Introduction to Logos Bible Software

TRAVIS: Hello, everybody, and welcome back to the Bible Study Podcast. I am Travis Pauley, and here we have one goal: Learn to love like Jesus. I hope you enjoy this conversation.

All right. And we're back. Hi, Wes.

WES: Hey, Brother.

TRAVIS: How are you doing?

WES: I'm doing very well. And you?

TRAVIS: I'm doing great. We are doing a special episode of the Bible Study Podcast today, doing it on Zoom, which is fun, if anybody was missing the good old Zoom days of 2020.

WES: Yes. We are in the same building, only a few feet apart, but we're still doing Zoom.

TRAVIS: That's right. We're doing it because we needed to do a screen-share for the very special episode we're doing today. Do you want to kind of intro why we're doing it this way?

WES: Yeah. And that brings up a good point before we even get started, in that if you're just listening to the audio, we're going to try to keep all of this so that it's still relevant and you still understand what we're talking about, but we would also recommend you watch this episode on video. You can find it on our YouTube channel or on the website RadicallyChristian.com and watch the video, and that way you can see what we're talking about, not just hear what we're talking about. But if you're just listening to the audio, keep listening because I think it will be relevant for you, as well.

But we're going to talk about Logos Bible Software for a couple of

reasons. One, our good friends at Logos have given us an upgrade to the program, let us check out Logos 10, and I've been checking that out, using it for several weeks now, and I'm excited to share some of those features with all of you. And, two, because this podcast is all about Bible study, and I even got an e-mail not too long ago asking me how I do sermon preparation. How does Wes do what Wes does? And so I thought this is a good way to answer that question and also share with people what Logos is like. It may be something that, if you're listening to this or watching this and you are interested in having something like this at your disposal for your Bible study, I think it could be great for anybody, whether you're a Bible class teacher or just trying to be a better student of scripture, but especially if you're in any type of ministry, if you're an elder, if you're a deacon, if you're a teacher or a preacher. So anything like that, it would be especially helpful, but, also, if you know someone who does those types of things, especially if you and other members of your congregation could give this as a gift to your preacher or to a Bible class teacher or to your elders, it would be incredibly helpful for them, I'm sure, if they don't already have access to it. It is rather pricey, but as you'll see and hear, it is very helpful once you get into it.

TRAVIS: I'm excited because I'm teaching Bible class on Sunday, Genesis 13 and 14, so -- we don't have to go over that specifically, but it would be super helpful.

WES: That would be a good passage to use. Okay. So I'm going to share my screen, again, for those that are watching this and not just listening, but again, if you're listening, we will keep you in mind as we go through this. When you first open up Logos -- again, this is version 10 that we're talking

about, and this new version just came out and I've looked at some of the features. I'm going to say, right at the outset, I'm not an expert on Logos. I use it every single day and I love it. It's great, but I probably have only begun to scratch the surface of what this software is able to do. And I will say, too, one of the things I love about Logos is that it's not only on my computer, but it's on my phone, it's on my tablet, so I have access to my entire library everywhere that I go, and so I love having those -- these tools available to me. Not just the tools, but also the resources that are part of this entire library. In fact, I really downgraded my print library because so much of what I use for my Bible study and my preparation is all on the computer or on my phone or on my tablet, so I really like that.

But one of the things in this new version of Logos that I really like is this sidebar. There's the sidebar, again, for those that are listening, that has all of these different -- there's some that are preset that you can put over here, but also you can drag and drop some of your favorites. So I have different Bibles that I have really easy access to, so whether it's the ESV -- I'm going to pull open -- let's see. This is my simple Bible layout. That's one of the things that you can put over here in the side is just different layouts that you like, and so I have -- the first of my little preset buttons that I've set up are my Bibles that I have access to because, again -- I'll just try to keep this both specific to Logos, but also to just Bible study in general, and one of the best Bible study tips is use different translations of the Bible. There are great translations of the Bible out there. They have different pros and cons, but there's great translations, and one of the best ways to study the Bible is by comparing different translations. By the way, shout out to the

International English Bible. One of our listeners sent us a Bible not too long ago, and so it's a new translation that -- well, it's not a new translation, but it's new to me, and I'm excited to look at that.

But, again, one of the best ways to study the Bible is to compare different translations, and so I have the ESV, the New American Standard, the NIV, the New Revised Standard, the New Living Translation, The Message all set up in my sidebar. People could get bent out of shape because, Well, you said New Living Translation or The Message; these are paraphrases. Yeah, absolutely, and sometimes they work like a really good commentary on scripture. But, again, the best way to find the meaning of a passage is by comparing different translations of the Bible. In fact, one of the buttons that I have set up under my different translations is this text-comparison button, and I'll click on that, and that brings up a tool that parallels different translations.

TRAVIS: That's cool. I really like that.

WES: What passage did you say you're studying for class?

TRAVIS: Genesis 13 and 14.

