

EXEGETICAL • VERSE BY VERSE • HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL HERMENEUTICS

BIBLE LESSONS INTERNATIONAL

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

Dr. Bob Utley - 903.935.2532 - 800.785.1005 - PO Box 1289, Marshall, TX 75671

LETTER FROM BOB

“So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11

Spring is bursting out all over! What a great time of the year. I hope all is well with you, our prayer partners and supporters.

In December I was sitting in my office and believe that I received a word from the Lord (at least I think it was Him, sometimes my revelations are heartburn!). The word was to offer to Federal and State prisons in the USA a set of our NT Commentaries (13) for their prison libraries. So far we have had good response. Our copier is smoking!! Each set has over 4,000 pages! This is very exciting to me. We received

a request from one chaplain for individual commentaries for each of their 250 female inmates. We were able to send 250 commentaries of Galatians and Thessalonians (this was the first commentary that we published in a small, spiral bound form that is no longer available). We also sent 2 sets of the entire New Testament commentaries to them. Several of the prisons requested more than one set because they have different unit libraries. We thought you might like to see a list of the cities and states of the prisons that have responded.

Websites:

www.freebiblecommentary.org

www.biblelessonsintl.com

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”

Matthew 24:35

Bushnell Fl 33513
Riverview Fl 33579
Lake City Fl 32025
Winslow Az 86047
Brooksville Fl 34604
Ypsilanti Mi 48197
Brooklyn Ny 11232
Lake Butler Fl 32054
Lowell Fl 32663
Westville In 46391
Milton Fl 32583
Greencastle In 46135
Big Spring Tx 79720
Doral Fl 33178
Chipley Fl 32428
Indianapolis In 46241
Dequincy La 70633
Red Granite Wi 54970
Norton Ks 67654

Lexington Ky 40324
St Louis Mi 48880
Indianapolis In 46201
Florence Az 85232
Ionia Mi 48846
Marenisco Mi 49947
Tell City In 47586
Ellsworth Ks 67439
Indianapolis In 46214
Gainesville Fl 32609
Orlando Fl 32831
East Palatka Fl 32131
Lake Butler Fl 32054

Raiford Fl 32026
Angie La 70426
Punta Gorda Fl 33955
Milton Fl 32583
Jasper Fl 32052
Madison Fl 32340
Perry Fl 32348
Cross City Fl 32628
Wewahitchka Fl 32465
Crawfordville Fl 32327
Lake City Fl 32025
Sneads Fl 32460

Please pray for:

1. More prisons to respond
2. Our copier to last
3. The hearts of the prisoners to be touched by Jesus!

Translation Update

Just this week the Urdu (Pakistan) translation of Galatians and I & II Thessalonians was put on the website. We have also contracted for the translation of John and Romans.

The Portuguese translation of Romans is almost ready. Hopefully, by the time you get this newsletter it will be on the website. We were contacted by the Brazilian Bible Society about translating and posting all of the commentaries on their website. Please pray God will open this door!

God has also opened the door for the Hungarian translations to continue. The first attempt failed but now we have a new contact. I will tell you more about this person in another section of this newsletter (There are also new musical additions to the website).

I am still trying to find people to help me with Spanish and Chinese. Please pray for this door to open!

Since I wrote you last, a recent graduate of SWBTS has agreed to translate Romans into Vietnamese! It will be ready in four months!

THE WEBSITE

(www.freebiblecommentary.org)

I am writing this on March 14th. As of this day, 100,500 people have visited our Bible study website. In February over 20,000 people visited the site! Many of them are from overseas. Here is a list of the countries and groups that are using it (in order of the amount of hits).

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. US Educational | 12. Netherlands |
| 2. Australia | 13. Philippines |
| 3. Canada | 14. Ghana |
| 4. United Kingdom | 15. Fiji |
| 5. Indonesia | 16. Japan |
| 6. Brazil | 17. Italy |
| 7. Singapore | 18. Romania |
| 8. Malaysia | 19. South Africa |
| 9. US Military | 20. Mexico |
| 10. New Zealand | 21. Slovakia |
| 11. Pakistan | 22. Trinidad & Tobago |

Please pray for God to open the door for the world to know of the availability of this Bible study resource.

