

# **How to Use Your Bible's Supplemental Material**

In addition to the Bible text, there is other valuable information within your Bible that can help you interpret and understand Scripture. At the beginning of most books, or group of books, you will find an introduction. This usually brief section will provide you with information about the authorship of the book, major themes and/or structures contained within the book, and a lot of other helpful information.

Within each book you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. The footnotes provide additional information and valuable insight into the meaning of certain words or phrases in their original languages and/or certain ancient customs (which may have a different meaning in English or to our modern world). The cross-references direct you to other verses in Scripture that are similar, refer to the same thing, quote each other, or are helpful in interpretation. This information is solid exegetical (interpretive) work done by and generally agreed upon by many scholars.

Every time you see an obelisk (†) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding footnote labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. Every time you see an asterisk (\*) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.

Other versions of the Bible may use an asterisk (\*) instead of an obelisk to indicate a corresponding footnote and small letters (a,b,c...) to indicate a corresponding cross-reference. Regardless of the marking, the meaning is the same.

## **Let's practice! First, using a physical Bible:**

- 1.) Read the introduction to the Book of Genesis
- 2.) Who wrote the book of Genesis?
- 3.) What are the major sections of Genesis and where do each of the sections begin and end?
- 4.) What are the major themes of the book of Genesis?
- 5.) Look up Genesis 1:1-2
- 6.) Which verse/s indicate there is a footnote?
- 7.) Which verse/s indicate there is a cross-reference? (list the first 5)

8.) Summarize the information provided for the first footnote given for this set of passages.

9.) Look up the very last cross-referenced passage for verses 1-2. Why do you think this particular passage was cross-referenced?

**Now, use the New American Bible online, located as USCCB.org:**

10.) Read the introduction to the Gospel of Luke (I know...it looks long).

11.) Who wrote Luke's Gospel?

12.) What were some of the likely sources of the Gospel?

13.) When do many scholars believe Luke's Gospel to have been written?

14.) What was the stated purpose of the Gospel?

15.) Who was the main audience of the Gospel?

16.) Look up and read Luke 22:14-20. There is an obelisk marking verse 15. Summarize the information contained in the footnote.

17.) There is an asterisk marking verse 20. Look up the first cross referenced verse. How are this verse and Luke 22:20 similar?