

Bible Commentaries

RELATED RESOURCES

- The Power of God's Word - a simple study
- [The Necessity of Scripture \(Pdf\) - William D. Barrick](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture \(Pdf\) - John MacArthur](#)
- [Rationality, Meaningfulness & Precision of Scripture - Robert L. Thomas](#)
- [The Authority of Scripture - excellent article by Richard L. Mayhue](#)
- [NT Commentaries for Bible Expositors: 1987-92 by James E Rosscup](#)
- [OT Commentaries for Biblical Expositors: 1987-92 by James E Rosscup](#)
- [Biblical Commentaries Online - nice compilation](#)
- Spurgeon on Commenting and Commentaries
- Jensen's Survey of the New Testament and Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament [in one Pdf download](#).

- Cyril Barber's The Minister's Library - Volume 1 (1974) - this book can be borrowed

1. [Old Testament Commentaries](#) - excellent resource (borrow)

2 [New Testament Commentaries](#) - excellent resource (borrow)

- Cyril Barber's The Minister's Library - Volume 2

1. [General Reference Works and Bible Commentaries](#)
2. [Old Testament](#) - reviews of commentaries
3. [New Testament](#) - reviews of commentaries
4. [Doctrinal Theology](#)
5. [Doctrinal Literature](#)
6. [Pastoral Theology](#)
7. [Social and Ecclesiastical Theology](#)
8. [Missions and Evangelism](#)
9. [Christian Education](#)
10. [Church History Learning About People, Part 2](#)

- Cyril Barber's The Minister's Library - Volume 3

1. [General Reference Works and Bible Commentaries](#)
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7. [Social and Ecclesiastical Theology](#)

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- [Verse by Verse Studies](#)
- [Reference Search Tool](#)
- [RefTagger by Logos](#)
- [TheWord Bible software - recommended](#)

- [Free Bible Study Software Program](#) - E-sword
- [Logos Bible Study Software](#)
- [Study Bibles - Defenders, Holman, Reformation - all free online](#)
- [Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#)
- [Romans and Ephesians by Dr. Wayne Barber](#)
- [A Testimony of Jesus Christ - excellent commentary on the Revelation](#)
- [The Net Bible Bible Online: OT & NT](#)
- [The Ray C. Stedman Library](#)
- [Bible Commentary by David Guzik](#)
- [Multiple Comments on one verse, one one page](#)
- [Expository Notes on all 66 Books of the Bible - Constable](#)
- [Some of the Commentaries on the Web written prior to 1900](#)
- [A W Pink's Archive](#) (caveat)
- [William Barclay's Commentaries](#)
- [Just As If I Had Never Sinned](#) - sounds good but is it Biblical?
- [The Enigmatic William Barclay](#) - by Wayne Jackson
- [Expositions of Holy Scripture by Alexander Maclaren](#)
- [Other Bible Translations \(especially Amplified Version\)](#)
- [Adam Clarke](#)
- [A W Pink](#)

Related Topics:

- Bibliography of resources quoted on [preceptaustin.org](#) — Interpretation in inductive Bible study
- Approach to Interpretation - supernaturalistic, naturalistic, existential, dogmatic

COMMENTARIES THAT CAN BE BORROWED FROM ARCHIVE.ORG

Explanation - The following list includes not only commentaries but other Christian works by well known evangelical writers. Most of the resources below are newer works (written after 1970) which previously were available only for purchase in book form or in a Bible computer program. The resources are made freely available by archive.org but have several caveats - (1) they do not allow copy and paste, (2) they can only be checked out for one hour (but can be checked out immediately when your hour expires giving you time to read or take notes on a lengthy section) and (3) they require creating an account which allows you to check out the books free of charge. To set up an account click [archive.org](#) and then click the picture of the person in right upper corner and enter email and a password. That's all you have to do. Then you can read these more modern resources free of charge! I have read or used many of these resources but not all of them so ultimately you will need to be a Berean ([Acts 17:11+](#)) as you use them. I have also selected works that are conservative and Biblically sound. If you find one that you think does not meet those criteria please send an email at <https://www.preceptaustin.org/contact>. The resources are listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name and some include reviews of the particular resource. For hundreds of other commentaries and books that can be borrowed see Christian Commentaries Online.

Note for the most up to date listing see - [Christian Commentaries Online](#)

STUDY BIBLES - ONE VOLUME COMMENTARIES OF ENTIRE BIBLE, BIBLE DICTIONARIES, GENERAL REFERENCE WORKS

[KJV Bible Commentary](#) - Hindson, Edward E; Kroll, Woodrow Michael. Over 3000 pages of the entire OT/NT - no restriction on length of time one can use it. No copy and paste. Well done conservative commentary that interprets Scripture from a literal perspective. [User reviews](#) - it generally gets 4/5 stars from users. - [372 ratings](#)

Very well done conservative commentary that interprets Scripture from a literal perspective (pre-millennial) [user reviews](#)

The King James Version Bible Commentary is a complete verse-by-verse commentary. It is comprehensive in

scope, reliable in scholarship, and easy to use. Its authors are leading evangelical theologians who provide practical truths and biblical principles. Any Bible student will gain new insights through this one-volume commentary based on the timeless King James Version of the Bible.

[NKJV Study Bible: New King James Version Study Bible](#) by Radmacher, Earl D; Allen, Ronald Barclay; House, H. Wayne; [917 ratings](#) Very helpful notes. Conservative.

[New Bible Commentary](#) - (1994) [See user reviews](#)

[The Experiencing God Study Bible : the Bible for knowing and doing the will of God](#) - Blackaby, Henry (1996) 1968 pages - CHECK THIS ONE! Each chapter begins with several questions under the title "PREPARE TO MEET GOD." Then you will interesting symbols before many of the passages. The chapter ends with a "DID YOU NOTICE?" question. This might make a "dry chapter" jump off the page! Read some of the [48 ratings](#)

[Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) - OT and NT - Charles Pfeiffer - 1560 pages (1962). [214 ratings](#) Less detailed than the KJV Bible Commentary.

[The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible commentary](#) - This version has no time restriction but only has the NT.

[The Defender's Study Bible : King James Version](#) by Morris, Henry M. Excellent notes for well known creationist. [45 ratings](#)

[The MacArthur study Bible](#) - John MacArthur. Brief but well done notes [1,275 ratings](#)

[The David Jeremiah study bible](#) - (2013) 2208 pages. [2,272 ratings Logos.com](#) - "Drawing on more than 40 years of study, Dr. David Jeremiah has compiled a legacy resource that will make an eternal impact on generations to come. 8,000 study notes. Hundreds of enriching word studies"50+ Essentials of the Christian Faith" articles."

[ESV study Bible](#) - Excellent resource but not always literal in eschatology and the nation of Israel [6,004 ratings](#)

[Believer's Bible Commentary](#) by MacDonald, William (1995) 2480 pages

Dr. John MacArthur, Jr. - "Concise yet comprehensive - the most complete single-volume commentary I have seen."

Warren Wiersbe - "For the student who is serious about seeing Christ in the Word."

[Life application study Bible](#) : New Living Translation. Has some very helpful notes. [4,445 ratings](#)

[Compact Bible commentary](#) by Radmacher, Earl D; Allen, Ronald Barclay; House, H Wayne, et al - 954 pages. [424 ratings](#) Multiple contributors to the comments which are often verse by verse. The comments are brief but meaty and can really help your study through a given book. A sleeper in my opinion.

[The Lion handbook to the Bible](#) - (1999) 822 pages. This resource is absolutely loaded with very nice color pictures and charts.

[NIV archaeological study Bible](#) (2005) 2360 pages [950 ratings](#) (See also [Archaeology and the Bible - OT and NT](#))

[The NIV study Bible](#) by Barker, Kenneth L; Burdick, Donald W (1995) 2250 pages. Note this is the first edition. This resource has been fully revised in 2020.

[The Ryrie study Bible](#) - Charles Ryrie (1978) 2142 pages. Conservative. [216 ratings](#)

[With the Word](#) - Devotional Commentary - Warren Wiersbe - [428 ratings](#)

[Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament](#) by Wiersbe, Warren W [113 ratings](#)

"Even the most difficult Scriptures come alive as Warren Wiersbe leads you book-by-book through the Old Testament and helps you to see the "big picture" of God's revelation. In this unique volume, you will find: • Introductions and/or outlines for every Old Testament book • Practical expositions of strategic chapters • Special studies on key topics, relating the Old Testament to the New Testament • Easy-to-understand expositions that are practical, preachable, and teachable If you have used Dr. Wiersbe's popular BE series, you know how simple and practical his Bible studies are, with outlines that almost teach themselves. If not, you can now discover a wonderful new resource. This work is a unique commentary on every book of the Old Testament. It contains new material not to be found in the BE series.

[Evangelical Commentary on the Bible](#) - editor Walter Elwell (1989) 1239 pages. [User reviews](#).

[Eerdmans' family encyclopedia of the Bible](#) (1978) 344 pages

[Eerdmans' handbook to the Bible](#) (1983) 688 pages

[Tyndale handbook of Bible charts & maps](#) by Wilson, Neil

[Bible handbook and A-Z bible encyclopedia](#)

[International children's Bible field guide : answering kids' questions from Genesis to Revelation](#) by Richards, Larry

[The illustrated guide to Bible customs & curiosities](#) by Knight, George W. (George William),

[Today's handbook of Bible times & customs](#) by Coleman, William L

[The Shaw pocket Bible handbook](#) - Editor - Walter Elwell (1984) 408 pages.

"This hardback is small in size but packed full of content: Brief summaries of every book of the bible, cultural, archaeological and historical info, word definitions, pictures, maps and charts." Worth checking!

[Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament \(Volume 2 - Isaiah - Malachi\)](#) by Unger, Merrill Frederick, 1909- (1981) 972 pages.

[Zondervan illustrated Bible backgrounds commentary](#) - New Testament - 552 pages. (2002) [See user reviews](#).

