

EXEGETICAL • VERSE BY VERSE • HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL HERMENEUTICS

BIBLE LESSONS INTERNATIONAL

A Great Commission Ministry: Evangelism and Discipleship--Matthew 28:18-20

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Letter From Bob

"The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for

He has Risen,

just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead. And behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

— Matthew 28:5-7

We hope you receive this newsletter by Easter and we pray that your celebration of the resurrection of our Lord will be meaningful to you, your family and your local church. We pray that He will be glorified in all of our lives.

Recently the Lord has allowed me to see the connections in the past that have brought me to the worldwide internet ministry that BLI has today. I want to share this with you.

Several years ago when I was still teaching at East Texas Baptist University I received an email from Logos (Bible Software Company). My New Testament commentaries are included in their system. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, had contacted Logos and wanted to produce a CD-Rom of their training materials to give away to pastors worldwide, to be translated into 50 languages. They wanted to translate all of my commentaries and include them on the CD-Rom. I quickly and excitedly gave permission to do so. Because I have never sold my commentaries to a publisher I retain full rights to them (so that I can give them away).



Not long after this I was teaching at the Emmaus OMS Seminary in Cap-Haitian, Haiti. I went to a local church on Sunday morning and as the pastor preached God spoke to my heart, "Go home and give all your Bible studies away, free to the world." I was not really surprised by this because for many years in my overseas travels it had become obvious to me that many countries have no Bible study materials in

their languages. When they are available the cost is about four times as much as in the USA. So, this had been a desire of mine for a long time.

However, I had never made the mental connection between these two experiences

until I heard that Bill Bright had gone to be with the Lord without completing the CD-Rom project. I wondered to myself, "Why would God open this door, just to close it"? Well, obviously both of these events prepared me to be open to the internet and CD-Rom ministry that BLI is doing today!!!

The Lord works in mysterious ways which may seem strange to us but He is in control and we trust Him to accomplish His will. What an awesome, mighty, wonderful God we serve!!!

Translations

Slowly, but surely, the number of languages that have been translated is growing. The opportunities often open in miraculous ways. Here is a list of what we currently have online:

- Bengali - Matthew
- Chinese - John, I, II, II John and coming soon, Deuteronomy and Acts
- French - Romans, I, II, III John and 9 more volumes coming soon
- Hungarian - John, coming soon are I, II Timothy and Titus
- Portuguese - Romans and possibly more soon
- Russian - Matthew, Romans and coming soon, John and Acts
- Serbian - John, I & II Corinthians, Prison Letters, I, II, II John and Revelation
- Slovakian - Romans, Revelation (John and Romans currently on radio programs in Slovakia)
- Spanish - Matthew, Romans, I Corinthians and soon, Acts, II Corinthians
- Telegu (India) - John, I, II, II, John and Romans
- Turkish - John, I, II, II John
- Urdu (Pakistan and India) - Deut., John, I, II, II John, Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, I & II Thessalonians, Prison Letters, James, Jude, Revelation
- Punjabi (India) - John, I, II, II John, and Romans
- Vietnamese - Romans and soon, Acts

The following are coming this year:

- Arabic - John, I, II, III John and possibly Romans
- Armenian - Romans and possibly John, I, II, III John
- Botswana - Prison Letters in a local tribal language
- Bulgarian - Romans
- Farsi (Iran) - Romans
- Hindi (India) - Acts and Romans
- Romanian - Acts and possibly Romans
- Tagalog (Philippines) - Acts and Romans

Open Doors

God has opened so many doors! The Baptist World Alliance (whose next meeting will be in Honolulu in 2010) is going to include the Computer Bible Commentary CD-Rom in every participant's packet. They said they are expecting 15,000 attendees! We are going to produce a new CD with all of the new translations for this project.

We recently sent 7000 of the CD-Roms to a mission organization (Sovereign World Trust) in Kent, England. They give resources to pastors/leaders around the world and include our CD-Rom. We sent 13,000 to ETBU graduates/attendees this year. We send hundreds a month free through our website (www.freebiblecommentary.org).

