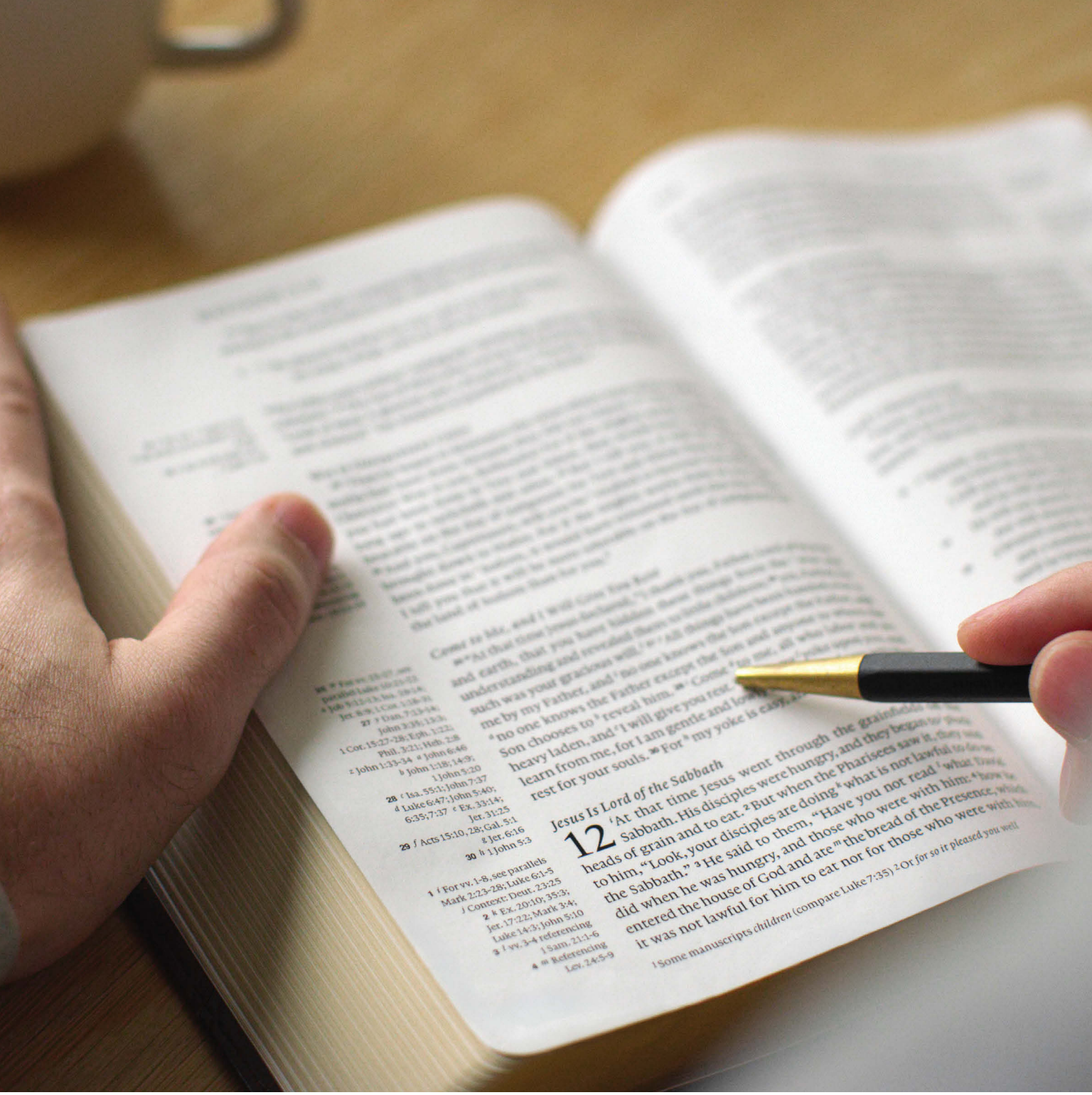


ESV Cross-Reference System

RELEASING FALL 2026



The New ESV Cross-Reference System

In 2026, Crossway is introducing a new cross-reference system for the ESV Bible. Developed by an experienced team of original language scholars and technologists, it is designed to be the most carefully curated and helpful cross-reference system available.

