to find parallel accounts. Not every story occurs in all four accounts, but many are in two or more.

Parallel accounts appear in other places in the bible. Often there are different details in the accounts and sometimes they can appear to be contradictory.

23.1 How Many Men Were There?

Consider this passage:

Luke 18:35-38

35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:
 36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.
 37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.
 38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

Two of the cross references will be these passages in the parallel accounts:

Matthew 20:29-30

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.
 30 And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

Mark 10:46-47

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.
 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

Matthew says that there were two men. The other two accounts only mention one. All of the accounts are true. *Mark* and *Luke* only mention the one that talked. *Mark* even tells you his name.

Before I explain the difference, let's see something very similar:

Matthew 8:28

28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.



Mark 5:1-2

- 1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.
 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Luke 8:26-27

- 26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.
 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

Again, *Matthew* says that there were two men and the other two accounts do not. You should read the entire story in each account. *Mark* and *Luke* have much more detail. *Matthew* seems to say that both men spoke, so we cannot say that the other accounts are focused on the one that spoke.

So, what is going on here? There is a doctrinal difference between *Matthew* and the other accounts. *Matthew* is addressing Israel as two divided houses, and so there are two men. These houses are sometimes called “the house of Israel” and “the house of Judah”. The kingdom was divided into two after Solomon died. Jesus was supposed to unite the two houses.

Mark and *Luke* are written about Israel after the kingdom is rejected. Both accounts focus on Israel as a whole, so there is only one man. It takes a lot of maturing to get to the place that the explanation will be clear to you.

The parallel accounts are true, and there are reasons why they differ.

23.2 How Many Times Did the Cock Crow?

As you are reading, you encounter this verse:

Luke 22:34

- 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Out of curiosity, you decide to search for “cock” (i.e., rooster). You find 11 verses that we will see below. I’ll only give a few verses, and you might want to look at the larger context.

I’ll reorganize the search results in order to present them chronologically. Let’s start with the prediction:

Matthew 26:34

- 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mark 14:30

- 30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Luke 22:34

- 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

John 13:38

- 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Notice that *Mark* mentions that the cock would crow twice. Next, let’s see the completion of each story.

Matthew 26:74-75

- 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.
 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Mark 14:68

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

Mark 14:72

72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

Luke 22:60-61

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.
61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

John 18:27

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Doesn't *Mark* prove that the cock crew once before Peter denied three times? Yes, but the other three accounts are focusing on Peter's three denials and the fact that Peter recalled what Jesus said after the final denial.

All of the accounts are true, but the bible often provides different details so that people can find reasons to reject the truth. If you have the true bible, always approach the scripture with the attitude of "I know the bible is true". When you find something that you cannot explain, you can tell yourself that you still have something to understand and seek God about it. It will take study to resolve it (rather than waiting for a miraculous blessing of understanding).

23.3 The Shadow Went Backwards!

Sometimes you get parallel accounts in unexpected places. In this case, you have an account in *2 Kings* because it concerned one of the kings of Judah. But it involved the prophet Isaiah, and so the account is also in *Isaiah*. I've only given the more miraculous part of the story, so you'll have to read more yourself.

2 Kings 20:1

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Kings 20:8-11

8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?
9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?
10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.
11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

Isaiah 38:1

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

Isaiah 38:7-8

7 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;
8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

Obviously, the account in *2 Kings* has more details concerning Hezekiah prayer. I left out the details concerning 15 years being added to Hezekiah's life. As an aside, there are 15 songs of degrees in the book of *Psalms*: 120-144.

23.4 Other Accounts

Here are some other examples where parallel accounts exist:

1. The plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7-12) and Psalms 78:43-49
2. stories of David, Solomon, and other kings in (a) *1 and 2 Samuel* or *1 and 2 Kings* and (b) *1 and 2 Chronicles*
3. Jesus' ministry in *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*
4. Paul's salvation story in Acts 9, 22, and 26

The book of *Psalms* recount many stories from earlier in the bible, and many of these concern David.