Please pray for us. The economic times in the US look rough. But, doors still open. We give everything away free but that does not mean it does not cost. Some of the costs involved are:

- paying the translators
- producing the actual CD-Rom
- postage to mail them

We need your help and prayers to walk through these open doors of "Great Commission" opportunities! We know that our God is in control and that He is working all things together to spread His word around the world so that people may be saved and that they may grow in Christ.

Thank you for all you do for the Kingdom of God in Christ.

Bob is currently the Interim Pastor at Lakeside Baptist Church in Dallas and we have put his sermons online (look under video sermons) so you can see how he looks with gray hair!!!

Please check the website: www.freebiblecommentary.org for the latest available resources. Bob's commentary on Ezekiel will be online soon. He spent all of 2008 working on it!!!

IMPACTING THE WORLD

(These letters are printed just as we receive them. We always enjoy these letters and hope that they will give you a glimpse of how all of us together are making an impact on parts of God's world. We cannot print them all because there are too many. Please pray for these people as they serve the Lord.)

Dear Dr. Utlej,

Greetings in Christ's precious name! Let me first introduce myself briefly. I am Saleem Younas from Pakistan. I earned my MTh (OT) from ACTS, South Korea in 2002. Presently, I am pasturing a small congregation and teaching Religion, Cultural and Hebrew at Gujranwala Theological Seminary as a visiting lecturer. Basically, I am a student of Hebrew language. I am also serving as a Youth Director of Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. You are introduced to me by Dr. K. Bender (Canada), one of my Professors at ACTS, Korea. He recommended that I visit free bible commentary website. I am recommending it to my Pakistani pastor friends. Thank you so much.

*In Christ,
Rev. Saleem, Pakistan*

Hello Bob,

I wanted to thank you for putting such a good commentary on the web for free. I grew up as a Catholic believer, found a new relationship with Christ in high school back in 1973, became inspired by reading St. Francis of Assisi and joined a group of men (kind of like a religious order only an ecumenical group) dedicated to advancing the Kingdom. I later left this group and married a wonderful woman who was from a more evangelical background. In my background I have found that understanding the scripture from many different backgrounds can really help in our daily lives and our ability to love those around us.

I wanted to thank you for promoting such an open minded study tool.

I really like the way you look at the various translations (and do not exclude the Catholic) in your approach. It is how I was trained to study the scriptures in my ecumenical group and find it refreshing to have a Baptist teacher doing the same. Thank you for helping promote christian unity by doing a deeper study of the Bible.

I am currently using your tool for a study of the book of James. It is the type of guide I have been looking for some time. I grow tired of studies that have secret agendas behind them. It seems that somehow the Bible studies in the evangelical church always lead to putting pressure on people to become evangelists. I have done street evangelism and other things like that in my life but found the will of the Father for me at this time is practice my Civil Engineering skills for the poor. I am now finding a very fruitful ministry in helping poorer churches and charities with their engineering needs. I am also helping in small group ministry in our church by helping to promote a more open minded study of the scripture much as you have done on your site. I also feel a leading to care for the poor directly but this has not yet come to bloom.

Thank you once again for providing such a good study tool.

Ed, Your Brother in Christ

Dear Bob

I hope this finds you well.

Several thousand of the CD-ROM have been distributed to approximately 130 countries. Often as Pastors receive a copy, they write and ask us for

more copies to use in their Bible Colleges or to distribute to other pastors.

*Marina Conran
Ministry Director/Foreign Editions
Sovereign World Trust*

Dr. Utlej –

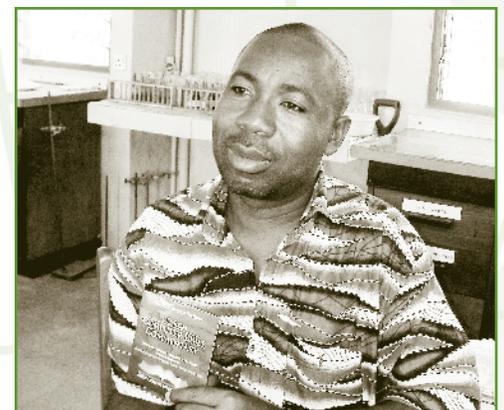
Your webpage and lessons have been a great blessing for me. I am in the Navy and am frequently at sea for extended periods of time. While I am away I will choose a book to study and then download your video commentary. This has been very enriching for me. I can't tell you how much. I tell nearly every Christian I know about this great resource. My question is, do you have a break down of the different Greek verb tenses? A sort of Greek cheat sheet? I don't even know if it is possible to condense something like that so please excuse my ignorance.

