

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Bible Study Tools

There are a number of very helpful Bible study tools.

1. SEVERAL VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

You can get a better sense of the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew by using several versions of the Bible.

A translation = AS LITERAL AS POSSIBLE. An example is the New American Standard.

A paraphrase = A FREE OR LOOSE TRANSLATION. An example is The Living Bible. A paraphrase is always easier to read, but it may not always be accurate. Many times a paraphrase includes some of the translator's ideas of what the text means. In other words, the translator also does some explaining along the way.

A Study Bible = a translation with all kinds of notes, and introductions, and study helps built right into the Bible. There are a number of them available, some good, some not so good. One of the better ones is the Thompson Chain-Reference Bible. It lists many topics, has a very good chain-reference through the Bible, outlines and a topical index are also included.

2. CONCORDANCE

A concordance is an alphabetical list of all the words in the Bible. It is a tool, then, that allows the Bible student to study all of the places in the Bible where certain words or ideas are found. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance has Hebrew and Greek dictionaries, which are designed for the use of English readers. It is called an "exhaustive" concordance because it includes every single word in the Bible.

3. WORD STUDIES

Word studies are expanded dictionaries of words used in the Old and New Testament. They tell you the wider meanings of Greek and Hebrew words and how they were used in their historical setting and in the Bible. Word Studies frequently use Strong's numbering system as a reference. A set of Word Studies is a must for a serious bible student.

4. BIBLE DICTIONARIES

A "word study" as Number 3 above, is a dictionary of Greek or Hebrew words used in the Bible. A Bible Dictionary is like a one volume encyclopedia of Bible facts, including people, places, and doctrines.

5. BIBLE HANDBOOKS

A Bible handbook is a kind of combination Bible Dictionary and Bible Commentary. Instead of listing topics alphabetically, a Bible handbook lists them in the order of the books of the Bible, giving historical and theological information along the way. I recommend either Unger's Bible Handbook or Halley's Bible Handbook. Both have been around for years, and one or the other is available in bookstores.

6. BIBLE COMMENTARY

A commentary is a chapter by chapter, verse by verse, sometimes word by word explanation of the Bible, taking into consideration matters of language, history and theology. Nearly any one volume commentary by a major Christian publishing company is going to be helpful. There are also many individual commentaries on each book of the Bible, if you want more detail. Or you can get commentary sets, which may have twenty

or thirty volumes of commentaries, something like an encyclopedia. As you can well imagine, building a Bible study library can become an expensive proposition!

7. CROSS REFERENCE HELPS

A cross reference is an invaluable tool to help you find other passages in the scripture that deal with the same concept or thought or phrase. Most study bibles have a cross reference column in the center.

8. BIBLE SOFTWARE

There are many types of bible software that are available. Bible software is loaded with many types of bible tools. This has become the most economic way to obtain many bible study tools.

9. REFERENCE BOOKS

There are many different books written by men concerning all kinds of topics and teachings. These can be a great help, but always be very careful to make sure proper interpretive rules are employed.

Lets look at a verse and exegete the truth from it.

John 12:32 - "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." NAS

A literal reading of this verse would imply that Jesus draws all men to Himself.

1. Does this mean that all men are saved?
2. Does this mean that Jesus does not draw women to Himself, but only men?
3. What is the direct context of this passage and what basic principles are being taught?
4. What is the context of the chapter and book?
5. Who is the book written to?
6. How does a literal reading of this verse compare to the whole of scripture and the character of God?
7. Does it contradict the understanding of any basic principles of scripture or the character of God?
8. Are there any hyperboles or metaphors being used?

Suggested sequence of study (after consecration and prayer)

1. Context: John 12:20-36

2. Translations

(KJV) 32 And I <kago>, if <ean> I be lifted up <hupsoo> from <ek> the earth <ge>, will draw <helkuo> all <pas> men unto <pros> me <emautou>.

(NKJV) - 32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

(TLB) - 32 And when I am lifted up [on the cross], I will draw everyone to me."

Ê(DBY) - 32 and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me.

