

Bible Study Tools

Randy Nelson, University of Northwestern—St. Paul, MN

IMPORTANT DOCTRINES

Authority of Scripture

- As the Creator, God has the absolute right to prescribe human beliefs and practices.
- Since the Bible is the revealed Word of God, it carries God’s authority.
- The Bible’s authority is true whether it is acknowledged or not.
- For believers, the Holy Spirit confirms the authority of Scripture (2 Cor. 2:14).
- During the Protestant Reformation (1517-1648), the battle cry was *sola Scriptura*.

“Our claim is that God has revealed himself by speaking; that this divine (or God-breathed) speech has been written down and preserved in Scripture; and that Scripture is, in fact, God’s written word, which therefore is true and reliable and has divine authority over men” (John Stott).

Sufficiency of Scripture

- The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Bible contains everything we need to know.
- This knowledge, of course, is about God and his purposes.
- It is also knowledge about human identity, purpose, and direction.
- “Everything in the Bible is true, but not all truth is in the Bible.”

“The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contains all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for our salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly” (Wayne Grudem).

Perspiciuity of Scripture

- The perspicuity of Scripture means that the overall message of Scripture is clear.
- Question: Are people saved by reading Gideon Bibles?
- This does not mean, however, that the meaning of every verse is obvious.
- Distance in time obscures the meaning of some Bible passages.
- See Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (1982).
- See also Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties* (2008).

“God has made His message understandable to humanity. The clarity of Scripture is also known as perspicuity. This means that the basic message of Scripture has been clearly revealed so that everyone can understand it. The Bible is a book to be understood by the masses—it does not contain secret or hidden messages from God” (Don Steward).

BENEFITS OF BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

Introduction to Bible Study Tools

- For interpreters of Scripture, Bible study tools are “the tools of the trade.”
- Scholars, pastors, and lay people find these tools to be helpful.
- Bible study tools provide valuable background information for understanding the Bible.
- Can the Bible be understood apart from the use of Bible study tools?

“All I Need is the Bible.”

- Much research goes into producing English translations of the Bible
- Textual critics review manuscripts to establish the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament.
- Lexicographers create lexicons by studying the ancient usage of Hebrew and Greek words.
- Grammarians study ancient grammatical usage to write Hebrew and Greek grammars.
- Bible translators rely upon the work of textual critics, lexicographers, and grammarians.
- They also rely upon the insights of linguists.
- Study Bible notes require additional research by scholars.

Verbal Meaning is Contextual

- Authors use shared literary conventions (i.e., language, genre, grammar, words).
- Communication, however, does not occur in a historical vacuum.
- When the historical context is ignored, it is easy to misrepresent an author’s message.
- Biblical texts, like all texts, have historical particularity.

"But because God chose to speak his Word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written" (Gordan Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 17).

"The writers [of the gospels] assumed that the original reader was familiar with this setting or that a few words would bring sufficient clarity (see, e.g., Mark 7:3-4). We serious modern readers must not take the first-century background lightly. We need to take a journey into a land in which we are strangers, that land of those to whom the gospel first came" (J. Julius Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*).

Mark 7:1-4. “¹ The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus ² and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)” (cf. Mt. 15:1-2).

Question: Why does Mark add this two-verse parenthetical comment?

Bible Study Tools Guard against Misinterpretation

- Exegesis means to “pull out” from the text the author’s intended meaning.
- Eisegesis means to “read into” the text the reader’s preconceived ideas.
- Analogy: Ink blot test (Psychology)
- Without a rigorous methodology, we tend to read into the Bible our personal and cultural perspective.
- “Wonderful things in the Bible I see; most of them put there by you and me.”
- We also tend to modernize the Bible producing anachronistic interpretations.
- For example, why does Joseph seek to divorce Mary while they are engaged?
- As a governor, was Pontius Pilate elected by popular vote?
- As a tax-collector, did Matthew work for the Internal Revenue Service?
- Was slavery racially motivated?
- Are all Samaritans “good?”
- Was it controversial for Jesus to have female disciples?
- Is it shameful to be infertile (barren)?

“A text cannot mean what it never meant” (Gordan Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 26).

“But if we start merely from our own culture’s assumptions, we stand as much chance of misreading the Bible as reincarnationist Hindus do” (Craig Keener, *The IVP Background Commentary: New Testament*, 4).

"If we try to make sense of the Bible with no knowledge of the people who wrote it, those who read it and the society in which they lived, we will be inclined to read into the Scriptures our own society's values and ideas. This would be a major mistake since our culture is very different from that of the ancient Romans" (James Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament*, 11).

“It is not necessary to understand the culture fully to benefit from reading the document, but having even a degree of insight into the culture can enrich one’s reading significantly and help to guard against erroneous interpretations” (Albert Bell, *Exploring the New Testament World*, 4).

“Interpretation which is not anchored in background studies will be historically insensitive and, therefore, simply wrong. Christians who neglect background information are in danger of denying the time-conditioned nature of revelation, both in the event and in the text” (Scot McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*, 28).

"The correct interpretation of a biblical passage will be consistent with the historical-cultural background of the passage... To the extent that we enter the world of the biblical setting, we can grasp the meaning of the passage. An interpretation that accurately corresponds to the original setting best represents the text's intended meaning" (William Klein, Craig Blomberg, & Robert Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 172, 183).

Building a Library of Bible Study Tools

- Bauer, David. *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Hendrickson, 2003.
- Danker, Frederick. *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*. Fortress, 1993.
- Glynn, John. *Commentary & Reference Survey*. Kregel, 2007.

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Original Languages of the Bible

- The Old Testament was primarily written in Hebrew, with some sections in Aramaic.
- Aramaic sections include Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-16; Dan. 2:4b-7:28; Jer. 10:11.
- The New Testament was written in *koine* ("common") Greek.

First Translations of the Bible

- The Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, ca. 250 B.C. (Septuagint).
- The Hebrew Bible was translated into Aramaic, ca. A.D. 100-600 (Targums).
- The Greek New Testament was translated into Syriac, ca. 2nd century A.D. (Peshitta).
- Also in the 2nd century A.D., it was translated into Coptic, an Egyptian dialect.
- The Greek New Testament was later translated into Latin, ca. A.D. 380 (Vulgate).

Importance of Good English Translation

Frederick Danker: "Of all the aids at the disposal of the biblical interpreter, none outranks Bible versions" (*Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*, p. 162).

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart: "The basic tool for reading and studying the Bible is a good English translation" (*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, p. 28).