[The new Unger's Bible dictionary](#) by Unger, Merrill Frederick, 1909-

[Survey of the Bible : introductory insights, background studies, book-by- book survey](#) by Unger, Merrill Frederick

[The parallel New Testament and Unger's Bible handbook : produced for Moody monthly](#) by Unger, Merrill (1975) 744 pages [4 ratings](#)

[The Hodder Bible handbook](#) by Unger, Merrill

[Nelson's expository dictionary of the Old Testament](#) by Unger, Merrill

[Kregel Bible handbook : a full-color guide to every book of the Bible](#) by Kerr, William [3 ratings](#)

[The new encyclopedia of Christian quotations](#) by Water, Mark

[Zondervan handbook to the Bible](#)

[Zondervan illustrated Bible backgrounds commentary](#)

BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Spurgeon's Advice Regarding Consulting the Commentaries

The "prince of preachers" **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** in his work "[Commenting and Commentaries](#)" declared to his students that...

"we should heartily subscribe to the declaration, that more **expository preaching** (Type of preaching in which an extended passage of the Scripture, especially a book, is explained and interpreted over a number of weeks) is greatly needed, and that all preachers would be the better if they were more able **expounders** (implies a careful often elaborate explanation to make something clear and understandable) of the inspired Word.

To render such a result more probable, every inducement to search the Holy Scriptures should be placed in the way of our ministers, and to the younger brethren some guidance should be offered as to the works most likely to aid them in their studies. Many are persuaded that they should expound the Word, but being unversed (**unfamiliar, unstudied**) in the original tongues (**Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek**) they can only fall back upon the help of their English Concordances, and are left floundering about, **when a sound comment would direct their thoughts**. True, the Holy Spirit will instruct the seeker, but He works by means. The Ethiopian eunuch might have received divine illumination, and doubtless did receive it, but still, when asked whether he understood the Scripture which he read, he replied, "How can I unless some man shall guide me?" **The guiding man is needed still**. Divines who have studied the Scriptures have left us great stores of holy thought which we do

well to use. Their expositions can never be a substitute for our own **meditations**, but as water poured down a dry pump often sets it to work to bring up water of its own, so suggestive reading sets the mind in motion on its own account. Here, however, is the difficulty. Students do not find it easy to choose which works to buy (**nor which of an endlessly and rapidly proliferating list of offerings on the internet to make good use of**), and their slender stores are often wasted on books of a comparatively worthless kind. If I can save a poor man from spending his money for that which is not bread, or, by directing a brother to a good book, may enable him to dig deeper into the mines of truth, I shall be well repaid. For this purpose I have toiled, and read much, and passed under review some three or four thousand volumes. From these I have compiled my catalogue, rejecting man, yet making a very varied selection. Though I have carefully used such judgment as I possess, I have doubtless made many errors; I shall certainly find very few who will agree with all my criticisms, and some persons may be angry at my remarks. I have, however, done my best, and, with as much impartiality as I can command, I have nothing extenuated nor set down aught in malice. He who finds fault will do well to execute the work in better style; only let him remember that he will have my heifer to plough with and therefore ought in all reason to excel me.

I have used a degree of pleasantry in my remarks on the Commentaries, for a catalogue is a dry affair, and, as much for my own sake as for that of my readers, I have indulged the mirthful vein here and there. For this I hope I shall escape censure, even if I do not win commendation.

To God I commend this labour, which has been undertaken and carried out with no motive but that of honoring his name, and edifying his Church by stimulating the study of his Word. May He, for His Son's sake, grant my heart's desire." (**and this writer humbly agrees**)...

It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others. My chat this afternoon is not for these great originals, but for you who are content to learn of holy men, taught of God, and mighty in the Scriptures. It has been the fashion of late years to speak against the use of commentaries...A respectable acquaintance with the opinions of the giants of the past, might have saved many an erratic thinker from wild interpretations and outrageous inferences. Usually, we have found the despisers of commentaries to be men who have no sort of acquaintance with them; in their case, it is the opposite of familiarity which has bred contempt. It is true there are a number of expositions of the whole Bible which are hardly worth shelf room; they aim at too much and fail altogether; the authors have spread a little learning over a vast surface, and have badly attempted for the entire Scriptures what they might have accomplished for one book with tolerable success...who can pretend to biblical learning who has not made himself familiar with the great writers who spent a life in explaining some one sacred book?

Spurgeon comments on specific writers beginning with **Matthew Henry**...

First among the mighty for general usefulness we are bound to mention the man whose name is a household word, Matthew Henry. He is most pious and pithy, sound and sensible, suggestive and sober, terse and trustworthy. You will find him to be glittering with metaphors, rich in analogies, overflowing with illustrations, superabundant in reflections. He delights in apposition and alliteration; he is usually plain, quaint, and full of pith; he sees right through a text directly; apparently he is not critical, but he quietly gives the result of an accurate critical knowledge of the original fully up to the best critics of his time. He is not versed in the manners and customs of the East, for the Holy Land was not so accessible as in our day; but he is deeply spiritual, heavenly, and profitable; finding good matter in every text, and from all deducing most practical and judicious lessons.

(**Ed note:** Matthew Henry was a nonconformist Presbyterian pastor, a master of biblical languages and a diligent Bible student who ransacked the old commentary material of his day to pass the meat along to us. He had a lovely gift for organizing and expressing his thoughts. It is notable that Henry died having finished his comments only through the book of Acts. The comments on Romans through Revelation were supplied by 14 contemporary preachers of his day, and all were dissenters from the Church of England. The unabridged edition of Henry's commentary is generally considered superior to the "concise" versions available today.)

Spurgeon goes on to add that...

It would not be possible for me too earnestly to press upon you the importance of reading the expositions of that prince among men, **John Calvin**!...

A very distinguished place is due to **Dr Gill**. Beyond all controversy, Gill was one of the most able Hebraists of his day, and in other matters no mean proficient...Probably no man since Gill's days has at all equalled him in

the matter of Rabbinical learning. Say what you will about that lore, it has its value: of course, a man has to rake among perfect dunghills and dust heaps, but there are a few jewels which the world could not afford to miss. Gill was a master cinder sifter among the Targums, the Talmuds, the Mishna, and the Gemara. Richly did he deserve the degree of which he said, "I never bought it, nor thought it, nor sought it. He was always at work; it is difficult to say when he slept, for he wrote 10,000 folio pages of theology...

Adam Clarke is the great annotator of our Wesleyan friends; and they have no reason to be ashamed of him, for he takes rank among the chief of expositors. His mind was evidently fascinated by the singularities of learning, and hence his commentary is rather too much of an old curiosity shop, but it is filled with valuable rarities, such as none but a great man could have collected. Like Gill, he is one sided (Arminian - believed you could lose your salvation), only in the opposite direction to our friend the Baptist....If you have a copy of **Adam Clarke**, and **exercise discretion in reading it**, ([Click](#) critique of Adam Clarke) you will derive immense advantage from it, for frequently by a sort of side light he brings out the meaning of the text in an astonishingly novel manner. I do not wonder that Adam Clarke still stands, notwithstanding his peculiarities, a prince among commentators. (from [Commenting and Commentaries](#))

In other writings **Spurgeon** had some interesting thoughts...

Regarding Matthew Henry - You will find him to be glittering with metaphors, rich in analogies, overflowing with illustrations, superabundant in reflections. Every minister ought to read Matthew Henry entirely and carefully through once at least. You will acquire a vast store of sermons if you read with your note-book close at hand; and as for thoughts, they will swarm around you like twittering swallows around an old gable towards the close of autumn."

Regarding John Gill - "He is always worth consulting...for good, sound, massive, sober sense in commenting, who can excel Gill?"

Regarding Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's commentary - We consult it continually, and with growing interest. It contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this and used it diligently.

Regarding Matthew Poole's (Puritan who lived from 1624-1679) **Commentary** (published about 1685) - If I must have only one commentary, and had read Matthew Henry as I have, I do not know but what I should choose Poole. He is a very prudent and judicious commentator... not so pithy and witty by far as Matthew Henry, but he is perhaps more accurate, less a commentator, and more an expositor.

Below are some of the resources readily available on [preceptaustin.org](#) and the Internet in general, with a brief critique and/or explanation of their potential utility.

Consult Conservative Commentaries

Someone has quipped that it is amazing how much light the Scriptures shed on the commentaries. It follows that the discerning reader should always perform their own inductive Bible study before consulting the commentaries. Too many students go to the commentary before they go to the Book or even the Author of the Book! Remember that every commentary is written by a human author, and as it is natural that the comments are strongly biased by the author's general belief system and the approach to the interpretation of Scripture. Therefore it behooves the judicious student of God's Word to restrict himself or herself to Conservative Commentaries.

This practice is especially critical in the interpretation of prophetic books like Daniel and Revelation. Click a brief discussion of the common methods of interpreting Revelation [preterist, historicist, idealist, futurist or literalist] and a list of recommended futuristic commentaries and sermons. Click for a list of futuristic commentaries and sermons on the book of Daniel. Commentaries on prophetic books vary widely in their interpretative approach, and you may not always be able to easily discern their bias. Click list of published Revelation commentaries categorized by the predominant interpretative view of the author. If an interpreter does not use the normal, customary, literal method of interpreting Scripture, interpretation is given over to an unconstrained imagination and presuppositions which explains the imaginative, confusing interpretations of non-literal interpreters. Remember that all the prophecies of the Old and New Testament that have been fulfilled to date have been fulfilled literally, thus there is no precedent for anything but a literal approach to the prophetic books containing prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

A good check on whether a commentator interprets Scripture literally in the area of prophecy is to read their

comments on Revelation 20, specifically the 1000 year period mentioned six times (eg compare the note by the modern evangelical writer [Guzik](#) and some of the pre-1900 commentaries like [Matthew Henry](#) or [Jameison Fausset, Brown](#) or [Adam Clarke](#) who comments on the "1000 years" that "there is no doubt that the earth is in a state of progressive moral improvement; and that the light of true religion is shining more copiously everywhere, and will shine more and more to the perfect day"!)