Thanks.

Dear man of God:

Shalom from Cameroon.

I want to kindly address this email to express my best wishes of a happy and prosperous year 2009. May the



Elder of a church in Ghana, West Africa, with a Computer Bible CD-ROM

Lord God bless you exceedingly abundantly this year than ever before in all sphere of life whether be spiritual, physical, material and financial.

I am writing to kindly inform you that I am a born again christian from Cameroon. By the grace of God I came across your web site. I would be very grateful to receive your free written and video bible commentary from Genesis to Revelation.

I have a friend of mine whose name and address is below who is currently in USA for some times again. Please kindly send the copies to him and he will give them to me in hands as he come back to Cameroon very soon.

Thank you very much for your understanding and gift. I anticipate giant steps in my faith with these wonderful tools.

Pierre NTOKO, Cameroon

Greetings Bob!

What a wonderful blessing for you to devote the written results of a life of ministry to those of us working alongside you for the Kingdom. I am deeply impressed with your commitment to those who serve the Body of Christ.

Thank you for blessing me, my brother.

*Ron, Pastor-in-Transition
Hudson, Massachusetts*

Dear Dr. Utley,

Just before Christmas last year at an interdenominational conference, a friend came to me and showed me a free bible commentary CD. He asked me to read it on my computer because he doesn't have a PC and could not access one. After installing it on my computer, I started clicking on links to different commentaries prepared by you. The teachings are

superb and illuminating. These commentaries are just what I desperately needed to effectively interpret and teach the bible. I am pasturing a village church in western Kenya. I have only had at my disposal an OPEN BIBLE (NASB) and Swahili translation of KJV. The gracious presence of the Holy Spirit has constantly helped and guided me all along. I have pastured for the last 7 years prayerfully and in all humility waiting upon Him. He has answered my prayer of being fully equipped. My kind request to you sir is if you are able to get me any literature for further reading please don't hastate. The place where I teach bible was previously under Islamic influence. Church members with this conditioning are very argumentative and sometimes become disappointed when they don't receive satisfactory answers especially concerning parts of the Bible that are not clear and seem controversial. I am now concentrating on young children and youth who are apparently more open and receptive to the teachings of the Bible. Please help me teach correctly and accurately these innocent dear ones for whom Christ died. I will appreciate both hard copy and soft copy of materials for Sunday school ministry. I have a vision of starting and establishing a school for Sunday school bible teachers. God bless you dear man of God as you pray over these issues.

*Yours in Christ's service,
Daniel Makokha
Bungoma – Kenya*

Dear Dr. Utley

I have just downloaded your written commentary and started reading it. But as a first impression, I am amazed and the learning, work, effort, re-

search etc. that has gone into your making of this commentary. I really appreciate and am grateful for your labour for the Body of Christ. I hope you (and your typist also) will continue to have more fruitful ministry to offer to God and His people.

Thanks again

*Rick Thomas, Mt. Hagen, WHP
Papau New Guinea*

Dear Dr. Utley,

You have unearthed for me a most neglected aspect of Bible Study – observing what the text says and allowing it to speak for itself. I have come to agree with your conclusions on the matter of truth (The Word of God) being obtainable and verifiable.

I have been a Pentecostal Christian since May 15, 1995 and my approach to Biblical interpretation has almost always been 'allegorical.' However, ever since I stumbled on your videos and writings I have become something of a skeptic – well, in a positive sense. I no longer give credence to preachers, be they Pentecostal, Charismatic or not who read their own meaning into the Bible or spiritualize a portion of scripture.