NECESSITY OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Unfamiliarity with Original Languages

- Over time, the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek are often forgotten.
- Soon the Bible becomes inaccessible to those who don't know the biblical languages.
- Jews living in diaspora needed the Hebrew Bible translated into Greek (Septuagint).
- Babylonian Jews needed the Hebrew Bible translated into Aramaic (Targums).
- Medieval Christians needed the Bible translated into Latin (Vulgate).
- Martin Luther translated the Vulgate into German for the common person (1522, 1534).

Changes in Language

- Over time, word usage changes.
- Words fall out of usage, new words are added, and words change meaning.
- For example, “chaffer” is an English word that dropped from usage in the early 20th century.
- See R.C. Trench, *Dictionary of Obsolete English* (1958).
- New English words: computer, internet, cell phone.
- The English word “gay” has changed meaning.
- “And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing” (James 2:3, KJV).
- The Bible must continually be translated into contemporary languages.
- Otherwise, it will be misunderstood or viewed as antiquated.

Advances in Biblical Studies

- Archaeologists continue to discover artifacts and manuscripts.
- Our knowledge of the original languages continues to grow.
- There are new developments in the field of linguistics.

THEORIES OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

Introduction to Bible Translations

- Words and grammar have a range of possible meanings.
- Example: “Love” translates *agape*, *philia*, *storge*, *eros*
- Example: *cheir(os)* can be translated as finger, palm, wrist, and forearm.
- Translators make interpretive judgments about the meaning of words and grammar.
- Thus, all translations include interpretation.

Verbatim (Literal) Translation

- Translators provide a literal, word-for-word translation from the original languages.
- Translators attempt, as much as possible, to find equivalent words.

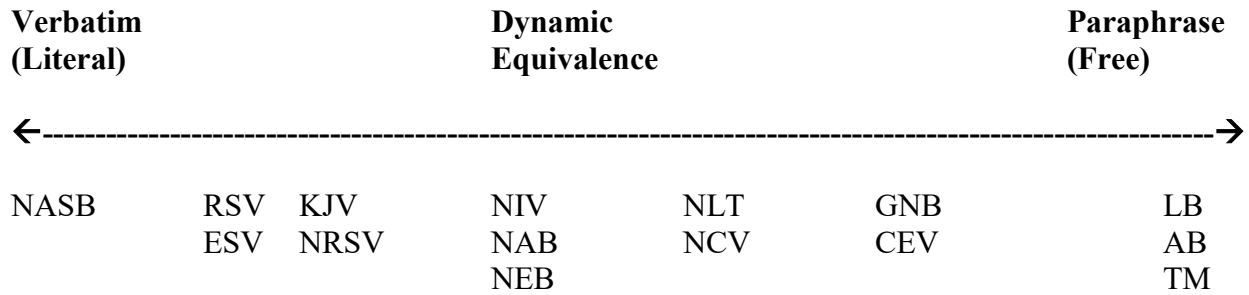
Dynamic Equivalence Translation

- Translators seek a thought-for-thought translation.
- Translators attempt to translate in a way that is understandable to contemporary readers.

Paraphrase (Free) Translation

- Translators attempt to provide a translation with interpretive clarity.
- Translators supplement the translation with commentary to make it more understandable.

CONTINUUM OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS



RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

- Carson, D.A. *The King James Version Debate*. Baker, 1979.
- -----. *The Inclusive-Language Debate*. Baker, 1998.
- Collins, C. John, et al. *Translating Truth: The Case for Essentially Literal Bible Translation*. Crossway, 2005.
- Comfort, Philip. *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*. Tyndale, 2000.
- Dewey, David. *A User's Guide to Bible Translations*. IVP, 2005.
- Fee, Gordon. *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth*. Zondervan, 2007.
- Grudem, Wayne, and Jerry Thacker. *Why is My Choice of a Bible Translation So Important?* 2005.
- Kubo, Sakae, and Walter Specht. *So Many Translations?* Zondervan, 1983.
- Lewis, Jack. *The English Bible for KJV to NIV*. Baker, 1991.
- Metzger, Bruce. *The Bible in Translation*. Baker, 2001.
- Rhodes, Ron. *The Complete Guide to Bible Translations*. Harvest House, 2009.
- Ryken, Leland. *Bible Translation Differences*. Crossway, 2004.
- -----. *The Word of God in English*. Crossway, 2002.
- Scorgie, Glen, et al. *The Challenge of Bible Translation*. Zondervan, 2003.
- Sheeley, Steven, and Robert Nash. *Choosing a Bible*. Abingdon, 1999.
- Strauss, Mark. *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translation & Gender Accuracy*. 1998.
- White, James. *The King James Only Controversy*. Bethany, 1995.

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING A BIBLE TRANSLATION

Who Prepared the Translation?

- Is this translation the effort of an individual or a committee?
- What are the credentials of the translator(s)? What are their theological biases?

What is the Translation Based upon?

- Is it a revision of an earlier translation or a completely new translation?
- Is it based upon the original languages and best manuscripts?

How was the Bible Translated?

- Is it seeking a word-for-word translation or dynamic equivalence?
- Is it a paraphrase, taking interpretive liberties?

Where will the Translation be Used?

- What age group will be reading it?
- Will it be used for public or private reading?
- Is it for the purpose of study or devotion?

ENGLISH REFORMATION BIBLES

John Wycliffe's Bible (1380). Wycliffe (1329-84) was the first Bible translator in England. He was an Oxford scholar who was assisted by his associates. Their translation was based upon the Vulgate (Latin Bible). This translation had to be copied by hand (no printing press).

Tyndale's Bible (1526). William Tyndale (1494-1536) translated the N.T. from Greek. He was martyred in 1538 for his efforts.

Coverdale's Bible (1535). Miles Coverdale (1488-1569) used the Vulgate, Tyndale's Bible, and German translations. The apocrypha was put in an appendix.

Matthew's Bible (1537). John Roger completed the work of William Tyndale on the O.T. Published under the assumed name of Thomas Matthew. Roger was burned at the stake in 1555.

Great Bible (1539). Called the "Great Bible" because of its size, 11" x 16.5". Miles Coverdale revised his earlier translation. Under the sanction of King Edward VI, placed in every church.

Geneva Bible (1560). Written by English scholars who had sought refuge in Geneva. Translation led by William Whittingham. Apocrypha put in an appendix. Became popular in England and Scotland.

Bishop's Bible (1568). Seven year project instigated by Archbishop Matthew Parker. Parker was assisted by several other bishops and scholars. Became official English version under Queen Elizabeth.

