

Cross-Referencing

One important part of scripture study is seeing how the passage or passages we are studying relate to other passages of scripture. Marking these connections is known as cross-referencing, a technique familiar to many students of the scriptures. For some people, cross-referencing is a primary scripture study tool. Methods vary from the most simple, such as penciled notes in the margins, to elaborate, color-coded schemes. However we do it, we cross-reference to see how what we read in one place is related to teachings elsewhere in the scriptures.

Cross-references can be excellent study aids. Sometimes the writings of one prophet clarify a doctrine or teaching we may not understand in a passage written by another prophet. Sometimes a cross-reference adds depth to our understanding by supplying additional information. Cross-references often show that the prophets have taught the same gospel from the beginning. If we are preparing a talk, writing a paper, or trying to understand a particular doctrine or topic, cross-referencing can often help clarify an important concept.

Like any tool, however, cross-references can cause problems if they are not properly used. Because cross-references often connect scriptures differently than did the authors of the scriptures, relying too heavily on cross-references can tempt us to see the scriptures as disjointed pieces of information rather than as whole sermons, stories, and hymns. Allowing the scriptures to keep their integrity is important. We must be careful not to fragment them into isolated bits of information or mere aphorisms to put on the bathroom mirror or refrigerator. The prophets wrote sermons, poems, histories, and doctrinal dissertations. Each of these mediums employs language differently. If, in our cross-referencing, we overlook the unity and integrity of the scriptures, we may also overlook many precious teachings.

Speaking of scripture interpretation, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?”¹ Brigham Young said, “Do you read the Scriptures, my brethren and sisters, as though you were writing them a thousand, two thousand, or five thousand years ago? Do you read them as though you stood in the place of the men who wrote them? If you do not feel thus, it is your privilege to do so, that you may be as familiar with the spirit and meaning of the written word of God as you are with your daily walk and conversation, or as you are with your workmen or with your households.”² This suggests to me that we can learn more from a scripture if we understand it in the context in which it was given. Cross-referencing can—but need not—distort our understanding of the scriptures. The scriptures are not a poorly written handbook that we make clear with our cross-referencing.

The better we understand the scripture we are studying, the better we can make cross-references. Cross-references do not usually help us understand particular passages of scripture; rather, understanding a passage of scripture helps us see how it may be connected to another passage or how ideas and doctrines may be connected. Thus I think that making simple cross-references is valuable and even necessary, but I also think that cross-referencing should be one of the last steps in scripture study rather than the first. There is, however, an exception to that rule.

Glancing Back

When the prophets and others write and speak about the gospel, they do so from their familiarity with the scriptures, and they often presume the same familiarity in their audiences. To make their points, they frequently use words and phrases from the scriptures as a kind of shorthand. A writer can refer to an entire doctrinal

discussion by mentioning one word or phrase from the scriptures. Prophets can allude to a related and important passage of scripture by using a few snippets from it.

Though today we also connect what we say to the scriptures by allusion or by using one or two key words, this practice was more common among ancient writers. We use footnotes, parenthetical references, and other systems to tell audiences that we are referring to the scriptures, but anciently there were no such systems. When ancient scripture writers wanted to introduce a quotation from scripture, they would often do so using a phrase similar to *it is written*. They did not usually give a more extensive reference than that. Presumably they thought that their audience would know the scriptures well enough to recall the passage they were quoting. In Romans 3, for example, Paul says:

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:9–18)

In these verses, Paul quotes from scriptures familiar to his audience: from Psalms 5:9; 10:7; 14:1–3; 53:1–3; 140:3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; and Isaiah 59:7–8. Paul does not quote these scriptures in chronological order, nor does he quote from the version of the Old Testament from which the KJV was made. Thus the wording differs somewhat, but it is apparent that he is quoting them.

