

Learn to Read the Bible Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Session 7



SESSION 7

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Section 1

Cross-references

In section 2 of the first session, you spent some time looking at how the Bible interprets itself, and you may remember looking at Isaiah 53.

You learned from that example that the Bible interprets itself.

In examining that passage we also introduced the tip on “listening” for Bible echoes. That was a very good example of how using cross-references can be valuable. Basically, cross-references can be used to help the listening process by indicating for you some passages which are “echoes”.

What is a cross-reference?

Cross-references are lists of verses which direct the reader to other locations in the Bible where a given event, place, person, phrase or word may be found.

We hope that you have cross-references in your Bible, because they can be one of your greatest aids when you are trying to understand a difficult passage.

There are two types of cross-reference. We have reproduced typical examples of cross-references at the end of this section. The first are those which fall into the category of “centre” references.

Centre references by location

The first example at the end of this section (p. 5) is an example of one such Bible. In this case, each letter appearing as a superscript in the main text is linked to a cross-reference or references. Sometimes there are also alternative meanings of words. In this example they are organised by the order they appear, generally in the vicinity of the verse.

Centre references by verse

The second example (p. 6) also has the references in the centre margin, but this time references are organised by verse.

Footnote references

The third example (p. 7) has the cross-references at the bottom of the page in the form of footnotes. Such cross-references are usually not as complete as those listed in the centre.

If you do not have good cross-references in your Bible, and you really do not want to buy a new one, there are books available which only contain cross-references. The most popular one is *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. It simply lists cross-references for each verse in the Bible. A word or phrase from the verse is listed with the list of references.

Using cross-references

We are going to look at some examples of how cross-references can be of help in making your reading more effective. There are four main ways in which cross-references can be of help.

1 Linking teaching and prophecies between the Old and New Testaments.

a) For this first example, we have shown Luke 1 v 31-33 from the New King James Bible to show exactly how to use cross-references.

31 ^a Is 7:14 Matt. 1:21, 25 Gal. 4:4 ^b Luke 2:21 [Phil. 2:9-11]	31 ^a “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and ^b shall call His name JESUS.
32 ^a Matt. 3:17 17:5 Mark 5:7 Luke 1:35,76 6:35 Acts 7:48 ^b 2 Sam. 7:12, 13, 16; Ps 132:11 [Is. 9: 6, 7; 16:5 Jer. 23: 5] ^c 2 Sam 7: 14-17; Acts 2:33; 7:55 ^d Matt 1:1	32 He will be great, ^a and will be called the Son of the Highest; and ^b the Lord God will give Him the ^c throne of His ^d father David.
33 ^a [Dan 2: 44; Obad. 21 Mic. 4:7] John 12:34 [Heb 1:8]; 2 Pet. 1:11	33 ^a And He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there will be no end”.

In verse 32, if you wonder “What is the throne of his father David?”, the marginal references can help. You will notice a small letter “c” just before the word “throne”. This Bible is a reference “by verse” type, so look down the margin for the references to verse 32, then look for reference “c”, which is 2 Samuel 7 v 14 to 17; Acts 2 v 33 and Acts 7 v 55. The 2 Samuel reference helps you to understand that Jesus is to fulfil the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7.

- b) If you look at Luke 4 v 16 to 21, you see that Jesus is reading from the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. If you refer to the cross-references, you will see that the actual passage he was quoting from is Isaiah 61 v 1 and 2.
2. Filling in details on persons, places, subjects.
- a) In Hebrews 7 v 1, you could ask, “Who is Melchizedek?”. The marginal references lead us to Genesis 14 v 17 to 19.
- b) The book of the Acts starts “The former account I made O Theophilus...”. If you ask “What is this ‘former account’”, the margin leads to Luke 1 v 3, where you see that the Gospel of Luke was also written for “Theophilus”, so you can conclude that Luke’s Gospel is the “former account”.
3. Filling in detail from parallel accounts.
- a) 1 Kings 15 v 34 says that King Baasha walked “in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin”. The margin helps you to find more about “the way of Jeroboam”. One reference is 1 Kings 13 v 33, which elaborates Jeroboam’s way of life.
- b) Luke 9 v 7 to 9 tells that Herod had killed John the Baptist. You might ask “Why?” The references in the “interlinear” Bible to Matthew 14 v 1 to 12 and Mark 6 v 14 to 29 help tell you why. If you read both of these passages, you see that John had reproved Herod for marrying his brother’s wife. Herod’s wife then used devious means to make Herod kill John.
4. Clarification of the meaning of a passage.
- a) Matthew 9 v 10 to 13. In verse 13, Jesus asked the Pharisees the meaning of “I desire mercy and not sacrifice”. The margin says that this is a quote from Hosea 6 v 6, where Hosea was telling the people that lots of sacrifices cannot make wicked men acceptable to God. The implication is that Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they were in fact as wicked as people in Hosea’s day.
- b) In Acts 8 v 27 to 40 you read of Philip and the Ethiopian who was reading his Bible. The margin tells what he was reading. In Acts 8 v 32, the margin says that he was reading Isaiah 53 v 7 and 8. So you know that Philip explained Isaiah 53 to the Ethiopian.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT 9

