

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

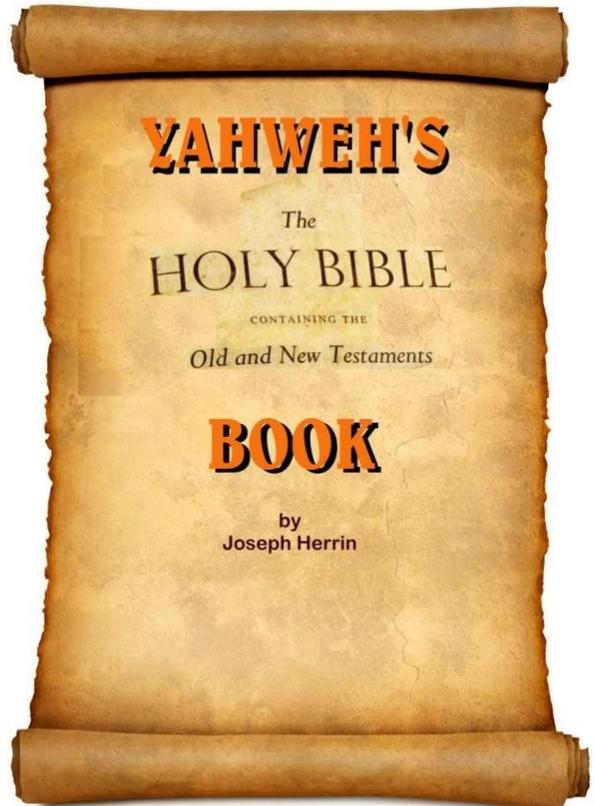
I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.18.7

This edition of the Parables Bookshelf Newsletter series continues the writing *Yahweh's Book*. In this newsletter we will look at some of the excellent Bible study resources available for the serious student of God's word. Although many of the tools mentioned are computer based, the same resources are available as books.

We will also consider that there is more required than a good intellect if a person would arrive at the knowledge of God and His kingdom. There are spiritual requirements, and failing to meet them, many men and women find that the Bible remains a closed book to them.

Joseph Herrin



Food for Thought

"The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation."

Dwight Lyman Moody

"A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't."

Charles H. Spurgeon

Scripture Memory

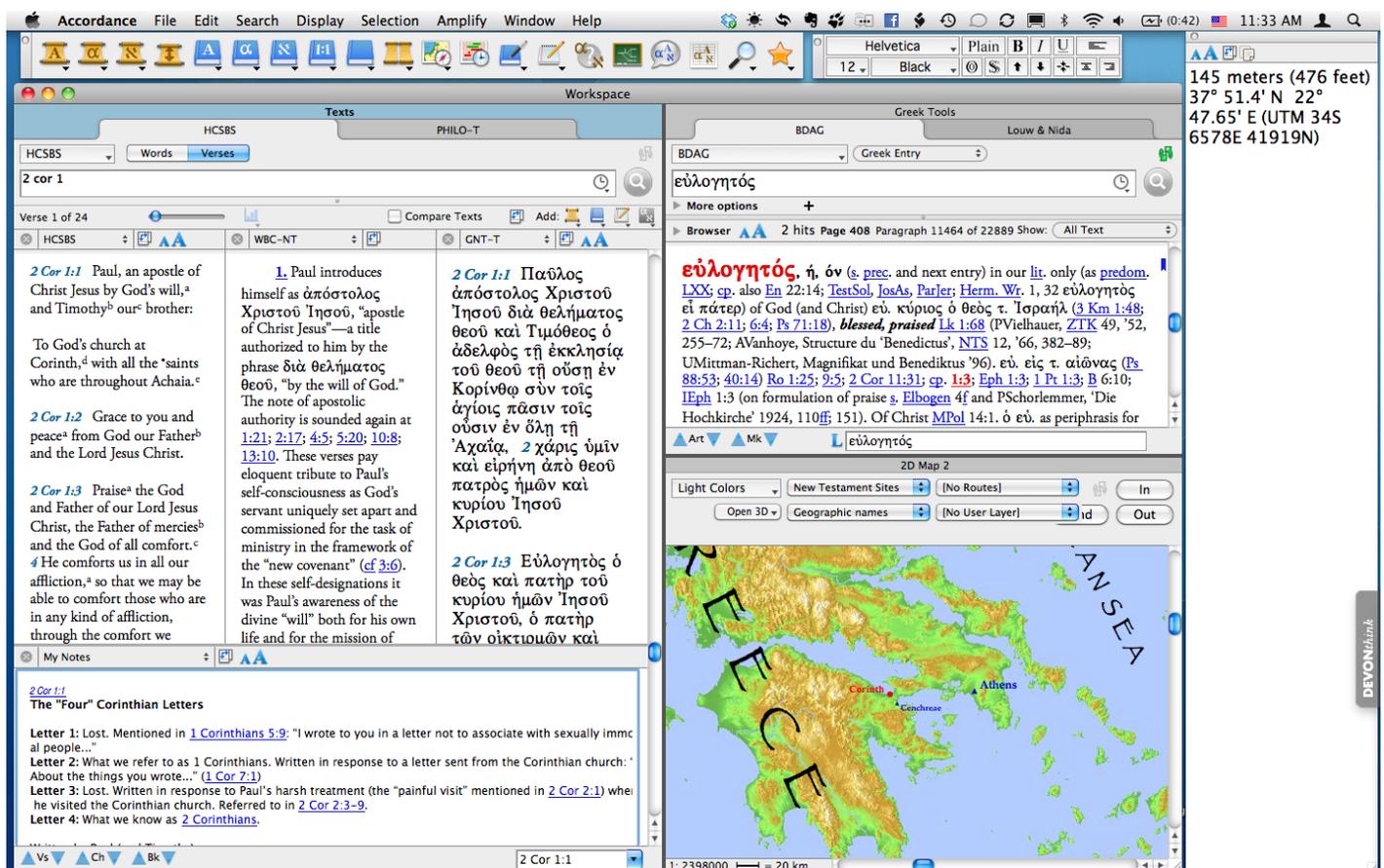
Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit...