Sometimes writers of scripture use words or phrases that a thoughtful audience familiar with the scriptures can connect to other scriptures. We do much the same thing when we use “Word of Wisdom” as a title for section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Suppose I were to use this sentence in a sacrament meeting talk: “The Word of Wisdom is not only a health law, it is also a spiritual law.” Most Latter-day Saints would understand me immediately, but those unfamiliar with LDS scriptures would not. Those familiar with the scriptures may not only recognize this as the title of section 89, they may also recognize that this phrase is not unique to Doctrine and Covenants 89. It occurs in 1 Corinthians, Moroni 10, and Doctrine and Covenants 46. The Prophet was familiar with all these scriptures when he received the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 89.

For to one is given by the Spirit the *word of wisdom*; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12:8–11)

For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the *word of wisdom*; And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; And to another, exceedingly great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles; And again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things; And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits; And again, to another, all kinds of tongues; And again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues. And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will. (Moroni 10:9–17)

And again, verily I say unto you, to some is given, by the Spirit of God, the *word of wisdom*. To another is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge. And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed; And to others it is given to have faith to heal. And again, to some is given the working of miracles; And to others it is given to prophesy; And to others the discerning of spirits. And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues; And to another is given the interpretation of tongues. And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God. (D&C 46:17–26)

Each of the previous scriptures was part of the background of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he received the revelation that became Doctrine and Covenants 89. Though none of them uses the phrase *word of wisdom* to talk about health, each mentions it as a gift of the Spirit. Moroni and 1 Corinthians and section 46 do not refer to Doctrine and Covenants 89, but the phrase *word of wisdom* may connect section 89 to those three scriptures. The more familiar we are with the scriptures, the more likely it is that we will recognize such connections.

Noticing the phrase *word of wisdom* in those scriptures and thinking about the gifts of the spirit and their connection to health laws may give added insight into section 89. It may be helpful to look more closely at the closing verses (18–21) of that section.

The Prophet himself may not have noticed the connections between the earlier scriptures and Doctrine and Covenants 89; he may not have been consciously aware of them as he received and recorded the revelation. However, because we believe that what we have in section 89 is revelation, we must assume that the use of the phrase *word of wisdom* is not accidental. Those familiar with the scriptures may use words and phrases from other scriptures unconsciously but meaningfully. As we study, it is helpful to take conscious account of as many of these connections as possible. We do that by what I call glancing back, or looking in the scriptures that were available to the prophet who wrote the verses we are reading to see what kinds of resonances and overtones are in the language he uses.

As we glance back for the phrase *word of wisdom* in the closing verses of section 89, we may also notice that they include other phrases from previous scriptures, such as *keep and do these sayings*. A variation of this phrase occurs in Deuteronomy 5:1; 7:12; and 26:16, and these references may shed light on section 89. Similarly, variations of the phrase *walking in obedience* appear in 1 Kings 3:3; Isaiah 57:2; Luke 1:6; Acts 9:31; 2 John 1:4; Mosiah 23:14; and 26:38. The phrase *health in their navel and marrow to their bones* appears in Proverbs 3:8. Variations of the latter part of this phrase occur in Job 21:24; Psalm 63:5; and Isaiah 25:6. The phrase *shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint* appears in only one previous place: Isaiah 40:31. There it describes those who serve the Lord:

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they *shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*. (Isaiah 40:28–31)

By glancing back, we can see that the scriptural language of section 89 suggests that the Word of Wisdom is not only a health law, but also a commandment, a matter of the gifts of the Spirit, and part of our service to the Lord. Such insights could provide ideas to meditate on and possible topics for sacrament meeting talks and lessons in Sunday School, Relief Society, priesthood, and family home evening.

Glancing back, then, is the process of finding out where important words and phrases in the scripture we are studying occurred in the scriptural works that were available to the person who wrote the passage. This may help us see what connections to other scriptures and scriptural ideas the writer might have made. Glancing back can help us better understand the background of the passage we are reading, and it may help us discover insights we would otherwise have overlooked. Sometimes it can help us understand the meaning of particular words and phrases. Other times it may help us see doctrinal connections or add depth to our understanding.

