



SESSION 04 / AI AND THE CHRISTIAN / 8-PAGE EDITION

AI in Bible Study and Christian Ministry

AI in Bible Study

Randy White | October 24, 2026

AI has received a bad rap for use in Bible Study

- AI has earned criticism for some uses. It gets a bum rap when those abuses are treated as an indictment of every use.
- **Using a research aid is not the same as outsourcing interpretation, deceiving a congregation, or replacing prayer.**
- These examples show what critics actually said, the concerns we should take seriously, and where the criticism can be overextended. They are not six blanket prohibitions against AI.

My notes and questions

1. AI sermon writing compared with cheating

Leah D. Schade, an ELCA pastor and preaching professor, "Did AI (Artificial Intelligence) Write Your Pastor's Sermon?", *Patheos / EcoPreacher*, updated February 28, 2023.

- **What she said:** "But it certainly feels like cheating to me." Later she pictures AI "like a serpent coiling around the tree".
- **Fair reading:** She is concerned about generated sermons, unattributed material, and a congregation being misled about authorship. She also calls for teaching ethical AI use.
- **Concealing borrowed work deserves criticism.** Asking a tool to locate a passage, compare arguments, or challenge an interpretation is a different activity. The serpent imagery is forceful rhetoric; it does not establish that every research use is sinful.

AI IN BIBLE STUDY

Sermon writing and dependence

Concealing borrowed work deserves criticism.

2. A pastor says AI would cheat his congregation

Cole Hartin, “Why I Don’t Use AI for Sermons”, *The Living Church / Covenant*, September 1, 2025.

- **What he said:** “I would feel like I’m cheating the people I care about.”
- **Fair reading:** Hartin, associate rector at Christ Church in Tyler, Texas, is discussing AI composing a sermon in place of his pastoral engagement. He distinguishes research assistance, describes using disclosed AI illustrations, and treats disagreement charitably.
- A pastor's duty to know the text and his people is real. But help gathering information does not automatically mean he has neglected either. This is a pastor explaining his own boundary, not a documented case of a named pastor being falsely accused of cheating.

My notes and questions

3. AI sermons compared with Israel's defeat at Ai

Greg Morse, “Artificial Preaching”, *Desiring God*, May 19, 2026.

- **What he said:** “A lifetime of AI-produced sermons, Bible studies, and Sunday school lessons will not honor God and will end in defeat.”
- **Fair reading:** His Jericho, Ai, and Achan analogy warns against laziness, borrowed preaching, and trusting technology instead of God. He explicitly distinguishes abuse of technology from permissible use.
- We should examine our dependence and our work. But gathering information with a tool does not itself prove misplaced trust. Verify the material, understand the passage, and take responsibility for what you teach. Do not turn his warning about dependence into a prohibition broader than he states.

My notes and questions

AI IN BIBLE STUDY

Prayer discernment and interpretation

A concordance does not pray either; the person using it must.

4. AI cannot pray—but neither can a concordance

Ken Ham, “Should Pastors Be Using AI to Write Sermons?”, *Answers in Genesis*, May 13, 2025.

- **What he said:** “Be assured, AI doesn’t pray for any wisdom from God!”
- **Fair reading:** Ham objects to advertising that offers an instant sermon without the pastor’s own study. He expressly allows possible help finding cross-references, related passages, and quotations to consider.
- A concordance does not pray either; the person using it must. A tool’s inability to pray is a reason to keep prayer with the believer, not a sufficient reason to reject the tool. Ham himself makes room for research assistance.

5. A hypothetical warning about demonic possession

Jack Hibbs, “What Spirit Lives In You? – Part 2”, May 21, 2023; reported by Nicole VanDyke in *The Christian Post*, October 6, 2023.

- **What was reported:** “What if an AI thing got possessed by a demonic spirit?”
- **Fair reading:** This is a hypothetical question in a broader warning about AI, deception, and idolatry. It is not evidence of possession or a statement that ordinary Bible-study assistance is demonic.
- Discernment about deception is necessary. A hypothetical danger does not establish that asking for cross-references is occult activity. Evaluate the actual use and its claims rather than treating the warning as proof against every use.