Parables Newsletter

- Series 1.18.7
- *Yahweh's Book*
- Chapters 13-15

Yahweh's Book



Knowledge Will Increase

Accordance Bible Software Screen Shot

(Image shows Accordance Bible study software with Bible passage, commentary, Greek New Testament, Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon, map, geographic coordinates, and personal notes panes open.)

Daniel 12:4

“But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”

The introduction of the computer has revolutionized man's pursuit of knowledge in all fields of study. This is as true of the study of the Scriptures, as it is of the fields of biology, physics, or mathe-

matics. Computer based tools have been developed that would inspire awe in the passionate Bible student of past centuries. No longer do men and women need to travel the world to study in the great libraries of universities, or the museums of nations. Nor do they have to pore over faded manuscripts by the light of a candle, or lantern. Gone are the days when a Bible scholar such as Erasmus was fortunate to have access to only a handful of incomplete manuscripts to create a translation into another language. Computer based Bible study resources are readily available today that bring together vast volumes of literature, commentary, and reference material on the Scriptures. Such a collection, though common today, would have been the envy of many ancient ecclesiastical schools. Neither is this material so expensive as to be out of reach of the majority of people. There are excellent computer based resources that are freely distributed at no cost to the user.

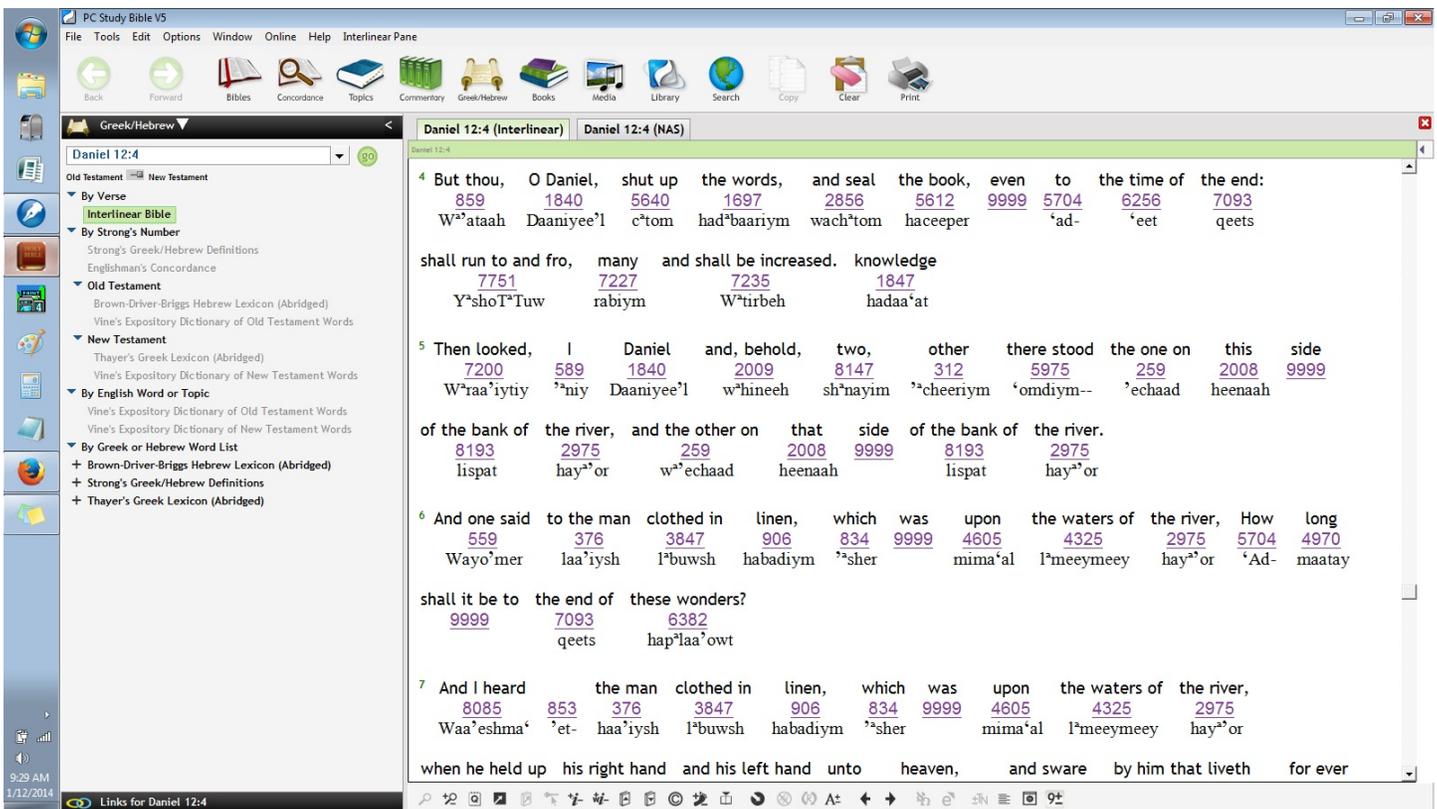
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My own study of the Scriptures took a leap forward when I acquired my first copy of the program PC Study Bible from BibleSoft back in the 1990s. I continue to use this program, having upgraded it when each new version has come out (the current version is PC Study Bible 5). Not only did this computer based Bible software make it much easier for me to locate passages of Scripture by searching on a word or two, to find passages on a specific topic, and to access Strong's Greek and Hebrew definitions more easily, but it brought to me study resources I did not previously possess.