The new cross-reference system introduces five unique types of references, helping readers distinguish between different kinds of connections within Scripture. These unique reference types—including parallel passages, citations, direct references, related concepts, and background context—are clearly indicated on the page. As a result, readers are equipped to understand both the meaning of individual passages and the broader unity of Scripture.

Methodology

The new system was built from the ground up, with a development process spanning three years. Using custom software tools and deep language knowledge, cross-references were curated from a wide range of data sources before being carefully reviewed and categorized. The team was led by Drayton Benner, a Google software engineer whose background includes a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago, as well as extensive experience in scientific and Bible software development.

16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children
sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

17 "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

18 For John came neither *n* eating nor *o* drinking, and they say, *p* 'He has
a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say,
'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a *q* friend of tax collectors
and sinners!' *r* Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."[1]

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

20 *s* Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty
works had been done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you,
Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in
you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented
long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be *t* more
bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.
23 And you, Capernaum, will you be *u* exalted to heaven? You will be
brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had
been done in *v* Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But
I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for
the land of Sodom than for you."

Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest

25 *w* At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven
and earth, that you have hidden these things from the *x* wise and
understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for
such was your gracious will.[2] 27 *y* All things have been handed over to
me by my Father, and *z* no one knows the Son except the Father, and
a no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the
Son chooses to *b* reveal him. 28 *c* Come *d* to me, all who labor and are
heavy laden, and *e* I will give you rest. 29 Take my *f* yoke upon you, and
learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will *g* find
rest for your souls. 30 For *h* my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 *i* At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the
Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to *j* pluck
heads of grain and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said
to him, "Look, your disciples are doing *k* what is not lawful to do on
the Sabbath." 3 He said to them, "Have you not read *l* what David
did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: 4 how he
entered the house of God and ate *m* the bread of the Presence, which
it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him,

[1] Some manuscripts *children* (compare Luke 7:35) [2] Or *for so it pleased you well*

18 *n* ch. 3:4 *o* Luke 1:15
p ch. 9:34; 12:24; John 7:20; 8:48
19 *q* ch. 9:10; Luke 15:1
r Luke 7:35

20 *s* For vv. 20-24, see parallel Luke 10:13-16

22 *t* Ezek. 16:46-58; Matt. 10:15; 11:24; Luke 10:12
23 *u* Ps. 139:8; Isa. 14:13-15
v Referencing Gen. 19:23-29

25 *w* For vv. 25-27, see parallel Luke 10:21-22
x Job 5:12-13; Isa. 29:14; Jer. 8:9; 1 Cor. 1:18-31
27 *y* Dan. 7:13-14; John 3:35; 13:3; 1 Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 2:8
z John 1:33-34 *a* John 6:46
b John 1:18; 14:9; 1 John 5:20
28 *c* Isa. 55:1; John 7:37
d Luke 6:47; John 5:40; 6:35; 7:37 *e* Ex. 33:14; Jer. 31:25
29 *f* Acts 15:10, 28; Gal. 5:1
g Jer. 6:16
30 *h* 1 John 5:3

1 *i* For vv. 1-8, see parallels Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5
j Context: Deut. 23:25
2 *k* Ex. 20:10; 35:3; Jer. 17:22; Mark 3:4; Luke 14:3; John 5:10
3 *l* vv. 3-4 referencing 1 Sam. 21:1-6
4 *m* Referencing Lev. 24:5-9

RELATED CONCEPTS

Reference contains similar language, imagery, or themes. This is the most common type of cross-reference.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Reference supplies historical, literary, or theological context that informs the text.