WES: Okay. So we'll type in Genesis 13. So this has four different translations -- the ESV, the New American Standard, the NIV, and the New Living -- all side by side by side so that you can go through and compare those to one another. And in comparing them, just to speak to our tendency, our tendency is to choose the wording we like the best, and I think we have to strive really hard not to do that. Don't choose the wording that you like the best. And, really, most of us are not even qualified to say which one is, quote-unquote, "right" and which one is "wrong," but when you compare

them, you understand that the committees that translated this particular passage had different reasoning to translate it in different ways. It's almost like the best understanding of the passage is found in the overlap. So when you compare four different translations and you see, Oh, this words it like this; this words it like that; this words it like this, it's almost like a Venn diagram, where you want to look at the place where they all overlap because there's truth in all of those different ways of translating it, and the translators would say the same thing. They would say, Oh, yes, this is a good way to translate it or this is a good way to translate it. They had to choose one. But as you're trying to hold on to the meaning and find the meaning, the best meaning is probably somewhere in the overlap. And so look at how the different translations differ, but then also try to figure out where are they similar and where would these meanings overlap? Because it's kind of a little bit this, and it's kind of a little bit that, and when you see one word, maybe, that's translated in four different ways, it's -- okay. If this word -- this Greek word or this Hebrew word can be translated in four different ways, what's the overlap of those four different English words? Where's the overlap of those words? Again, if you think about a Venn diagram, where's the overlap? And that's where I think the best meaning is often found, so I love this text-comparison tool. It's really good. And this version of Logos, again, allows you to put these little buttons right where you want them, so if that's something that you would use a lot, you could just drag -- I'll just drag this button over here. You just drag it there. In fact, I'll delete it so that those that are watching can see what that looks like. But you just go up to Tools and then you scroll up to the text-comparison tool and you just drag

that right over here and say, Okay, right there, and next time you want that, you can just click on it and pull it right up, and so it's right where you need it when you need it.

Again, one of the cool things about Logos is these different layouts that you can have, and there's this layout button, and you can -- it has a lot of preset layouts, so this one is Bible and Commentary, so you click on that, and it's going to split the screen between the Bible on one side and one particular commentary from your library on the other side, and, again, that's really a helpful way to study the Bible sometimes. You're reading through a passage and you want the Bible open over here and you want your commentary open over there, and so that might be the layout that you want to choose.

But I like to create a custom layout, and I created a custom layout. The way you do that is you open the resources that you want, and then this top option right here says "Save As Named Layout" and you can just -- whatever you have open there at the time, you create it and you name it whatever you want to, and then that becomes a layout that you can put over here, again, in your custom menu, and then you could open that layout any time you want. So this one right here, this is what we had open a minute ago, I just called it "Simple," and you can put a little icon beside it so you remember what it is, but this is just the Bible. So if I just want the Bible open, I just click the "Simple" button, and that's the layout that opens.

But the one I use the most is this that I call "Lesson Prep." And so I'm going to click on the Lesson Prep button, and when I'm preparing a sermon or a Bible class, this is predominantly the layout that I use. And the tools

that I have open right now are the passage guide tool, the exegetical guide tool, my Greek lexicon, and my Bible, and so I have all four of those tools. And, again, one of the benefits of using a digital software like this, as opposed to the old-school way of doing it with actual print books, is that I probably wouldn't have enough room on my desk for these four resources all open at the same time. And, really, even these four resources are more than that because this passage guide -- this is one of my favorite tools on Logos, but this passage guide gives you quick access to all kinds of different resources that are in your library.

So, again, we'll use Genesis 13 for your Bible class, so we'll type Genesis 13 in, and what I've done is I've set up all of these open tabs to all link with each other. So this one is the passage guide, and when I typed in Genesis 13, it also changes the different -- the other resources, the other tabs, as well, so my Bible changed to Genesis 13, as well. And you can do that by -- let's see. There's this -- again, see, the exegetical guide changed to Genesis 13, and you click on this little menu here, and you can link them all so they're a set, and that's why that little orange A up there in the corner says A. That way all of those tabs are linked to one another, and so when I change the passage to Ephesians 4:1 and send it there, then all of the different resources go to Ephesians 4:1. So again, the way I like to think about the digital version is comparing it to, Well, what if I was doing this with print books? What if I was doing this the old-school way? And if I was going to go from studying Genesis 13 to Ephesians 4, not only would I turn over there in my Bible, which that's no big deal, but now I'm going to have to go to the shelf and grab a whole new set of commentaries or a whole new