One of the tools that has most transformed my personal study of the Scriptures is the Interlinear Bible on computer. Now, when I am studying a passage of Scripture, I can quickly switch to the Interlinear view and see what Hebrew and Greek words correspond to the English text.

In the screen shot below I have opened the Interlinear Bible to display the Scripture from Daniel 12:4 that is cited at the beginning of this post. You will note that the English text is displayed. Underneath each English word is the Strong's Concordance number. Below the Strong's number is a transliteration of the Hebrew or Greek word into English. With this view opened, I can click on any of the Strong's numbers and the entry for that word will be opened in another pane.

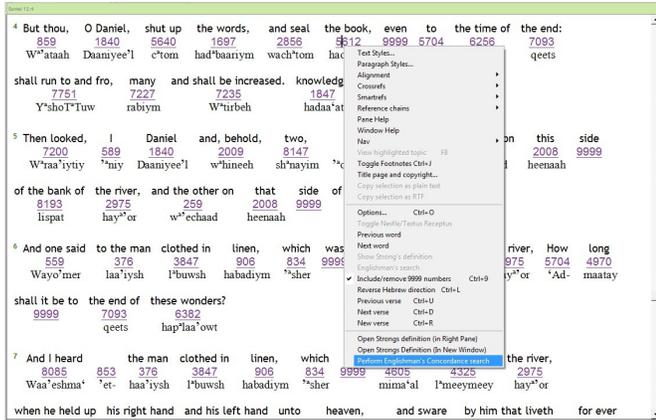
Also, by right clicking any of the Strong's numbers, a pop-up menu appears that provides me with a number of other tools. Among the most useful of these tools, and the one I use most often in my studies, is the Englishman's Concordance Search. By choosing this option I can see a list of every place in the Bible where a specific Hebrew or Greek word occurs. This is a valuable tool, for it



PC Study Bible 5 with Interlinear Bible Pane Opened

Yahweh's Book

permits me to see whether the word in question has other shades of meaning, and whether the Bible translators rendered it consistently into English.



Interlinear View Showing Pop-Up Menu Options

There are times when the Strong's dictionary definition of a word contains some error, or is deficient in not showing the full range of meaning of a specific Hebrew or Greek word. This makes it necessary for the student of the Scriptures to look at all of the occurrences of a Hebrew or Greek word in order to establish its meaning from the context in which it appears. For example, yesterday a brother in Christ e-mailed me regarding the Strong's definition for the Greek word "aionios" found in Jude 1:7.

Jude 7

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of **eternal** fire.

KJV

In the original Greek, the word translated as "eternal" in the KJV Bible is "aionios." Following is Strong's definition.

NT:166

aionios (ahee-o'-nee-os); from NT:165; perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well):

KJV - eternal, for ever, everlasting, world (began).

Readers who are familiar with my book *God's Plan of the Ages* will realize that I teach that this is an errant translation of this Greek word. If I relied solely upon the Strong's definition of this word, I would be hindered from arriving at the truth. There are other resources available, however. I mentioned in the previous chapter that, prior to James Strong producing his concordance, Robert Young published *Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible*. Young provides a very different definition for this Greek word. Following is his concise entry.

aionios, Age lasting

The discerning student will recognize at once that not only are Strong's and Young's definitions different, they are contradictory. Something cannot be "perpetual," which is to say "never ending," and also be "age lasting." An age has a definite beginning and an end. Robert Young also produced a Literal Bible translation. Following is the verse as it appears in his Bible version.

Jude 7

as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, in like manner to these, having given themselves to whoredom, and gone after other flesh, have been set before — an example, of fire **age-during**, justice suffering.

[Young's Literal Translation]

Everywhere throughout Young's Literal Translation, Robert Young has consistently rendered the Greek word "aion" and its variant forms as indicat-

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ing an age. The Bible student is therefore left with a quandary. Is James Strong's definition correct, or is Robert Young's definition correct, or are both wrong? Not being a Greek scholar, how would a Christian test the matter? One way to do so is to look at every place in the Bible where the word "aion" and its variants occur, and see what is revealed. It should become apparent from the context in which the word is found whether one, or both, of these definitions are inaccurate. I examined the Scriptures to see where this word occurred, listing the results of my study in the book *God's Plan of the Ages*. Consider how nonsensical the following Scriptures would be if we use Strong's definition of aion to mean "a period of time without end," or "eternal."