Douay-Rheims Bible (1590). Roman Catholic translation of the Bible. Largely translated from the Vulgate (Latin). Primary Bible for Catholics until the New American Bible (1970).

KJV: King James Version (1611). Called the Authorized Version (AV) in England. Authorized by the King of England, James I, to whom it was dedicated. Produced by 47 scholars working for seven years. Revised Bishop's Bible but appealed to original languages. Relied upon the best available mss. of Hebrew O.T. and Greek N.T. (textus receptus). Early version of the KJV included the OT apocrypha in an appendix. Quickly replaced the Bishop's Bible as the official version of England. It has undergone major revisions (1613, 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769).

MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

ERV: English Revised Version (1887). In 1870, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce called for revision of KJV. 54 scholars were appointed to the revision committee. Church of England, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian. Considered original languages but relied heavily upon the KJV.

ASV: American Standard Version (1901). Involved 30 American members of revision committee for ERV. Considered original languages but relied heavily upon the KJV.

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1946). Copyright of ASV purchased by International Council of Religious Education. 32 scholars served on the committee to revise the ASV. Prose put into paragraphs and poetry put into poetic form. RSV has been officially adopted by many mainline denominations. Addition of apocrypha sponsored by National Council of Churches (1957).

New Testament in Modern English (1958). Translated by J.B. Phillips. Paraphrase translation.

NWT: New World Translation (1961). Translated by New World Translation Committee. Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses). Supposedly "Rendered from the Original Languages" (p. 3).

AB: Amplified Bible (1964). Translated by Frances E. Siwert. Published by Lockman Foundation and Zondervan.

JB: Jerusalem Bible (1966). Translated by 28 Roman Catholic scholars from original Hebrew and Greek. Based upon French translation *La Bible de Jerusalem*. Includes O.T. Apocrypha and explanatory notes. Method of translation was dynamic equivalence.

TEV: Today's English Bible (1966). Translated by Robert Bratcher, research associate for American Bible Society. Entitled "Good News for Modern Man: The N.T. in Today's English Version." Method of translation was dynamic equivalence.

MLB: Modern Language Bible (1969). Also known as the New Berkeley Version. Berkeley Version in Modern English (1969) largely the work of Gerrit Verkuyl. Under the leadership of Verkuyl, committee of 20 scholars revised it. Published by Zondervan.

NAB: New American Bible (1970). This translation was sponsored by the Catholic Church. Translated by 59 Catholic scholars and 5 Protestant scholars. Based upon original Hebrew and Greek texts, and includes O.T. Apocrypha. Most widely used translation by Catholics.

NEB: New English Bible (1970). Sponsored by numerous denominations in England. Published by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. Based upon original Hebrew and Greek texts, and includes O.T. Apocrypha. Method of translations was dynamic equivalence. More popular in Britain than the U.S. (used British idioms).

NASB: New American Standard Bible (1971). Produced and published by the Lockman Foundation, La Habra, California. 32 member committee translated from the original languages. Translation based upon ASV (1901). Method of translation was verbatim (word-for-word).

LB: The Living Bible (1971). Produced by Chicago businessman, Kenneth Nathaniel Taylor. Translation based upon ASV (1901), a strictly literal translation. Method of translation was paraphrase.

GNB: Good News Bible (1976). Addition of O.T. to TEV (1966). Published by the American Bible Society. Method of translation was dynamic equivalence.

NIV: New International Version (1978). International effort (Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand, U.S.). Based upon original Hebrew and Greek texts. 100 translators from different denominational backgrounds. Translators were divided into teams and assigned specific sections. Two different committees reviewed and revised the translations. Method of translation was dynamic equivalence. Currently the most widely used English translation.

NKJV: New King James Version (1982). Popular revision of the KJV. Replaced archaic words (e.g., "thee" or "thou"). Committee of 119 scholars from various denominations. Published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

NJB: The New Jerusalem Bible (1985). Based upon a 1973 revision of *La Bible de Jerusalem*. The *La Bible de Jerusalem* was originally translated into English in 1966.

NCV: The Word--New Century Version (1986). Translated by 21 scholars. Attempts to use gender inclusive language. This is the translation used for the Adventures in Odyssey Bible.

REB: Revised English Bible (1989). A revision of the New English Bible (1970).

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1990). Translated by Bruce Metzger and other scholars. Purpose is to create a gender inclusive translation.

The Message (1993). Translated by Eugene Peterson.

SV: Scholars Version (1993). Produced by members of the Jesus Seminar. Includes Gospel of Thomas alongside Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Jesus' sayings are color-coded according to degrees of authenticity. Colors: Red, Pink, Grey, Black

CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995). Translated in the spirit of the KJV. Translated from original Hebrew and Greek texts. Sponsored by the American Bible Society.

ESV: English Standard Version (2001). Started with the RSV but considered the original Hebrew and Greek texts to produce a literal translation.

BENEFITS OF A STUDY BIBLE

Book Introductions. Most Study Bibles have introductory notes at the beginning of each book of the Bible. These notes include information about the historical setting, such as, author, date, and audience. Also included is a description of the book's purpose and themes, along with a thematic outline of the entire book. Better Study Bibles have extensive introductory notes. Keep in mind, however, that these introductory notes are written from the perspective of the editors of the Study Bible. They are neither inspired nor inerrant.

Annotations. Probably the most helpful, but also the most given to bias, is the interpretive notes usually found at the bottom of each page. This commentary, though helpful, is not inspired; it is written from the perspective of the editors of the Study Bible. It is important, then, to investigate the background of the Study Bible and the theological perspective of the editors. Another

shortcoming of these interpretive notes is that even though their conciseness makes them user friendly, they are frequently too brief to be of much value.

Cross-References. In either the center or the sides of the page, there will be a list of cross-references. The editors of the Study Bible have identified biblical passages that are related topically. A review of cross-references is helpful when considering the canonical context in biblical interpretation. The principle of "Scripture interpreting Scripture" is referred to as the analogy of Scripture. Probably one of the best Study Bibles for checking cross-references is the Thompson Chain Reference Bible.

Concordance. A concordance lists the location (chapter and verse) of words in the Bible. Although some concordances are exhaustive, a Study Bible provides only an abridged version.

Subject Index. This index provides a list of biblical topics in alphabetical order. At a glance, the reader can observe the Bible passages that address a particular topic. While a concordance will provide references to word usage, the subject index identifies verses that are linked topically.