Establishing 'Context' has become paramount to me in my reading of the Bible, as I read paragraphs, chapters and books instead of creating a foundation for interpretation based on a 'single' word meaning and a 'single' sentence in paragraph, chapter or entire book of the Bible.

Admittedly, I am still learning to be a better reader of my Bible and I haven't mastered any of the skills or techniques I mentioned briefly but at least now I am more critical in my Bible "Interrogating the text like a detective" as Kay Arthur says in her book "How To Study Your Bible."

There is much I have to learn about reading my Bible. You have set me on the right path. Thank you and God bless you immensely.

Immanuel S. Nah

Dear Dr. Utley,

Greetings from Lebanon!

Hope you are doing well.

At the same time, as a biblical scholar and theologian, I would like to express to you my thanks for the excellent work you have done in preparing this study guide. I would like to inform you that the translation work of Johnine Writings is going on well. To be honest with you it is a tough work in translation as it involves original languages and minute details in addition for formatting the text, but I am glad to be able to do that. I do hope to be able to provide you with the full text in a PDF format prior to our deadline.

Have a blessed advent and Christmas seasons.

Riad Kassis, Lebanon

Dear Bob,

I greet you a Happy and prosperous New Year 2009.

It was really good to have had your notes on the whole New Testament Books. Very sorry for not telling you all about this that I have downloaded them from your site. Bob, sorry about that and I apologise for that and ask you to bear with me.

But that good thing was that I and my friend extensively used your notes on Matthew, Luke and II Corinthians over the Christmas and New Year Day celebrations in our preachings. Because the topics we were given to speak on were from those books. I felt the leading of God in my preaching this time. I would say that your

notes helped me so much in such a way that it played as a channel of blessing through me for my people from God. My friend also liked you notes and felt very helpful as I did.

Bob, I think I will be able to get my translation on gospel John done in January. I will keep you informed of the progress I am making on it. It was very good that you picked John Gospel for me to start with, I now have come to know that this book is such an important book. Thank you so much. May God bless and keep you.

Bob, I don't want to do things very hastily, I am very afraid to miss important points. Instead, slowly and steadily with satisfaction.

Let us keep in touch.

Henna Singson

Churachandpur, Manipur

North East India

I came across Dr. Utley's verse-by-verse audio and written commentaries while doing a Google search tonight. I am working on a devotion for our staff devotion time at the ministry where I serve – Ambassadors for Christ www.afcinc.org. The ministry is an outreach to Chinese intellectuals. We have several Chinese on our staff. I wanted to do an in-depth study on the birth of Christ as recorded in Matthew 1 and Luke 2.

It has been 20 years since I was in seminary at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. I remember my New Testament professor teaching us about the details of the birth of Christ and how fascinated I was by this. I just



Bro. Bashir Swarup encouraging the persecuted believers in India

finished your video studies on Luke 1 and Matthew 2 on the birth of Christ. Wow! I felt like I was back in seminary! Thank you for making these resources available on the Internet.

Blessings on your ministry. Have a blessed Christmas.

Paul Schultz

Ambassadors for Christ

Lancaster, PA

Bro. Bob, thanks so much for sharing what the Lord has given to you. I've been a Christian for some time now and have attended churches where the KJV is the Bible of choice. The Lord seems to be pressing me to seek further meaning on some verses that I've always been hung up on. One of those is Acts 9:5 esp. the last part; "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." I know you lean toward the NASB, which I am coming to see is a very accurate translation, and in your commentary notes there seems to be some info about the only original transcript to reflect this verse was a Latin one. The verse as stated in the KJV has never set comfortable in my heart. Is the fact that the NASB doesn't include that which is referenced above indicate the authors weren't 100% sure of its authenticity?

Thanks for your help,

Bill (Sterling.Va)

Dr. Utley,

I believe the Lord has used the sermons He has given you to help me in a tremendous way in my Christian life. The Lord has used your ministry to get the message across to me that He is still actively at work in my life, still loves me and still can and is willing to use me. You have dealt specifically with some very pertinent and pressing issues that I have never heard in the Church I was affiliated with. I was surprised to hear anyone in the body of Christianity deal with these topics, even more so someone affiliated with the Baptist movement. I myself was affiliated with the Baptist Movement even went to a Baptist Bible College, so yes I know why I make that statement.

