

John 5:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Analysis

'Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.' This can be read as command ('Search the scriptures') or statement ('You search the scriptures'). Either way, the irony is sharp: those who diligently study Scripture looking for life miss the One Scripture testifies about. The Scriptures point to Christ; missing Him while reading them misses their purpose. Bible study without Christ-focus produces religious knowledge without salvation.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism devoted immense effort to Scripture study. The Pharisees believed Torah study itself brought eternal life. Jesus corrects this—Scripture is pointer, not destination. The Old Testament's purpose is to testify of Christ. Those who study it without finding Him read in vain.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can intensive Scripture study miss Christ whom Scripture reveals?
2. What does it mean that the Scriptures 'testify of me'—how do you see Christ in the Old Testament?

Interlinear Text

ἐρευνᾶτε	τὰς	γραφάς	ὅτι	ὕμεῖς	δοκεῖτε	ἐν	αὐταῖς
Search	G3588	the scriptures	for	ye	think	in	them
G2045		G1124	G3754	G5210	G1380	G1722	G846
ζωὴν	αἰώνιον	ἔχειν·	καὶ	ἐκεῖναί	εἰσιν	αἱ	μαρτυροῦσαι
life	eternal	ye have	and	they	are they	G3588	which testify
G2222	G166	G2192	G2532	G1565	G1526		G3140
περὶ	ἐμοῦ·						
of	me						
G4012	G1700						

Additional Cross-References

Luke 24:27 (Word): And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44 (Word): And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Acts 17:11 (Word): These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Matthew 22:29 (Word): Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Isaiah 34:16 (Parallel theme): Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

Acts 13:27 (Parallel theme): For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

Jeremiah 8:9 (Word): The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?

John 5:46 (Parallel theme): For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

Mark 12:10 (Word): And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

Romans 3:2 (Parallel theme): Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.