Visual Aids. Study Bibles usually provide visual aids that summarize important information. These aids may be in the form of charts, diagrams, and time lines. Examples of these visual aids include: (1) list of patriarchs, judges, prophets, and disciples; (2) description of biblical covenants; (3) diagram of the tabernacle and temple; (4) messianic prophecies and their fulfillment; and (5) harmony of the gospels.

Maps. A good Study Bible will have numerous maps, either scattered throughout the Bible or localized in the back. These maps are helpful to locate the people and events described in both testaments. Since geographical locations change names and even boundaries, several different maps are provided. Some maps even chronicle individual journeys, e.g., Abraham's journey from Ur, the Exodus from Egypt, Jesus' week of passion, and Paul's missionary journeys.

Word Studies. Study Bibles typically do not include individual word studies. There are, however, two notable exceptions. First, the Nelson's Study Bible has word studies on over 350 key words throughout the Old and New Testaments. Second, a more extensive approach to word studies is provided by Spiros Zodhiates. Numerous words are numerically tagged throughout the Bible. These numerical tags correspond to the appendix which includes a Hebrew and Greek Lexicon (keyed to Strong's concordance). See Zodhiates' *KJV Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible* or *NAS Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*.

Recommended Study Bibles

- Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The NIV Study Bible*. Zondervan, 1985.
- Hiebert, Edmond. *Life Application Study Bible: New International Version*. Zondervan, 1991.
- Meeks, Wayne, ed. *The NRSV HarperCollins Study Bible*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.
- Morris, Henry. *The Believer's Study Bible, NKJV*. Nelson, 1991.
- Ryrie, Charles. *The Ryrie Study Bible*. Moody Press, 1994.
- Scofield, C.I. *Scofield Study Bible*. Oxford University Press, 1945.
- ----- . *The New Scofield Study Bible*. Oxford University Press, 1984.

- Shelley, Marshal, ed. *Quest NIV Study Bible*. Zondervan, 1994.
- *The Open Bible, NASB*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.
- *The Open Bible, NKJV*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997.
- *Thompson's Chain Reference Bible*. B.B. Kirdbride Bible Co., 1990.

THREE STEPS OF BACKGROUND STUDIES

Two Assumptions

- Bible has eternal relevance.
- Bible has historical particularity.

First Step: Be Aware of the Bible's Socio-Historical Setting

- Collectivist perspective (corporate identity)
- Hierarchal (class stratification) and Patriarchal (male leadership)
- Loyalty to family
- Arranged marriages: negotiation → dowry → betrothal (engagement) → wedding
- Honor/shame society
- Agrarian culture: mostly tenant farmers
- Occupied nation: soldiers, limited freedom, taxation, growing Jewish nationalism
- Household slaves: indentured servitude
- Supernaturalists: God, angels, demons, miracles, afterlife
- Ritual (ceremonial) purity based on Levitical laws

“We also want to discover the common cultural beliefs and values—the presuppositional pool, as some have called it—that authors and hearers/readers of the original text would have brought to their production of and encounter with the text” (Michael Gorman, *Elements in Biblical Exegesis*, 67).

Second Step: Reconstruct the Socio-Historical Setting of the Biblical Text

- What is known about the author (e.g., identity, location, date, purpose)?
- What is known about the original readers (e.g., identity, location, relationship with author)?

Third Step: Explain Cultural Conventions and Social Customs within Bible Passage

- We no longer practice some biblical conventions.
- Examples: animal sacrifices, meat sacrificed to idols, slavery, head-coverings, crucifixion
- Other biblical conventions have changed meaning.
- Examples: circumcision, barrenness, fasting, table fellowship, hospitality, foot-washings.
- Even weights and measures change over time.
- Examples: cubit, homer, ephah, stadion, talent, mina

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS FOR BACKGROUND STUDIES

TWO TYPES OF SOURCES

Primary Sources. Ancient remnants and manuscripts discovered by archaeologists.

- Ancient Near Eastern literature
- Old Testament Apocrypha
- Old Testament Pseudepigrapha
- Dead Sea Scrolls
- Philo
- Josephus
- Rabbinic literature
- New Testament Apocrypha
- Roman sources
- Patristic writings

Secondary Sources. Scholars create Bible study tools to aid biblical interpretation.

- Study Bibles
- Bible atlases
- Bible handbooks
- Bible dictionaries
- Bible encyclopedias
- Bible introductions
- Background studies
- Bible commentaries

SECONDARY SOURCES

Introduction to Secondary Sources

- Students of the Bible rely heavily upon secondary sources for background studies.
- Scholars interact with primary sources as well as other secondary sources.
- Secondary sources are not inspired.
- They are written from the theological perspective of the scholar.
- Secondary sources vary substantially in their quality.
- Some secondary sources are dated in their scholarship.
- This is especially true on websites and in software.

Dated Secondary Sources

- Matthew Henry's Commentary (1706)
- John Gill Commentary (1746-63)
- Adam Clarke's Commentary (1810-25)
- Smith's *Bible Dictionary* (1863)
- Charles Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David* (1869)
- Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary (1871)
- Orville Nave's *Topical Bible* (1897)
- James Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible* (1902)
- *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, edited by James Orr (1915)
- A.T. Roberson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (1930-33)
- William Barclay's *Commentary of the New Testament* (1953)

BIBLE ATLASES

Introduction to Bible Atlases

- Bible history (i.e., people and events) is often linked to geographical location.
- An accurate understanding of many texts requires knowledge of Bible geography.
- A Bible atlas provides multiple maps of geographical locations in both testaments.
- Scholars create maps that are time sensitive since names often change.
- New archaeological discoveries lead to revision of current maps.
- Maps identify nations, territories, cities, towns, mountains, lakes, and rivers.
- They also frequently provide helpful background information on these locations.
- Some present Bible locations in alphabetical order, while others in chronological order.
- Still others provide time-specific overlays.

Bibliography of Bible Atlases

- Aharoni, Yohanan. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. Macmillan, 1993.
- Baly, Denis. *The Geography of the Bible*. Harper & Row, 1974.
- Beitzel, Barry. *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*. Moody, 1985.
- Brisco, Thomas. *Holman Bible Atlas*. Broadman & Holman, 2014.
- Bruce, F. *The Illustrated Bible Atlas*. Kregel, 1999.
- DeVries, LaMoine. *Cities of the Biblical World*. Hendrickson, 1997.
- Dowley, Tim, ed. *Atlas of the Bible and Christianity*. Baker, 1997.
- ----- . *Student Bible Atlas*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015.
- Frank, Harry, ed. *Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Hammond, 1997.
- Jenkins, Simon. *Nelson's 3-D Bible Mapbook*. Thomas Nelson, 1985.
- Kopp, Clemens. *The Holy Places of the Gospels*. Herder & Herder, 1963.
- Laney, J. Carl. *The Concise Bible Atlas*. Hendrickson, 1998.
- May, Herbert. *Oxford Bible Atlas*. Oxford University, 1984.
- Monson, J., et al. *Student Map Manual*. Pictorial Archive, 1979.
- Paterson, John, et al. *New Bible Atlas*. InterVarsity, 1994.

