

True Christianity III

Brief recap

- If you're hearing this for the first time, please back up two messages.
- These messages are given live each week through our YouTube channel. The live messages are often different because our way is to have back and forth. Please join live to appreciate other people's perspectives.
- Starting fresh – get an NASB95, read the front of the book (or the “about” online) for the hints and why it's formatted the way it is, and start from Genesis 1.
- Don't read through the chapter breaks and verse numbers. They aren't really there. Don't read the headings that tell you what you are about to read. Let the Bible speak to you.
- Language is not static and never has been. Language has idioms and sayings. These change over time. Understand who is writing the book, when they lived, and what is going on in the world at the time. Basically don't read the bible like it's western literature written all at once.
- Don't take the bait to fast forward and watch a lot of videos. Most of Christianity is just rehashing long memorized and entrenched doctrines. If the doctrines are true, you'll find them on your own.
- Take your time and enjoy the journey. The Messiah had a 3.5 year ministry. He didn't just fast forward to the crucifixion. We are in this for life, so why not stop and smell the flowers?

Now for this installment's lessons.

Is it not written? Show a NT citation without all caps, then with all caps, then the OT reference. The people of Yeshua's day had a way to cite scripture that was based on their particular culture. This culture included everybody going to synagogue on Shabbat and having heard Moses read their whole lives. The teachers of the day had memorized most if not all of the OT. While likely won't memorize it all the way they did, if we're aware of this, scripture will make more sense. When we see sentences in the NT that are just out of place, that don't mesh with the context, they are very likely cues for us to look up something in the Old Testament. Let's walk through an example.

Slide 2 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment." (Mat 22:36-38)

We're going to do a little exercise here. Look at how this question is answered. We should know from the context that the answer comes from the Torah because He was asked what is the greatest commandment in the Torah. Fair enough. But if you start reading the bible from the New Testament

instead of the book of Genesis, you will likely think that the greatest commandment is to just love God and then we get to define what that means. We read western literature as if we already know the definitions of everything and the immediate context of a phrase defines it for us. We're taught to do this starting in middle school. But we're not reading modern western literature here, we're reading the words of the Son of God.

The word love is a challenge to define. There are different words for it in Greek but in our modern parlance, it's a pretty malleable word. It can mean anything from having an affinity for a car, or a food, to how you feel about your parents to how you feel about your spouse. While it is clearly told us that the Torah is being reference here, there's more to it than the words by themselves. Most bibles show this exchange just as it is presented here. Check this out.

Slide 3 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. (Mat 22:36-38)

When you read the NASB, it makes a big note when the NT is citing the OT. Even though the text cites that the answer is from the Torah, the all caps makes it super simple to see. I'm illustrating one of the helps from the NASB95 here. So now it's much clearer that this phrase comes from the OT. This illustration here is handy and pretty clear. But in the later writings, especially from Paul, it's not as easy to see when this happens without the all caps hints.

I also want to point out that the answer is not the ten commandments. This line is from much deeper in the Torah than that. So we should really be motivated to learn where this commandment comes from if the Messiah tells us it's the mitzvot Gadol, the great commandment.

Slide 4 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. (Mat 22:36-38)

Still slide 4 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and all thy strength. And these words, all that I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart and in thy soul. (Deu 6:5-6) (Brenton LXX)

Now you can see where this comes from. This illustrates how Yeshua cited scripture. He didn't say "Deuteronomy 6:5-6", He actually recited the verses. Because there were no chapters and numbers and He was communicating to those who knew scripture using their cultural method of referencing scripture.

The best analogy I can think of is if two Navy veterans get together. I was in the Navy and we have a different language than any of the other services. We call walls bulkheads, rope is line, gossip is scuttlebutt, and on and on. Navy rank is also different than the other services. If I meet someone who was in another service, we have a mutual respect, but not this mutual language. If I meet someone who was in the Navy, particularly during the same time period I was in and on a similar ship, we will communicate in a way that onlookers won't quite understand. If we were on the same ship at the same time, then the rest of the world goes on pause while we reminisce about talking the way we did back then. That's very similar to how the NT is written and how these exchanges play out. This is why I'm going to such repetitive lengths to explain "these guys just don't communicate like us" but we can understand them better if we're aware of it.

I'm cited the LXX because Yeshua was citing that version or a version we don't have today. We can tell because it includes the word "mind". The MT doesn't include that. These are the hints we get when starting from scratch. And that's just a little trivia.

Let's see how to look this up and figure out where to see the references when they pop up.

Slide 5 Pic of the cross references

Using the hints of the all caps, we can then use the helps of this cross reference tool on the right side of the picture to see where the OT citation comes from. You can see it comes from three places in Deuteronomy, but the key one is chapter 6 (look at me use these verses and chapters while saying not to, it's a challenge.)

This is an illustration of how to study verses. But for new people, after you read from Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament, you'll delve into the New Testament and recognize a ton of the material. You will catch verses and themes from the OT naturally, even when they don't have the all caps or direction from the authors that the data comes from the OT. The cross reference tools are handy to jump back to the place and read the context. If you're picking up these teachings after having started in the New Testament and then starting the OT, you're going to find that you've already heard a lot of the Torah by reading the NT.

Now, let's examine the context of loving God in the Torah so we can know how to do that. Because it's understood in the exchange between Yeshua and His questioner that He's referencing an entire passage, not just a sentence from the Torah.

Slide 6 "You shall love YHVH your Elohim (God) with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you

walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deu 6:5-9)

Here’s the lesson for today. Yeshua wasn’t just saying loving God was the greatest commandment. He was telling us HOW to love God. If you love God with all your heart, soul, might, and mind, then you will keep the Torah. You won’t just keep the Torah, you’ll talk about the Torah all the time. Because the Torah is the foundation for the Word of God.

The bible is written to be cited and referenced inherently. That means without the chapters and verses There is also a culture for this in ancient Judaism, a culture which Yeshua embraced, about citing the scriptures. In reality, we can see how Yeshua quoted verses to illustrate how we are supposed to. And Paul expected everyone who read his letters to understand how he communicated. The chapters and verses are a substitute for the way the bible, especially the New Testament, is meant to be cited. This is why it’s crucial to learn the bible from Genesis to Revelation and in no other order and without the numbers. This culture/system develops over time, so we will see it in the major and minor prophets. But the goal here is to learn Christ and Him crucified. To learn Christ, we really benefit from learning how He communicated, which will benefit us in the life and in the world to come.