I realize that the most important thing in this life is my relationship with My Redeemer and it is for this reason He gave his life and shed His blood. To save my wretched soul and bring me into a relationship with Him. A daily interaction on an intimate level. It's not about anything else but a personal walk with Jesus the Christ who loved me and gave Himself for me. Everything else will be affected and will flow out of this.

I am grateful to you Dr. Utley, for being so candid and speaking the true word without apology or personal interest. Staying true to the Word of God and preaching nothing but what God would have you to say. Helping me realize what is important and what is not.

Now I am assured by His word and His Holy Spirit that I know Him, and more so, that I am known by Him. That He is still able and willing to use me for His Glory. Now I know that I am responsible for my response to this grace that He so freely offers.

I pray that the work God has done through you continues to bring forth Fruit to His honor and glory. I pray that He blesses and keeps you and your family and grants you the desires of your heart. Continue to Labor for the Lord till He comes.

Trinidad and Tobago

Dear Dr. Bob,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. Your teaching tapes have renewed our faith in God and His Word to a level never before known in our Christian lives. What a profound gift our Heavenly Father has bestowed to you. You have opened the truth of the Bible in a way that is indescribable. How God could put so much insight and information into one mind is truly a Divine Mystery. God has truly bless you and for that I am very thankful. You are much loved and appreciated and you are in our prayers every day and all the time.

I had searched everywhere for the truth, but to no avail. I went from church to church and from denomination to denomination looking for the truth, but I could not find what I knew was in my heart. But then in February of this year, 2008, by the Grace of God, I found your website listed on the Internet and as they say, "The Rest Is History."

You have, by and through the power of the Holy Spirit, transformed our lives in ways you could never imagine. Your teaching has opened our hearts, minds and eyes, and the Light of God's Word has come rushing in like a "Spiritual Title Wave." I have no words to express the joy and blessings you and your teachings have brought into both of our lives. We both agree that we have never heard such anointed teach-

ing and preaching that has come forth from any mortal being.

God truly has His hand on you, your mind and your heart.

Lajolla, CA

Dear Dr. Utley,

I am Linus Baito from Indonesia. I live in Lombok Island near by Bali (just 25 minutes flight from Bali). If you have a good time – some day – to visit Bali, please extend your traveling to Lombok and let me know. I would be glad to company you during there. I serve at small church in Mataram, Lombok. This now is the 8th year of my ministry.

Thank you so much Bob for receiving your CD-ROM of free Bible commentary. I am really delighting about it. It arrived to my address yesterday afternoon.

I have try opened some files in that CD and I am so happy about it fantastic understanding the Bible. And also for the seminar videos inside are more valuable for me. I glad to share this material to my friends who taking ministry with me in Indonesia. And I believe they will be happy too.

I do pray that your further project to translate this CD-ROM to Armenian, Mandarin, Farsi, Spanish, Telegu, Turkish, Vietnamese, and Arabic will be blessed with great impact to those people who have it in their own language.

With my fully humbleness, could you plan to translate it too in Indonesian? I believe that it will bring great blessing for us to have a skill of understanding the Bible much better than before. For about 95% pastors, preachers, and ministers (deacons, lay leaders, and Sunday school's teachers) don't have ability to understand English. I pray

that our mighty God can open the door to you and your team to do it.

Linus Baito, Indonesia

Dear Brother Utley,

Thank you so much for sending me your Computer Bible Commentary. I do appreciate it so much that you are willing to freely share the results of all the study that you have invested into God's Word.

May you know God's enabling and blessing as you continue on into the Book of Genesis.

Your fellow servant in The Service of our Lord and Master,

*Pastor Lance Palmer,
Sydney, Australia*

Dear Brother

I am very grateful to you for sending me the copy of CD-rom Computer Bible Commentary. I have gone through it and found it very very useful for reading the Bible steps by steps and especially the spiritual life. I specially thank God who has given you the wisdom to compile the whole writing and make it online so that whole of people could see and use it. God blessed you. I will always remember you in prayer.