Ephesians 2:7

That in the *eternities* (aions) to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:26

Even the mystery which hath been hid from *eternities* (aions) and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints...

Ephesians 2:2

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the *eternity* (aion) of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

Hebrews 1:2

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the *eternities* (aions)...

John 9:32

Since the *eternity* (aion) began was it not heard that

any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

If, however, we use Robert Young's definition of aion as denoting an "age" then the verses above become intelligible.

This reveals an issue that Bible students need to bear in mind. Even as men have introduced errors into the Scriptures over the millennia, they have also introduced errors into their commentaries and Bible study resources. In my reply to the brother who wrote to me yesterday, I shared the following comment.

I would make mention of the fact that Mr. Strong was a Methodist minister. No doubt, had he embraced, and taught, the doctrine of the reconciliation of all men, he would not have remained a Methodist minister very long. I am not suggesting that Mr. Strong compromised truth to maintain his standing with the Methodists. What I would suggest, however, is that Mr. Strong was influenced by, and aligned with, Methodist doctrine, and this doctrine rejected the reconciliation of the creation back to God the Father. Denominationalism is a great snare. It leads to factions, and causes men to be fitted with blinders, unable to receive any teaching or doctrine outside of that which is endorsed by their particular sect of Christianity. Paul condemned such divisions in the church in his first letter to the Corinthians.

To be clear, James Strong did concede that some forms of the word "aion" do mean an age. In fact, the root word of aionios, and all similar variants is the Greek word "aion." Mr. Strong has given us this definition of the word.

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NT:165

aion (ah-ee-ohn'); from the same as NT:104; **prop-erly, an age**; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):

KJV - age, course, eternal, (for) ever (-more), [n-] ever, (beginning of the, while the) world (began, without end).

So even James Strong declared that the **proper** meaning of the Greek word *aion* is "an age." Nevertheless, he was not consistent in acknowledging this fact when providing definitions for the variant forms of this word.

One of the immense benefits of having Bible study tools readily available on the individual level is that the student of the Scriptures is set free from denominational and doctrinal bias. Rather than having to attend seminary, or Bible college, and have a professor tell them how the Bible should be rightly interpreted, the man or woman who yearns for spiritual truth is able to investigate matters themselves.

In addition to the tools already listed that are part of the PC Study Bible software program, I have a number of different Bible dictionaries to choose from. It can prove profitable to check the entries in these dictionaries to ascertain the meaning of a word. Following are some examples.

Age

an indefinite period (Ephesians 2:7 Ephesians 3:5,21; Colossians 1:26)...

(Easton's Bible Dictionary)

AGE

A period of time characterized by a certain stage of development of God's grand scheme of redemption

(aion) (Ephesians 2:7; 3:5).

(Fausset's Bible Dictionary)

AGE

we have the plural as the translation of aion, properly "duration," "the course or flow of time," "an age or period of the world..."

(International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

AGE

An era or specified period of time during which certain related events come to pass. As used in the New Testament, age generally refers to the present era, as opposed to the future age. According to the apostle Paul, Satan is "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4). But the age to come will belong to Jesus Christ and His rule of justice and righteousness (Hebrews 6:5).

(Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Although one of the common features of Bible study software are the commentaries, and PC Study Bible comes with a number of them, I rarely refer to them in the course of my research. In general I have not found them helpful. They rarely contain deeper spiritual insights into the word, and are far more likely to contain personal opinion and denominational bias than some of the other Bible study tools.

Maps, and photographs of places and objects named in the Bible are a common feature of many Bible study programs. Additionally, one may find a large number of other features that vary from one software suite to another. A final tool I will make mention of that has been of great help to me is *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. Whenever I have a verse from the Bible pulled up, I can click on the link for *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* and I

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will be shown a list of phrases from the verse along with numerous references to other Bible passages that are related in topic. This provides a quick method to find other passages of Scripture on a specific subject.

Although I use PC Study Bible as my software of choice, it is not necessarily the best program available. Other programs may be more suitable to an individual depending on their specific needs and their budget. Two highly regarded programs are Accordance, which was originally developed for the Apple Macintosh, and Bibleworks which was developed for Microsoft operating systems. Accordance has recently come out with a native version of their software that runs on Windows, and BibleWorks can be run on Macintosh computers by using an emulator. Both are reportedly excellent products offering full-featured suites that are priced around \$350 dollars. The price will be higher or lower depending upon which level of the product one chooses.

One of the recent additions to BibleWorks 9 is their BibleWorks Manuscript Project. Following is a press release on this offering.



BibleWorks 9 on Tablet Computer

BibleWorks 9 Exegetical Software Offers Breakthrough Resources

NORFOLK, Va June 28 - Bible students, teachers, pastors and scholars are in for a treat with the

launch of BibleWorks 9. It introduced one of the most comprehensive resources for studying the original texts of the Greek New Testament -- the BibleWorks Manuscript Project.

The first installment of the BibleWorks Manuscript Project contains new e-transcriptions and complete image sets of seven of the most widely studied Greek New Testament manuscripts -- Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Bezae, Washingtonianus, Boernerianus and GA1141. The images of these ancient copies of the New Testament are also hot-linked -- allowing users to quickly find specific verses -- giving unprecedented access to the early text. The morphological tagging of manuscripts is an ongoing project and updates will be provided to users as they become available.

