

Bible Study Tools – Cross-References

Bible Study Tools activities are designed to give students practice in basic Bible study skills: the use of Bible maps, cross-reference systems, concordances and lexicons.

Cross-Reference Systems

Cross-references identify biblical connections for us. Here are five kinds of connections that commonly occur in the Bible:

- (1) Direct Quotations. A later passage quotes an earlier passage.
- (2) Prophecies and Fulfillments. What is foretold in one place is also foretold or fulfilled in another.
- (3) Parallel Accounts. A story is told in more than one place, often with different details.
- (4) Related Subjects. The subject of one passage is connected in some way to that of another passage.
- (5) Repeating Principles. The fundamentals of God's plan for mankind are repeated in many places throughout the Bible.

The use of cross-references expands our knowledge and understanding of the Bible. This activity focuses on Parallel Accounts. It uses the cross-reference system that was developed for the English Revised Version of 1881/1885 and is found in many modern study Bibles.

Bible Study Tools – Cross-References Parallel Accounts

Both Old and New Testaments contain more than one account of many important events. These are known as parallel accounts. Cross-references tell us where parallel accounts are found and let us compare them. This leads to a fuller understanding of the events. Here are two examples to study. Answer the questions that go with each example.

Example 1

2 Samuel 5

⁶ ^c And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land ...

Cross-References:

⁶ ^c For ver. 6-10 see
1 Chr.11:4-9.

- 1 – Read 2 Samuel 5:6-10. What is it about?

- 2 – Look at the cross-reference for 2 Samuel 5:6. Where is the parallel account of this event found?

- 3 – What do we learn from the parallel account that 2 Samuel 5 does not tell us?

Example 2

Matthew 10

¹ v And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. ² The names of the twelve apostles are these: ...

Cross-References:

¹ v For ver. 1-4 see
Mark 3:13-19 &
Luke 6:12-16.
Cp. Acts 1:13.

- 1 – Read Matthew 10:1-4. What is it about?
- 2 – Look at the cross-references for Matthew 10:1. How many parallel accounts of the same event are found in the Gospels? Where are they found?
- 3 – What impressive fact does Luke record about this event that Matthew and Mark do not record?
- 4 – What do Matthew and Mark tell us that Luke does not mention?
- 5 – What key phrase do the cross-references for 2 Samuel 5:6 and Matthew 10:1 use to draw our attention to the fact that something we are reading about is recorded in another part of the Bible as well? Circle the phrase in both sets of cross-references.