

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 Repeating Principles. 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 Repeating Principles

The principles that are important for us to believe and live by are recorded in many places in the Bible. Cross-references help us find some of these places, connect them in our thinking, and grow in faith. Here are two examples to study. Answer the questions that go with each example.

Example 1

Matthew 1

¹ THE BOOK of the ^a generation of Jesus Christ, ^b the son of David, ^c the son of Abraham.

Cross-References:

- ¹ ^a Cp. Luke 3:23-38.
- ^b 2 Sam.7:12-16;
Ps.132:11; Is.11:1;
Jer.23:5; Luke 1:32,
69; John 7:42;
Acts 2:30 & 13:23;
Rom.1:3; 2 Tim.2:8;
Rev.22:16.
- ^c Gen.22:18; Gal.3:16.

- 1 – What Old Testament passage records God’s promise of a son to David? Find the passage and read it. What does God tell David that his son will do?

- 2 – David already had sons when God made this promise to him. Why do you think God promised David another son?

- 3 – What do the rest of the ^b cross-references have in common?

- 4 – What Old Testament passage is about a son of Abraham? Find the passage and read it. What does God tell Abraham that his son will do?

5 – Abraham clearly had a son when God made this promise to him, but the promise looked to the future. What offspring of Abraham do you think God had in mind? Explain.

6 – What do you think Galatians 3:16 is about? Look it up and see if you are right.

7 – Why does Matthew start his Gospel this way? What does he want us to believe about Jesus?

Example 2

Matthew 5

³ x "Blessed are ^y the poor ^z in spirit, for ^b theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Cross-References:

³ x For ver. 3-12,
cp. Luke 6:20-23.
^y Cp. Isa.61:1 & 66:2.
^z Cp. ch. 11:29.
^b Cp. Luke 12:32.

- 1 – Read Isaiah 66:1-2. What does it tell us about the person who is "humble and contrite in spirit?" What is their attitude toward God's word, and how are they blessed?

- 2 – When we use cross-references, one passage often leads to others and the learning continues. For example, in some Bibles, Isaiah 66:2 has cross-references that send us to Isaiah 57:15 and Psalm 34:18. Read these. What does our "high and lofty" God do for the "humble and contrite" person? This is worth thinking about!

- 3 – Read Matthew 11:29 in context. Who is gentle and lowly in heart? What does he invite us to do, and what do you think this means?