There are many stories during the time of the kings. Here are two verses concerning an event with David:

2 Samuel 24:1
1 And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

1 Chronicles 21:1
1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

Wait a minute! These say different things. In this story, the LORD used Satan to provoke David. You can find something similar in Job 1:6-12.

The cross references in your bible can help you find these. Sometimes searching for a word (e.g., "cock") or phrase (e.g., "ten degrees") can do it. Art comes with experience.



Word Studies in Acts

In this chapter, we will look at some words in the book of *Acts*. You should search for these words just to see how often and where they occur in the bible.

24.1 Proselyte

Acts 2:10

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

Dictionary Definition: proselyte (noun)

A new convert to some religion or religious sect, or to some particular opinion, system or party. Thus a Gentile converted to Judaism is a proselyte; a pagan converted to Christianity is a proselyte. . .

A *proselyte* is a Gentile that has become a Jew. So, why are there proselytes? Because the Jews are scattered throughout the world and the Gentiles witness their worship of their God:

Acts 2:5

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

A proselyte joins the nation:

Exodus 12:48-49

48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.

The bible doesn't refer to Christians as proselytes: while Judaism was for the Jews, Christianity is for all.

24.2 Heathen

Acts 4:25

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

Dictionary Definition: heathen

1. A pagan; a Gentile; one who worships idols, or is unacquainted with the true God.
2. A rude, illiterate, barbarous person.



The *heathen* is simply another name for a Gentile. God eventually cast Israel down and declared them to be heathen. So today, unbelieving Jews are considered to be heathen:

Galatians 2:7-9

- 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter;
 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)
 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

24.3 Grecian

Acts 6:1

- 1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

Dictionary Definition: Grecian (noun)

A native of Greece. Also, a Jew who understood Greek.

What is happening in Acts 6 is that Jews were taking care of the widows that were from Israel, called “Hebrews”, and neglecting the widows that were foreign, which were called “Grecians”. In the context, all are Jews. Essentially, you have some “racism” since a distinction was being made between those that were local and those that were not.

Let’s see some other examples. If you search for the word, you will find 3 occurrences in *Acts* and one in *Joel*. Here is the next one in *Acts*:

Acts 9:29

- 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

This one isn’t so easy to figure out, so understanding what the word means from the others will be valuable.

For the next one, we will add the preceding verse:

Acts 11:19-20

- 19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.
 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

Verse 19 says that the Jews scattered abroad preached to Jews only. Verse 20 mentions “Grecians”. So these are Jews that live outside of the land of Israel. The scattered Jews are only temporarily displaced.

These verses give us more context:

Acts 2:5

- 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:8-11

- 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?
 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,
 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Male Jews were required to go to Jerusalem for Pentecost (which is called “the feast of weeks” in the old testament). So there were many from other nations. Verse 8 says that they were born in those nations.

Finally, the word also occurs in the old testament:

Joel 3:6

6 The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.

If you read other verses around this one, you should see that we are dealing with Gentiles. So, in this case, these are probably natives of Greece. The Greek empire is not ruling over Israel at this time.

In *Acts*, *Grecians* refers to Jews living outside of Israel in the Roman empire. Although Rome is ruling, many in the empire speak Greek (a carry over from the Greek empire which preceded it). We might describe them using the phrase “Hellenistic Jews”.

So, context matters. In *Joel*, a Grecian is a Gentile from Greece. In *Acts*, it is a Jew born outside of Israel.

24.4 Christian

Acts 11:26

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Dictionary Definition: Christian (noun)

1. A believer in the religion of Christ
2. A professor of his belief in the religion of Christ
3. A real disciple of Christ; one who believes in the truth of the Christian religion, and studies to follow the example, and obey the precepts, of Christ; a believer in Christ who is characterized by real piety
4. In a general sense, the word Christians includes all who are born in a Christian country or of Christian parents

The (predominately Gentile) believers at Antioch were called *Christians*.

The Jews that followed Jesus during his ministry were also called Christians:

1 Peter 4:16

16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

But the Gentiles that followed Jesus through Paul were called *Christians* first.

