Tools For Bible Study (Part 2)

Introduction

In our last lesson (Tools for Bible Study Part 1) we looked at most everything available to us in a "non-electronic" form. This study will center around tools that are available in an electronic format. There are so many of these tools available it will simply be impossible to cover each and every one. However, by looking at the basic tools you will have a better understanding of what's out there and how to find it.

As stated in the first lesson, we are very fortunate to live in a time during God's history where there is such a wealth of resources available to help us understand what we are studying and help make his words available to so many people. Many of the "Hard Copy" tools have been time tested and we can be confident by author and\or title on which ones are reliable and acceptable. However, electronic tools are new to us and so the a great challenge for the studying Christian is; How do you know what is "reliable" or "acceptable"? Electronic study tools can be built and published by absolutely anyone! Therefore we must use great care in selecting which tool to use so as no to be led astray.

In this lesson we will look at some of the electronic tools that are now available to us. We will demonstrate how to find them and a sound way to know if they are "reliable" and "acceptable" to use in your quest to study God's text. At the end of this lesson we should be very confident in the tools that are available for use, and how to choose them.

1. The Electronic Bible

As we stated in the first lesson:

> *There is simply no other more reliable source or aid for our study of the Bible, then the Bible itself. Our quest for a study of God's word should start and end with the Bible.*

Absolutely everything beyond the word of God itself becomes "un-inspired" and thus brings a huge risk of "adding to" or "taking away" from God's word. So in our quest for electronic tools we will make this our fundamental starting point. Electronic bibles can be purchased as an installable software, a book for electronic readers, as a portable electronic device and are certainly available via many websites. Probably the
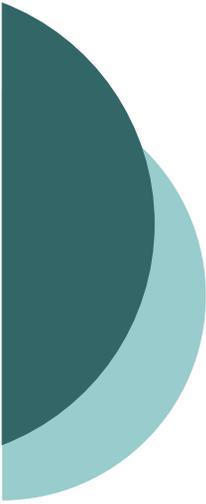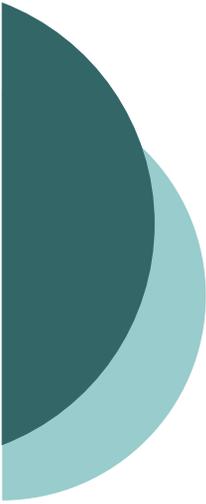
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most flexible way to use an electron Bible is via the web. Most phones, laptops, tablets and even e-readers can connect to the web which makes this the most accessible form of the bible. Finding a website is really quite simply. You can simply use any search engine and type in the words "Online Bible". You will be amazed at the results! Many of these sites will have a variety of tools available along with the bible. However, to simply have an electronic resource for the bible, it is highly suggested to use a site that offers just the bible.

How do we know which ones to use? Quite simply, we use the same rules for electronic bibles as we would for hard copies. For example:

a. **Version:** Take a look at the version that is offered. Many versions of the bible are reliable based on their origination and author. There is no "Official" version that is sanctioned by God. However, there are several versions out there that simply work hard to provide the exact words of the original text. Some examples of these are: King James, New King James, New American Standard Version (NASV) and the English Standard Version (ESV). There are also many versions out there that work hard at adding "commentary" type translation which makes it very difficult to know what is from God and what is from man. These are the versions that should be avoided in your search for any type of bible.

b. **Type:** A Many bibles are published in different formats. For example there are chronological bibles, study bibles, teen bibles and the list goes on. These formats offer a great deal of help to study but must also be reviewed for accuracy. This is especially true in the case of a study bible. These formats will include commentary type notes which must be verified as being accurate to the scripture itself. Many times the author of the commentary can help make this decision. When selecting a site for an electronic bible, be sure to follow the same rules for "Type" as you would for selecting a hard copy.

The electronic bible has opened up a new world of opportunities for the studying Christian. How easy is it now to flip open a phone or tablet and read your bible literally ANYWHERE! There has simply been no better and easier way to do this. When you consider the changes in the medium of God's word over the years you will see the advances that has been given to us to make our job easier! Yet, with so many different mediums out there, God's word remains unchanged. Praise God! A list of electronic bible sites has been provided at the end of this lesson for your use.

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2. Study Aids (Electronic)

As we mentioned earlier many sites have a complete set of tools to work with. Bibles, concordances, chain references, dictionaries and commentaries. However, each on of these tools can be accessed by itself. In this section we will look at these tools, how to find them and examples of using them.

A. Chain Reference

In Part 1 of this study we looked at Thompson's Chain Reference as an example of this type of study tool. Just like with the electronic bible, a chain reference tool can be easily found on-line by simply searching for "On-Line Chain Reference". We will continue with Thompson's for our example.

Let's start by simply looking under the "B's" in the Alphabetical index;

Home > Concordances > Thompson Chain Reference > Entries beginning with B

Thompson Chain Reference

Choose from entries beginning with: B

A|B|C|D|E|F|G|H|I|J|K|L|M|N|O|P|Q|R|S|T|U|V|W|Y|Z

202 total entries

Baal	Bible stories for children
Baal-peor	Bible, the
Baasha	Bigotry-catholicity
Babbling	Binding grain
Babel, tower of	Birds
Babylon	Birthdays
Backbiting	Birthright

You will see that there are 202 total entries for the letter B. Under that a list of each word, starting with B is given. If we select the word "Babylon" the site will then take us to a more detailed breakdown of where and how the word is used as seen in the following example;
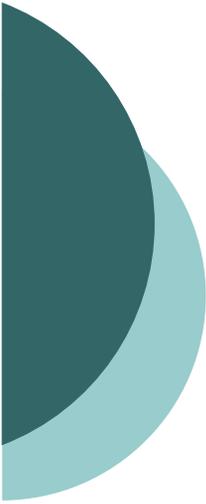
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Thompson Chain Reference

Babylon - ◀))

- General References to
  - Genesis 10:10
  - 2 Kings 25:13
  - Isaiah 14:4
  - Jeremiah 51:8
  - Daniel 4:29
  - 1 Peter 5:13
- Prophecies against
  - Psalms 137:8
  - Isaiah 13:19
  - Isaiah 14:22
  - Isaiah 21:9
  - Isaiah 43:14

By clicking on the scripture link, you are then given the scripture along with the links to additional scriptures.