New Free Music

In February I was teaching at First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Texas. The Minister of Music at the church is also a Music Professor at Sam Houston State University. He did his doctoral work in Hungarian Choral music. He and his wife have a real heart for the churches in Hungary. So, here is what we have partnered with them to do:

1. Put three CD's online of English music and piano specials (sponsored by FBC, Huntsville to raise money for the Hungarian ministry)
2. Digitalize his choral music to put on line
3. Find a Hungarian translator and publisher for Romans!

Also, Peggy and I were at Fairview Baptist Church in Columbus, Mississippi this winter for a Bible study. We met a lady who has a wonderful voice. BLI has offered to sponsor the production of a CD of her music which will be sold at her church and put on the website free.

My ultimate hope is to email Christian radio stations worldwide to inform them about the free music which can only be gotten from the Bible Study Website!!!

Pastor's Conferences Sponsored by BLI

Last year BLI sent two young pastors (former students at ETBU) to Botswana, South Africa, to hold a pastor's conference with the ultimate goal of starting a Baptist Seminary. Here are their summary reports.

Tim:

November 2007, Bible Lessons International was invited to southern Africa to teach intensive seminary courses in Botswana. God's grace and unending sense of humor extended an undeserved opportunity for me to answer this request. I met Ryan Berryhill in Washington D.C. and together we began our grand adventure. We faced an uncomfortable closeness to the sun, one angry mamba, five cuddly lions, a mildly irritated rhinoceros, and a plague of bugs. Everything about the trip was a constant struggle, except the classroom. We were welcomed by an incredible group of Christian leaders who proved to be eager and able students. What a wonderful time we had exploring the mysteries of God's revelation together. I learned so much from them and from Ryan's teaching, and we were used by God to affect real growth. In our last session, Brother B.J. (speaking on behalf of all the students) thanked us for coming and promised to take this teaching to heart and to the churches. "We will not allow this seed to die! You watch us, you watch Botswana. This teaching will come to fruition." I found it very hard to leave these fine Christian brothers and sisters. I found it very hard to leave Africa. Thank you, Lord, for the great and creative stories you write in and through our lives.

BLI is also sponsoring a pastor's conference in Togo, West Africa in August of this year. I will be teaching Romans and Bible Interpretation. Peggy is going with me, along with a former IMB missionary couple to Togo, Frank and Melaney Dudley. They are now serving at FBC, Harlingen, Texas. Frank is the Mission Pastor and Melaney is the Pastor's secretary. Frank will be teaching (1) Local Church Ministry and (2) The African Church and World Missions. The dates are August 4th – 8th (we will leave July 30th and return on August 10th).

The French translations (official language of Togo) of Romans and John have just been completed (we hope they will be online by the time you get this newsletter). We are going to put them on a CD-Rom, along with all of the English commentaries (OT & NT), and give them to

Ryan:

I would like to thank Bible Lessons International for sending me to teach the pastors conference in Botswana. I taught "Old Testament Survey I" and co-taught "Discipleship and Church Planting" with Tim Walker. Since there is no theological seminary in the country, the pastors there have no place to study and to prepare for the calling God has put on their lives. Consequently, they were most enthusiastic and grateful for the opportunity to dive deeper into God's word through this conference. In every class session, there were "God moments," Spirit-anointed times when everyone in the class knew that He was speaking and taking us all deeper into the truths of the Bible and into a deeper knowledge of Him. At the end of the conference, two of the pastors stood up and told Tim and me on behalf of the others that we had planted a seed, and they committed to water that seed and "spread it all over Botswana." I count it a major joy and privilege of my life to have equipped these servants of God in Botswana and, again, am grateful to Bob and Bible Lessons International for the opportunity and support to go.



Ryan, far left, and Tim, top, 2nd from right with class.

the participants. They are expecting at least 500 pastors. Please pray for this meeting.

BLI sponsored a national to national evangelistic crusade in Botswana from June 19-27, 2007 in Gabarone (the capital). There were five participating churches and ten pastors (from Zimbabwe and Zambia). Over 4,800 people prayed to receive Christ! WOW!

BLI sponsors at least one of these crusades every year through International Commission in Lewisville, Texas. If you ever want to go on an effective evangelistic partnership crusade call (214) 488-2555 and get a list of the crusades involving North Americans. I have done over 30 and they have blessed my life.