6. Real interpretive errors deserve real scrutiny

John Boyles, “Misreading Scripture with Artificial Eyes”, *Christianity Today*, July 27, 2023.

- **His criticism, paraphrased:** Testing ChatGPT on the Sermon on the Mount, Boyles finds unwarranted metaphorical and individualistic readings, poor awareness of interpretive traditions, and interpretation detached from embodied life.
- **Fair reading:** This is criticism of identifiable output, not merely fear of a new tool. He recognizes similar failures in human interpreters.
- We do not have to adopt his interpretation to recognize the need to check a chatbot’s reasoning. An early chatbot’s failures warrant verification; they do not demonstrate that every later model or limited research task is useless. Read the passage in context and make the tool show its work.

My notes and questions

BIBLE-STUDY EXERCISES 01–04

How AI can enhance Bible study

Compare your recollection with the actual wording and context.

EXERCISE 01

By locating vaguely remembered scriptures

- Find likely passages from a remembered phrase, event, or idea.
- Compare your recollection with the actual wording and context.

AI exercise-test: "I remember a verse about earning wages and putting them into a bag with holes. Find the closest KJV match, give the reference, and compare its wording with my recollection."

EXERCISE 02

By providing relevant cross references

- Distinguish matches by English wording from occurrences of the same Greek or Hebrew word.
- Find similar situations while noting differences in audience and setting.

AI exercise-test: "Find six cross-references for 'approved' in 2 Timothy 2:15. Label each connection: same English word, same Greek word, or similar situation. Identify the Greek word where relevant and explain each connection."

My observations

EXERCISE 03

By providing grammatical structure of a passage

- Identify subjects, verbs, objects, and modifying phrases.
- Recognize figures of speech and explain their role in the passage.

AI exercise-test: "Analyze Philippians 4:6-7 in the KJV. Identify the commands, main clauses, and modifying phrases. Show how the clauses connect, and identify any figures of speech."

EXERCISE 04

By giving historical information

- Explain customs, political arrangements, and daily life relevant to a passage.
- Distinguish what Scripture states from outside historical information or uncertain reconstruction.

AI exercise-test: "Give three pieces of historical background for Acts 16:11-40, including Philippi's civic setting and Roman citizenship. Cite checkable sources and distinguish what Acts states from information supplied by other sources."

My observations

BIBLE-STUDY EXERCISES 05–08

How AI can enhance Bible study

Read the passage in context and make the tool show its work.

EXERCISE 05

By finding relevant references in extra-Biblical materials

- Locate accounts in writers such as Josephus or Philo that can be compared with Scripture.
- Request precise work and section references so you can read the source in context.

AI exercise-test: "Find a possible parallel in Josephus to Acts 12:20-23. Give a precise work and section citation, then compare the accounts. If you cannot verify the reference, say so."

EXERCISE 06

By comparing Bible translations and highlighting differences in wording

- Place translations side by side to make differences easy to examine.
- Identify wording differences that raise questions about grammar or meaning.

AI exercise-test: "Compare 2 Timothy 2:15 in the KJV, NKJV, and ESV. Identify wording differences, name the underlying Greek terms involved, and list questions I should investigate further."

My observations

EXERCISE 07

By outlining the flow of thought in a chapter or book

- Trace the sequence of an argument, narrative, or set of instructions.
- Notice changes in subject, audience, or time that help explain the structure.

AI exercise-test: "Outline Ephesians 2 using the KJV. Give each section a short heading and verse range. Identify changes in audience or time, and show how each section connects with the next. Base the divisions on clues in the text."

EXERCISE 08

By developing study questions that draw attention to details in the text

- Ask who is speaking, to whom, about what, and in what circumstances.
- Use follow-up questions that require supporting answers from the passage.

AI exercise-test: "Ask me six observation and context questions about 2 Timothy 2:1-15 in the KJV, one at a time. Wait for my answer, ask which words support it, and then give feedback."

My observations

BIBLE-STUDY EXERCISES 09–10

How AI can enhance Bible study

Mark estimated or disputed dates so a neat chart does not imply unwarranted certainty.