Glancing back requires some knowledge of the history of the scriptures, but it does not have to be extensive. For example, when reading King Benjamin’s address in Mosiah, it is helpful to know that besides whatever other scriptures were available, King Benjamin was familiar with the Old Testament through at least Isaiah and perhaps Jeremiah, and also with the Book of Mormon through Omni. Similarly, when reading the New Testament, we must remember that all the Old Testament was available to New Testament writers, but the Book of Mormon was not. It may also be helpful to look in the Bible Dictionary for the chronology of the books and letters of the New Testament, an effort that may reveal where various ideas and phrases originate. It would probably also be helpful to make a comparative chronology to see, for example, how the books of the Bible and the Book of Mormon line up on a time line that includes both.

Though most of the scriptures are arranged in roughly chronological order, the New Testament is not. Following is my guess at the chronological order of the books of the New Testament. Because it is only a guess based on rather informal research, it should be used only as a guide.

Possible Dates of the Books of the New Testament

New Testament Book	Date I Think Likely	Other Dates Suggested by Scholars
Matthew	55–60	70–80, 80–85
Mark	60–65	65–70
Luke/Acts	55–60	80–85, 85–90
John	70–80	90–100, 100–110
Romans	56–60	
1 Corinthians	54	
2 Corinthians	56	
Galatians	56	
Ephesians	after 70	90–100
Philippians	62	
Colossians	60–65	
1 Thessalonians	50	
2 Thessalonians	51	
1, 2 Timothy	65	90–140
Titus	55–65	50–60, 70–100, 100–130
Philemon	61–62	
Hebrews	69	95
James	before 60–62	80–100
1 Peter	64–65	95, 112

2 Peter	100–110	150
1–3 John	80–90	100–110
Jude	85–95	125
Revelation	90–95	95

Put in chronological order according to my guesses, the list of New Testament books (with approximate dates) would look something like this:

1, 2 Thessalonians (50–51) 1, 2 Corinthians (54–56) Matthew (55–60) and Luke/Acts (55–60) Titus (55–65) Galatians (56) Romans (56–60) James (before 60–62) Mark (60–65) and Colossians (60–65) Philemon (61–62) Philippians (62) 1 Peter (64–65) 1, 2 Timothy (65) Hebrews (69) Ephesians (after 70) John (70–80) 1–3 John (80–90) Jude (85–95) Revelation (90–95) 2 Peter (100–110)

Note that contrary to my estimations, most non-LDS scholars believe that the book of Mark was the first Gospel written, though not the first New Testament document.

Glancing Back for Doctrine and Covenants 4

This section gives an example of what I call glancing back, in other words, finding out how prophets before Joseph Smith used the words and phrases of Doctrine and Covenants 4. To show how to glance back, I have written out the scriptures I read when glancing back for Doctrine and Covenants 4. This list includes every previous combination I could find of *heart*, *might*, *mind*, and *strength* and *faith*, *virtue*, *knowledge*, *temperance*, etc., words from verses 4 and 6, respectively. I have also created lists of previous scriptures for various combinations of some of these key words. To make these lists, I used the electronic program WordCruncher™, a commercial version of the electronic scripture search available from the church. A person could use any electronic index to the scriptures to make similar lists. Many are available, and some are quite sophisticated.

On the basis of my glancing back, I have offered a definition of the phrase *heart, might, mind and strength*. That definition encapsulates what I learned by doing this work, but the definition is not nearly as important to my scripture study as was the work itself. Looking at the scriptures that used the same language and thinking about their relation to Doctrine and Covenants 4 gave me insights that the provisional definition I offer cannot capture.

Though I do not go through the whole process of glancing back for *desires*, *faith* and *hope*, *charity* and *love*, and *faith*, *virtue*, *knowledge*, etc., and then come to a conclusion about what these terms mean, I do provide the references that could be used to do so. The example of glancing back to understand the phrase *heart, might, mind and strength* is sufficient to show what can be learned by glancing back.