EMAILS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

(these emails are printed just as we received them)

If you have a prayer request please email us (bli@biblelessonsintl.com) so that we can pray for you.

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Praise God, your written Commentaries, really help me to learn more about our whole Bibles.

I am Budiman Pakpahan from Indonesia, I am evangelize and a teacher one of seminary at west Kalimantan, Indonesia.

By His Mercy
Budiman Pakpahan
Indonesia

Wow!! What a blessing!! Thank you so much for sending me this site. I am leaving the end of this month for Cameroon and will be taking this blessing with me!!

May God continue to bless you and yours,

Pam

Dear Rev. Bob,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Today I bring you greetings on behalf of my family and the saints here at "Upendo Outreach Ministries." I wish to thank God for the good work he is doing in you and through you to our brothers and sisters in faith. We believe your efforts are not in vain.

I understand that you are the true followers and apostles of Jesus Christ because you are preaching the light of the gospel to reach all over the nations through Free Bible Commentary website. You are not only preaching the gospel but giving literature for evangelism services.

I cannot quantify the extent to which your ministry has blessed me and the people in our church after listening to your teaching/readings through "Internet." It is just too great to measure. People are getting inspired spiritually and above all we have started meeting together every weekend just

to study your teachings through "Free Bible Commentary website."

Your teachings/preaching through "Internet" has generated new strengths in the new converts and in the entire church as well. Your ministry is one of the most wonderful ministry in the world, changing thousands of lives. It has been an Instrument of transformation to the lives of many. We take this opportunity to congratulate and encourage you to continue for your labor in the Lord is never in vain. We thank God for your teachings and the encouraging messages.

I am happy to tell you that Churches in Eldoret town are seeking God with all their hearts! After having heard your teachings from the Internet ministry.

May God bless you, your family and the staff of your ministry.

Yours in His service,
Pastor John
Kenya, Africa

Dr. Utley,

I have attended the session that you led at the Bivocational/Small Church Pastor Conference at Belton for the last two years. Your video lectures and Bible commentary have become my primary source of Bible study/sermon preparation. They have changed the way I do my studies and application of Scripture and I would like to share the experience with some of my congregation.

I would like to show the "You Can Understand the Bible" seminar that I downloaded from your website. May I have your permission to do that and to also make copies of the printed material that goes with the seminar?

Pastor in Texas

Dear Dr. Bob Utley,
Peace and Grace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I understand that you are the true followers and apostles of Jesus Christ because you are preaching the light of the gospel to reach all over the nations through Free Bible Commentary website.

I am an evangelist who have been serving the Lord in the church with teaching and preaching.

In the past we used much of your materials in our ministry and it helped us greatly. God bless you.

Now I am writting this letter hoping that you will provide me some important literature, audio and video cassettes. By doing so you will serve Jesus Christ and his church.

Finally I will pray that may God bless and enlarge you and your ministry.

I wait eagerly your response.

Yours in Christ,
Evangelist, Femedkun
Mekuria
Ethiopia

Dr. Utley,

I'm listening to your free commentary on Leviticus and you

mention at the outset that you have detailed notes and outlines. I'm wanting to know what I need to do to get a copy? I loved your Bible Seminar, I listened to it and I also purchased the N.T. commentaries over a year ago. I'm 52, have pastured a couple small Baptist churches but have never had the opportunity to go to Seminary so all my education is basically coming through the internet. I have taken some extension seminary classes through SWBTS but I don't really like the format. When I found your site I was excited. I love for the Spirit to teach me the Word but I also like to have good resources to compare my findings with and I think yours are among the best I've found.

God bless and Merry Christmas to you and your family.

In Christ,
Jerry

Dr. Bob Utley,

Dear fellow believer,

Warm Greetings! I want that you give me permission that I use your online Bible Study material to teach our Students of Christian Theological Seminary Pakistan.