Collections of Commentaries on Old and New Testament Books:

The purpose of these collections is to compile the a compact listing of the best sermons, commentaries, devotionals and illustrations in one site with each resource organized by chapter and verse so that it can be utilized somewhat like a multi-authored "commentary". Click the drop down menu below for a list of the completed collections on books of the Bible for conservative resources on all 66 books of the Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT RESOURCES

LINKS TO HUNDREDS OF CONSERVATIVE RESOURCES
SERMONS, COMMENTARIES, DEVOTIONALS, ILLUSTRATIONS

[CLICK FOR LIST OF ONSITE VERSE BY VERSE OT
COMMENTARIES
WHICH UPDATED AUTOMATICALLY](#)

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| ■ Genesis | ■ Job | ■ Hosea |
| ■ Exodus | ■ Psalms | ■ Joel |
| ■ Leviticus | ■ Proverbs | ■ Amos |
| ■ Numbers | ■ Ecclesiastes | ■ Obadiah |
| ■ Deuteronomy | ■ Song of
Solomon | ■ Jonah |
| ■ Joshua | ■ Isaiah | ■ Micah |
| ■ Judges | ■ Jeremiah | ■ Nahum |
| ■ Ruth | ■ Lamentations | ■ Habakkuk |
| ■ 1 Samuel | ■ Ezekiel | ■ Zephaniah |
| ■ 2 Samuel | ■ Daniel | ■ Haggai |
| ■ 1 Kings | | ■ Zechariah |
| ■ 2 Kings | | ■ Malachi |
| ■ 1 Chronicles | | |
| ■ 2 Chronicles | | |
| ■ Ezra | | |
| ■ Nehemiah | | |
| ■ Esther | | |

NEW TESTAMENT RESOURCES

LINKS TO HUNDREDS OF CONSERVATIVE RESOURCES
SERMONS, COMMENTARIES, DEVOTIONALS, ILLUSTRATIONS

[CLICK FOR LIST OF ONSITE VERSE BY VERSE NT COMMENTARIES
WHICH UPDATED AUTOMATICALLY](#)

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------|
| ■ Matthew | ■ Romans | ■ Hebrews |
| ■ Mark | ■ 1 Corinthians | ■ James |
| ■ Luke | ■ 2 Corinthians | ■ 1 Peter |
| ■ John | ■ Galatians | ■ 2 Peter |
| ■ Acts | ■ Ephesians | ■ 1 John |
| | ■ Philippians | ■ 2 John |
| | ■ Colossians | ■ 3 John |
| | ■ 1 Thessalonians | ■ Jude |
| | ■ 2 Thessalonians | ■ Revelation |
| | ■ 1 Timothy | |
| | ■ 2 Timothy | |
| | ■ Titus | |
| | ■ Philemon | |

It should be noted that given the large number of links to off site resources, there is no way I could read each work verbatim. Therefore it follows that just because a particular author or resource is listed, this does not mean that I agree with everything that this author has written. Therefore "caveat emptor" (let the "buyer beware"). Every attempt is made to select the most conservative and thoroughly evangelical resources but this is a difficult task. For example, one might agree with the majority of what one pastor or commentator has to say, but have significant disagreement on some issues, like for example the "millennium". Therefore, you, the reader, are strongly advised to first prayerfully examine the Scriptures in context making your own unbiased observations. And as you grow in your ability to read the Scriptures inductively, you will come to realize the truth of the saying that it is "amazing how much light study of the Scriptures will shed on the commentaries!"

In short you would be well advised to approach all Bible commentaries (including myVerse by Verse Commentaries on this site) like the good Berean saints who were...

more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received (deliberate & readily received - even as they might welcome a guest into their house - put out the "welcome mat for") the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things (truths taught by Paul) were so (see note Acts 17:11).

If you first perform your own study in reliance on your own personal Teacher, the Holy Spirit, you will be better equipped to comment on whether or not the commentary, sermon or devotional you are reading is an accurate reflection of what God meant for a passage or section of Scripture to teach. If you are not familiar with the inductive approach to Bible Study click for an introduction and discussion of the three components - observation (which answers the question "What Does the Text Say?"), interpretation (which answers the question "What Does it mean?"), and application (which addresses the question "How will I respond to the truth I have gleaned?").

If you feel that a particular resource contains significant erroneous interpretative material please email your concerns. Several resources have been removed when specific issues were questioned by you the users and they were found to be correct.

Introductions to Every Book of the Bible by Dr John MacArthur:

Each Book has a brief discussion of: Title, Author and Date, Background and Setting, Historical and Theological Themes, Interpretive Challenges and an Outline by Chapter and Verse. Very useful overview of each book. Grace To You ministries has made these freely available from the MacArthur Study Bible.

- [Genesis](#)
- [Exodus](#)
- [Leviticus](#)
- [Numbers](#)
- [Deuteronomy](#)
- [Joshua](#)
- [Judges](#)
- [Ruth](#)
- [1 Samuel](#)
- [2 Samuel](#)
- [1 Kings](#)
- [2 Kings](#)
- [1 Chronicles](#)
- [2 Chronicles](#)
- [Ezra](#)
- [Nehemiah](#)
- [Esther](#)
- [Job](#)
- [Psalms](#)
- [Proverbs](#)

- [Ecclesiastes](#)
- [Song of Solomon](#)
- [Isaiah](#)
- [Jeremiah](#)
- [Lamentations](#)
- [Ezekiel](#)
- [Daniel](#)
- [Hosea](#)
- [Joel](#)
- [Amos](#)
- [Obadiah](#)
- [Jonah](#)
- [Micah](#)
- [Nahum](#)
- [Habakkuk](#)
- [Zephaniah](#)
- [Haggai](#)
- [Zechariah](#)
- [Malachi](#)

- [Matthew](#)
- [Mark](#)
- [Luke](#)
- [John](#)
- [Acts](#)
- [Romans](#)
- [1 Corinthians](#)
- [2 Corinthians](#)
- [Galatians](#)
- [Ephesians](#)
- [Philippians](#)
- [Colossians](#)
- [1Thessalonians](#)
- [2Thessalonians](#)

- [1 Timothy](#)
- [2 Timothy](#)
- [Titus](#)
- [Philemon](#)
- [Hebrews](#)
- [James](#)
- [1 Peter](#)
- [2 Peter](#)
- [1 John](#)
- [2 John](#)
- [3 John](#)
- [Jude](#)
- [Revelation](#)

SEE THESE RELATED RESOURCES

[John MacArthur's Sermons by Scripture](#)

[Insights on the Bible- An Overview of the Books of the Bible - Chuck Swindoll](#) - note Overview Chart of the Book in the upper right corner (after you have selected a Book of the Bible).

[NIV Study Bible Book Introductions](#)

[Christ in All the Scriptures - A M Hodgkin](#)

[The Old Testament Presents...Reflections of Christ by Paul R. Van Gorder -Table of Contents for all 33 OT Books](#)

New Testament:

- [Synthetic Bible Studies NT - James M. Gray](#)
- [NT Studies 27 Keys to the New Testament - William W. Orr](#)
- [Through the Bible Book by Book NT - Myer Pearlman](#)

Old Testament:

- [Synthetic Bible Studies of the Books of the Old Testament - 1906 - James Gray](#)
- [Outline Studies in the Books of the Old Testament - 1893 W G Moorehead](#)
- [Living Messages of the Books of the Bible- 1912 - G Campbell Morgan](#)
- [9 Keys to the Old Testament: A Practical Guide to Bible Study - 1961 - William Orr](#)
- [Through the Bible Book - Old Testament - 1935 - Myer Pearlman](#)

Verse by Verse Studies

These notes have been compiled while leading various Bible studies over the past 30 years. The approach is generally expositional, with emphasis on sound doctrine, original language studies (see in depth [Greek Word Studies](#)), and application. Frequent use is made of well done illustrations, especially from [Our Daily Bread: A Daily Devotional](#).

Quotations from conservative, evangelical resources are frequently used to amplify the passage. The following studies are currently available and they are continually being added to, revised and updated but Be a Berean.

OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

[CLICK HERE FOR A LIST WHICH UPDATED AUTOMATICALLY
AND HAS ALL MOST RECENT COMMENTARIES](#)

- Exodus 6, 17 Commentary
- Judges Verse by Verse Commentary
- Ruth Verse by Verse Commentary
- Ezra 7:10 Commentary
- Job 23:10-12 Commentary
- Psalms Commentary
- Proverbs Commentary
- Isaiah Verse by Verse Commentary (under construction)
- Ezekiel 1-16 Commentary
- Daniel 9:24-27 Commentary

In Depth Commentary on the Following Verses:

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- Joshua 1:8;
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- Psalm 1:1; Ps 1:2; Ps 1:3; Ps 1:4; Ps 1:5; Ps 1:6
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NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

[CLICK HERE FOR A LIST WHICH UPDATED AUTOMATICALLY
AND HAS ALL MOST RECENT COMMENTARIES](#)

- Matthew 5-7 Commentary (Sermon on the Mount)
- Acts 16-17 Commentary
- Romans Verse by Verse Commentary
- Ephesians Verse by Verse Commentary
- Philippians Verse by Verse Commentary
- Colossians Verse by Verse Commentary
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- Jude 1:1-13 Jude 1:14-25
- [Revelation Verse by Verse \(by Dr Anthony Garland\)](#)

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Reference Search Tool

The purpose of the Reference Search Page this page is make multiple Bible related Search Engines available for quick and easy access. Utilizing the various search engines you can search various conservative preachers so that their sermons function much like a commentary. I would especially recommend sermons from Spurgeon, John Piper, Ray Pritchard, C H Spurgeon and Ray Stedman)

RefTagger by Logos

[RefTagger](#) is a free web tool which converts all the Bible references (eg Acts 17:11) on your website, blog, etc, into active verse popups. Hover over the verse for popup in your choice of various translations (see below). You can even **copy and paste** the Biblical text in the popup box. When you click the link, the verse can be read in **context** which is always advisable if you have time, **for context is king** in interpretation! This tool is used extensively on preceptaustin to encourage you to read the actual words of God rather than just the Scripture annotation (see Isaiah 55:10, 11, Lk 1:37ASV).

TheWord - Free Bible Study Program

[TheWord](#) is similar in some ways to E-sword below. I have used both and prefer THEWORD. Many of the resources are free, but some of the newer commentaries are paid modules. This resource has a tool that I use 100's of times a day if I am writing commentaries. The tool is a Scripture pop-up (select the version you prefer). Here's how it works - Let's say I am reading a blog and encounter a Scripture reference. With **TheWord** running in the background (uses very little CPU), one simply mouses over the reference and hit **control + C** (copy) and the reference pops up. You can adjust the program to close the reference

automatically or keep it open until you force it to close. You can also hold the mouse pointer over the reference (chap/verse) and use your mouse wheel to scroll to the previous or following passages which allows you to quickly check context. You can copy just the Bible book chapter and the entire chapter pops up (e.g., If you are studying Eph 2:8-10, but you wanted to see the entire chapter, you would select just the "Eph 2" portion of the reference and the entire chapter pops up for quick review. You can change the font size of the pop up so if you are old like me so you can easily read the reference. And this tool works anywhere the Scripture is found - internet pages, emails, Microsoft Word documents, other Bible programs, etc. **In sum, this little tool is a jewel if you want to actually read the Scripture or copy it to a Word document or Web page on which you are working.**

[Click](#) to see links that will take you to a large and growing number of resources compatible with TheWord. In my opinion the best resource (an all of them are free) is [Wordmodules Downloads](#).