- Pfeiffer, Charles. *Baker Bible Atlas*. Baker, 2003.
- Pritchard, James. *The HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible*. Harper, 1997.
- Rasmussen, Carl. *The Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible*. Zondervan, 1999.
- Rogerson, John. *Atlas of the Bible*. Facts on File Publications, 1985.
- Wood, D., et al. *New Bible Atlas*. InterVarsity, 1985.
- Wright, Paul. *Then and Now Bible Atlas*. Rose Publishing, 2012.
- ----- . *Holman Illustrated Guide to Biblical Geography*. 2020.

BIBLE HANDBOOKS

Introduction to Bible Handbooks

- Prepared by individual scholars to provide general background information
- Information on each book in the Bible is presented in canonical order.
- Usually comment on larger sections, such as chapters or other divisions.
- Many of the key points are illustrated with maps, charts, diagrams, graphs, and pictures.

Bibliography of Bible Handbooks

- Alexander, David and Pat, eds. *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible*. Zondervan, 1999.
- Blair, Edward. *The Illustrated Bible Handbook*. Abingdon, 1987.
- Bowker, John. *The Complete Bible Handbook*. DK Publishing, 1998.
- Boyd, Robert. *World's Bible Handbook*. World Bible, 1992.
- Dockery, David, ed. *Holman Bible Handbook*. Broadman & Holman, 1992.
- Easley, Kendall. *Ultimate Bible Guide*. Holman, 2018.
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- Hayford, Jack, ed. *Hayford's Bible Handbook*. Thomas Nelson, 1990.
- Kerr, William. *Kregel Bible Handbook*. Kregel, 2000.
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- MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*. Thomas Nelson, 2002.
- Metzger, Bruce, and Michael Cohen. *Oxford Companion to the Bible*. Oxford University, 1993.
- Porter, J. R. *The Illustrated Guide to the Bible*. Oxford University, 1995.
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- Willmington, Harold. *Willmington's Bible Handbook*. Tyndale House, 1997.

BIBLE DICTIONARIES

Introduction to Bible Dictionaries

- Bible dictionaries provide information on biblical topics in alphabetical order.
- These topics include the people, places, and subjects addressed in the Bible.
- Include brief introductions to the books of the Bible and limited word studies.

- Editors assemble numerous scholars who have specialized expertise.
- These scholars write brief entries (1-2 paragraphs) that provide introductory information.
- They also include selected bibliographies for further study.

Bibliography of Bible Dictionaries

- Achtemeier, Paul, ed. *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. Harper & Row, 1985.
- Brand, Chad, et al. *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. 2015.
- Browning, W.R.F., ed. *Oxford Dictionary of the Bible*. Oxford University, 1998.
- Butler, Trent, ed. *Holman Bible Dictionary*. Broadman & Holman, 1991.
- Buttrick, George, ed. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vols. Abingdon, 1981.
- Dockery, Karen, et al. *The Student Bible Dictionary*. Barbour, 2001.
- Douglas, J. D., ed. *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. 3 vols. InterVarsity, 1998.
- -----. *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*. Zondervan, 1987.
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- Elwell, Walter, et al. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*. Tyndale, 2007.
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- Harrison, R., ed. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Moody, 1988.
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- Lockyer, Herbert, ed. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson, 1986.
- Marshall, I.H, et al. *New Bible Dictionary*. InterVarsity, 1996.
- McKenzie, John. *Dictionary of the Bible*. Macmillan, 1965.
- Mills, Watson, ed. *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. Mercer University, 1994.
- Myers, Allen, ed. *Eerdmans' Bible Dictionary*. Eerdmans, 1987.
- Pfeiffer, Charles, et al. *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*. Hendrickson, 1998.
- Powell, Mark. *HaperCollins Bible Dictionary*. 2011.
- Rhodes, Ron. *Understanding the Bible for A-Z*. Harvest House, 2006.
- Richards, Lawrence, ed. *The Revell Bible Dictionary*. Baker, 1990.
- -----. *Illustrated Bible Handbook*. Thomas Nelson, 1998.
- -----. *The Illustrated Concise Bible Handbook*. Thomas Nelson, 2001.
- Smith, Williams. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Barbour, 1989.
- -----. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Hendrickson, 1996.
- -----. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson, 1986.
- -----. *Nelson's Quick Reference Bible Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson, 1993.
- Unger, Merrill. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Moody, 1976.
- Williams, Derek. *New Concise Bible Dictionary*. InterVarsity, 1989.
- Young, Douglas. *Young's Bible Dictionary*. Tyndale, 1978.
- Youngblood, Ronald, ed. *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson, 1995.
- -----. *Nelson's Student Bible Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson, 2005.

BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Introduction to Bible Encyclopedias

- Like Bible dictionary but with longer entries (1-2 pages).
- Many of the key points are illustrated with maps, charts, diagrams, graphs, and pictures.

Bibliography of Bible Encyclopedias

- Adler, Cyrus, et al. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. 12 volumes. Funk & Wagnall, 1907.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey, ed. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 volumes. Eerdmans, 1986.
- Drane, John, ed. *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Nelson, 1998.
- Elwell, Walter, ed. *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. 4 volumes. Baker, 1997.
- McDonald, W., et al. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. McGraw-Hill, 1967.
- Packer, James, & Merrill Tenney. *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*. Nelson, 1995.
- Roth, Cecil, et al. *Encyclopedia Judaica*. 16 volumes. Macmillan, 1971.
- Silva, Moises. *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*. 5 volumes. 2009.
- Tenney, Merrill, ed. *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. 5 volumes. Zondervan, 1975.

BIBLE INTRODUCTIONS AND BIBLE SURVEYS

Introduction to Bible Introduction and Bible Surveys

- Bible introductions and Bible surveys are typically devoted to either OT or NT.
- They provide important background information on each book in that testament.
- The focus is usually on issues that are unique to a particular book of the Bible.