BibleWorks 9 also includes several important Greek e-texts and revisions – all enhanced for computer analysis. They include the Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine text with Robinson 2010 morphology; Westcott-Hort with diacritics, variant readings and morphology; Scriveners with diacritics, variant readings and morphology, Trinitarian Bible Society Greek New Testament, and the Tregelles New Testament. With a click of the mouse button, BibleWorks users can quickly highlight differences between Greek texts in the main window.

“BibleWorks 9 takes a giant leap forward in terms of opening up the world of textual variants and text criticism,” said Dr. David deSilva, the Trustees’ Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Greek at Ashland Theological Seminary. “Even more exciting, the transcribed texts of the major uncial witnesses can be selected as display versions. I can read the critical text, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and others side-by-side, such that the historic witnesses come alive as real texts, and not just as symbols at the bottom of the page of the print edition of the critical text.”

Yahweh's Book

BibleWorks has also added the exhaustive New Testament Critical Apparatus from the Center for New Testament Textual Studies (CNTTS). In BibleWorks, when studying any New Testament Greek text in the main window, the information from the Critical Apparatus updates allows users to see minor and major differences between hundreds of manuscripts dating from the 2nd through 15th centuries. Plus, in the BibleWorks version, every manuscript is categorized in easy-to-read matrixes by Aland categories and time periods.

[End Excerpt]

Not every student of the Bible would make use of this exceptional feature of BibleWorks 9, but for those doing exegetical studies, or developing new Bible translations, such a tool is a remarkable development. Of course, any student of the Scriptures may make use of this tool. If they wanted to compare variants in the ancient manuscripts of the Bible there is no better tool I am aware of to do so.

The Bible study software that will work best for you will depend on your specific needs. You should clearly identify what you want to do with the software, and make your purchase choice accordingly. There are many Bible Study software programs available. The following is not an exhaustive list, but it does include the best known titles.

Computer Based Bible Study Software

Accordance

BibleWorks

e-Bible by Thomas Nelson

Logos Bible Software

PC Study Bible

Quickverse

SwordSearcher

Wordsearch

Free Bible Study Software

BibleAnalyzer

e-sword (Windows)

Interlinear Scripture Analyzer

PocketBible

The Sword Project for Windows

Free Internet Bible Study Resources

Bible Gateway

Blue Letter Bible

StudyLight

Unbound Bible

Most of the software programs listed above have additional resources (Bible versions, commentaries, etc.) that can be added to them at cost. This is true even of the free programs listed above. Although the core program and a substantial set of resources are included with the free programs, many Bible and reference work publishers will not allow their books to be distributed free of charge. Therefore, this additional material may be acquired for a fee determined by the publisher and the software distributor.

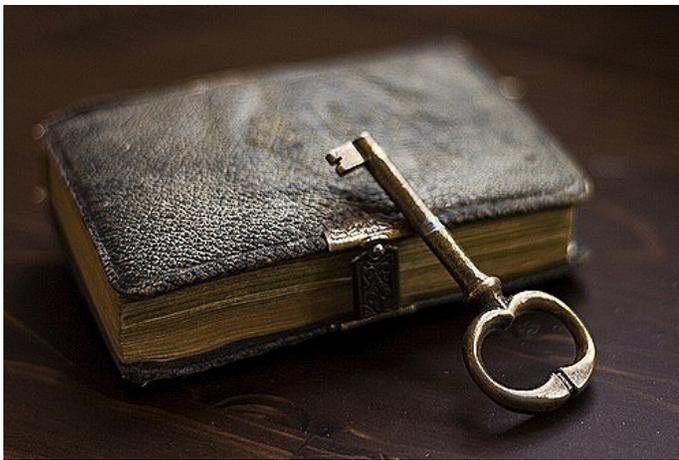
Additionally, it should be noted that many of the programs listed have versions of their software available to run on multiple platforms including Windows, iOS (Macintosh, iPad, iPhone), Android, and Linux. Not all software vendors support all of these platforms. To find if your device has a pro-

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gram available, check with the software developer.

We live in an hour when knowledge of all kinds is increasing, and is being made readily available to the individual. When it comes to having access to a wealth of Biblical translations and study tools, this generation is truly rich. How much value you place on the knowledge of God and His holy word will determine the amount of time you invest in the quest for truth.

Unlocking the Bible



Divine truth is exceedingly precious. In the same way that man places his treasures under lock and key, so does Yahweh. The treasures of the kingdom of God are not carnal things like silver, gold, and precious gems. In the treasury of heaven are hidden divine mysteries and the knowledge of the Holy One. Yahweh does not permit anyone to stroll into His treasure house and freely take what they will. The entrance into the storehouse of wisdom, knowledge, and divine secrets is a guarded one.

Having read the previous two chapters, it would be a mistake to conclude that all that is needed to obtain spiritual wisdom and the understanding of divine mysteries are the Scriptures and various tools to aid in their study. If that were true, Bible Colleges and Seminaries would be able to offer a money-back guarantee that all students who pass

through their doors will leave possessing the great truths, and divine treasures, of the kingdom of God. The evidence proves such a thought to be a lie. There is great apostasy among the institutions of Biblical learning. Men who spend years learning about Biblical exegesis (critical explanation) and Scriptural hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) often come away doubting even the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead, and other seminal truths of the faith. How can this be?

