

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 ὑμεῖς 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.