Bibliography of Bible Introduction and Bible Surveys

Old Testament Introductions

- Anderson, Bernard. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Prentice Hall, 1957.
- Arnold, Bill, et al. *Encountering the Old Testament*. Baker, 2015.
- Baylis, Albert. *From Creation to the Cross*. Zondervan, 1996.
- Benware, Paul. *Survey of the Old Testament*. Moody, 2001.
- Cate, Robert. *An Introduction to the Old Testament and Its Study*. Broadman & Holman, 1987.
- DeRouchie, Jason, ed. *What the O.T. Authors Really Cared About*. Kregel, 2013.
- Geisler, Norman. *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*. Baker, 1977.
- Gleason, Archer. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Moody, 1964.
- Harrison, Richard. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Eerdmans, 1969.
- Hess, Richard. *The Old Testament*. Baker, 2016.
- Hill, Andrew, and John Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Zondervan, 1991.
- Hindson, Ed, et al. *The Essence of the Old Testament*. Broadman & Holman, 2012.
- House, Paul. *Old Testament Survey*. Broadman & Holman, 1992.
- LaSor, William, et al. *Old Testament Survey*. Eerdmans, 1982.
- Longman, Tremper, et al. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Zondervan, 2006.
- Phillips, John. *Exploring the Old Testament Book-by-Book*. Kregel, 2009.

New Testament Introductions

- Benware, Paul. *Survey of the New Testament*. Moody, 2001.
- Blair, Joe. *Introducing the New Testament*. Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Carson, D.A., et al. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Zondervan, 1992.
- Elwell, Walter, et al. *Encountering the New Testament*. Baker, 2022.
- Gromacki, Robert. *New Testament Survey*. Baker, 1974.
- Gundry, Robert. *A Survey of the New Testament*. Zondervan, 1995.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. InterVarsity, 1990.
- Jensen, Irving. *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. Moody, 1977.
- Kostenberger, Andreas. *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*. Broadman & Holman, 2016.
- Lea, Thomas. *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*. Broadman & Holman, 1996

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND STUDIES

Introduction to Historical Background Studies

- Provide information on the historical settings of the biblical world.
- Some survey a particular period in biblical history, e.g., Babylonian Captivity,
- Others cover customs and manners throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Bibliography of Historical Background Studies

- Arnold, Clinton, ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. 29 volumes. Zondervan, 2002.
- Barnett, Paul. *Behind the Scenes of the New Testament*. InterVarsity, 1991.
- Bell, Albert. *Exploring the New Testament World*. Nelson, 1998.
- Cate, Robert. *A History of the New Testament and Its Time*. Broadman & Holman, 1991.
- Cornwall, Judson, et al. *The Complete Dictionary of Bible Names*. Bridge-Logos, 2017.
- Duvall, J. Scott, et al. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*. 2020.
- Freeman, James. *Manners and Customs of the Bible*. Whitaker House, 1996.
- Gardner, Paul, ed. *The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Zondervan, 1994.
- Gower, Ralph. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*. Moody, 1987.
- Green, Joel, et al. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. InterVarsity, 1992.
- Hawthorn, Gerald, ed. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. InterVarsity, 1993.
- Keener, Craig. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. InterVarsity, 1993.
- Malina, Bruce, et al. *Social-Scientific Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*. Fortress Press, 1992.
- Martin, Ralph, et al. *Dictionary of the Latter New Testament*. InterVarsity, 1997.
- Matthews, Victor. *Manners and Customs in the Bible*. Hendricksen, 1993.
- Packer, J. I., & Merrill Tenney, eds. *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*. Nelson, 1997.
- Vos, Howard. *New Illustrated Bible Manners and Customs*. Nelson, 1999.
- Walton, John, et al. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. InterVarsity, 1997.
- Wright, N.T., et al. *The New Testament in Its World*. Zondervan, 2019.

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

Bible	www.bible.org
Bible Gateway	www.biblegateway.com
Bible Hub	www.biblehub.com
Bible Study Tools	www.biblestudytools.com
Bible Web App	www.biblewebapp.com
Blue Letter Bible	www.blueletterbible.org
Enduring Word (David Guzik)	www.enduringword.com
Got Questions	www.gotquestions.org
Net Bible	www.netbible.org
Online Parallel Bible	www.biblecc.com
Precept Austin	www.preceptaustin.org
Study Light	www.studylight.org

BIBLE STUDY SOFTWARE

- Logos
- Accordance
- E-Sword
- Olive Tree Bible
- Bible Soft
- Word Search Bible
- Laridian Pocket Bible
- You Version

WORD STUDIES

Importance of Words

- Words are shared literary conventions.
- Authors use common words according to dictionary definitions.
- Their goal is to be understood by their reader.

Necessity of Word Studies

Translations are Limited

- “Something is always lost in translation.”
- It is difficult to match word meanings as you move from one language to another.
- Translators must approximate word meanings in their translations.
- There is always interpretation in translation.

Words Change Meaning over Time

- Some words drop out of usage (e.g., “chaffer”) while new words are added (e.g., “internet”).
- Some words develop new meanings (e.g., “gay”).
- The dictionary definitions of words change over time.
- Example: Classical Greek → Koine Greek → Medieval Greek → Modern Greek

SEMANTIC RANGE VS. CONTEXTUAL MEANING

Semantic Range

- Range of possible meanings for a word at a given point in history.
- Based upon the current usage of the word at the time of writing.
- Dictionaries, which define word meanings, are time-specific.

Contextual Meaning

- Specific meaning of a word in a particular literary context.
- Context determines meaning from possible range of meanings.
- Translators make interpretive judgments about word meanings.

METHOD OF WORD STUDIES

Identify Key Words

- Focus on content words, e.g., verbs, nouns, adverbs, adjectives.
- Avoid structure words, e.g., articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns.
- Focus on words that are theologically loaded (e.g., faith, righteousness, justify), words that significantly impact the meaning of the passage (see parallel Bible), and words whose meaning appears obscure in English.

List Semantic Range

- Do not use an English dictionary to define biblical words.
- Use time-specific Hebrew or Greek lexicon (see word study tools below).
- Note the range of possible meanings for the word.

Determine the Contextual Meaning

- Try process of elimination (trial-and-error).
- Observe how a particular word is used elsewhere by the same author (concordance).
- Use a theological lexicon (see below).

Semantic Anachronism

- Fallacy: The meaning of a word is determined by later usage.
- In fact, the meaning of a word is determined by its usage at the time.
- It is also true that words change meaning over time.

Example: Greek word *dunamis* is the root of the English word "dynamite" (Rom. 1:16).