If you are short on cash, download TheWord and the free add-on resources and you will be pleasantly surprised at the depth of digital study you will be able to perform.

E-Sword Bible Study Software Program:

E-Sword is one of the best free software available. It can be downloaded at no charge with a large number of helpful resources. It is easy to use and includes a well done online visual tutorial. Most of the current commentaries are generally ones prior to 1900, which means that comments on Bible prophecy are not generally in line with most conservative, evangelical, literalist interpretations. There are some excellent Greek word study tools like A. T. Robertson's Word Pictures (or [click here](#)) and Vincent's Word Studies (or [click here](#)). **Zodhiates Complete Greek and Hebrew dictionary** is available for purchase.

Bible Explorer - Another free Bible program is [Bible Explorer](#) (very similar to Wordsearch) which has a lengthy list of free Bible translations, commentaries, etc ([Click to see the list of free books](#)).

Logos Bible Study Software

If you are looking to purchase the most complete Bible software product available, one that "does it all" (and then some), you need to consider **Logos Bible Software**. There are over 25,000 resources available not counting the many books in [Christian Ebooks in Faithlife](#) which also work in the Logos format . Because of the increasing number of resources one needs to be very discerning [Acts 17:11- note] as many of the newer resources are neither conservative nor evangelical. The Logos program also has a steep learning curve, requires a robust computer (and yet still tends to be run slow compared to other Bible programs), and is expensive. The negatives aside, Logos is hands down my "go to" program for in depth, serious Bible research for it allows me to easily search over my library of 23, 684 (April, 2016). My library of resources includes over 1000 "personal books" I have made. This feature is wonderful if you have material in digital format you can convert to Microsoft Word Documents (Docx files), for then the Logos program will compile the Docx file into a fully searchable book that integrates seamlessly with the commercial resources produced by Logos. This feature alone is "worth the price of admission" in my opinion (See [Personal Book Builder](#)).

[Wordsearch](#) also has a very good Bible program, albeit much less expensive than Logos and with fewer resources (although they have been purchased by Lifeway and will doubtless increase their inventory). Their resources are generally less costly than Logos. For the person who does not want to invest thousands of dollars, Wordsearch would be a very reasonable alternative to Logos. While Logos has many more resources than Wordsearch, the latter has all of John MacArthur's NT Commentary series, which are no longer carried by Logos (as of April 14, 2016). Wordsearch also offers all of Adrian Rogers' excellent sermons in digital format as well as a number of other sermon series not carried by Logos.

Study Bibles - free online

Defender's Study Bible - From creationist Dr Henry Morris. Excellent notes. Literal interpretation.

Holman Christian Standard Bible Study Bible Evangelical. Conservative. Interprets the text literally. Click on "Library" on left side of page. Select "Study Bible Notes." Select HCSB Study Bible and "View in Reader."

Reformation Study Bible - Brief notes. Conservative. Evangelical but does not always interpret the text literally especially in eschatological passages so please be a Berean - Acts 17:11.

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (TSK)

This excellent conservative resource was highly promoted by Dr. Reuben A. Torrey around the turn of the 20th century which added to its popularity because Torrey was so well known. This incredible resource has over 500,000 cross references specifically linked to an individual verse. It is the most comprehensive collection of Scriptural cross references available in a single resource.

Was R. A. Torrey the author of the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge?

Although The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (TSK) is often described as being the work of R. A. Torrey, it was first published years before he was born. Despite this, many editions of the TSK today have Torrey's name on the cover, and sometimes in the title.

R. A. Torrey never tried to claim the authorship of the TSK. But, he did become one of its greatest promoters. Torrey was one of the most prominent evangelists of his day, and as his fame grew his endorsement of the book mattered to many people. So inevitably, his name ended up on the cover. If you read his introduction to the book he describes having first encountered the book "*some twenty years ago*."

So who created the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge?

The TSK was created in London by publisher [Samuel Bagster](#) (1772-1851). It was first published around 1830. It is a collection of Bible cross-references assembled by Bagster from prominent biblical scholars dating back to the patriarchal fathers. The TSK displays only the chapter and verse citations with no accompanying text. It is organized like a Bible, beginning at Genesis and ending at Revelation. Each verse of the Bible is cross-referenced with other verses to enable the reader to understand each word and phrase in the Bible more clearly. ([Source](#))

In his introduction to the TSK, R. A. Torrey said:

"There is no other commentary on the Bible so helpful as the Bible itself. Using cross-references allows the Bible to speak for itself and be its own interpreter."

You might be asking...

"Well, how does this resource qualify as a *commentary*?"

You have probably heard the axiom that Scripture **never** contradicts Scripture and thus is **always** the best commentary on Scripture (see discussion - **Compare Scripture with Scripture**). Therefore as you study God's Word develop the habit of taking a few moment to check for pertinent [TSK](#) cross references that can aid interpretation. (Click here for a discussion and example of the use of [TSK](#) reference system in the interpretation of the Bible.)

Respected Bible expositor **Dr. John MacArthur** speaks very highly of the [TSK](#) noting that it is

"The one book, aside from the Bible itself, that I value most in my studies."

You might be asking...

"Why not simply use my Bible's marginal cross references?"

There are at least 3 reasons you want to supplement your Bible's "built in" marginal references with with the [TSK](#):

1) TSK generally has far more cross references per verse than your average Bible marginal references.

2) TSK references are more "relevant" to the particular verse in question than those found in most reference Bibles (Click example).

3) TSK has more Old Testament cross references on the New Testament and thus helps integrate the New with the Old , which is important because "the Old is the New concealed" and "the New is the Old revealed." (See related study of Typology - Study of Types) Remember the Scripture will never contradict itself.

Keep in mind that as excellent as Torrey's cross references are, they were composed by a man and thus will be tainted with his theological bias.

There are numerous websites with the [TSK](#) resource available ().

Expository Studies on Romans and Ephesians by Dr. Wayne Barber

Romans - Dr Barber's (Jul 27, 1943 – Aug 29, 2016) practical, in depth exposition of the Christian's "Constitution" for living the Christ Life.

Ephesians - Dr Barber's exposition of the book of Ephesians. There are 86 messages with a strong emphasis on how to live the "victorious Christ life". Dr Barber places great emphasis on Major Ian Thomas' guiding principle regarding the "Christ Life"...

**You can't.
He never said you could.
But He can and
He always said He would!**

Caveat - While I agree with Major Thomas' pithy saying, be aware that this does not condone "passivity." In other words it is not like the non-Biblical saying "Let go, let God." That sounds good but is NOT accurate. That saying suggests that it is God's sovereignty and power, but that we have no responsibility. A more accurate statement is "Let God and let's go!" We see this perfect balance of our responsibility to work out our salvation and God's sovereign provision of power to work out our salvation in Phil 2:12+ and Phil 2:13+. Our part can only be carried out relying on God's part, but the point is that we do have a "part" to play! Does that make sense?

Related resources

- Verse by Verse Commentary on Ephesians;
- Verse by Verse Commentary on Romans

A Testimony of Jesus Christ

Anthony Garland has written [A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#) which is a verse by verse commentary on the book of the Revelation from a **conservative, futuristic**, literal viewpoint. If you agree that literal interpretation is the safest and most accurate way to interpret Scripture, you will find that Garland's work is one of the best resources available on the book of the Revelation.

Garland's comments are based on a literal interpretation. His straightforward approach will help reveal the Revelation which was God's intended purpose for giving it to the Church, as shown even by the Greek word for "Revelation," **apokalupsis**, which conveys the idea of "taking the lid off" so as to remove the cover and expose to open view that which was heretofore not visible, known or disclosed! Indeed, The Revelation was not written to confuse the saints but to encourage, edify and equip us to fight the good fight of faith, fully confident (cp Ro 10:17- note) of the fact that Jesus Christ will return as King of kings and Lord of lords and triumph over all evil (Rev 19:11-16- [note](#))! Many say the study of prophecy is so controversial and confusing it should be minimized and thus many churches today assiduously avoid preaching on prophecy. I strongly disagree, for to take such an approach is to cut out 25% of the Scriptures, 80% of which has been perfectly fulfilled. Therefore surely God will fulfill the other 20% and thus it behooves us to be familiar with His plan for the ages! To be sure, prophecy study tends to attract folks that offer sensationalistic or "off the wall" interpretations, but that is all the more reason to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." (2Ti 2:15 - note).

Click here for links to each chapter and verse of the Revelation from A Testimony of Jesus Christ.

For multiple other resources click **Revelation**.

The Net Bible Bible Online: OT & NT

Notes scroll with Bible verses and function like an abbreviated commentary and word study (Hebrew/Greek) resource. Let's look at one more example below using the interesting passage [Genesis 3:16](#) after the "Fall" where God is pronouncing the consequences the woman face. You will find this note very interesting especially if you have ever taken the Precept course "Marriage Without Regrets".

(NASB) Genesis 3:16: To the [woman](#) He said, "I will [greatly multiply](#) Your [pain](#) in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your [desire](#) will be for your [husband](#) & he [will rule](#) over you."

(NET Bible) Genesis 3:16: To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your labor pains

with pain you will give birth to children. You **will want to control** your husband⁴⁸ but he **will dominate**⁴⁹ you.”