24.5 Greek

Acts 14:1

1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

Dictionary Definition: Greek (noun)

A native of Greece

Although the Roman empire was ruling at the time, it was basically an extension of the Greek empire. And thus, the common name used is Greco-Roman empire. The bible still treats the world as Greek even though it acknowledges that Rome is in charge. Most of the people of the empire still spoke Greek. So, “Greek” does not require that the person be a native of Greece.

The term is somewhat synonymous with Gentile. However, emphasis is often placed on a Greek being educated:

Romans 1:14

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

A “barbarian” would not be educated. Notice how “Greek” is associated with “wise” and “barbarian” associated with “unwise”. Therefore, this verse uses “Greeks” rather than “Gentiles”:

1 Corinthians 1:22

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

24.6 Evangelist

Acts 21:8

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

Dictionary Definition: evangelist

A preacher or publisher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, licensed to preach, but not having charge of a particular church

An evangelist is a preacher of **a** gospel because there is more than one gospel in the bible. The gospel Philip preached was the gospel of the kingdom.

24.7 Religion

Acts 26:5

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Dictionary Definition: religion

1. Religion, in its most comprehensive sense, includes a belief in the being and perfections of God, in the revelation of his will to man, in man's obligation to obey his commands, in a state of reward and punishment, and in man's accountableness to God; and also true godliness or piety of life, with the practice of all moral duties.
2. Religion, as distinct from theology, is godliness or real piety in practice, consisting in the performance of all known duties to God and our fellow men, in obedience to divine command, or from love to God and his law.
3. Religion, as distinct from virtue, or morality, consists in the performance of the duties we owe directly to God, from a principle of obedience to his will.
4. Any system of faith and worship.
5. The rites of religion; in the plural

Religion is predominately a bad word in the bible because it is corrupt. Note that Paul said "our religion". Note these other verses that reference the "Jews' religion":

Galatians 1:13-14

- 13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:
- 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But compare it to God's (pure) religion:

James 1:26-27

- 26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.
- 27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Christianity is not a religion because it has no rites or rituals that are required to worship God.

24.8 Barbarian

We encountered "barbarian" as we discussed "Greek", although we didn't look at the definition.

Acts 28:4

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

Dictionary Definition: barbarian (noun)

1. A man in his rude, savage state; an uncivilized person
2. A cruel, savage, brutal man; one destitute of pity or humanity
3. A foreigner.

In most of the bible, people are divided into Jews and Gentiles (i.e., those that are not Jews). The new testament divides Gentiles into Greeks (wise) and Barbarians (unwise). During the dispensation of grace, none of these distinctions are relevant.

Figures of Speech

In our daily lives, we encounter figures of speech without thinking much about them. Likewise, the bible is full of figures of speech. I point this out only to say that not everything in the bible is literal. Yet, there are many details in the bible that are literal. I will demonstrate some figures of speech without fully defining them. I also won't pretend that I listed every possible figure of speech.

Here are some figures of speech that appear in the bible: allegory, analogy, anthropomorphism, dysphemism, ellipsis, euphemism, hyperbole, hypocatastasis, idiom, irony, metaphor, metonymy, parable, personification, simile, synecdoche, and type. Are there others? I'm sure there are.

Do we really need to identify these as we read? Definitely not. You can always go the Internet to find examples. Unfortunately, people understand this kind of thing better than what God is telling them in the bible. But let's see a few examples:

Anthropomorphism is describing God with traits of a man. The problem that arises here is that God's image is a man. So, in such cases, the traits are appropriate. Let's see an example that is misunderstood:

2 Chronicles 16:9

9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

This verse mentions the "LORD". That's God's image. He does have eyes. But that is not what this verse is about anyway. This is a reference to angels. This requires advanced study, so be careful when you see examples on the Internet (which this one was). Nonetheless, anthropomorphism is in the bible.

Here is *hyperbole*, which is great exaggeration:

Deuteronomy 1:28

28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people *is* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.

The walls were not that high.

Similes are easy to spot since they involve "like" or "as":

Matthew 20:1

1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

A *metaphor* represents one thing by another without using the words of a simile:

Matthew 26:26

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

A *parable* teaches a truth using symbols that are not necessarily literal:

Matthew 24:32-33

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:
33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

Personification is describing something as a person that is not a person:

Acts 28:25

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

The Holy Ghost does not have a mouth to speak. Other scripture tells you what this means:

2 Peter 1:21

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost, a Spirit, moves a man's spirit, so that the man speaks (or writes) what God would have him say.