*Thanks and regards
MB Nongkhlaw, India*

Hello Sir,

Thank you so much. Of course I have received the CD and it has been a great source of blessing for me. I have also given the same hard copy to my pastor after I copied it on to my pc. I have used it as a reference in my personal study of the bible as well as my preparations to serve the Lord when I preach. I will keep exploring your internet sources after a brief time. Right now my internet services

are not so readily available. I have planned to reset them in a month's time and I will have more to testify then. My church people are also blessed by the word I shared them after reading and enriching my sermons with the assistance of your guide. Bless your God for you could stretch your hands to influence people so far from you. I pray that the ministry in your commentaries reach a great many believers and deliver them out of their confusions and uncertainties. The progress of the word of our God is the power of our own kingdom which relieves everyone of us. I will be lifted up through your blessings and I will pray for you more.

God bless your effort.

Elias

Dear Dr. Utley,

Christian Greeting! I received your Free CD-Rom Bible Commentary recently. Thank you very much for this gift. I appreciate your years of studies and researches that resulted in this masterpiece. And you will give to anyone who needs.

Being a pastor who does not take salary. My income is very limited when coming to buying books for my sermon preparation. I try to search the Internet for free materials. Unfortunately, many Christian organizations even charge a fee to download a sermon. Of course, I understand they need money to run them.

Ironically, in Singapore and Taiwan, the Buddhist associations place free books, CDs, etc. at shopping areas and telephone booths. Anyone interested in their materials can help themselves.

Is this the reason, many are turning to Buddhism because they have access into their free media? I am

involved in distributing free gospel CDs. I do not charge people, and even pay for their postage, so they always feel free to ask me for them, because they can share the gospel with their friends and relatives. Many came to know Jesus as a result.

Your gift comes in timely. I know that you will help me to learn more spiritual things as I use your software.

HEB 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

*God bless you
Rev David Lim, Singapore*

Dear Bob,

My name is Paul Curtas, I am general director of a ministry called Fellowship of Christian Airline Personnel, (www.FCAP.org), been in the airline industry since early 1970's. I just discovered your website and the commentary works you've done. It looks excellent! Thanks for your diligent and thorough work in Exegesis. I appreciate very much what I have seen thus far. My personal journey has taken me through Bible College and Seminary; also I studied and worked at L'Abri fellowship some years back. And yes, I loved Hermeneutics, but more so the one who wrote this incredible book we study.

Keep up the great work...

By His grace, Paul Curtas

Dear brother Dr. Bob Utley,

I cannot tell you how much I am blessed with Your work. May the Lord of lords bless you abundantly.

Up to now, I have made one copy of your CD and gave it to one of a near-by church leader. Honestly speaking, I wanted to see it

first and then encourage my congregation and others to use it. As you know, there are many false teachings hence I found it to be my responsibility to safeguard my sheep.

I have up to now read Ephesus, Colossians, and the articles on adoption, election and predestination, christian responsibility. I could honestly say that it is wonderful and healthy.

By the way, I am an Ethiopian (East Africa) "full time minister" in a small local baptist church. I was an atheist and received Jesus as my personal savior and baptized into the Holy Spirit 15 years ago. I am actually only 9 months old since I become full time minister.

I would really appreciate if you send me any kind of mate-

rial that could help me to build the body of Christ.

Once again, I would like to say God bless you richly and let His grace be on you abundantly to finish the work you are now on.

Tsegaye Kebede (MD), Ethiopia

You are Bob Utley?

I recognized the name immediately as I have read some of your material in the past and have found it to be quite well written.

I had to chuckle at the Eschatology chart when "Bob's Tentative Opinion" seems to look very much like Amillennialism under a slightly different name (you've expressed my own loosely held opinion, too).

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I would like very much to be able to cite your works as a source in the future and a copyright date and accompanying information would be helpful (city and state if it is to be under "Bible Lessons International").

Thanks again for making your materials available and let me know if any are to be published or if I can be of assistance in helping to move them in that direction.

John Stevenson, RedeemerPublishing.com



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