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**How to Study the Bible**

**Class 10: Linking Words**

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*“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore* ***go*** *and* ***make disciples of all nations, baptizing them*** *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and* ***teaching them*** *to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”* Matthew 28:18-20

I just read what is commonly known as the Great Commission.

What is being commanded?

*A: Go, make disciples, baptizing… and teaching them*

Does Jesus give us a reason why we should obey this command?

*A: All authority…*

How do you know which part of the passage is the command and which part is the reason?

*A: The linking word signals a connection between the command and reason*

What is the linking word?

*A: Therefore*

**What are linking words?**

The “therefore” in Mt. 28 is one of example of the tool that we’re going to look at today—which we’ll call the **linking words tool.** The last few weeks we’ve gone through interpretive tools in our personal bible study toolbox.

Identifying linking words and how they work helps us understand the relationship between various.

What is a preposition?

When I say preposition, I merely mean **a statement about something that includes:**

* **a subject, and**
* **a predicate (part of the sentence containing a verb and stating something about the subject)**

For example, the sentence “Dogs bark” is a complete preposition.

 What is the subject? *Dog*

 What is the predicate? *Barks*

What if we expanded the sentence to, “Dogs bark outside my house”?

 What is the subject? *Dogs*

 What is the predicate?

*A: All that follows the verb is the predicate.*

These are simple enough. Many times in Scripture we find whole paragraphs composed of multiple prepositions. Our job is to understand how the prepositions relate to one another.

How do we do that?

Linking words. We look at the linking words between prepositions, which in turn tells us how the prepositions relate to each other.

This is not a new concept, right? Remember when you were young, and your mom said to you,

 **Don’t touch the stove because it will burn you.**

Thankfully, in that situation your mom made it clear.

*Don’t touch the stove*, and *It will burn you* are not separate statements, or prepositions. They’re connected by the word *because.*

 Don’t touch the stove *because* it will burn you.

*Because* links the two prepositions together and tells us that being burned is the reason or grounds for *why* you should not touch the stove.

Linking words can be used a number of ways:

* Give examples… *for instance*
* Add information… *Furthermore*
* Summarize… *In short*
* Sequence/show a progression of ideas… *Firstly, secondly,… finally*
* Give a reason… *Because*
* Give a result or purpose… *So that*
* Contrast ideas… *However*
* Distinguish… *And*

Today, we’ll highlight 4 linking words, starting with:

1. **For**: Let’s start with **“for,”** looking at the examples in your handout.

**Example 1:** 2 Chron. 20:21—*“Give thanks to the Lord, FOR his love endures forever.”*

The linking word **for** tells us the reason/grounds for why the command is given.

*Give thanks to the Lord…*

For what reason?

***FOR* his love endures forever.**

 “For” has the same linking function as words like

“because” and “since.”

**Example 2:** 1 Cor. 7:9—*“If they do not have self-control, let them marry, FOR it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”*

 **Questions:**

* For those who do not have self control, what should they do? *Marry*
* And what is the reason they should marry? *FOR it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

**Example 3:** Phil. 1:18-19—“*Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, FOR I know that through you prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.”*

**Questions:**

* What does Paul say that he will do? *Continue to rejoice*
* And what’s the reason Paul says he’ll continue to rejoice, despite being in chains? *He will ultimately be delivered—the FOR helps us see the link.*

**Example 4:** Heb. 10:23—*“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, FOR he who is promised is faithful.”*

**Questions:**

* What are we to do? *Hold unswervingly to our hope*
* Why (on what grounds) are we to do it? *He who promised is faithful*
1. **Therefore:** Like the word FOR, the word THEREFORE also provides much insight into the flow of thought between two different prepositions. But if FOR points from right to left

THEREFORE points from left to right. Both are linking words, but THEREFORE indicates a particular consequence of a preceding statement.

The example that we had just looked at in Hebrews 10 could be flipped around. *“He who is promised is faithful, THEREFORE let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.”*

Words and phrases like “Consequently” and “For this reason” function similarly.

 **Example 1:** READPhil. 2:5-11

 So… what is the *therefore* (v.9)there for?

**Questions:**

* What did God the Father do? *Exalt Jesus to the highest place.*
* Why did he do it? *Because he obeyed the Father, becoming a man, and dying on the cross for a sinful people to repent and believe.*

**Example 2 (FOR and THEREFORE):**

Hebrews 4:14-15—*“****Therefore****, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.* ***For*** *we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”*

1. **If:** IF statements can be understood one of two ways:
2. Conditional Statements

 **Example 1:** READ Deut. 28:13, 15

**Questions:**

* What conditions are being linked by the word IF? *These verses lay down an ultimatum for Israel. God’s blessing for them is conditional upon their keeping the terms of His covenant. The blessings are not automatic and can be lost IF the people turn away from Him—which they do turn away from Him, again and again.*
* What is the your response to this passage as one who is now in Christ? Praise God that the covenant that He made with me was not dependant on my righteousness, but Jesus Christ’s!
1. Because Statements: If statements can also be used in a way similar to the because statement.

 **Example 2:** READ 2 Peter 2:4-9

**Questions:**

* How is Peter using IF here as a because statement? *Peter is not suggesting that there’s any doubt whether these things happened. Rather, he’s using IF in a way that’s similar to because, saying that God can be relied upon for rescuing the righteous in Christ from the punishment of the wicked outside of Christ.*
1. **So that:** So that statements can also be understood two ways.

 They can tell us the PURPOSE behind something…

**Example 1:** Eph. 3:16-17—*“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with the power through his Spirit in your inner being SO THAT Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”*

Or, they can introduce the *result* of something.

**Example 2:** Luke 12:1—*“Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak.”*

**Activity:** Titus 2:1-15—pulling it all together, let’s look at Titus 2, and I want you to underline the linking words.

 READ

 **Questions**:

* There are 3 SO THAT’s in our passage (v. 5, 8, 10).
* Why does Paul tell us to live godly lives?
* What is the significance of v.4 in verse 11? Why is the linkage of 1-10 (commands) and 11-14 (grounds) all that important? (Grace motivated obedience)

**Any Questions?**

**Conclusion:** In conclusion—did you catch that linking word?—I hope that you are able to see how linking words act as interpretive queues for our personal bible study, helping us follow the authors argument and, ultimately, see what the Lord has for us in a given passage. Let’s pray.