- Paul was not referring to the explosive made with nitroglycerin.
- *dunamis* meant strength, might, and ability at the time of Paul's writing.

Example: Greek word *hilarion* is the root of the English word "hilarious" (II Cor. 9:7).

- Paul does not mean extremely funny.
- *hilarion* meant cheerful, glad, and joyful at the time of Paul's writing.

SOURCES FOR WORD STUDIES

CONCORDANCES

Introduction to Concordances

- Concordances are either exhaustive or abridged.
- They list the location (chapter and verse) of words in the Bible.
- Concordances are based on either the original languages or a specific translation.
- Readers can observe how an author commonly uses a word.

Bibliography of Concordances

- *ESV Exhaustive Concordance*. Crossway, 2018.
- Kohlenberger, John, ed. *The NIV Exhaustive Bible Concordance*. Zondervan, 2015.
- -----, ed. *The NRSV Concordance Unabridged*. Zondervan, 1991.
- -----, ed. *The Greek-English Concordance of the New Testament*. Zondervan, 1997.
- *NKJV Exhaustive Concordance*. Nelson, 1997.
- Strong, James. *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Cranston Curts, 1894.
- Thomas, Robert, ed. *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Holman, 1981.
- Wigram, George. *New Englishmans Greek Concordance and Lexicon*. Hendrickson, 1986.
- Young, Ronald. *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*. Nelson, 1982.

INTERLINEAR BIBLES

Introduction to Interlinear Bibles

- Below the Hebrew text of the O.T. are literal translations of Hebrew words into English.
- Below the Greek text of the N.T. are literal translations of Greek words into English.

Bibliography of Interlinear Bibles

- Berry, George. *KJV Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Baker, 1987.
- Douglas, J.D., ed. *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament, NRSV*. Tyndale, 1990.
- Green, Jay. *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Baker,
- Kohlenberger, J.R., ed. *Greek New Testament with NRSV and NIV Parallel*. Zondervan, 1993.
- ----- . *NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament*. Zondervan, 1987.
- Letteris, M., ed. *The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, Hebrew and English*. American Bible Society, 1982.
- Marshall, A. *NAS-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*. Zondervan, 1987.
- ----- . *NRSV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*. Zondervan, 1990.
- Mounce, Robert. *The Zondervan Greek and English Interlinear N.T. with NASB and NIV*. 2011.
- ----- . *Interlinear for the Rest of Us: The Reverse Interlinear for N.T. Word Studies*. 2013.

PARALLEL BIBLES

Introduction to Parallel Bibles

- Parallel versions of the Bible are laid side-by-side for the purpose of comparison/contrast.
- It is interesting on the translations of different words changes the meaning.

Bibliography of Parallel Bibles

- *Eight Translation New Testament*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1974.
- *Layman's Parallel Bible*. Zondervan, 1991.
- *NIV, KJV, NASB, and Amplified Parallel Bible*. Zondervan, 2020.
- *NIV, NKJV, NLT, and the Message Parallel Bible*. Zondervan, 2023.
- *Precise Parallel New Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

WORD STUDY BOOKS

Introduction to Word Study Books

- Provide English definitions of Hebrew and Greek words.
- Biblical words are listed in English in alphabetical order.
- Provides semantic range of biblical words.

Bibliography of Word Study Books

- DeMoss, Matthew. *Zondervan Dictionary of Theology and Bible Words*. 2002.
- Earle, Ralph. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*. Baker, 1989.
- Richards, Lawrence. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Zondervan, 1985.
- Renn, Stephen. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Hendrickson, 2012.
- Vincent, M. *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament*. 4 volumes. Hendrickson, 1886.
- Vine, W. *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. Thomas Nelson, 1985.
- -----. *The Expanded Vine's: Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Bethany, 1984.
- Wilson, William. *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies*. MacDonald Publishing,
- Wuest, Kenneth. *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. 4 volumes. Eerdmans, 1961.
- Zodhiates, Spiros. *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, NIV*. AMG, 1996.
- -----. *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*. AMG, 1994.
- -----. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament*. AMG, 1992.
- -----. *The Complete Word Study of the New Testament with Parallel Greek Texts*. AMG, 1992.
- -----. *The Complete Word Study New Testament*. AMG, 1991.
- -----. *KJV Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*. AMG, 1991.
- -----. *NAS Hebrew-Greek Study Bible*. AMG, 1990.

LEXICONS

Introduction Lexicons

- Contains the definition of words in alphabetical order.
- Word is listed in Hebrew or Greek while the definitions are in English.
- Requires knowledge of Hebrew and Greek characters.
- Provides semantic range of biblical words.
- Lists occurrences of word in biblical and extra-biblical texts.

Bibliography of Lexicons

- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Alsop, John. *An Index to the Revised Bauer-Ardnt-Gingrich Greek Lexicon*. Zondervan, 1981.
- Brown, F. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Hendrickson, 1996.
- Louw, J.P. and E.A. Nida. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*. 2 volumes. United Bible Society, 1988.

THEOLOGICAL LEXICONS

Introduction to Theological Lexicons

- Provides semantic range of biblical words.
- Lists examples of particular usages.
- Usages distinguished by time period as well as by individual authors.

Bibliography of Theological Lexicons

- Balz, H. and G. Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 volumes. Eerdmans, 1990.
- Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 volumes. Zondervan, 1975.
- Gzella, Holger, et al. *Theological Dictionary of the O.T.* 2 volumes. Eerdmans, 2018.
- Harris, R.L., ed. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Moody, 1980.
- Kittel, G. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 volumes. Eerdmans, 1964.
- ----- . *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Abridged Edition. Ed. by Geoffrey Bromily. Eerdmans, 1985.
- Silva, Moises, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Zondervan, 2014.
- Spicq, C., et al. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 3 volumes. Hendrickson, 1997.
- ----- . *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. 3 volumes. 1994.
- VanGemeren, Willem, ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Zondervan, 1997.

METHOD FOR VALIDATING YOUR INTERPRETATION

Review Results of Inductive Study

- Consider the historical setting and literary context of the passage.
- Study the literary conventions, i.e., words, grammar, genre.
- This evidence establishes boundaries of possible meaning for the text.

Develop an Interpretation with Explanatory Adequacy

- After an inductive study of a passage, an interpretation serves as a hypothesis.
- Propose interpretation that adequately accounts for the evidence.
- There are a lot of uniformed interpretations; develop an informed opinion.
- The goal of interpretation should be accuracy rather than novelty.
- Don't force the evidence to support preconceived ideas.
- An interpretation should be plausible given historical and literary constraints.