HEART AND MIGHT

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy *might*.
(Deuteronomy 6:5)

And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his *heart*, and with all his soul, and with all his *might*, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him. (2

HEART AND MIND

And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling *heart*, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of *mind*. (Deuteronomy 28:65)

And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine *heart* and in my *mind*: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. (1 Samuel 2:35)

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect *heart* and with a willing *mind*: for the Lord searcheth all *hearts*, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. (1 Chronicles 28:9)

But when his *heart* was lifted up, and his *mind* hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. (Daniel 5:20)

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy *mind*. (Matthew 22:37)

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy *mind*, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy *mind*; and thy neighbour as thyself. (Luke 10:27)

And now that my soul might have joy in you, and that my *heart* might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave, arise from the dust, my sons, and be men, and be determined in one *mind* and in one *heart*, united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity. (2 Nephi 1:21)

But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of *heart*, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of *mind*, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage. (Mosiah 7:33)

Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of *heart*, and blindness of *mind*, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken *heart* and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel. (Ether 4:15)

HEART AND STRENGTH

He is wise in *heart*, and mighty in *strength*: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? (Job 9:4)

My *heart* panteth, my *strength* faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. (Psalm 38:10)

My flesh and my *heart* faileth: but God is the *strength* of my *heart*, and my portion for ever. (Psalm 73:26)

Blessed is the man whose *strength* is in thee; in whose *heart* are the ways of them. (Psalm 84:5)

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy *strength*: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

And to love him with all the *heart*, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the *strength*, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (Mark 12:33)

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy *strength*, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (Luke 10:27)

DEFINITION: HEART, MIGHT, MIND AND STRENGTH

In many cases the words *heart*, *might*, *mind*, and *strength* are used in parallel constructions, and it thus seems that they are often synonyms. (In fact, the phrase seems to contain parallels: *heart* to *mind* and, the most obvious, *might* to *strength*.) I assume that they are synonyms in Doctrine and Covenants 4. The revelation appears to use these four words for emphasis.

The phrase *heart, might, mind and strength* reminds me of Deuteronomy 6:5, 2 Kings 23:25, Matthew 22:37 (and Mark 12:30, which is identical), and Luke 10:27. It is most similar to Luke 10:27: "With all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." The difference is that Luke uses *soul* where the Doctrine and Covenants uses *might*, and the Doctrine and Covenants transposes the words *mind* and *strength* from their order in Luke. Perhaps these changes are to create the parallelism discussed above. For *heart, might, mind, and strength* to be synonyms, they must refer to something like the person as a whole.

DESIRES

Psalms 37:4; 140:8; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Nephi 2:16; 13:8; Enos 1:12; Mosiah 11:2; 16:12; 18:28; 21:6, 13; 29:38; Alma 7:18; 9:20; 18:35; 20:24; 21:22; 22:34; 23:3; 27:3; 29:4, 5; 30:27, 28; 35:5; 41:3, 5; 43:9; 44:6; 46:32; 47:20; 49:15; 55:12, 20, 26; 60:9, 27; 62:28; Ether 3:2; 7:22

FAITH AND HOPE

Romans 5:2; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 2 Corinthians 10:15; Galatians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:21; Jacob 4:6; Alma 7:24; 13:29; 22:16; 25:16; 32:21; 58:11; Ether 12:4, 9, 28; Moroni 7:1, 40-42

CHARITY AND LOVE

Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have *charity*, which *charity* is *love*. And except they should have *charity* they were nothing. Wherefore, if they should have *charity* they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish. (2 Nephi 26:30)

And now I know that this *love* which thou hast had for the children of men is *charity*; wherefore, except men shall have *charity* they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father. (Ether 12:34)

But *charity* is the pure *love* of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. (Moroni 7:47)

And I am filled with *charity*, which is everlasting *love*; wherefore, all children are alike unto me; wherefore, I *love* little children with a perfect *love*; and they are all alike and partakers of salvation. (Moroni 8:17)

FAITH, VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE, TEMPERANCE

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the *knowledge* of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the *knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and *virtue*: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your *faith virtue*; and to *virtue knowledge*; and to *knowledge temperance*; and to *temperance* patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:2–11)

Glancing Back for John 1:1–5, 10–12, 14, and 16

While reading a Bible commentary, I discovered that some scholars think that John 1:1–5, 10–12, 14, and 16 may have been part of an early Christian hymn. That made me think I would like to study this hymn more closely.