48 Hebrew “**and toward your husband [will be] your desire.**” The nominal sentence does not have a verb; a future verb must be supplied, because the focus of the oracle is on the future struggle. The precise meaning of the noun **tesuqah**, “desire”) is debated. Many interpreters conclude that it refers to sexual desire here, because the subject of the passage is the relationship between a wife and her husband, and because the word is used in a romantic sense in Song 8:6. (My note: this is an error - “desire” is actually in [Song of Solomon 7:10](#) not SS8:6) However, this interpretation makes little sense in Gen 3:16. First, it does not fit well with the assertion “he will dominate you.” Second, it implies that sexual desire was not part of the original creation, even though the man and the woman were told to multiply. And third, it ignores the usage of the word in [Genesis 4:7](#) where it refers to sin’s desire to control and dominate Cain. (Even in Song of Songs it carries the basic idea of “control,” for it describes the young man’s desire to “have his way sexually” with the young woman.) In Gen 3:16 the Lord announces a struggle, a conflict between the man and the woman. She will desire to control him, but he will dominate her instead. This interpretation also fits the tone of the passage, which is a judgment oracle. See further Susan T. Foh, “What is the Woman’s Desire?” Westminster Theological Journal 37 (1975): 376-83.

49 The Hebrew verb **marshal** means “to rule over,” but in a way that emphasizes powerful control, domination, or mastery. This also is part of the baser human nature. The translation assumes the imperfect verb form has an objective/indicative sense here. Another option is to understand it as having a modal, desiderative nuance, “but he will want to dominate you.” In this case, the Lord simply announces the struggle without indicating who will emerge victorious.

Ray Stedman Library

Pastor Stedman's commentaries are devotional, easy to read and filled with practical applications, all from a conservative, evangelical perspective.

Below is a list of most of Ray Stedman's edifying material...

The Power of His Presence: (see below) Mark Mitchell has compiled a full year of devotions based on the excellent writings of Ray Stedman. This resource is highly recommended for your devotional reading this year.

January:	Mark: The Servant Who Rules
February:	Ecclesiastes: Things That Don't Work
March:	Ephesians: Riches in Christ
April:	Genesis 1-11: Foundations for Living
May:	1st John: Life with Father
June:	Genesis 12-25: Abraham -- The Man of Faith
July:	John 13-17: Secrets of the Spirit
August:	Nehemiah: Principles of Reconstruction
September:	2nd Corinthians: authentic Christianity
October:	Psalms: Folk Songs of Faith
November:	Timothy: Letters to a Son
December:	Job: Let God Be God

Adventuring Through the Bible: 66 messages given over 4 years with each message providing an overview of one book of the Bible. One additional message addresses the 400 silent years between Malachi and Matthew. Available in MP3 format for your Ipod! This resource would be a great supplement to your system for reading through the Bible in a year.

- [Authentic Christianity](#)
- [Body Life \(Revised and Expanded Edition\)](#)
- [Genesis 1-3: Understanding Man](#)

- [Genesis 4-11: The Beginnings](#)
- [Genesis 11:31-25:1-8: Abraham: Man of Faith](#)
- [Leviticus: The Way to Wholeness](#)
- [Esther: The Queen and I](#)
- [The Book of Job: Behind Suffering](#)
- [Psalms of Faith](#)
- [Ecclesiastes: Is this All There is to Life?](#)
- [Jeremiah: Death of a Nation](#)
- [Talking With My Father: Jesus Teaches on Prayer](#)
- [Matthew 13: Behind History \(The Parables of Matthew 13\)](#)
- [Matthew 24-25: What on Earth is Happening \(The Olivet Discourse\)](#)
- [Mark 1:1-8:33 The Gospel of Mark: The Servant who Rules](#)
- [Mark 8:33-16:20 The Gospel of Mark: The Ruler Who Serves](#)
- [The Gospel of John: God's Loving Word](#)
- [John 13-17: Secrets of the Spirit \(The Upper Room Discourse\)](#)
- [Acts: When the Church was Young](#)
- [Romans 1-8: Romans: From Guilt to Glory - Volume 1](#)
- [Romans 9-16 Romans: From Guilt to Glory - Volume 2\)](#)
- [Romans: Reason to Rejoice \(2004\)](#)
- [1Corinthians: The Deep Things of God](#)
- [2Corinthians: Power out of Weakness](#)
- [Ephesians: Our Riches in Christ](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-20: Spiritual Warfare](#)
- [1, 2 Thessalonians: Waiting for the Second Coming,](#)
- [Hebrews: How to Live What You Believe](#)
- [Hebrews, IVP New Testament Commentary Series, 1992.](#)
- [1 John: Life by the Son](#)
- [Revelation: God's Final Word](#)

Bible Commentary by David Guzik

Conservative brief verse by verse commentary on the entire Bible. Along with the resource by Constable below, [Guzik](#) is one of the few entire Bible commentaries from a contemporary writer which is freely available on the internet. The comments on prophecy are definitely conservative, evangelical and **literal**. As mentioned earlier a good guide to determine whether a given author interprets Scripture literally, is to read their comments on Revelation 20, specifically regarding the "1000 years" mentioned six times (eg read [Guzik's notes on Revelation 20](#)) Note that the Guzik's commentary at [StudyLight.org](#) is not necessarily up to date (e.g., as of June, 2007 there are no commentaries on Ezekiel, and just a sprinkling of the Psalms). [Click here](#) for the most up to date collection of Guzik's commentaries.

Multiple Comments on One Verse, On One Page

StudyLight has an interesting tool called "[Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary](#)" - This allows you to quickly see the comments from multiple resources without having to leave the page. Most of the commentaries however tend to be older (pre-1900).

See also StudyLight's collection of over 90 Bible commentaries - [Bible Commentaries](#). Remember also to check the [Preceptaustin.org collection](#) of OT and NT resources which includes links to the StudyLight material in addition to literally 100's of other resources not found on StudyLight.

Expository Notes on all 66 Books of the Bible

Thomas Constable [Expository Notes](#) include notes on all 66 books and takes a conservative, literalist approach to the Scriptures. Dr Constable's website also includes [James Van Dine's Bible Analyses](#) which has an introduction to each book (historical context, literary structure, etc).

Some of the Commentaries on the Web written prior to 1900:

The commentaries below freely available on the Web but all are of "older vintage". Although they are generally conservative, these commentaries tend not to be literal (and futuristic) in their interpretation of prophetic

passages (C lick collection on the Revelation. Scroll down to the categorization by author's interpretative approach to prophecy) (See similar evaluation under **Daniel Commentaries**)

[Adam Clarke's \(1760-1832\) Commentary on the Bible](#) - [Click](#) evaluation of Adam Clarke.

[Exposition of the Entire Bible](#) by John Gill. [Click](#) Spurgeon's assessment of Gill.

[Commentary on the Whole Bible](#) by Matthew Henry (See Spurgeon's [critique](#))

[Treasury of David](#) (Psalms) by C. H. Spurgeon.

Highly recommended to supplement your personal study in the Psalms. This magnum opus has no peer. Read the psalms devotionally (and inductively) and then compare your observations, interpretations and applications with Spurgeon's powerful, often pithy remarks.

[Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary](#) - Of all the pre-1900 commentaries, this one tends to give the most literal interpretation of the Scriptures and therefore does not generally replace Israel with the church. Sample excerpt of eschatological (prophetic, apocalyptic) passage Zechariah 14:2 - "**gather all nations, etc.** — The prophecy seems literal (compare Joel 3:2). If Antichrist be the leader of the nations, it seems inconsistent with the statement that he will at this time be sitting in the temple as God at Jerusalem (2Thessalonians 2:4); thus Antichrist outside would be made to besiege Antichrist within the city. But difficulties do not set aside revelations: the event will clear up seeming difficulties (**Ed**: Interesting statement!). Compare the complicated movements, Daniel 11:1-45-note." Comment on Zech 14:11 - "**no more utter destruction** — (Jer 31:40). Literally, "no more curse" (Rev 22:3-[note](#); compare Malachi 4:6-note), for there will be no more sin. Temporal blessings and spiritual prosperity shall go together in the millennium: long life (Isaiah 65:20-22), peace (Isaiah 2:4-note), honor (Isaiah 60:14-16), righteous government (Isaiah 54:14; Isaiah 60:18). ([Zechariah 14 - Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#)) Spurgeon adds that JFB is "to some extent a compilation and condensation of other men's thoughts, but it is sufficiently original to claim a place in every minister's library: indeed it contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this & used it diligently. (See also JFB's unabridged commentary - [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible - Unabridged](#))

Pulpit Commentary (PC) - This is a commentary has brief expositions plus homilies with each verse. Although the Pulpit Commentary is impressive in size and is generally theologically conservative, as with most of the commentaries written prior to 1900, it is not recommended as your primary commentary but only as a secondary resource. One must be especially discerning when reading the Old Testament comments (specific those related to prophecy) as the PC unfortunately frequently misinterprets the promises to Israel as promises given to the Church. For example, in the PC's commentary on the book of Isaiah, the word "**church**" is used 827 times, despite the fact that the church is not found in the Old Testament. Paul's "commentary" clearly states that the "church" was "the **mystery** which **has been hidden** from the past ages [including Isaiah] and generations" (Col 1:26-note)!

In the PC comments on the book of Isaiah there is only a single mention of the "millennium" (and even that mention is not interpreted correctly) compared with 52 mentions in the highly more literal **Bible Knowledge Commentary**. In fact, a literal reading of the book of Isaiah reveals it to be filled with direct and indirect allusions to a future time period which correlates very well with the 1000 year, "**Millennial**" period of Revelation 20. If you attempt to read the book of Isaiah from an amillennial (no literal millennium) perspective, many of the chapters cannot be interpreted **literally** which leads to a strained and often inaccurate interpretation of Isaiah's many prophecies which deal directly with Israel's future, including the believing **remnant** of Jews and the promised millennial kingdom.

Here is one example in which the Pulpit Commentary spiritualizes the interpretation of the

famous prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-note

"Now it will come about that in the last days, the **mountain** of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the **mountains**, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it."

The **Pulpit Commentary** writes that "*the mountain of the Lord's house*" is "*the Church, the true Zion*" which is clearly a misinterpretation.

John MacArthur interprets "*the mountain of the house of the LORD*" as a literal mountain, writing that it is a "*reference to Mt. Zion, the location of the holy temple in Jerusalem* ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** agrees that Isaiah's description "*refers to the mount where the Temple was built.*"

The second allusion to **mountains** in context however does not refer to literal mountains but is a figure of speech using mountains to refer to a **kingdom** (as is done elsewhere in the Old Testament - see "*great mountain*" in Daniel 2:35-note, cp Jer 51:24-25 where mountain is a metaphorical description of Babylon). In the interest of being "fair and balanced" it is also possible to interpret the first **mountain** as a reference to the kingdom of Israel as the leading ("chief") kingdom over all the other kingdoms of the earth. Either of these interpretations makes good sense in the **context**, but to interpret this phrase as "the Church" is nonsense and confuses the meaning of the entire prophecy in Isaiah 2. Notice also that clearly this prophecy was given to Judah and Israel (Isa 2:1 -note), so even if one tried to say the Church is Israel (based on Gal 6:16 - see The Israel of God), they would not be able to explain Isaiah's mention of Judah, for nowhere is Judah called the "church."