Rev. Prof. S.A.Christy
President & Principal of,
Christian Theological Seminary Pakistan

Dr. Utley,

I wanted to thank you for providing a NASB CD-Rom to me at the BGCT convention two years ago. I tried to attend as many seminars during that one day in Dallas and gather as many resources as possible to prepare Sunday School lessons. This and the CBF convention as well as the Truett free seminars allow me to "pack my parachute"

for a year of reading and studying. Your CD and Dr. Jim Denison's on-line commentary helped me prepare a difficult (!) lesson from Romans 9-11 to present this Sunday. As a former school teacher, I'm so excited to prepare and present; out of all my academic subjects, I wish I could teach the Bible every week and every day. It's my joy!

Thank you for your selfless work. The fact that you would provide this CD to me, a female, and not charge a semester's fee (because it's an entire seminary

class and years of research) lets me know your heart is truly to share the gospel and not for personal gain or glorification. The resource you provided is such a privilege to have; I will try to invest it well.

Jesus is such a wonderful Lord, I just want so much to share Him in a way others can understand all the Holy Spirit can provide to them personally, without any intercessor except Christ. Your CD mentions this fact over and over. Thank you for directing people to the true source. You are a kind and humble minister.

Appreciatively,
Kim in Texas

Hi, Dr. Utley,

I just had to pass this on along to you. I am so excited and want to share this with you. You made the statement in one of your e-mails to me to the effect that you sometimes wonder if what you are saying or doing is being heard and really making a difference. Well, it is! One day this week, a fairly new friend of mine at the office came in and with tears in her eyes asked me if I knew where she could attend a true Bible study – that she had to do some studying so that she would know how to respond to her young adult son when he questions her about the

I love for the Spirit to teach me the Word but I also like to have good resources to compare my findings with and I think yours are among the best I've found.

Bible and God. I told her about our class and that we are studying Genesis. She began to cry and say, "Oh, my goodness, this is a God-thing." Her son had come in the night before and asked her in a very angry voice why God had allowed Cain to kill Abel and why there was so much killing – that that did not seem to be a very Christian thing

– so how could she justify that to him and it make sense? She told him she really could not explain it, and began to look around the house for books like CASE FOR CHRIST, etc. She said she heard a voice inside her that said, "Look in My Word." I told her about your website, what all I had learned from you, and what all we are learning together in Sunday School. She wrote it all down. We shared our concerns about our children for

a few minutes, then we prayed together. We thanked God for her son's questioning; thanked Him for being far bigger than any question anyone of us can ever have; asked for His blessing on our study; and asked for wisdom in how to respond to our children. As ridiculous and awful as this sounds, I never cease to be amazed that God is who He says He is and does what He says He will do!

Thank you, Dr. Utley. Thank you for obeying God's direction in your life and for what it is doing in ours.

Sincerely,
Marsha in Louisiana

Hello Dr. Bob Utley,

I am glad to hear from you. Yes, it will bless us greatly to get the New Testament for now and we will send as needed to the ministries over in Africa. The need is great in Africa therefore I can't really say how many (Number) CD-Rom you should send. I will say send whatever you are able to send and if the need come for more I will write with that request: Please mail all items to: IGFC-Canada

“As I mentioned to you over the telephone, these are some of the best study helps for teachers of the Bible that I have seen. The commentaries are now available for inmates and staff members to use through our Religious Library.”

Bob-

So you'd be willing to let us offer any of the materials for free in distribution in our Bible Explorer engine? What would need to do to make this happen?

Thanks for contacting us. Let me know what would be the next step.

Many Blessings,
Mike

Dear Dr. Bob:

Thank you very much for send a CD of New Testament commentary. I have forwarded it to the Dean, School of Theology and to our Pastors to circulate to the students and faculty. I give you the email Id of the Dean, School of Theology and the Pastors for your information and future correspondence.

Dr. Roy Injety, Dean, School of
Theology
Spicer Memorial College
India

Thank you very much and wish you God's abundant blessings.

Sincerely yours,
Justus Devadas, Ph D
India

Dear Mr. Utley:

Thank you so much for donating the following books to the Williams Baptist College Library:

1. An Explanation and application of the Historical-Grammatical-Lexical method of Hermeneutics focusing on Authorial Intent
2. Luke the Historian: Acts
3. Luke the Historian: The Gospel of Luke
4. The Gospel According to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter
5. Paul's First Letters: Galations and I & II Thessalonians
6. The Gospel According to Paul: Romans
7. Paul Bound, The Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, then later, Phillippians)

8. Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy
9. Eighth Century Minor Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Jonah and Micah
10. Old Testament Apocalypses: Daniel and Zechariah
11. The Post-Exilic Period: Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther

We had previously received the other NT volumes.