Test Validity of Interpretation (checks and balances)

- A valid interpretation should be consistent with the whole of Scripture.
- Consider scholarly insights from a variety of Bible commentaries.
- Be a critical thinker when interacting with Bible scholars.
- Also exercise humility, being open to the possibility of inadequacy or error.
- Novel interpretations should be reconsidered.
- Be able to demonstrate the basis for your interpretation.
- Ultimately, we are accountable to God for our interpretations.

THREE TYPES OF BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Exegetical Commentaries

- Scholars interpret a book of the Bible usually verse-by-verse.
- Commentary includes interpretation and evidential support.
- Scholars interact with other commentaries, ancient and modern.
- The primary concern is the historical meaning of the biblical text.
- Much of the language in exegetical commentaries is technical.

Homiletical Commentaries

- Authors provide pastors with some exegetical insights.
- Primary consideration is contemporary application.
- Anecdotal stories and analogies are provided to illustrate application.

Devotional Commentaries

- Authors show relevance of biblical texts for Christian belief and practice.
- Primary concern is contemporary application.
- Very little information about the historical meaning.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Bible Commentaries are Basically the Same

- Commentaries vary tremendously on the quality and quantity of interpretive insights.
- Commentaries are written for different purposes using different methods.
- Scholars have different qualifications and perspective.

Bible Commentaries always Disagree

- There is a surprising amount of agreement among biblical scholars.
- Scholars must account for the same biblical evidence.
- Interpretations outside the boundaries of meaning are invalid.
- Disagreement is usually over contemporary significance and application.

Bible Commentaries are Easy to Use

- Better commentaries assume knowledge on the part of their reader.
- Scholars expect readers to understand basic principles of interpretation.
- Sometimes extensive knowledge of biblical languages is expected.
- Hebrew and Greek words, without transliteration or definition.
- Grammatical constructions, e.g., perfect periphrastic, hortatory subjunctives.

PROPER USE OF BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Use Commentaries Secondly

- Use a commentary only after you have done your own inductive study.
- This will build confidence in your interpretation.
- Remember that scholars are fallible, susceptible to personal and cultural biases.

Be Open to New Insights from Scholars

- Try not to be closed minded about your interpretation of a Bible passage.
- Scholars have extensive knowledge of historical backgrounds and biblical languages.
- They may have significant insights into the meaning of biblical texts.
- It would be beneficial to review multiple Bible commentaries.

EVALUATING BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Introduction to Evaluating Bible Commentaries

- There are many good independent Bible commentaries.
- Most Bible commentaries, however, are published as part of a series (see below).

Understanding Commentary Series

- Publishers develop a commentary series to serve a specific purpose.
- Publishers secure the best scholars to write individual commentaries.

Method for Evaluating Commentaries

- Who is the publisher? What is publisher's theological perspective?
- What is the purpose for the series?
- Who is the author? What is the author's theological perspective?
- What are the author's qualifications?

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Conservative Theological Perspective

- Apollos O.T. Commentary (Apollos)
- Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT (Baker)
- Expositor's Bible Commentary (Zondervan)
- Holman NT Commentary (Broadman & Holman)
- IVP NT Commentary (InterVarsity)
- New American Commentary of the OT/NT (Broadman & Holman)

- New International Biblical Commentary of the OT/NT (Hendrickson)
- New International Greek Testament Commentary (Eerdmans)
- NIV Application Commentary of the OT/NT (Zondervan)
- Pillar NT Commentary (Eerdmans)

Moderate Theological Perspective

- Anchor Bible Commentary of the OT/NT (Doubleday)
- Black's NT Commentaries (Hendrickson)
- Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Eerdmans)
- International Critical Commentary
- Interpretation Commentary of the OT/NT (John Knox / Westminster)
- New Testament in Context Commentary
- Sacra Pagina (Liturgical Press)
- Tyndale OT/NT Commentaries (Eerdmans)
- Word Biblical Commentary of the OT/NT (Nelson)

Liberal Theological Perspective

- Abingdon NT Commentaries (Abingdon)
- Augsburg Commentary of the NT (Augsburg)
- Basic Bible Commentary (Abingdon)
- Hermeneia (Fortress)
- Interpreting Biblical Texts (Abingdon)
- New Century Bible Commentary of the OT/NT (Eerdmans)
- New International Commentary on the OT/NT (Eerdmans)
- New Interpreters Bible, OT/NT (Abingdon)

Commentary on Commentaries (Annotated Bibliographies)

- Carson, D.A. *New Testament Commentary Survey*. Baker, 2007.
- Longman, Tremper. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. Baker 2007.
- Evans, John. *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works*. Zondervan, 2016.

BOOKS ON BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Introductory Books

- Arthur, Kay. *How to Study Your Bible*. Harvest, 1994.
- Braga, James. *How to Study the Bible*. Multnomah, 1982.
- Stein, Robert. *Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Baker, 2011.
- Wald, Oletta. *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*. Augsburg, 1975.

Intermediate Books

- Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hayes. *Grasping God's Word*. Zondervan, 2012.
- Fee, Gordon, and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth*. Zondervan, 1982.
- Longman, Tremper. *Reading the Bible with Heart & Mind*. NavPress, 1997.
- McQuilken, Robertson. *Understanding and Applying the Bible*. Moody, 1992.
- Plummer, Walter. *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*. Kregel, 2021.
- Russell, Walt. *Playing with Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul*. 2000.
- Traina, Robert. *Methodological Bible Study*. Zondervan, 1980.
- Zuck, Roy. *Basic Bible Interpretation*. Victor Books, 1991.

Advanced Books

- Brown, Jeannine. *Scripture as Communication*. Baker, 2007.
- Corley, Bruce, et al. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Broadman & Holman, 1996.
- Doriani, Daniel. *Getting the Message*. Presbyterian & Reformed, 1996.
- Dyck, Elmer, ed. *The Act of Bible Reading*. IVP, 1996.
- Erickson, Millard. *Evangelical Interpretation*. Baker, 1993.
- Kaiser, Walter, et al. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Zondervan, 1994.
- Klein, William, et al. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Third Edition. Word, 2017.
- Kostenberger, Andreas, et al. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*. Kregel, 2011.
- ----- . *For the Love of God's Word*. Kregel, 2015.
- McCartney, Dan, and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand*. Victor Books, 1994.
- Osborne, Grant. *The Hermeneutical Spiral*. IVP, 2007.
- Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. Hendrickson, 1997.