So, be careful as you read. You will struggle with many things that the bible has to say. Over time, you will get comfortable with the language of the bible. As you learn to study, you will start receiving what the bible is really teaching in many places. Hang in there until such a time comes.

Word Studies in *Romans*

In this chapter, we will look at some words in the book of *Romans*.

26.1 Reprobate

Paul uses this word a few times.

Romans 1:28

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Here, the word is an adjective. Let's see what the dictionary says:

Dictionary Definition: reprobate (adjective)

1. Not enduring proof or trial; not of standard purity or fineness; disallowed; rejected
2. Abandoned in sin; lost to virtue or grace
3. Abandoned to error, or in apostasy

It also appears as a noun:

Dictionary Definition: reprobate (noun)

A person abandoned to sin; one lost to virtue and religion

A simple way to describe a person who is a reprobate is that the person cannot really discern between right and wrong. In fact, there might be too much given to what is wrong being viewed as right.

26.2 Sacrilege

This word only occurs once:

Romans 2:22

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

Dictionary Definition: sacrilege

The crime of violating or profaning sacred things; or the alienating to laymen or to common purposes what has been appropriated or consecrated to religious persons or uses

This is a good example of the bible telling you what the word means. Essentially, if one does not abhor idols, he likely embraces them. So, instead of "violating and profaning things" (or going against a "do"), the act does the opposite (going against a "don't"). It certainly can be taken both ways.



26.3 Circumcision

This is a word that occurs frequently:

Romans 2:25

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

Dictionary Definition: **circumcise**

To cut off the prepuce or foreskin of males; a ceremony or rite in the Jewish and Mohammedan religions.

In the old testament, Israel had the covenant of circumcision. They also had the law covenant. So, the two were viewed together. Israel was expected to keep the law.

Gentiles had neither covenant. They weren't expected to keep the law. A Jew that didn't keep the law was like a Gentile, and his circumcision was meaningless.

Romans 2:26-29

26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

In the new testament, circumcision is more than the physical operation. It requires a circumcision of the heart: a heart that believes and obeys. A Jew that didn't believe was not part of the circumcision.

This is a good example of progressive revelation. Essentially, the meaning of *circumcision* changed from the old testament to the new testament.

26.4 Uncircumcision

We just saw verses with this word in the previous section (Section 26.3).

Dictionary Definition: **uncircumcision**

Absence or want of circumcision

We also defined what it meant. Unbelieving Jews were heathen, just as Gentiles were.

26.5 Propitiation

This word occurs a few times (and most people do not already know what it means when they read it):

Romans 3:25

25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Dictionary Definition: **propitiation**

1. The act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person; the act of making propitious
2. In theology, the atonement or atoning sacrifice offered to God to assuage his wrath and render him propitious to sinners. Christ is the propitiation for the sins of men

Don't be surprised if you encounter words in the bible that you don't know or use normally. Just learn what they mean and move on. But beware of dictionary definitions that mention "theology". Theology is often absent from the bible.

26.6 Concupiscence

Paul uses this word a few times, and it is a word that many do not know the meaning of.

Romans 7:8

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

Dictionary Definition: concupiscence

Lust; unlawful or irregular desire of sexual pleasure. In a more general sense, the coveting of carnal things, or an irregular appetite for worldly good; inclination for unlawful enjoyments

Perhaps seeing the other two verses might help you:

Colossians 3:5

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

1 Thessalonians 4:5

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

26.7 Carnal

Romans 7:14

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Dictionary Definition: carnal

1. Pertaining to flesh; fleshly; sensual; opposed to spiritual; as carnal pleasure
2. Being in the natural state; unregenerate
3. Pertaining to the ceremonial law; as carnal ordinances
4. Lecherous; lustful; libidinous; given to sensual indulgence

This word is fairly straightforward, but make sure you understand it. Most Christians are carnal and don't know it.