Using cross-references

If you have a Bible with cross-references, choose one of the readings for the day from the *Bible Companion* (at the back of Session 4) and look up some of the cross-references and see where they lead you. If you find an interesting “echo”, look up the cross-references from that verse as well. If you pick any of the major themes in the Bible, you can be led all round the Bible in this way.

If you don't have a Bible with cross-references, look at some of the references we have mentioned.

Write down what you have found out.

Example of centre references by location

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

THE book of the *generation of Jesus Christ, *the son of David, *the son of Abraham.

2 *Abraham begat Isaac; and *Isaac begat Jacob; and *Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3 And *Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and *Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And *Jesse begat David the king; and *David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

7 And *Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And *Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11 And *Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were *carried away to Babylon:

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, *Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat *Zorobabel;

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from

c. 7 B.C.

a Luke 3. 23

b Ps. 132. 11

Is. 11. 1

Jer. 23. 5

ch. 22. 42

John 7. 42

Actu 2. 30

& 13. 23

Rom. 1. 3

e Gen. 12. 3

& 22. 18

Gal. 3. 16

d Luke 1. 27

e Gen. 21. 2

f Gen. 25. 26

g Gen. 29. 35

h Gen. 38. 27

i Luke 1. 35

k Ruth 4. 18

l Chr. 2. 5

m Deut. 24. 1

n 1 Sam. 16. 1

& 17. 12

o 2 Sam. 12. 24

p Luke 1. 35

q Gr. begotten

r Luke 1. 31

s Chr. 3. 10

t i.e. Saviour,

Heb.

u Actu 4. 12

& 5. 31

v & 13. 23, 38

w Is. 7. 14

x ot, his

name shall

be called.

y 2 Kin. 20. 21

z 1 Chr. 3. 13

aa Some read

Josias begat

Jakim,

and Jakim

begat Je-

chonias

u See 1 Chr.

3. 15, 16

x 2 Kin. 24.

14-16

& 25. 11

2 Chr. 36. 10

Jer. 27. 20

& 52. 11,

15, 28-30

Dan. 1. 2

y 1 Chr. 3. 17

z Ex. 13. 2

aa Luke 2. 7, 21

ab Ezra 3. 2

& 5. 2

ac Neh. 12. 1

ad Luke 2. 4, 6

ae Gen. 10. 30

af Luke 2. 11

Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

18 ¶ Now the *birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child *of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing *to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: *for that which is *conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *JESUS: for *he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and *they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

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

2 NOW when *Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men *from the east to Jerusalem,

2 Saying, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen *his star in the east, and are come to

Example of centre references by verse

Matthew

1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, ⁷Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, ⁸Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, ⁹Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, ¹¹and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

12 After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵Eliud the

father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"

—which means, "God with us."
24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he had no union with