Yahweh has linked together obedience to His will and access to His storehouse of truth. Just as there are laws that govern nature, such as the law of gravity, there are inviolable laws in the kingdom of God. One of these laws is expressed in the following words of the Messiah.

Luke 8:18

"So take care ***how you listen***; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him."

If God has given you truth and you have obeyed the truth, conforming your life to the light you have received, Yahweh will grant you access to more truth. However, if you have disobeyed the truth then further truth will be withheld from you. In fact, those who are hearers, but not doers, of the word of God will find that even that which they once possessed will be taken from them.

Have you ever observed the life of a carnal believer who is living an unholy life, justifying his/her actions despite what they know to be the will of God? Have you never observed such an one come to a point in their life where they deny the truth they once possessed, even turning away from their pro-

Yahweh's Book

fession of being a Christian? Those who are given the light of truth, but choose to walk in disobedience will find that their understanding will become darkened. The knowledge of God will be restricted. They will never advance past elementary truths, and they will be in danger of losing those as well.

The Bible reveals that spiritual truth comes from the Father. To some men truth it is withheld, while to others free access is granted. Those who are outside the kingdom of God, strangers to the Holy Spirit of promise, are unable to understand, or receive, spiritual truth.

I Corinthians 2:12-14

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Being born of the Spirit of God is a prerequisite for receiving the thoughts of God. Yet, spiritual birth alone is insufficient to guarantee that the Christian will be granted access to divine truth. If a Christian walks like a natural man, they will be treated like a natural man. The mysteries of God will remain mysteries to them. Carnal Christians often behave as scoffers when divine truth is spoken to them.

In the book of Isaiah, the prophet declared to the people of Israel that Yahweh had removed from them discernment and wisdom because they were walking in sin and had embraced idolatry.

Isaiah 29:10-14

For Yahweh has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, the seers. And the entire vision shall be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I cannot, for it is sealed." Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, "Please read this." And he will say, "I cannot read." Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed."

Yahweh will do the same thing to Christians who do not surrender their lives to follow the path He has chosen for their perfecting. There are myriads of Christians who seek to serve both God and mammon. Having come to confess faith in Christ, there is little fundamental change in the course of their lives. They continue to pursue the desires of their soul. They work where they choose, live where they choose, date or marry whomever they please, pursue worldly entertainment as they did before coming to Christ, spend money on whatever their soul desires. They then wonder why the Bible remains such a closed book to them.



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Worse yet, many who have rejected Christ's invitation to "take up YOUR cross and follow Me," gravitate to preachers and churches that teach falsehood, where there is no mention of the cost of discipleship. They are self-deceived, believing that the no-cost Christianity, and materialistic doctrine of personal fulfillment and prosperity they are hearing are "the deep things of God." These are blind followers of blind leaders.

Matthew 15:14

"And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

It is both just and wise for Yahweh to withhold truth from those who are unfaithful. Yahweh will always bring to a Christian some test of truth to see whether they will obey, accepting the consequences no matter how costly. For some, the test may be something as simple as separating themselves from cultural holidays that are pagan in origin. Year after year the Spirit of Christ has directed me to teach publicly about the idolatrous origins of Christmas and the traditions that are associated with it. It is quite costly for a Christian to separate themselves from idolatry when it is something their soul loves. It is all the more difficult when one recognizes that a spouse, children, or other family members, friends, work associates, or fellow Christians will object, sometimes vehemently. Following Christ in the way of truth often leads to separation from those close to our hearts.

Luke 14:25-27

Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Matthew 10:34-38

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

I have people write to me frequently who declare the Bible to be a closed book to them. They relate to me how they can read Scriptures and not get anything out of them. Some sit down to study the Scriptures and cannot even recall the passage they just read. In such cases I never ask the person if they are using the best Bible study tools. The issue is not one of access to the right information. It is a matter of having a veil over one's understanding, placed there because of some failure to obey the truth that God has already given to them.

Many Christians would vociferously deny that there is any link between participating in Christmas festivities and their ability to glean truth from the Scriptures. Yet, if God has called you to separate yourself from that which is unclean, and you refuse to do so, He is both just and wise to withhold from you further truth.

Many men and women have married a person that the Holy Spirit told them not to marry. Some have adopted a lifestyle that is sinful. It is reported that a large percentage of Christian men are viewing pornography regularly on the Internet, or on television. When Christians walk as natural men, engaging willfully in sinful behavior, Yahweh will treat them as natural men. Access to His most holy things will be restricted from them.

Yahweh's Book

Jeremiah 29:13-14

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you,” declares Yahweh, “and I will restore your fortunes...”

Yahweh never intended all mankind to be granted understanding of His word. We see this clearly in the ministry of Christ. Yahshua knew who the Father had given to Him to be His disciples, and who had not. Though all the Jews were religious and claimed to be followers of Yahweh, the Son of God made a clear demarcation between His disciples and the rest of the Jews.

Matthew 13:10-11

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” And He answered and said to them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”

Christ spoke all things to the multitudes in parables. Similarly, the Bible has been given to the masses of humanity, but it is a veiled book. During the years of His ministry Yahshua would take His disciples apart to some private place and explain to them the meaning of the parables. The masses of people who heard the parables got no such explanation.