(WEB) - 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

3. Treasury of Scripture Knowledge or other CROSS REFERENCE

Isa 49:6

6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a **light of the nations** So that My **salvation may reach to the end of the earth.**" NAS

John 1:7

7 He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that **all might believe** through him. NAS

Rom 5:17-19

17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted **condemnation to all men**, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted **justification of life to all men.** 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. NAS

1 Tim 2:6-7

6 who gave Himself as a **ransom for all**, the testimony borne at the proper time. NAS

Heb 2:9

9 But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might **taste death for everyone.** NAS

1 John 2:2

2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also **for those of the whole world.** NAS

Rev 5:9

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men **from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**" NAS

4. Interlinear

John12:32

ÊKago— eḡn hupsootho— ek teŽs geŽs pḡntas

Ê2504 1437 5312 1537 3588 1093 3956

ÊAnd I, if I be lifted up from the earth, all

helkæsoo pr—s emaut—n

1670 **9999** 4314 1683

will draw **men** unto me.

5. Concordance

John 1:3 - 3 **Allthings** were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. KJV

John 3:8 - 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is **every one** that is born of the Spirit. KJV
Luke 24:53 - 53 And were **continually** in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. KJV
John 4:45 - 45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen **all the things** that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. KJV
John 6:45 - 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be **all** taught of God. **Every man** therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. KJV
John 17:2 2 As thou hast given him power **over all** flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. KJV
Acts 10:12 - 12 Wherein were **all manner of** four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. KJV
Acts 13:44 44 And the next sabbath day came almost the **whole** city together to hear the word of God. KJV

6. WordStudy

NT:3956 pas (pas); including all the forms of declension; apparently a primary word; **all, any, every, the whole.**

KJV - all (manner of, means), always (-s), any (one), Xdaily, + ever, every (one, way), as many as, + no (-thing), X thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever.

7. Commentary

John Gill - I will draw all men to me; which is not to be understood of the concourse of people about him, when on the cross, some for him, and others against him, some to bewail him, and others to reproach him; but rather of the gathering of the elect to him, and in him, as their head and representative, when he was crucified for them; or of the collection of them, through the ministry of the apostles, and of their being brought to believe on him for eternal life and salvation: and this drawing of them to him, inconsequence of his death, supposes distance from him, want of power, and will, to come to him, and the efficacious grace of God to bring them, though without any force and compulsion; and this is to be understood not of every individual of human nature; **for all are not drawn to Christ, or enabled to come to him, and believe in him.** There were many of the Jews who would not, and did not come to him for life; and who instead of being drawn to him in this sense, when lifted up on the cross, vilified and reproached him; moreover, in the preceding verse, "a world" is spoken of, whose judgment, or condemnation, was now come; and besides, there was at this time a multitude of souls in hell, who could not, nor never will be, drawn to Christ; and a greater number still there will be at the last day, who, instead of drawing to him in this gracious way and manner, will be bid to depart from him, as having been workers of iniquity.

Poole - For by the preaching of my cross, and publication of my gospel to all nations, and by the efficacious concurrence of my Holy Spirit, together with the preaching of the gospel, I shall draw (though not all, and every man, yet) multitudes of men and women after me, so as they shall embrace and believe in me, having died and risen up again from the dead, and being by my apostles, and other ministers of the gospel, held forth as the object of people's faith, to be by them laid hold upon in order to their eternal life and salvation. He used the term of lifting up, (saith the evangelist), to signify the particular death he should die, by being crucified; in which death the bodies of the crucified abode not upon the earth, as when they were at any time stoned, or strangled, or beheaded, &c., but were lifted up from the earth to be nailed to the cross, and hung in the air until they died.

Robertson - {Will draw all men unto myself} (pantav elkusw prov emauton). [Future active of elkuw, late form of elkw, to draw, to attract.] Jesus had already used this verb of the Father's drawing power (#6:44). The magnetism of the Cross is now known of all men, however little they understand the mystery of the Cross. **By "all men" (pantav) Jesus does not mean every individual man, for some, as Simeon said (#Lu 2:34) are repelled by Christ, but this is the way that Greeks**

(verse #Jo 12:22) can and will come to Christ, by the way of the Cross, the only way to the Father (#14:6).

Barnes -Will draw. #John 6:44. The same word is used in both places.

All men. I will incline all kinds of men; or will make the way open by the cross, so that all men may come. I will provide a way which shall present a strong motive or inducement--the strongest that can be presented--to all men to come to me.

{g} "lifted up" #John 8:28

{h} "will draw all men" # Ro 5:18

Guidelines for Interpretation

1. Taken in its customary, **normal**, and natural sense
2. Taken within its **context** of word, phrase, or larger passage
3. **Scripture must interpret scripture**, and be compared to scripture
4. **Antinomies**, scripture never contradicts scripture, it is always consistent with all of scripture
5. Near and far applications
6. **Key words** to understand in symbolic scripture- *Hyperbole-Metaphor-Anthropomorphism-Parable*