Following is a compilation of some of what I learned by glancing back for these verses. Others thinking about the same verses will probably come to very different conclusions, which is good. The following notes are not a definitive account of what these verses mean but a synthesis of what I learned from them. Other people are likely to learn things I did not, and when I return to these verses, I am likely to learn something different.

I have written out the results of my work to show what I did in my study. However, except for something like this book, I would probably never write out my glancing-back work in so much detail. This merely shows what I did; it is not necessary to create such lengthy documents.

I have grouped the verses into what I consider to be probable stanzas, assuming that this is an early hymn.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. (1–2)

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (3–5)

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (10-12)

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (14)

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. (16)

Following are discussions of several key words in these verses, namely, *beginning*, *word*, *light*, *world*, *his own*, *glory* and *grace*. In the definitions that follow, I have marked those that seem to me to be likely with an exclamation point (!) and those that seem still possible but somewhat less likely with a question mark .

BEGINNING

! The beginning of a particular set of events

So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the *beginning* of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. (Judges 7:19)

Now ye Philippians know also, that in the *beginning* of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. (Philippians 4:15)

! The beginning of the world

In the *beginning* God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

And, Thou, Lord, in the *beginning* hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. (Hebrews 1:10)

Both meanings seem appropriate, but the second, “the beginning of the world,” seems most relevant to the discussion, given the context and the later discussion of the creation (see verse 3).

WORD

! Command

And the children of Israel did according to the *word* of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. (Exodus 12:35)

Because he hath despised the *word* of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him. (Numbers 15:31)

And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the *word* of God, and do it. (Luke 8:21)

? Prophecy

For when David was up in the morning, the *word* of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer. (2 Samuel 24:11)

Then came the *word* of the Lord to Isaiah. (Isaiah 38:4)

For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the *word* that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the *word*, and will perform it, saith the Lord God. (Ezekiel 12:25)

! The act of creation

By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Psalm 33:6)

For the *word* of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth. (Psalm 33:4)

! The gospel

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the *word*, and anon with joy receiveth it. (Matthew 13:20)

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the *word* of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19)

? The church

And the *word* of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

But the *word* of God grew and multiplied. (Acts 12:24)

The most obvious meaning of "the Word" seems to be Christ, but that meaning probably comes mostly from this verse. Thus the question is, what other meanings does it have here? Because the reference to the creation is clear in both verses 1 and 3, that meaning seems inescapable. Because Christ is the origin of the commands, the reference to command also seems important. And because he is the good news, the gospel, that reference also seems intended. Perhaps the reference to revelation and prophecy is important because Christ is the Revealer as well as that to which all revelation points. I doubt that the reference to the church is important here.

LIGHT

? Physical light

And God said, Let there be *light*: and there was *light*. (Genesis 1:3)

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them *light*; to go by day and night. (Exodus 13:21)

! The good life

The Jews had *light*, and gladness, and joy, and honour. (Esther 8:16)

Wherefore is *light* given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul. (Job 3:20)

! The commandments

They are of those that rebel against the *light*; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. (Job 24:13)

! God's saving power

The Lord is my *light* and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

The use of the word *light* in Job 24:13 made me consider whether the word *light* in John 1:4–5 might be associated with a command or commandment, as *word* is in John 1:1. In turn, that made me think that there might be a connection between *light* and the other two possible meanings of *word*, namely, “creation” and “gospel.” Light was the first thing created (see Genesis 1:3) and figures prominently in the rest of the creation story, and the scriptures regularly associate light with the gospel (see 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 1:10; D&C 10:62; 45:28; 138:30). We are reborn, or recreated, when we are saved, and light may thus refer to saving power; Christ is the saving power of the world. The gospel is the good news regarding Christ, so that too seems intended.