The New American Standard Bible
Book of Genesis
Chapter 10 - *Click for Chapter Audio* ◀))

10:10 - [In Context | Read Chapter | Discuss this Verse]
[Original: Hebrew / Greek | Multi-Translation | Make Poster]
The beginning of his kingdom was Babel R233 F152 and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. R234

FOOTNOTES:

F152 Or *Babylon*

CROSS REFERENCES:

R233 Genesis 11:9
R234 Genesis 11:2; 14:1

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B. Online Bible Dictionary

On line bible dictionaries are free and easy to use. As with the other tools simple search for "On-line Bible Dictionary". Most will have the following format:

Typically you can pick the dictionary you would like to use and then either type in the word you are looking for or simply search by alphabetical index. From that point, if more than one definition exists, you can simply click on each one to get the details.

C. Concordance

On-line concordances are easy to use as well. After for search for "On-line Bible Concordance", you will find most have the following format:

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You can type in the word to search, select a translation and even what parts of the bible you want to search (Old\New Testaments). If you use Strong's online concordance, the strong's number will appear next to the scriptures that are listed. In all cases, once the scripture is located, you can simply click on the link and read the passage in it's context via an online bible of your choice.

D. On-line Bible Commentary

The on-line bible commentaries are as easy to use as any other electronic tool. However, a strong word of caution needs to be given at this point. As stated earlier, anyone can put anything on the internet. Just because a site advertised itself as a "Bible Commentary" does not mean the truth will be given. Commentaries in any format are "subjective" at best and must be viewed in that light. Extra care must be given when selecting an on-line bible commentary. Typically any sound written commentary will have a sound on-line commentary available.

Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Concise)

The codensed one-volume classic commentary
Originally written in 1706, Matthew Henry's six volume Complete Commentary provides an exhaustive look at every verse in the Bible. Also included is the one volume.

The Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible is in the public domain and may be freely used and distributed.

- **Genesis**   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50
- **Exodus**   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40
- **Leviticus**   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
- **Numbers**   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
- **Deuteronomy**   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34
- **Joshua**   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

The example above is a common format for most on-line commentaries. A listing by book and then links by chapters are available. Once you find the notes you are looking for, they can easily be printed for further study.
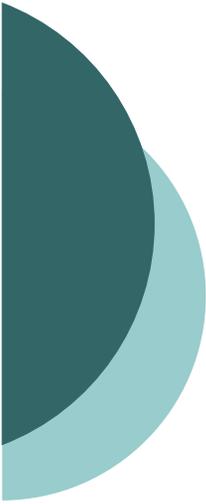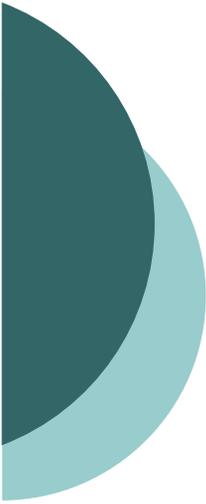
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Many on-line study sites combine all of these tools into one easy to use location. You can read the bible, look up words, use a concordance and even do a Greek word study all on the same site. A list of some of these sites are given in the appendix at the end of this lesson.

Conclusion (Part 2)

So how do we know if a bible study tool (written or on-line) is "okay" to use? When you think of all the options that are available to us it can be really quite daunting to figure out which ones to use. The answer… has already been given.

A. Start by reviewing our first lesson on Fundamentals of Studying the Bible. Remember to check your motivation for study. Remember that God's word is the ultimate tool for any spiritual question.

B. After you have done a self check, then remember to ask the questions "by what authority…?" The second lesson in this study was exhaustive in explaining the significance of the proper authority for all things spiritual. When selecting a tool to help you in your study of God's word, investigate the authority that is being used by the tool and see if the tool, and it's conclusions stand up to that test.

C. Finally, remember:

"There is simply no other more reliable source or aid for our study of the Bible, then the Bible itself. Our quest for a study of God's word should start and end with the Bible. Any tool we use, aside from the Bible itself becomes "un-inspired" and thus is vulnerable to error, and should be taken with that grain of salt.

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Appendix (On-line Resource Sites)

Site Name	URL	Com-ments
Bible Study Tools On-Line	http://userwww.service.emory.edu/~cmadd01/ivan12.html	Links to Resource Tools
Blue Letter Bible	http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.cfm	Multi – tool Site
Christ Notes	http://www.christnotes.org/	Multi – tool Site
Bible Tool-box	http://www.mybibletools.com/	Multi – tool Site
Biblos	http://biblos.com/	Multi – tool Site
Bible Gate-way	http://www.biblegateway.com/	Multi – tool Site
Study Light	http://www.studylight.org/	Multi – tool Site
Great Treas-ures	http://greattreasures.org	Greek Words
ESV Bible	http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/browse/	ESV Bi-ble
Got Ques-tions	http://www.gotquestions.org	Answers to ques-tions
e-Bible Teacher	http://www.ebibleteacher.com/imagehtml/ntmaps.html	On line Maps
Christ Art	http://www.christart.com/	Clip Art Resource