26.8 Adoption

Romans 8:15

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Dictionary Definition: adoption

1. The act of adopting, or the state of being adopted; the taking and treating of a stranger as one's own child
2. The receiving as one's own, what is new or not natural
3. God's taking the sinful children of men into his favor and protection

Well, these definitions don't help at all if you want to understand the bible. Most people think adoption is joining a family. Well, you joined the body of Christ when you got saved. So adoption can't mean that. Fortunately, the bible defines it for us:

Romans 8:23

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

The "redemption of our body" is the event where we get our immortal bodies. Why doesn't the dictionary reflect that? Learn the lesson: the dictionary is only a tool—it might not reflect the bible's truth.

Part V

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A

Reading Plans

Chapter 2 gave some details about just how big the bible is. Well, this appendix will provide even more detail.

A.1 Basic Reading Plan

The basic reading plan is one that focuses on the parts of the bible that are for Gentiles (of course, Jews really are included in that group today). In this plan, you are only reading about one-sixth of the bible. Table A.1 shows some details that we will discuss.

Table A.1: The basic reading plan focuses on the parts of the bible that do not focus solely on Israel.

#	Book	Ch.	Verses	Words	H:MM
1	Genesis	50	1,533	38,262	3:35
2	Luke	24	1,151	25,640	2:35
3	Acts	28	1,007	24,229	2:24
4	Romans	16	433	9,422	1:00
5	1 Corinthians	16	437	9,462	1:01
6	2 Corinthians	13	257	6,046	0:41
7	Galatians	6	149	3,084	0:21
8	Ephesians	6	155	3,022	0:20
9	Philippians	4	104	2,183	0:14
10	Colossians	4	95	1,979	0:13
11	1 Thessalonians	5	89	1,837	0:11
12	2 Thessalonians	3	47	1,022	0:06
13	1 Timothy	6	113	2,244	0:17
14	2 Timothy	4	83	1,666	0:12
15	Titus	3	46	896	0:07
16	Philemon	1	25	430	0:03
Total		189	5,724	131,424	13:20

Not that you need to know this, but the table shows the number of chapters, verses, and words for each of the books shown. It also shows the run time of the chapters on the *Dramatized Audio Bible* in hours and minutes. When you look at this time, you might think that this will be rather easy. But listening is different from comprehending (or thinking about) what was said.

As Chapter 11 suggests, you could really read only chapters 1-11 of *Genesis* to make your task even easier. But we will stick with the numbers in the table.

If you only read 1 chapter every two days, you will finish this plan in a little more than a year (come on—you can read more than that!). You can determine your own rate and calculate when you finish. The events of life might



interrupt your plan so just accept that and move on. Just don't forget to get back to it. If you finish this plan, you should take on reading the entire bible next.

A.2 Full Bible Reading Plan

Before you consider maturing beyond a new believer, you should read the entire bible. Don't worry—you won't understand a lot of it. I am surprised how many Christians have been saved for many, many years and have not read the entire bible.

Table A.2 shows the number of chapters, verses, and words for all of the books of the bible. It also shows the run time of the chapters on the *Dramatized Audio Bible* [2] in hours and minutes.

Table A.2: The full bible reading plan targets the entire bible.