Ch. 1

1-17 Lk 3. 23-38

1 Mt 9.27;
2 Sam 7.12-16; Ps 89.3-4; 132.11;
Is 9.6-7; 11.1; Lk 1.32,69;
Jn 7.42;

Acta 13.23;
Rom 1.3;
Rev 22.16;
Gen 22.18;
Gal 3.8, 14, 16

3-6 Ruth 4. 13-22; 1Chr 2:1-15

6 2Sam 11.27; 12.24

7 1Chr 3.10ff

11 2 Kings 24.14; Jer 27.20; Mt 1.17

16 Mt 27.17, 22; Lk 2.11; Jn 4.25

18 Lk 1.26-38

27 Lk 1.31; 2.21; 2.11; Jn 1.29; Acta 4.12; 13.23; Tit 2.14

23 Is 7.14; Is 8.8, 10; Rom 8.31

25 Mt 1.21

* Greek Aram * Greek Asaph * Other authorities read Amon * Greek Salathiel
† Other ancient authorities read of the Christ

Example of footnote cross-references

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

² Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; ³ And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; ⁴ And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; ⁵ And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; ⁶ And Jesse begat David the king;

And David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; ⁷ And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; ⁸ And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; ⁹ And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; ¹⁰ And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; ¹¹ And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

¹² And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; ¹³ And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; ¹⁴ And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; ¹⁵ And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; ¹⁶ And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from

the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. ²⁰ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Emman-uel, (Which being interpreted is, God with us.) ²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

2 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, ² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. ³ When

^a Greek Aram ^b Greek Asaph ^c Other authorities read Amon ^p Greek Salathiel

^f Other ancient authorities read of the Christ

1.1-17 : Lk 3.23-38. 1.3-6 : Ruth 4.18-22; 1 Chron 2.1-15. 1.11 : 2 Kings 24.14; Jer 27.20.

1.18 : Lk 1.26-38. 1.21 : Lk 2.21; Jn 1.29; Acts 13.23. 1.23 : Is 7.14. 2.1 : Lk 2.4-7; 1.5.

2.2 : Jer 23.5; Zech 9.9; Mk 15.2; Jn 1.49; Num 24.17

Section 2

A law ahead of its time

In this section, we want to look at one or two more evidences which show that the Bible cannot have been written by ordinary people. In Session 3, Section 2, we looked at fulfilled prophecy. What follows now is really an extension of that section.

The first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy - contain the code of laws under which the Israelites lived. Together they are called “The Law of Moses”. There are several aspects of the Law of Moses which show how remarkable the Bible is, especially considering it was written thousands of years ago.

Here are some of the provisions of the law that helped to keep the Israelites healthy.

1. Isolation



Read Leviticus 13 v 45 and 46

“Lepers” were commanded to live separately from the rest of the people. The Biblical term “leprosy” includes a whole group of infectious diseases, along with the modern leprosy. The modern practice of isolating sufferers of infectious diseases from other people was derived directly from the Jews.

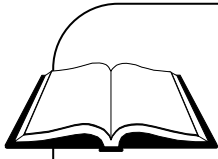
2. Washing after handling dead bodies



Read Numbers 19 v 11 to 19

When a Jew had handled a dead body he was regarded as “unclean”. He was to be quarantined for seven days, and had to undergo an elaborate washing procedure before he was regarded as fit to mix with society again. Until about a hundred years ago surgeons used to handle the dead and the dying and then go straight into the operating theatre without washing. Thousands of their patients died through infection. Many of them might have lived if those early surgeons had kept this principle from the Law of Moses.

3. Sanitation



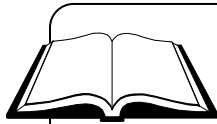
Read Deuteronomy 23 v 12 and 13

This passage is clearer in the New International Version:

Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement.

The Law of Moses had strict rules for disposal of sewage. It was not until the eighteenth century that Western Europe began to see the life-saving wisdom of this part of the law. Even now some countries are still learning the wisdom of proper sewage disposal.

4. The food laws



Read Deuteronomy 14 v 4 to 20

Two chapters in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14) are filled with lists of the birds, animals, insects and fish which may and may not be eaten. With a few exceptions the lists agree with modern ideas about healthy and unhealthy food. The flesh-eating creatures, the rats, the reptiles and most insects are forbidden; the vegetarian birds and animals are permitted.

The main differences from modern practice are that pork and shell-fish were forbidden by the law, yet are eaten today. There were good reasons for the law's strictness. Today public health inspectors, backed by an elaborate laboratory service, can ensure that pigs and shellfish are reared under healthy conditions. The Israelites had no such facilities.