WORLD

! The physical world

And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the *world* were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. (2 Samuel 22:16)

! The people who live on the earth

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the *world* stand in awe of him. (Psalm 33:8)

Before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the *world* with righteousness, and the people with his truth. (Psalm 96:13)

? A particular time period, a reign (time on this earth, time in the next kingdom)

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this *world*, neither in the *world* to come. (Matthew 12:32)

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the *world* to come. (Hebrews 6:5)

? Evil

And the *world* passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:17)

Though *world* can mean a variety of things, the first two of the previous four meanings seem most likely in these verses. The first (the physical world) is likely because these verses speak of Christ as the Creator, and the second (the inhabitants of the world) is likely because the verses speak of him as a Savior.

HIS OWN

! What belongs to someone (emphatic)

Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of *his own* cistern. (Isaiah 36:16)

This seems to me to be the only possible meaning.

GLORY

! Something that can be seen, usually light; it indicates power and high station

And in the morning, then ye shall see the *glory* of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? (Exodus 16:7)

And the sight of the *glory* of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. (Exodus 24:17)

And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his *glory* was not arrayed like one of these. (Matthew 6:29)

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the *glory* of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. (Luke 2:9)

Again, this seems to me to be the only possible meaning. I was surprised that *glory* is almost always conceived quite physically; it is something one can see. I had thought of it more abstractly. This means I may have to rethink the definition of *light*. Physical light may also be an important part of the meaning of *glory* in these verses.

GRACE

! Almost always used in the phrase *grace in the sight of* ——— or *grace in the eyes of* ———. It most often means “mercy.”

But Noah found *grace* in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:8)

Behold now, thy servant hath found *grace* in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.

(Genesis 19:19)

Grace is another word that I had generally thought about as an abstraction. It surprised—and helped—me to see that it can mean “mercy.”

Though the examples of glancing back for Doctrine and Covenants 4 and John 1 may seem tedious, it is important to remember that they represent only a written version of what would usually happen in my head as I studied. However, they also show the depth to which it is possible to go just by considering the words of a passage of scripture. These examples should make it clear that glancing back is a useful tool. It can help us think more carefully about scripture by helping us study the scriptural context in which the passage was written and the nuances of meaning that the words of the passage acquire from that context.

Glancing Forward

Glancing forward is a helpful and often overlooked way of cross-referencing. As the name suggests, glancing forward means finding out how later prophets used the words or phrases of the passage you are studying. This knowledge can help us learn how they understood the scriptures we are reading.

Concordances

The most important tool for glancing in either direction, as well as for other methods of cross-referencing, is a concordance. A concordance is an alphabetical index of the words used in a book or set of books. There is a variety of concordances, each with its own use. Electronic concordances are especially useful for looking up phrases, because we cannot easily look up phrases with a printed concordance. However, electronic concordances do not yet replace printed ones. Not everyone has a computer, and some who do find them difficult to use. In addition, not all the resources of printed concordances are presently available for use on the computer. For example, the KJV translators often translated the same Hebrew or Greek word in more than one way. That is common in any good translation, but it makes some connections more obscure than they were to the original writers and readers. A few electronic concordances allow you to see the different ways that the same words were translated, but most do not.

Any Greek concordance shows that the word translated “judgment” in Romans 2:2 is also translated “damnation” (e.g., Romans 3:13), “condemnation” (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:39), and “avenged” (Revelation 18:20).³ A concordance allows us to see that this word and the one translated “damnation” in Romans 3:8 are the same. Some computer programs can do more complex searches, but they are expensive.

Though some electronic concordances allow a person to find all the ways that a Hebrew or a Greek word has been translated into English, most people use printed Hebrew and Greek concordances to do this seemingly daunting work. Few Latter-day Saints are proficient in Hebrew or Greek, but, luckily, we can search Hebrew and Greek concordances even if we do not read a letter of either language. Learning the Greek and Hebrew alphabets is relatively easy and quite useful. However, the chapter titled “Doing Bible Research without Knowing Hebrew or Greek” explains how to work in these concordances without learning the alphabets.

Notes

1. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 5:261.
2. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:333.
3. One good concordance is George V. Wigram, *The New Englishman's Greek Concordance and Lexicon*, ed. Jay P. Green (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1982), s.v. "**κρίμα**" (Strong's number 2917).