These books will be bound, cataloged and processed into our collection. They will also include a gift plate listing your name as the donor.

Thank you again for your generous gift to our Library. May the Lord richly bless you and your family.

Sincerely,
Director of Library Services
Walnut Ridge, Arkansas

Dear Dr. Utley,

I want to thank you for the shipment of your commentaries to the Religious Services Department at Trumbull Correctional Institution. As I mentioned to you over the telephone, these are some of the best study helps for teachers of the Bible that I have seen. The commentaries are now available for inmates and staff members to use through our Religious Library.

Thank you, again.

In Christ's service,
Chaplain

Dear Bob,

Thanks for contacting our ministry. I am pleased to hear how you have a similar ministry and calling in the Lord, and I congratulate you on your lifelong dedication to teaching God's Word. As I'm sure you will agree, the church today is malnourished and anemic in its understanding of God's Word, and the effect is seen in the recent growth of false teaching within the Church, the lack of appreciation for sound doctrine and a falling away in service and devotion among many of the faithful. Consequently, the Church needs men like yourself to preach the Word in a devoted manner if it hopes to stand against this troubling trend.

As you suggested, I briefly visited your website, and I commend you for the breadth and depth of the resources you offer. I'm sure the Lord is working through your teaching to minister to many people, and I praise Him for your faithfulness to His word. I have passed your URL on

to a few friends and associates, and I'm sure they will find an interest in your resources.,

Thanks again for taking time to visit our website and contact our ministry. May the Lord bless your devotion to His precious word.

Steve (www.versebyverseministry.org)

Dear Rev. Dr. Bob Utley,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus' name. I am an Anglican church of Kenyan clergy currently doing 2 years MA (Biblical Studies) in USA. And the free Bible Commentaries from you sent to me by a friend are a great resource for my study here. After I finish this MA I am planning to do a PhD in New Testament, God willing.

God bless you and your Ministry and family

In Christ Jesus,
Ferdinand Manjewa M'bwangi
Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry
Sherman Street 319
Ambridge, Pennsylvania 15003

Thank you for
your love and
prayers for
Bible Lessons
International!

SPECIAL TOPICS:

(Special Topics like the ones below are included throughout Bob's commentaries)

CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL'S GOD

1. Compassionate (BDB 933) - Exod. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; II Chr. 30:9; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Neh. 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
2. Gracious (BDB 337) - Exod. 34:6; II Chr. 30:9; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Neh. 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
3. Slow to anger (BDB74 CONSTRUCT BDB 60) -Exod. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
4. Abounding in steadfast love (BDB 912 I CONSTRUCT BDB 338) - Exod. 34:6-7; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
5. Faithful (BDB 54) - Exod. 34:6; Ps. 86:15
6. Abundant forgiveness (BDB 699) - Neh. 9:17
7. Did not forsake them (BDB 736 I) - Neh. 9:17,31
8. Repents of evil (BDB 636, KB 688, Niphal PARTICIPLE + BDB 948) - Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
9. The great God (BDB 42, 152) - Neh. 1:5; 9:32
10. Great and terrible (BDB 152, 431) - Neh. 1:5; 4:14; 9:32
11. Keeps covenant (BDB 1036, 136) - Neh. 1:5; 9:32
12. Steadfast love (BDB 338 - Neh. 1:5; 9:32

BOB'S EVANGELICAL BIASES

I must admit to you, the reader, that I am biased at this point. My systematic theology is not Calvinism or Dispensationalism, but it is Great Commission evangelism. I believe God had an eternal plan for the redemption of all mankind (e.g., Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 18; 36:22-39; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29; Rom. 3:9-18,19-20,21-32), all those created in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). The covenants are united in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28-29; Col. 3:11). Jesus is the mystery of God, hidden but now revealed (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13)!

This pre-understanding colors all my interpretations of Scripture (i.e., Jonah). I read all texts through it! It is surely a bias (all interpreters have them!), but I believe it is a Scripturally-informed presupposition.

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