We know now that two serious diseases, cysticercosis and trichiniasis, can be caught through eating the flesh of pigs infected by parasitic worms. In a primitive society the only safe way to avoid these diseases was to steer clear of pork.

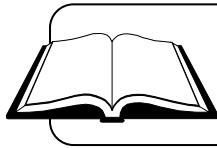
As for shellfish, they are quite harmless if they grow in water free from sewage. But if human excrement is present, they feed on it, and then may harbour the germs of typhoid and other intestinal diseases. Modern science helps us to take precautions against this, but the best thing for the Israelites was not to eat shellfish.

Conservation of resources

It has taken mankind a long time to realise that the world's resources are limited and need to be carefully conserved. Meanwhile, human foolishness and greed have done considerable damage to the beautiful world in which we live.

Much of this harm could have been prevented if more people had obeyed the Law of Moses. Here are four examples:

1. Bird life

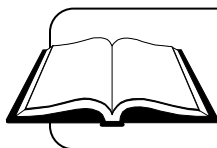


Read Deuteronomy 22 v 6 and 7

If Israelites caught a mother bird sitting on a nest, they must not take both the mother and her eggs or young. They could take the eggs or young birds, but had to let the mother go free to continue the species.

If only modern man had listened to Moses, the museums of the world would not now be full of stuffed examples of extinct birds. We would not have a saying, "Dead as a dodo". The beautiful Passenger Pigeon of North America, and the Great Auk of the North Atlantic, would still be thriving in their millions as they were at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

2. Arable land



Read Leviticus 25 v 1 to 7

Every seventh year the Israelite was not allowed to cultivate the land. Under modern farming methods this is not necessary, but with more primitive methods of agriculture, constant cropping was liable to destroy the fertility of the land.

The Law of Moses provided an effective method of preventing human greed from ruining the good earth, but mankind disregarded the law. All over the world man-made deserts sprawl where once there were fertile fields. The deserts of Iraq, the coastal belt of North Africa, the dust bowls of the United States – all these might still be rich farmland if the Law of Moses had been obeyed.

3. Fruit trees



Read Deuteronomy 20 v 19 and 20

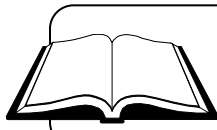
In present-day warfare anything goes – or almost anything. There are, it is true, a few “rules of war”, dating back to the first Geneva Convention in 1864. However, they are limited in scope, and not all countries recognise them. Even those that say they accept them sometimes break the rules when a conflict arises.

In the Vietnam War America introduced a new military tactic. It was called “defoliation”. The US airforce sprayed many thousands of tons of weedkiller over enemy-occupied territory. Vast areas of jungle where enemy troops once hid were turned into a temporary desert. Rice crops and fruit trees were also wiped out, and great numbers of Vietnamese went hungry in consequence. Such is “total war”, as it is practised today.

Ancient Israel was forbidden to treat nature so ruthlessly. Even under the stress of war they were not allowed to chop down fruit trees to make defensive barriers. Though this might have reduced their own casualties, or even turned defeat into victory, they still must not do it. Moses told them why not: “for the tree of the field is man’s food”.

So the Jewish Law of 3500 years ago was in this respect far wiser and far more civilised than American law (or British law, for that matter) today.

4. Human strength



Read Exodus 20 v 8 to 10

Human strength was the most precious of all natural resources in a world where machine power had not yet come to replace muscle power. The Law of Moses introduced a revolutionary new principle to conserve human strength – a compulsory day of rest once a week.

In the times of the early Israelites, people’s welfare was not usually considered by most nations. Yet the astonishing fact about the Sabbath law was this: it applied to everybody in the land, Israelite and foreigner, master and slave alike. Such an act of generosity towards slaves was most unusual. Yet Israel’s law commanded it.

The great medical historian, Karl Sudhoff, has said:

“Had Judaism given nothing more to mankind than the establishment of a weekly day of rest, we should still be forced to proclaim her one of the greatest benefactors of humanity”.

He acknowledges that the idea of a day of rest, which came from the Law of Moses, is a great advantage to us.

All this evidence shows what a remarkable book the Bible is. This encourages us in our confidence in God and His Word.

Permission to reproduce extracts from *God's Truth* by Alan Hayward is gratefully acknowledged .