For a short introduction to the science of Biblical interpretation (hermeneutics), including allegorical interpretation, see [The Art and Science of Interpretation](#).

In summary, although conservative commentaries written prior to 1900 can be very enlightening resources (and many are listed in the [book collections](#) on this website), the wise student of the Word, will first perform a careful **inductive study** of the passage (this caveat is especially true of prophetic passages where specific commentaries can vary "wildly") so that he or she will not misled by the comments in the commentary.

All this said, the **Pulpit Commentary** (as well as all the commentaries written prior to 1900) can be very useful, but the wise student will "**examine** (present imperative) everything carefully; **hold fast** (present imperative) to that which is good" and "**abstain** (present imperative) from every form of evil." (1Th 5:21-22-note)

[A W Pink's Archive](#)

Pink's commentaries are available for Old and New Testament books and are filled with pointed insights and applications. Pink is always worth consulting if he has written a commentary on the book you are studying. Please see the [caveat](#) regarding his works. See also discussion of **Approach to Interpretation**

[Expositions of Holy Scripture by Alexander Maclaren](#) (1826-1910)

Alexander Maclaren was one of Great Britain's most notable and famous preachers. Maclaren published a number of books of sermons and climaxed his ministry by publishing his monumental [Expositions of Holy Scripture](#) ([click](#) for another source) which consists of expository essays covering most books of the Bible and are characterized by a devotional flavor.

While pastoring the Union Chapel, Manchester (1858-1903), he was known as "the prince of expository preachers." If you are not familiar with Maclaren's style, here are a few of his quotes to whet your appetite (or read his exposition Jehovah Jireh based on Genesis 22:14):

The risen life of Jesus is the nourishment and strengthening and blessing and life of a Christian. Our daily experience ought to be that there comes, wavelet by wavelet, that silent, gentle, and yet omnipotent influx into our empty hearts, this very life of Christ Himself."

"Faith does not grasp a doctrine, but a heart. The trust which Christ requires is the bond that unites souls with Him; and the very life of it is entire committal of myself to Him in all my relations and for all my needs, and absolute utter confidence in Him as all sufficient for everything that I can require."

"Each of us may be sure that if God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes, and He will not send us out on any journey for which He does not equip us well."

There is nothing more impotent than words which lie dormant in our brains and have no influence on our lives.

Seek to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life.

We must have the glory sink into us before it can be reflected from us. In deep inward beholding we must have Christ in our hearts, that He may shine forth from our lives.

"Man's course begins in a garden, but it ends in a city."

"Only he who can say, 'The Lord is the strength of my life' can say, 'Of whom shall I be afraid?'

"Love is the only fire that is hot enough to melt the iron obstinacy of a creature's will"

"We believe that the history of the world is but the history of His influence and that the center of the whole universe is the cross of Calvary."

"Every life has dark tracts and long stretches of somber tint, and no representation is true to fact which dips its pencil only in light, and flings no shadows on the canvas."

"If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it."

Did any of you, parents, ever hear your child wake from sleep with some panic, or fear, and shriek the mother's name through the darkness? Was not that a more powerful appeal than all words? And, depend upon it, that the soul which cries aloud on God, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, though it have "no language but a cry," will never call in vain.

"Death is but a passage. It is not a house, it is only a vestibule. The grave has a door on its inner side."

Other Bible Translations (especially the Amplified Version):

Although you may not have thought of different versions of the Bible as potential "commentaries", you might be surprised at the insights that can be gleaned from reading a passage, paragraph or chapter studied using a different version. In this regard I would highly recommend the relatively literal **Amplified Version** which can function much like a "mini-commentary", often expanding the meaning of the passage. To help you use this version as a "mini-commentary", be aware that the Amplified Version uses **parentheses** - () - to identify an alternative Greek or Hebrew definition of the preceding word or phrase. In other words, you can take these alternative "definitions" and substitute them for the preceding word or phrase and it would still be a relatively literal rendering of the original Greek or Hebrew text (e.g., using John 3:3 in the Amplified Version in the box below, practice "substituting" some of the words in parentheses for "born again" and for "see" and see if that doesn't help amplify the meaning of this familiar verse). On the other hand when you see a notation in **brackets** - [] - this represents more of an explanatory or amplifying comment on the preceding word or phrase to help and helps clarify the meaning of the passage. In contrast to the notes in parentheses, the notes in brackets represent words that are not present in the original Greek or Hebrew text.

See the [chart below](#) to compare the **literalness** of various translations, keeping in mind that the **more literal** the translation, the closer it follows the original Greek or Hebrew and the **less interpretative** it is.

In regard to using other Bible versions to aid your study of a passage, do not restrict your study to a paraphrased version. Paraphrased versions represent a restatement of the passage with the goal being to give the meaning in another form and thereby can aid one's comprehension. As noted in the [chart below](#), paraphrased versions are the least literal and the most interpretative. Note especially that "The Message"

should be used with caution and discernment, because it is a loose and free paraphrase and some passages are very far removed from the meaning of the original Greek or Hebrew (in my opinion). On the other hand, the New Living Translation is a paraphrase which can be highly recommended.

Comparing Bible Versions - Most of the versions listed below are freely available on the internet and one can easily compare passages in different versions at sites like StudyLight.org - [Parallel Search](#). Try a simple comparison to see how the Amplified version functions as a "mini-commentary". For example, type John 3:3, selecting NASB in parallel with the Amplified Version and **Highlight Variations**. [Can you see how the Amplified version can potentially aid understanding of a given passage?](#) If you type in John 3 you retrieve a comparison of the entire chapter.

New American Standard Version	The Amplified Bible
John 3:3 - Variant Count: 8	John 3:3 - Variant Count: 17 (48%)
Jesus answered and said to him, " Truly, truly , I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."	Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God .

Another source for parallel passages is Biblegateway.com which allows more versions to be compared but does not highlight variations.

BIBLE VERSIONS										
COMPARISON OF LITERALNESS										
MORE LITERAL LESS INTERPRETATIVE MORE WORD FOR WORD					MORE PARAPHRASE MORE INTERPRETATIVE** MORE CONCEPT FOR CONCEPT					
YLT	NAS ASV	Amp ESV	KJV NKJV RSV	NRSV NAB	NIV NJB	NCV ICB	NLT Phillips	GNT CEV	TLB	Msg
NAS = New American Standard Amp = Amplified Version ASV = Authorized Standard Version 1901 ESV = English Standard Version RSV = Revised Standard Version KJV = King James Version NKJV = New King James Version YLT = Young's Literal Translation				NRSV = New Revised Std Version NAB = New American Bible NJB = New Jerusalem Bible NIV = New International Version NCV = New Century Version ICB = International Children's Bible			NLT = New Living Translation Phillips = J B Phillips Paraphrase GNT = Good News Translation CEV = Contemporary English Version TLB = The Living Bible Msg = The Message			

**** MORE INTERPRETATIVE:** For the most objective, non-biased and "pure" inductive study, do not use paraphrased versions as your **primary** resource for they provide no way to determine whether or not the translator's interpretation of the original Greek and Hebrew is accurate. The more literal versions such as **NAS, ESV, KJV, NKJV** more accurately render the words of the original biblical authors and are therefore recommended for inductive Bible study. Although more literal, the Amplified is not recommended as your primary text, but can be helpful once you have done your study because in many verses it functions like a "mini-commentary". Consultation (after your own inductive study) with some paraphrases (e.g., NLT and Phillips) may also yield insights into the meaning of the passage. Note that the **NIV** is a thought-for-thought (dynamic equivalence) translation which can be helpful for new believers, but it is **not recommended** for in depth bible study because of the inconsistent way in which it renders the Hebrew and Greek texts. In some cases, the NIV includes significant interpretation which leaves the reader without any indication of the other possible ways to understand that particular verse. Although every translation has some degree of interpretation, the **NAS** is the least interpretative of the modern translations. The **NAS** also has the advantage over the NIV in that it identifies words in *italics* that are not present in the original language but which have been added by the translators to make the passage more readable. Several other versions also use **italicized words** (ASV, Darby, KJV, NKJV, YLT) to signify words and phrases added by the translators to clarify or smooth out the reading. This feature helps one know when they are standing on solid ground (words not in italics) or "thin ice" (italicized phrases). Note that popular versions like the ESV, NIV, and NET Bible do not use italics (although sometimes they include notes to help explain the specific rendering.)

Adam Clarke

Adam Clarke (1760-1832) is the author of a commentary on the entire Bible that is found on many websites as well as computer Bible programs. Clarke was a Methodist, a Wesleyan, and an [Arminian](#), (e.g., Clarke "suggested that although God can know all future events, He chooses not to know some events beforehand" Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, page 808). He **did not always interpret Scripture** literally and so was amillennial (did not believe Messiah would reign 1000 years in His earthly Kingdom) (to quote Clarke on 1000 years - "*I am satisfied that this period should not be taken literally*" [\[see comment on Rev 20:4\]](#) - he interpreted Revelation as a Historicist) which led him to interpret the church as fulfilling many OT promises to Israel.

He was influential in the development of the doctrine of entire sanctification ([or "Christian perfection"](#)). Although Clarke affirmed the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, thus holding to a belief of "**plenary dynamic inspiration**" (idea of every **thought** inspired), he fell short of a belief in the "**plenary verbal inspiration**" (every single **word** inspired) (Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 125, p 163, 1968).

In summary, Adam Clarke can be a useful commentator but in view of some of his beliefs you again are advised to Be a Berean when utilizing his material, of which he has a commentary for every book of the Bible!

Although I respect the work of the developer of StudyLight.org, it is noteworthy that his description of Adam Clarke gives no warning to the unwary of some of the beliefs of Clarke. Instead StudyLight.org describes Clarke as the...

"Author of one of the most respected interdenominational commentaries ever written, Adam Clarke shows his Godly respect for the Bible as well as his courage to give his opinion on many difficult and controversial questions other commentaries often avoid."