EXERCISE 09

By organizing people, places, and events into timelines or comparison charts

- Arrange events and locations in sequence with supporting Scripture references.
 - Mark estimated or disputed dates so a neat chart does not imply unwarranted certainty.
- AI exercise-test:** "Create a table of Paul's journeys in Acts 13-21 with columns for event, location, passage, and approximate date. Label estimates and cite sources for dates supplied from outside Acts."

My observations

EXERCISE 10

By quizzing you on Bible knowledge

- Test recall of people, places, events, and passage references.
- Adjust the difficulty and review missed answers with the relevant Scriptures.

AI exercise-test: "Quiz me on 2 Timothy, one question at a time. Wait for my answer before giving feedback and a KJV reference. After ten questions, identify weak areas and give me a short review quiz."

My observations

MINISTRY EXERCISES 11–14

AI in Christian Ministry

Match hymns to the Scripture passage, sermon theme, and congregation's familiarity with the songs.

EXERCISE 11

AI and song selection

- Match hymns to the Scripture passage, sermon theme, and congregation's familiarity with the songs.
- Arrange selections into a service order with a suitable balance of themes and musical pace.

AI exercise-test: "Suggest three congregational hymns for a service on Philippians 4:4-9. Give each title and author, explain its connection to the passage, and propose a service order. Flag any uncertain attribution."

EXERCISE 12

AI and Christian Music

- Develop original lyrics from a biblical theme or message you supply, then refine their wording, meter, and theological meaning.
- Describe the melody, mood, instrumentation, and vocal range you want for an AI-generated musical arrangement.

AI exercise-test: "Draft two original verses and a chorus about gratitude to God. Explain the biblical allusions, then write a music-generation prompt for a traditional congregational song with a modest vocal range and piano accompaniment."

My observations

EXERCISE 13

AI and Church Communication

- Prepare placemats and bulletins with clear announcements, service information, and welcoming language.
- Adapt the same information for newsletters, announcement slides, and social media while keeping the details consistent.
- Website creation and updates

AI exercise-test: "create a beautiful HTML landing page advertising our Taos Bible Conference based on your knowledge of the event. Use graphics and content that matches the work we've been doing on this conference"

EXERCISE 14

AI and translation

- Translate invitations, announcements, and study materials for people who speak another language.
- Do live translation during services.

AI exercise-test: "Translate this sample invitation into natural Spanish: 'Join us Sunday for Bible study at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m. Everyone is welcome.' Provide an English back-translation and explain your choices for 'Bible study' and 'worship.'"

My observations

MINISTRY EXERCISES 15–17

AI in Christian Ministry

Create matching handouts with an outline, discussion questions, and room for participants' notes.

EXERCISE 15

AI and answering Bible questions

- Identify the issue behind a listener's question and gather passages that deserve examination.
- Organize your conclusions into concise talking points for Ask The Theologian or a personal follow-up reply.

AI exercise-test: "Help me prepare a two-minute answer to 'What does rightly dividing the word of truth mean in 2 Timothy 2:15?' List relevant KJV passages and questions about audience and context. Ask for my conclusions before drafting the answer in my voice."

EXERCISE 16

AI and creating teaching slides and conference handouts

- Turn a teaching outline into slides with clear headings, concise points, and relevant Scripture references.
- Create matching handouts with an outline, discussion questions, and room for participants' notes.

AI exercise-test: "Turn the teaching outline I paste below into a six-slide presentation outline and a one-page participant handout. Preserve my argument and KJV references. Include short slide titles, suggested speaker notes, two discussion questions, and space for handwritten notes."

My observations

EXERCISE 17

AI and turning broadcasts into articles and study guides

- Reshape a broadcast transcript into an article or study guide while preserving your position and manner of expression.
- Remove verbal repetition, organize the argument, and flag unclear names or Scripture references for review.

AI exercise-test: "Using the transcript I paste below, draft a 600-word article, a five-point study guide, and three discussion questions. Preserve the speaker's theological distinctions and mark unclear words or references for review."

My observations