but only for the priests? 5 Or have you not read in the Law *n* how on
the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are
guiltless? 6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.
7 And if you had known what this means, *o* 'I desire *p* mercy, and not
sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son
of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

A Man with a Withered Hand

9 *q* He went on from there and entered their synagogue. 10 And a man
was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, *r* "Is it lawful to
heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse him. 11 He said to
them, "Which one of you who *s* has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the
Sabbath, will not take hold of it and *t* lift it out? 12 Of *u* how much more
value is a man *v* than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."
13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man
stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. 14 But the
Pharisees went out and conspired against him, *w* how to destroy him.

God's Chosen Servant

15 Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed
him, and he healed them all 16 and ordered them not to make him
known. 17 This was *x* to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

18 *y* "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
19 He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
20 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;
21 and *z* in his name the Gentiles will hope."

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

22 *a* Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was
brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.
23 And all the people were *b* amazed, and said, *c* "Can this be the *d* Son
of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, *e* "It is only by
f Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."
25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided
against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself
will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against him-
self. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons
by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they

5 *n* Referencing Num. 28:9-10

7 *o* Cited from Hos. 6:6
p 1 Sam. 15:22; Prov. 21:3; Mic. 6:6-8; Mark 12:33; Heb. 10:5-10

9 *q* For vv. 9-14, see parallels Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11
10 *r* Luke 14:3
11 *s* Luke 13:15; 14:5
t Ex. 23:5; Deut. 22:4
12 *u* ch. 6:26, 30; 7:11; 10:25; John 7:23
v ch. 6:26; 10:31

14 *w* ch. 27:1; Mark 11:18; Luke 19:47; John 5:18

17 *x* ch. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9
18 *y* vv. 18-21 cited from Isa. 42:1-4

21 *z* Isa. 11:10; Rom. 15:12

22 *a* For vv. 22-32, see parallels Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:14-23
23 *b* ch. 9:33; 15:31; Mark 7:37 *c* John 4:29
d 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:3-4, 19-37; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Matt. 1:1
24 *e* ch. 9:34; Luke 7:33; John 7:20; 8:48
f 2 Kings 1:2; Matt. 10:25

DIRECT REFERENCE

Reference is referred to, but not directly quoted, by the author of the text.

CITATION

Reference is directly quoted in the text.

PARALLEL PASSAGES

Reference describes the same Biblical event.

Cross-Reference Examples

RELATED CONCEPTS

Text A and Text B contain similar language, imagery, or themes.

A *Matthew 11:19*

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

B *Matthew 9:10*

"And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples."

PARALLEL PASSAGES

Text A and Text B both describe the same event.

A *Matthew 12:22*

"Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, 'Can this be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.' Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?'"

B *Luke 11:14–18*

"Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,' while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?'"

CITATION

Text A is a direct quotation of Text B.

A *Matthew 12:18*

"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles."

B *Isaiah 42:1*

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations."

DIRECT REFERENCE

Text A refers to text B, but does not directly quote it.

A *Matthew 12:5*

"Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?"

B *Numbers 28:9–10*

"On the Sabbath day, two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering: this is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering."

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Text A assumes knowledge of historical, literary, or theological context. Text B supplies this context.

A *Matthew 12:1*

"At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat."

B *Deuteronomy 23:25*

"If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain."

NEW CROSS-REFERENCE ESV BIBLES

Personal Size Reference Bible	Fall 2026
Heirloom Bible, Scriptura Sacra: Personal Size Reference Edition	Fall 2026
Large Print Thinline Reference Bible	Fall 2026
Heirloom Bible, Gratia: Large Print Thinline Reference Edition	Fall 2026
Wide Margin Reference Bible	Fall 2026
Large Print Center Column Reference Bible	Fall 2027
Giant Print End-of-Verse Reference Bible	Fall 2027
Single Column Reference Bible, Journaling Edition	Fall 2027

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