Please understand that my synopsis is not meant to be critical but informative, and you will encounter Clarke's comments a number of times on preceptaustin.org because he does offer some excellent insights on specific passages. The wise reader will however read his notes with an awareness of his basic beliefs and his approach to the Scripture.

William Barclay

William Barclay's New Testament commentaries often contain useful insights and illustrations, especially in regard to Greek words and Greco-Roman culture ([Click for Barclay's Commentary online](#)). The potential **danger** of Barclay's material is that he did not seem to be orthodox concerning such non-negotiable topics as the virgin birth and deity of Jesus, the way of salvation, eternal judgment, etc. For a critique of the Barclay's theological aberrations see Wayne Jackson's article below. The discerning student would be well advised to read this review so that they would be better able to read his commentaries with due caution. (See related resource [Is Your Interpretation Supernaturalistic, Naturalistic, Existentialistic, Dogmatic?](#))

Here is a quote from **John Piper's** book "Brothers We are Not Professionals" cautioning us on the use of William Barclay's material -

"Barclay's Autobiography is the more depressing when I think how many evangelical pastors have fed on Barclay's commentaries for almost every sermon. He scorned a view of the atonement in which the death of Christ propitiates the wrath of God. And he wrote, **"I am a convinced universalist. I believe that in the end all men will be gathered into the love of God."** I can't help wondering whether the theological weakness of many pulpits today is owing to the facile dependence on the anemic, unbiblical theology of commentators like Barclay."

I agree wholeheartedly with Piper! That said, Barclay can still be used as a good source of Greek word studies as he has historical material on the words that I cannot find (easily) in any other resources.

"JUST-AS-IF-I'D" NEVER SINNED

Let me give you an example of a statement by Barclay that sounds very catchy, but the question is it truly Scriptural? In his commentary on Romans Barclay is describing the meaning of righteousness, specifically the Greek verb [dikaioo](#). He writes "If God justifies a sinner, it does not mean that he finds reasons to prove that he was right - far from it. It does not even mean, at this point, that he makes the sinner a good man. It means that God **treats the sinner as if he had not been a sinner at all**" Even a respected writer like David Guzik uses this quote from Barclay as part of his explanation for "righteousness." It is very close to a statement I have heard a number of times (and was even in Miss Weatherall Johnson's explanatory notes in Bible Study Fellowship - I was saved in BSF!) that justification means that God treats me **"just-as-if-I'd"** never sinned. Other examples of men I greatly respect who have used this catchy phrase include - Dr De Haan (Our Daily Bread ministries), Robertson McQuilkin (in Life in the Spirit), Jerry Bridges, Derek Prince, Donald Grey Barnhouse, Wayne Barber (one of my mentors), Adrian Rogers (sermon on Isaiah 53), Wayne Detzler (NT Words in Today's Language). So it is clear that this catchy phrase has crept into the Christian jargon in evangelical teaching and preaching. At first hearing it sounds very good and admittedly it is easy to remember, but maybe too easy to remember! I personally do not believe it passes muster for sound doctrine. I am not going to go into great detail but will offer a few quotes, followed by links to several related articles, to help you arrive at your only conclusion about *"just as if I'd never sinned"*

***For all eternity I will remember that I am a forgiven sinner,
and that my righteousness is not based on my own merit,
but on the grace of God in the saving work of Jesus Christ***

Dr Wayne Grudem in his magnum opus [Systematic Theology](#) gives a good explanation of the problem with **just as if I'd" never sinned** - One sometimes hears the popular explanation that justified means **"just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned."** The definition is a clever play on words and **contains an element of truth** (for the justified person, like the person who has never sinned, has no penalty to pay for sin). But the definition is misleading in two other ways because (1) it mentions nothing about the fact that Christ's righteousness is reckoned to my account when I am justified; to do this it would have to say also **"just-as-if-I'd-lived-a-life-of-perfect-righteousness."** (2) But more significantly, it cannot adequately represent the fact that I will never be in a state that is **"just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned,"** because I will always be conscious of the fact that I have sinned and that I am not an innocent person but a guilty person who has been forgiven. This is very different from **"just as if I had never sinned"**! Moreover, it is different from **"just as if I had lived a life of perfect righteousness,"** because I will forever know that I have not lived a life of perfect righteousness, but that Christ's righteousness is given to me by God's grace. Therefore both in the forgiveness of sins and in the imputation of Christ's righteousness, my situation is far different from what it would be if I had never sinned and had lived a perfectly righteous life. For all eternity I will remember that I am a forgiven sinner, and that my righteousness is not based on my own merit, but on the grace of God in the saving work of Jesus Christ. **None of that rich teaching at the heart of the gospel will be understood by those who are encouraged to go through their lives thinking "justified" means "just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned."** (From [Footnote 4 on page 632 of Systematic Theology](#)) (Bolding added)

William Newell in his commentary on Hebrews writes "Sad to say, for centuries, beginning with the so-called Christian Fathers themselves, in one way or another, the effect both upon God and upon the believing sinner, of the shedding of Christ's blood, has been perverted. For instance, a phrase has been current among some

(ED: KEEP IN MIND THIS WAS WRITTEN IN 1947), which, (never dreamed of by them) defeats grace. I refer to the shallow, thoughtless rendering of "justified" by the words "**just-as-if-I'd never sinned.**" This would merely seek to view the pardoned sinner as being restored to the position in which Adam was before he sinned. It comes infinitely short of the truth....Now "**just-as-if-I'd never sinned**" not only looks at our escape from punishment as the chief object to be attained at the Cross, but minimizes that Divine forsaking and judgment, that sparing not of His own Son, as well as the unutterable glory of being placed in that Son and one with Him. It falls so far short of the work Christ did and of the place the believer is in, that I am ashamed to speak of it further. (See Newell's Note on Hebrews 8)

[Justification] is, "Although I am terribly sinful, He declared me righteous," NOT "just as if I'd never been sinful."

Charles Swindoll on **justification** - Someone once told me, "Justification is the sovereign act of God whereby He declares righteous the believing sinner while he is still in his sinning state." It means that while we were still prone to sin, God saw us in Christ and said, "You're righteous! I declare you to be right in My eyes. You don't have to work to find favor with Me." Grace says, God reached down in Christ, captured us, declared us righteous and said, "You're right from now on in My eyes." Some people have misused this word and taught that it means "**just as if I'd never sinned,**" taking the little syllables "**just-if-ied.**" That's too shallow. That doesn't say enough. It is, "Although I am terribly sinful, He declared me righteous," not just as if I'd never been sinful. **Let me illustrate it.** A couple of friends of mine from the church and I rented a rototiller to replant the backyard for the fourth time. Out there in that dirt, we began to run that rototiller. Dust and dirt and junk went everywhere, and all of it settled on our bodies, so that from head to foot we were really dirty. We finished up and I walked into the shower and turned on that fresh water. I got all cleaned up and toweled off. I could have walked in front of the mirror and said, "*Ah, it's just as if I'd never been dirty*" But that wouldn't have adequately conveyed the power and the value of the water and soap. I could otherwise look in the mirror and say, "*I was filthy and now I'm clean.*" That's the difference. (Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations and Quotes)

John MacArthur in a sermon on Romans 3 after mentioning the phrase "Justified means Just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned" asked his congregation "Have you ever heard that? I hope you haven't heard that, but **if you have you don't need to remember it.** God isn't playing games and saying "Well, I'm going to pretend that it was just as if they never did it."

Knute Larson on Titus 3:7 - Paul told us God's purpose in providing salvation: so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs. Some people claim that justification means "**just as if I'd never sinned.**" **That may be cute, or clever, but it does not do salvation justice** Actually, "salvation" is a legal term describing a guilty person before the bar who is then pronounced blameless by the judge. This does not mean the individual has been found guiltless. Instead, it means that the person has been released from guilt, his offense paid for. All of this is by God's grace, apart from human merit. (Holman NT Commentary on Titus 3:7)

Here is an example of how this phrase "Just-as-if-I'd" is misused by a well respected preacher **David Jeremiah** who offers very questionable definition for **justification** - "This verse (Ro 3:24) contains an important theological word that needs defining: **justified**. My father used to say, when I was growing up, that "justified" means "**Just-as-if-I'd never sinned.**" That's a pretty good definition. **The problem with it is, we really did sin!** (ED: IT SEEMS THAT THIS WOULD MAKE IT NOT SUCH A "GOOD DEFINITION" FOR IT IS ACTUALLY NOT ACCURATE!) When a president of the United States pardons someone, all he does is make the person not-accountable for their crime or misdeed. The president can pardon, but he can't justify. **Justification** means restoring you to the status you had before you sinned—making it as if you'd never sinned. (ED: I DON'T AGREE WITH HIS DEFINITION OF JUSTIFICATION BECAUSE IT DOES NOT EVEN MAKE SENSE. WHY? BECAUSE "BEFORE YOU SINNED" WAS NEVER OUR STATUS. WE WERE ALWAYS SINNERS. WE WERE BORN IN SIN. SINNERS WAS OUR STATUS!). That's what God does through Christ. He sees us as if we had never sinned (though we have) because Christ took our sins upon himself. And He does that by his grace. (Captured by Grace, page 26)

Related Resources:

- [The "Just-as-if-I'd" definition of Justification](#) - Erik Raymond - a good, simple refutation of this popular catchy statement
- [Just As If I'd never sinned? Not Really](#) - Dr. C. Matthew McMahon - an in depth analysis of "just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned."
- ["Just as if I'd never sinned" – Please don't preach this-](#) Dan Fabricatore, PhD - a short, clear explanation of why this phrase should be assiduously avoided
- [Justification is Not 'Just-as-if-I'd Never Sinned'](#) - Chris MacLeavy

- [Does justified really mean “Just as if I’d never sinned”?](#) - Lisa Roettger

The Enigmatic William Barclay

WAYNE JACKSON

William Barclay (1907-1978), the famous Scottish scholar, was, in some respects, a brilliant writer. But he was an enigma. Barclay taught at the University of Glasgow for 28 years. Though a man of humble background, he became a theological celebrity. He was widely known in Great Britain for his radio and television broadcasts, but his most significant legacy — whether for good or bad — was his writing.