Mark 4:33-34

And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

A critical matter is revealed when one understands the criteria for being a disciple. Yahshua spelled

out the qualifications for being His disciple so that no one would be in doubt.

Luke 14:26-27

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

Luke 14:33

So then, any of you who does not forsake (renounce, surrender claim to, give up, say goodbye to) all that he has cannot be My disciple.

[Amplified Bible]

Being a disciple is a costly proposition. A man or woman must yield the control of their life to Christ. They must agree to go where He says go, and to do what He says do. They cannot claim anything in this world as their own. All they possess, their very life, must be placed in the hands of God for Him to determine what to do with it.

It was men and women who had embraced the cost of discipleship that He took aside to explain to them the mysteries of His kingdom. It is such men and women who continue to be granted access to God's most holy things today.

It has ever been a remnant who have heeded the invitation to “Come, take up your cross, and follow Me.” These are accounted as true disciples. To such ones the Bible is a rich banquet. They are given permission to eat from a table of truth and divine mysteries that is restricted to others.

Hebrews 13:9-10

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Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were thus occupied were not benefitted. We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

Note how the apostle compares doctrines to food. He then states that the altar of divine truth is restricted. “Those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat” from this altar. This is a parable, for the tabernacle is a symbol for man’s body.

I Corinthians 6:19

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...

Those who “serve the tabernacle” are those who serve the flesh. If you would dine on the truths of Yahweh’s kingdom, if you would be a partaker of His holy things, you must crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. You must accept the invitation of Christ and follow in His steps.

The pride of man would entertain the thought that anyone can be a possessor of divine truth. It is nothing more than humanism to believe that all one needs is a Bible, some tools and some training, and they can plumb the depths of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Yahweh’s kingdom does not function along such lines. Yahweh grants wisdom and understanding to whom He pleases, and He withholds the same from those He has determined should not have access to His divine mysteries.

If you love truth you will show your love by your willingness to suffer for it. If you are faithful with the little you have been given, Yahweh will give you more.

Use It or Lose It!



In 2013 the American Bible Society commissioned the Barna Group to conduct a survey. The focus of the survey was American’s attitudes and actions relating to the Bible. The results were published under the title *The State of the Bible, 2013*. The report reveals a tremendous disparity between what people say, and what they actually do, when it comes to the Bible. For example, although 88% of American adults reported that their household contained a Bible, and on average there were 4.4 Bibles per household, only half of those surveyed were characterized as Bible readers. This designation was itself rather generous considering that among the 50% of American adults characterized as Bible readers, 9% said they read the bible no more than 3 to 4 times a year, and an additional 7% read it on average once a month.

The Barna Group survey reported that 47% of Americans **STRONGLY AGREE** that the Bible contains **EVERYTHING** a person needs to know to live a meaningful life. Additionally, more than half of adults (56%) believe the Bible has *too little* influence in U.S. society today. Nevertheless, only 13% of those surveyed said they read the Bible daily. Another 20% stated that they are weekly Bible readers.

Yahweh's Book

It may sound impressive to hear that a full third of American adults read their Bibles either daily, or weekly, but it should be kept in mind that among religiously minded people there is a tendency to dramatically overstate their actual participation in spiritual activity. As a case in point, among those deemed to be "Bible readers," the survey reported that 13% could not identify the Bible version they read and 39% (more than a third) of those who identified themselves as practicing Protestants could not name the first five books of the Bible. The survey also reported that 58% of Americans wrongly thought that John the Baptist was one of the twelve apostles. (Protestants did no better than Catholics on this question.) These facts reveal a very low level of familiarity with the Scriptures among a significant number of people identified as Bible readers.

Not surprisingly, the survey reported that the number one frustration relating to the Bible was not having enough time to read it. The complete survey can be viewed at the following link.

As I reflected upon the results of this survey I was reminded of the following words of Christ.

Matthew 6:21

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

If you want to know the true value a person places upon something, do not listen to their claims, instead observe their actions. The person making the loudest and boldest declaration of their love and reverence for the Bible may in fact spend very little time reading and meditating upon the Scriptures. Yahweh sees beyond the boasting of man's speech. As the saying goes, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Intentions are not actions.

When Christ addressed the churches of Asia Minor in the opening chapters of Revelation, He began His comments with the repeated statement, "I know your deeds."

Revelation 2:1-2

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write... "I know your deeds..."

Revelation 2:18-19

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write... "I know your deeds..."

Revelation 3:1

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write... "I know your deeds..."

Revelation 3:7-8

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write... "I know your deeds."