#	Book	Ch.	Verses	Words	H:MM	#	Book	Ch.	Verses	Words	H:MM
1	Genesis	50	1,533	38,262	3:35	34	Nahum	3	47	1,284	0:08
2	Exodus	40	1,213	32,685	2:57	35	Habakkuk	3	56	1,475	0:09
3	Leviticus	27	859	24,541	2:12	36	Zephaniah	3	53	1,616	0:09
4	Numbers	36	1,288	32,896	2:57	37	Haggai	2	38	1,130	0:06
5	Deuteronomy	34	959	28,352	2:46	38	Zechariah	14	211	6,443	0:34
6	Joshua	24	658	18,854	1:42	39	Malachi	4	55	1,781	0:10
7	Judges	21	618	18,966	1:38	40	Matthew	28	1,071	23,343	2:22
8	Ruth	4	85	2,574	0:14	41	Mark	16	678	14,949	1:31
9	1 Samuel	31	810	25,048	2:09	42	Luke	24	1,151	25,640	2:35
10	2 Samuel	24	695	20,600	1:56	43	John	21	879	18,658	1:53
11	1 Kings	22	816	24,513	2:11	44	Acts	28	1,007	24,229	2:24
12	2 Kings	25	719	23,517	2:11	45	Romans	16	433	9,422	1:00
13	1 Chronicles	29	942	20,365	2:12	46	1 Corinthians	16	437	9,462	1:01
14	2 Chronicles	36	822	26,069	2:26	47	2 Corinthians	13	257	6,046	0:41
15	Ezra	10	280	7,440	0:41	48	Galatians	6	149	3,084	0:21
16	Nehemiah	13	406	10,480	1:01	49	Ephesians	6	155	3,022	0:20
17	Esther	10	167	5,633	0:30	50	Philippians	4	104	2,183	0:14
18	Job	42	1,070	18,098	1:48	51	Colossians	4	95	1,979	0:13
19	Psalms	150	2,461	42,704	4:27	52	1 Thessalonians	5	89	1,837	0:11
20	Proverbs	31	915	15,038	1:31	53	2 Thessalonians	3	47	1,022	0:06
21	Ecclesiastes	12	222	5,579	0:30	54	1 Timothy	6	113	2,244	0:17
22	Song of Solomon	8	117	2,658	0:16	55	2 Timothy	4	83	1,666	0:12
23	Isaiah	66	1,292	37,036	3:44	56	Titus	3	46	896	0:07
24	Jeremiah	52	1,364	42,654	3:44	57	Philemon	1	25	430	0:03
25	Lamentations	5	154	3,411	0:20	58	Hebrews	13	303	6,897	0:48
26	Ezekiel	48	1,273	39,401	3:55	59	James	5	108	2,304	0:15
27	Daniel	12	357	11,602	1:03	60	1 Peter	5	105	2,476	0:17
28	Hosea	14	197	5,174	0:30	61	2 Peter	3	61	1,553	0:11
29	Joel	3	73	2,033	0:10	62	1 John	5	105	2,517	0:16
30	Amos	9	146	4,216	0:24	63	2 John	1	13	298	0:02
31	Obadiah	1	21	669	0:03	64	3 John	1	14	294	0:02
32	Jonah	4	48	1,320	0:07	65	Jude	1	25	608	0:05
33	Micah	7	105	3,152	0:18	66	Revelation	22	404	11,952	1:11

Here are the totals that aren't in the table: Chapters: 1,189; Verses: 31,102; Words: 788,280; and Run Time (H:MM) 76:02. Just think about the number of chapters: You have to read a little more than 3.25 chapters a day to finish in a year. That's about 23 chapters a week, or 99 chapters a month. This should sound like a lot. If you have a life to live, you probably won't have time for it. You might start out on an acceptable pace, but some of the content of the bible will grind you to a halt. But here is the encouragement: Commit to something, expect to get behind, but keep at it. This is where the *Dramatized Audio Bible* [2] really comes in handy. You'd be listening to about 15 minutes a day. You can do that!

B

Turning from Error

One of the worst influences on Christianity is Catholicism. As a reader, you might be greatly offended by my statement. If so, then you need to do a little research that involves the bible. If not, you should still understand how this corrupt religion influences Christianity. Just about every television show depicting Christianity is really Catholicism.

I was not brought up in Catholicism, but I do have family members who were. Let's see some scriptures that Catholicism violates by its teaching.

B.1 Call No Man, Father

If you understand Christianity, you will understand that it has no priesthood. Guess who has a priesthood! Not only that, they call the priests "father". Let's see what the bible has to say:

Matthew 23:9
9 And call no <i>man</i> your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Now, this isn't about calling your male parent "father"; it is about calling a religious leader by that as a title. Where does that come from?

Judges 17:10
10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten <i>shekels</i> of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

Judges 18:19-20
19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: <i>is it</i> better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?
20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

This was where idolatry became firmly entrenched in the nation. There are many names for this problem. One of them is Baal worship. Catholicism is essentially that.

