

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs

Comparing the Flavors

Correlating the Text

2 Peter 1:16–21; 3:15–18

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

The process of searching the Scriptures can be a thrilling and satisfying experience. Once you learn the necessary techniques and put them into practice over the course of several studies, you will begin to feel an increasing joy and confidence in your work. An important technique in developing that confidence is *correlation*—comparing the passage you are studying with related passages throughout the Bible. Correlation deepens and adds much-needed context to your interpretation and ultimately to the application of the truths you discover.



Whetting Your Appetite: Getting Started

One of the many wonders of the Word of God is how it came into existence. The Bible is a collection of books and documents written by men who were supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit to record Scripture.

The apostle Peter wrote:

Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20–21)

That's why this technique of *correlation* remains so critical for searching the Scriptures. Correlation recognizes that all Scripture is *God-breathed*, thereby establishing the credibility and value of the whole Bible. So comparing one verse—by highlighting a particularly significant word or truth—to another verse in a different section of the Bible, helps to broaden your understanding and to confirm your interpretation. That's how correlation works.

By the way, just in case you are skeptical about the value of including the technique of correlation in your study of the Scriptures, take a look at the master Teacher as He uses precisely the same approach!

Quotable

We're learning together how to get in the Word of God for ourselves. We're learning how to be spiritually self-sustaining through God's help and, of course, through a serious and in-depth study of His Word.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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A CLOSER LOOK

Jesus Shines the Light of the New onto the Old

Jesus, the Light of the World, broke through the thick veil of four centuries of spiritual darkness which spanned the close of the Old Testament era to the dawn of the New. He came, John declared, as “one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone” (John 1:9).

Just as a handy flashlight brings much-needed clarity to the dark corners of a dusty attic, Jesus, as He taught, shined the light of understanding onto the shadowed, often misunderstood passages of the Hebrew Scriptures.

At times, Jesus went toe-to-toe with the harsh and judgmental religious clerics who routinely presented themselves as the ultimate theological authority. On one occasion, Jesus shone the light onto their erroneous claims regarding the truth of the resurrection when He said, “Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God. . . . Haven’t you ever read about this in the Scriptures? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So he is the God of the living, not the dead” (Matthew 22:29, 31–32).

Enter Jesus—the master of correlation!

By comparing what He was teaching to a misrepresented passage in the Old Testament book of Exodus, Jesus reversed centuries of bad teaching on what would soon emerge as the bedrock doctrine of the New Testament.

Jesus’ use of correlation literally brought to life—from the damp, darkened tomb of Pharisaic misinterpretation—the wonder and power of the resurrection!



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In light of Jesus' own use of correlation, take a few minutes to consider the following benefits of mastering the technique of correlation in your study of the Scriptures.

- **You will base your interpretation on clear discernment instead of vague opinions.** Everyone has an opinion about what a verse or passage “means to them.” But do any of those opinions matter? Absolutely not! What matters is God’s intent and what the divinely inspired writers were moved to communicate when they penned the Scriptures.
- **As your knowledge broadens, your understanding will deepen.** By comparing passages from throughout the whole Bible, just like Jesus did when correcting the Pharisees, you ensure greater accuracy in your determination of what the Bible means.
- **You will cultivate a reasonable and balanced approach to the Scriptures.** How easy—and dangerous—it is to become unyielding in your teaching of the Scriptures. Correlation provides a firewall to protect against such unnecessary dogmatism by guaranteeing a balanced and more gracious presentation of truth.
- **You will become able to separate truth from error quickly.** Correlation hones your ability to detect subtle errors in the teaching of others who promote incorrect ideas and who handle the Scriptures carelessly.



YOUR TURN IN THE KITCHEN

Just as comparing flavors and ingredients in great cooking takes time and experimentation, correlating the Scriptures works in the same way; you won't really learn how to do it until you give it a try. The following exercises will help you begin. Enjoy!

1. Look up Mark 3:10–11, Luke 4:31–35, and Acts 16:16–18. Using the chart, “Demon Contact in the New Testament,” fill in the blank boxes with the details you observe. Take your time and work carefully. If you need to recreate the chart on a separate sheet for more room, feel free!



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DEMON CONTACT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

| | MARK 3:10–11 | LUKE 4:31–35 | ACTS 16:16–18 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| VICTIM | | | |
| TORMENTOR | | | |
| VICTIM'S EXPERIENCE | | | |
| METHOD TO EXPEL DEMONS | | | |
| DEMON'S RESPONSE | | | |
| FINAL RESULT | | | |

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2. What do you learn by correlating these three accounts of demon contact in the New Testament?



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3. What consistencies do you see when you look at each of the following categories represented in the three passages: the victim's experience, the demon's response, and the final outcome?
4. Take a few minutes to read John 3 and the story of Nicodemus. Then read carefully John 8:27–28 and John 12:31–36. How do these latter passages help you understand Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3 about being "born again"?
5. The apostle Paul revealed some important lessons on the power of prayer in Philippians 4:4–9. Take a few moments to read that passage and refresh your memory. Now it's time to correlate Paul's teaching with other key passages that will help you understand what Paul meant. Carefully read Matthew 6:5–7, James 4:3, and Psalm 66:18, and observe what they say. Write down three things you find that help you gain a broader understanding of Paul's statement on prayer in Philippians 4:4–9.



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6. In Luke 10:25–37, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan in response to a question about loving one's neighbor. Read Leviticus 19:15–18, Romans 13:8–10, and Galatians 5:14. How do these verses help you understand the importance of the parable of the Good Samaritan?



Helpful Hint

Locate a map that shows the topography of Israel in the back of your Bible or in a Bible atlas. Locate on the map the city of Jericho, just northeast of Jerusalem. Notice Jericho is down near the Jordan River, below sea level. Jerusalem, on the other hand, sits up high in a range of rugged mountains, nearly three thousand feet above sea level. The Samaritan in this parable was said to be “traveling down to Jericho” from Jerusalem. Think about the terrain of that area and the ruggedness of that journey.

Now that you've studied the important technique of correlation, make sure you add it as a necessary part of your process of searching the Scriptures. The more you practice, the more comfortable you will become in using the whole Bible in your study and ultimately your presentation of the truths you discover.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, strengthen my ability for searching the Scriptures by teaching me to use the whole Bible to bring perspective and understanding to what I'm studying. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit, who guides me and illumines my mind to the truths of Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.



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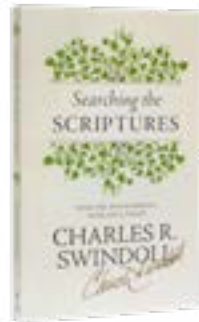
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When the book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* was written, the format for this STS study was developed by Charles R. Swindoll and Rhome van Dyck and published at the end of chapter six under the title “Your Turn in the Kitchen.” For the 2016 broadcast, this STS study was expanded with additional material by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Charles R. Swindoll based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts.



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