Revelation 3:14-15

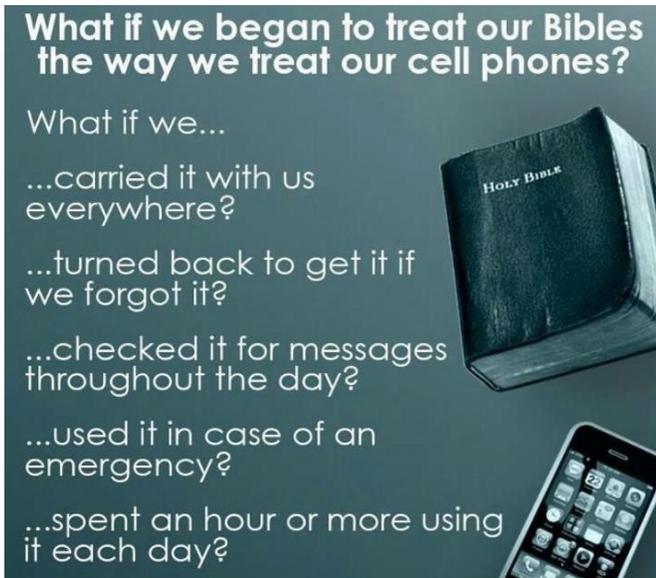
And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write... "I know your deeds..."

To the church in America Yahshua will judge no differently. He will not judge the church in America, or any other nation, on its confession. He will judge them on their deeds. When Yahshua reveals that which His people deemed to be valuable, He will look at where they focused their time and attention.

Some years back an e-mail began circulating that posed the question, "What if we began to treat our Bibles the way we treat our cell phones?" This was followed by additional questions.

Parables Bookshelf

- What if we carried it with us everywhere?
- What if we turned back to get it if we forgot it?
- What if we checked it for messages throughout the day?
- What if we used it in case of an emergency?
- What if we spent an hour or more using it each day?



Like the cell phone, the Bible is a communication device. It is called “the word of God” for good reason. The Bible is one of the chief instruments Yahweh uses to speak to His people. Much is revealed as a person compares their behavior regarding their cell phone and that regarding their Bible.

Recognizing that a cell phone allows an individual to stay in communication with other people, and the Bible assists them in staying in touch with God, which one do you grab before you go out the door in the morning? If you have previously experienced God speaking to you through the pages of Scriptures, would you not want to check the Bible often to see if Yahweh has some new message for you? Are not Yahweh’s messages more important than those received from friends, family, and other people?

When was the last time you turned back to get your

Bible when you realized you did not have it with you? Have you ever turned back to get your cell phone when you realized you did not have it on your person? If you encountered an emergency situation, would you be more likely to call out to God first, or reach for your phone and call somebody to help you?

When was the last time you received a word from the Father as you read the Bible? When was the last time you received new revelation when meditating upon a passage of Scripture? When did you last sense your heavenly Father speaking as the Bible was opened before you? Is it possible that there is a correlation between the time you spend in the word of God and the frequency with which you hear His voice?

Have you ever heard God speak something to you that you did not want to hear, or hear Him give you some direction you did not want to obey, so you tuned Him out? Do you avoid reading the Bible because it might lead to conviction that God wants to change things in your life? I admit that I am at times prone to silencing my phone when someone calls me and I do not want to talk to them at the moment. Have you considered that an absence of Bible reading is man’s way of silencing God’s voice? It is like setting your cell phone to mute.



Yahweh's Book

There can be no more effective way to mute the voice of the Holy Spirit in the Bible than to not read it. Leave the Bible on the shelf to collect dust and it will speak to no one.

One attribute of those whom the Father has used in spiritually powerful ways is that they meditated regularly on the words of God recorded in Scripture.

Psalms 119:24, 99

Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors... I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.

The apostle Paul gave the following wise encouragement and counsel to Timothy.

II Timothy 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Yahshua. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work

Paul himself remained an avid student of the Scriptures until the end of his life. In the

same letter, Paul instructed Timothy to bring him the Scriptures he had left in Troas.

II Timothy 4:13

When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

Seeing that the Bible holds so much potential for advancement to spiritual maturity and understanding of the ways of God, should Christians not clamor out for it as if it were a great and valued treasure? A recent phenomenon has been observed as people line up outside of stores selling the latest iPhone or Android based smart phone. Some camp out for days in anticipation of a new model phone being released. What if people showed the same enthusiasm for purchasing a new Bible? What if crowds clamored with outstretched hands, pleading to be given a copy of the word of God?



I began this teaching series by sharing about my delight and excitement at having received my first Bible in my youth. That lit-

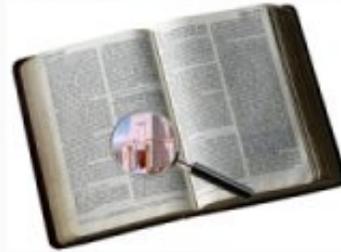
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tle, brown, leather bound KJV Bible was treasured by me. I always knew where it was at. I carried it with me more than any other possession I owned at the time. I read it often and considered myself fortunate to have received such a valuable and useful gift.

When in recent years I was twice put in jail, my great desire was to have a copy of the Scriptures to read as I spent 20 hours a day in a cell. When the Father led me through many distressing experiences, fears, and trials, beginning in 1999 and continuing for a period of years, my prize possession was my Bible. In it I sought comfort, encouragement, strength, wisdom, and direction. Through many wilderness journeys I have kept Yahweh's Book close at hand. It is the nearest tangible connection I have to the One who created me. It is a book I have loved and treasured from my youth and I continue to treasure it to this day. It is my prayer that you might as well.

*The Bible is the nearest
tangible connection I have to
the One who created me.*

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PARABLES PRECEPT— Famous Hymns: Blessed Assurance

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Refrain:
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;

Angels, descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Refrain

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Refrain

Written by Fanny Crosby, 1873