B.2 Mary Was Not Sinless

I'm not sure why the error is taught that Mary was sinless. If she were sinless, then we can achieve the same! Clearly the bible says otherwise. Let's see:

Luke 1:47
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.



If Mary were sinless, she wouldn't need a savior. She was either telling the truth here (yes) or giving us lip-service (no). Here's another condemning verse:

Romans 3:23

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

I think Mary falls into the group called **all**. There is no shame that Mary was a sinner because all are.

Jesus wasn't a sinner because he did not have an earthly father. Mary did have such an earthly father.

B.3 Mary Had Other Children

Did Mary remain a virgin? That's absurd—well, it is if you have a proper bible and can read it. I wonder if Catholics read theirs. Let's see the overwhelming hints:

Matthew 1:25

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Luke 2:7

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Jesus wouldn't be her firstborn if she didn't have others; it would have said "only" instead. Not convinced? Keep going:

Matthew 13:55

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?
--

Mark 6:3

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

John 7:5

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.
--

Galatians 1:19

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

1 Corinthians 9:5

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and <i>as</i> the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?
--

All of these talk about brothers (and possibly sisters). Now, the error that is taught is that these were cousins (or kinsmen). Wouldn't the bible use those words if that were the case. Let's see examples were those words are used:

Luke 1:36

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.
--

Luke 1:58

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Both of those verses call out a cousin or cousins.

Here is proof that might be a little harder to follow. Let's start with this verse in the new testament:

John 2:17

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.
--

That's a quote from the second verse in this passage:

Psalms 69:8-9
8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.
9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

This old testament passage is prophecy about Jesus. It refers to his "mother's children". Well, those aren't cousins. You really have to wonder why this lie is so important.

B.4 The Queen of Heaven Is Bad

You find various titles for Mary that aren't in the bible. You might hear "Queen of Heaven" or even "Queen of the Universe". Well, the former is in the bible and it is a bad thing:

Jeremiah 7:18
18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead <i>their</i> dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

Jeremiah 44:17-19
17 But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for <i>then</i> had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.
18 But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all <i>things</i> , and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.
19 And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?

Jeremiah 44:25
25 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.

Technically, this next verse is unrelated to the queen of heaven. But it is coming from the same book.

Jeremiah 7:9
9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;

This last verse helps you understand why it is called "Baal worship".

B.5 Other Protestant Error

I don't want to get into the similarities and differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. Yet, the latter is related to the former. Perhaps, you could say it is less offensive. Most denominations fall into Protestantism.

It is easy to summarize most of them: if they teach water baptism for Christians, then they are in error. They are in the wrong part of the bible (these are not written by Paul):

Matthew 3:6
6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark 1:5
5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We aren't confessing our sins today either.

You might think I am just making these things up. How can most of Christianity have it wrong? Well, you'll eventually learn that as you mature. Will it be sooner or later that you do that? Good luck to you.





Reference Materials

Completed and draft e-books are available via <https://thechurchoforlando.org>.

- [1] *American Dictionary of the English Language*, Noah Webster, 1828; commonly called *Webster's Dictionary 1828* (see <https://webstersdictionary1828.com>); this dictionary is in the *e-Sword X* application
- [2] *Dramatized Audio Bible*, King James Version, The Zondervan Corporation, 2007
- [3] *e-Sword X*, Rick Meyers, 2025; electronic bible application, Version 9.6 (44); see also <https://www.e-sword.net/mac>
- [4] *Biblical Time*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, 9/7/25
- [5] *Maturity Curriculum*, Tom Wilson, e-book; 5/1/25
- [6] *Respecting Distinctions*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, Revision A, 6/18/26
- [7] *The Biblical Angels*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, Revision A, 9/11/24
- [8] *The Biblical Creation*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, 1/1/24
- [9] *The Common Man's Reference Bible*, David Allen Hoffman, second edition, 2011; free use is granted
- [10] *The English Bible*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, 6/3/25
- [11] *The Revelation of God*, Tom Wilson, e-book; Draft Edition, 1/19/25 (first edition coming soon)
- [12] *Zondervan KJV Study Bible*, The Zondervan Corporation, 2002

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