Barclay’s Modernism

Barclay once described himself as a “liberal evangelical” — an expression that is somewhat contradictory. The truth is, the engaging professor was a theological modernist. For example, he did not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. We are not compelled to accept this teaching “in the literal and physical sense” he wrote.

And while he felt there was some essence of the “miraculous” in the deeds of Christ, he believed that many of the Lord’s miracles had perfectly “natural” explanations.

He argued that the Savior did not multiply the loaves and fishes literally; Jesus merely motivated the thronging people to share their food with one another. He opined that Christ did not actually walk upon the Sea of Galilee; it was just that, from the disciples’ vantage point, it **appeared** that he did — as he walked in the shallow water near the beach. Further, he said, the Lord did not really intend for Peter to cast his fishing hook into the sea in order to obtain a coin from a fish’s mouth; rather, he meant for the apostle to use his fishing skill to raise the funds for the temple tax. So went the Barclay “spin.”

If you were to read some of Barclay’s writings regarding Jesus, you would be convinced that he believed in the Savior’s deity. For example, in his discussion of John 1:1, the famous theologian said that Jesus was “of the very same character and quality and essence and being as God.” But when two acquaintances of this writer visited with Barclay at his home in Glasgow, in the spring of 1970, the distinguished professor strongly denied that he believed that Jesus was divine, and he insisted he never had endorsed that idea. He claimed that the Lord himself believed that he was divine, as did others, but personally, he did not. When Paul was cited as evidence to the contrary, the professor snapped: “I don’t care what Paul said.”

Barclay repudiated the doctrine of the substitutionary nature of the death of Jesus. He denied that, in the divine scheme of things, Christ had to die to atone for the sins of humanity (see Isa. 53:4-6; Rom. 3:21-26). The Lord himself expressed it like this: the Son of man came to “give his life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28). But Prof. Barclay believed that to literalize this statement was a “crude” approach to a passage that was merely an instance of the “poetry of love.” The real power of Jesus’ death, he suggested, was in its benevolent, selfless example — nothing more.

Though Jesus taught more about the topic of “hell” than did any other biblical character, Barclay denied the existence of eternal torment. The punishment of hell is “not to be taken literally” he said. In fact, as historian J.D. Douglas observed, “Barclay was a universalist (one who believes that all people will be saved ultimately).” In one of his books the professor declared that man “cannot drift beyond the love and care of God.” Supposedly, the Lord God will “never leave or forsake” any person — regardless of the depth of his depravity. For all his learning, the Scottish expositor knew nothing of the concept of God’s justice and wrath.

On the Other Hand

Even in the face of these most deplorable ideas — wherein the respected educator totally set aside sacred Scripture and substituted his own foolish opinions — he stuns you with some of his teaching.

For instance, in a time when it was popular to claim that the Gospel narratives were written by unknown writers of the second century or so, Barclay contended that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were the actual authors of the compositions that bear their names. He was the only faculty member of his university to take that position.

He deplored the fact that churches neglected to practice discipline. (Of course, if they had, he should have been the first in line to receive such — if heresy is a disciplinary matter!)

And though he repudiated the deity of Jesus, he produced some of the richest material regarding the Lord’s teaching that has ever been written. Barclay’s discussion of Christ’s “Golden Rule” is a masterpiece that demonstrates the originality of Jesus’ teaching — contrary to the claims of many modernists.

And while the respected professor rationalized away many of Jesus' miracles, he vigorously contended that there is no way to explain the explosive success of Christianity other than by the fact that such was the result of Christ's resurrection from the grave!

Where Lies the Value?

Inasmuch as William Barclay was such a theological maverick, why do so many serious Bible students — even conservatives (including this writer) — find his writings valuable — even thrilling, on occasion? I have asked myself that question many times. Permit me to share my thoughts.

(1) The Scottish professor was a life-long student. He was not a cleric who spoke or wrote lazily. He did not employ stale, borrowed (or stolen) or warmed-over material. He obviously had a thirst for knowledge.

For more than half his life he was a teacher of Hellenistic Greek. He was perfectly at home with Aristotle, Thucydides, or Herodotus. In his discussions of biblical words he would track the terms from their classical origins, into the environment of the Septuagint era. He was familiar with words in Koine (common) Greek (the first-century Greek). He would explore the New Testament usage of terms, and even compliment the investigation by showing how the early "church fathers" employed various biblical texts. His linguistic studies are models of research methodology. Barclay's little book, *New Testament Words*, is a must — especially for ministers.

(2) His writings are mosaics of literary treasure. Hundreds of illustrations from the works of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Kipling, etc., adorn his compositions in illustrative fashion. His productions are filled with rich deposits of historical lore. For instance, he once wrote regarding Roman domestic life: "So high was the standard of Roman morality that for the first five hundred years of the Roman commonwealth there was not a single recorded case of divorce."

Barclay's New Testament commentaries (eighteen small volumes) are packed with information that it would take years and years to locate on one's own. For instance, his discussion of "slavery" in connection with the book of Philemon is a treasure that significantly illuminates that ancient problem, and the Christian approach to the oppressive institution.

(3) For all his scholarship, the professor of Glasgow was never "pedantic." He did not "strut" while sitting at his desk! He wrote so that the average person could understand him. He once stingingly declared: "It is usually true that the man who is unintelligible is not unintelligible because he is 'deep,' but because he does not himself understand what he is talking about."

By way of contrast, some today write so as to flaunt their alleged scholasticism, rather than to communicate meaningfully to the man-on-the-street. They speak to the wind!

Barclay's words flowed easily and elegantly. He is never boring, but always a delight to read. (In a way, this is what makes him so dangerous as well — especially to the novice who may be unable to separate the "wheat" from the "chaff.") But one can never read Barclay to a significant degree without learning something.

(4) His writings were never intended to be mere exercises in the theoretical. He was ever applying the truths of the Bible to the circumstances of daily life. He believed that the student of the Scriptures must learn to practice the teaching of Christ.

He once commented that the teacher who arouses only passion in his student, without pointing out what *needs to be done*, is a dangerous instructor. That sort of teaching lulls the student into a psychological comfort zone that lends itself to the development of a cancerous apathy that ultimately is deadly. The good teacher, he declared, provides his audience with something to **know**, to **feel**, and to **do**.

(5) Barclay had a way of illustrating his lessons so as to make them memorable. I remember the story he told of a dog he once had. Rusty, a bull-terrier, would accompany his master on walks down through the meadow and beside the stream. Rusty had a passion for plunging into the water, locating a rock on the bottom, getting it in his mouth, and bringing it to the bank. He would carefully deposit the stone some distance from the water's edge, and then go for another one. Time and again he would fetch his treasured rock, repeating the process for hours — if so allowed. Barclay asked this question: "What is the point?"

So far as he could determine, there was none. The exercise served no discernable purpose at all. He then observed that this is the way many Christians are. They seem to be going through the same monotonous routine every day, but without a purpose; with no projected goal. They appear not to know what their reason for existing actually is. They operate on the "dog" level.

Is it not the case that many of us scurry to make money (having little time for faith or family), and then die, leaving our resources (be they much or meager) to others, over which to squabble. We stay frustrated over the most trivial issues. As the saying goes, we "major in minors." We are ever sidetracked from our main goal — reverencing our Creator, keeping his commands, and teaching others to do likewise.

And so, Barclay's "what-is-the-point?" point was powerful indeed — and obviously memorable!

William Barclay frustrates me and delights me. He makes me angry, yet he teaches me. I despise his theology, but I thrill to many truths I have learned from him. I listen to him, and I ignore him. I recommend his writings, yet with a grain of salt (no, a **bucket** of salt!).

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES - John 1:1; Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 3:21-26; Matthew 20:28

SOURCE - Jackson, Wayne. "The Enigmatic William Barclay." *ChristianCourier.com*. 5-15-16. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/681-enigmatic-william-barclay-the>

A W Pink

Arthur Pink (1886-1952)

is often described as an eccentric. He didn't really fit in anywhere. Converted to Christ out of a theosophical background (the New Age movement of his day), he became a student of Puritan thought. But his efforts at pastoring churches and evangelization were not successful. Nor did his books sell. A monthly magazine that he edited called *Studies in the Scriptures*, never topped a circulation of 1,000. The last sixteen years of his life, he spent on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, in virtual isolation, having no formal association with any church...He seemed to take pride in his "persecution," although some of the men he disagreed with were among the greatest Christians of the century. (Christian History Institute)

In the interest of balance and fairness another source writes that...

There is a difference of opinion among Christians today as to the value of a study of his life. Many regard him as an eccentric while others see a spiritual quality reflected in his life marking him out as a unique servant of God, one who would be used in the service of the kingdom of God long after he had departed this life. ([Banner of Truth](#))

In contrast to the [Arminian](#) beliefs of Adam Clarke, Pink was a staunch Calvinist (in simple terms one who holds a belief in God's complete sovereignty - see Pink's landmark work [The Sovereignty of God](#)), he countered a growing trend toward acceptance of [Arminian](#) views. Pink has a writing style which is both doctrinal and devotional.

On the other hand, the informed reader who consults Pink's commentaries (he is frequently quoted on [preceptaustin.org](#)) should be aware that he is a notable example of a commentator who approaches the Scriptures leaning heavily on the supernaturalistic approach (see also [allegorical interpretation](#)) Pink frequently discusses "types" (other than those the Bible itself specifically designates as "types" - see [understanding of symbols and figures](#)) in which he uses an Old Testament event, personage or institution and associates it figuratively with some truth in the New Testament.

Donald Campbell, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary, in reviewing Pink's work, [The Life of David, Vols. I & II](#), comments that..

In his desire to be practical and helpful, the author sometimes is extreme in his typical applications (e.g., 1,148, 216ff). Dispensationalism is attacked as a hindrance to typology (1, 275). (Bibliotheca Sacra. Volume 115, October, 1958. Dallas Theological Seminary)

Therefore, good Bereans are advised to be aware of Pink's supernaturalistic approach to the Scriptures lest one take away from a passage a meaning that God never intended. Remember that the most efficacious application of Scripture is predicated upon an accurate interpretation, lest one be misapply (see application) the Scriptures.

In summary, A W Pink's commentaries can be an excellent resource with the caveat that the reader be cognizant of Pink's tendency toward a supernaturalistic approach in interpretation. (See related resource [Is Your Interpretation Supernaturalistic, Naturalistic, Existentialistic, Dogmatic?](#))