set of resources because now I'm going to want to look things up in the Hebrew, and I'm going to want to look things up from Genesis, and so I'm going to need Genesis commentaries and not the Ephesians commentaries. And what this does, this passage guide, it puts all of these commentaries that are in my library at my disposal. It actually separates them by different kinds of commentaries: apparatus, application, Bible notes, concise, exegetical, expositional, homiletic, study Bible, theological. So most of the time, I'm going to stick with the exegetical commentaries, and I just open that drop-down menu and it's got all of these different exegetical commentaries that are already pointing to the reference that I'm studying. So if I'm looking at Ephesians 4, they're already pointed to that, so they're hyperlinked and I just click over there. The way I like to think about it, it's like if you had an assistant who went to your shelf and grabbed, I don't know, nine or ten different commentaries on Ephesians and got all ten of those books off the shelf for you and opened them all to Ephesians 4 and had them ready for you whenever you needed to say, Okay, well, that's what this commentary says. Let's look at what this other commentary says. So all of these commentaries and all of these different genres are already pointed to and hyperlinked to the passage that you're studying. And, again, I've got my Bible open here so I can read it, but then I also have the commentary that, as I open different commentaries, it's already opened to the passage that I'm studying, and as I scroll down, it will continue to open to the place that I need it to. So if I went back to Genesis 13, I just click -- I just type in Genesis 13 in the search box, and then once it gets there, it's going to give me all of these commentaries that are hyperlinked to Genesis 13, and I just

click on those and it opens right to the passage that I need.

So let me stop right there because you're seeing all of this for the first time, Travis. As kind of somebody that's new to Bible study software like this, any thoughts or questions so far?

TRAVIS: Well, for starters, I mean, like you said, it's overwhelming in the sense that you couldn't put all this on the desk. You would need like a conference room table in order to lay all of the information that it provides out. So where would you suggest like a good first place to start? You're diving into a passage. As you get all of this -- you've got all of these commentaries and they're divided into categories of commentary. I see theological, exegetical, expositional, homiletic, you mentioned. Where would you suggest somebody start in diving into a passage with all these tools?

WES: Yeah, great question. I think it always has to start with -- that's why I would start with just the Bible open, you know, the simple layout that I have here. So I would just suggest, if somebody is studying a passage of scripture -- if you're studying Genesis 13, you just read the passage over and over again, and then as you read it, especially the second or third time, you start taking notes of, Okay, this is an interesting phrase. Why is this phrased this way? Why does he say this? What's happening here? You write down the things that you're naturally curious about or the things that seem to be the theme of what you're studying and maybe starting to point you in a certain direction, and so you start taking notice of those even before you reference any other commentaries.

TRAVIS: Well, what's interesting, I already kind of started doing that when

you had four different versions of the Bible open on Genesis 13 and I noticed some of them phrased it differently when it says -- in Genesis 13, it's when Abram and Lot separate, and I noticed there was a verse -- I can't remember which one off the top of my head, but it's -- oh, it's verse 10. One of the versions you had up said, in verse 10 of Genesis 13, "Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley." I thought that was an interesting distinction in the NLT, and it already just sort of directed me to, like, that's an interesting way to phrase that because that is going to lead us to, you know, Lot being caught up in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this is the point where he's looking and saying, you know, Where do I want to settle versus where is Abram going to settle? So I already made a note about that just by seeing all four of those versions up at the same time, so that's pretty cool.

WES: So that's a great example. So let's go ahead -- we have the text-comparison tool right now, for those that can't see what we're talking about, but we have this text comparison, and it has four different translations. One translation says -- as you pointed out, this is the New Living Translation -- "Lot took a long look at the fertile plains." NIV says, "Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered." This is New American Standard: "Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere." So we can already maybe start to make some assumptions, but why did the New Living Translation say he "took a long look at the fertile plains" versus, you know, "he looked around and saw the whole plain of the Jordan"? So we can kind of maybe start to make some assumptions, but let's go ahead

and open the lesson prep. Again, this is something I just created, this particular layout, and named it "Lesson Prep." That's just something I did, but we'll go ahead and open that tab and look at Genesis 13:10, and especially in the passage guide -- again, this tool is incredibly helpful because it not only has these different commentaries, but as you scroll down, it also has other references that are similar in some way to this verse. And so even before you get into the commentary -- I think, for me, commentaries are one of the latter steps rather than one of the earlier steps, and so I'm going to want to look at parallel passages and think, Okay, well, here's Genesis 2:10, so this is a parallel that it's pointed out. Hey, there's some similarities between what Genesis 13:10 says. Lot is observing how well watered this is. That's maybe pointing back to Genesis 2, "A river flowing out of Eden to water the garden and there it divided and became four rivers." And then these other passages that have to do with either the place, this particular plain, or maybe the idea of being a well-watered place, and so it's going to have these different parallel passages, so kind of thinking through some of those.

Another section of the passage guide is important words, so like Sodom, or Lot, the ground, the earth, the territory. Even -- I'm not sure if it'll play on the podcast or not, if we can hear it, but could you hear that?

TRAVIS: I didn't hear it.

WES: Okay. Yeah, so it has these buttons that tell you how these different words are pronounced so you can actually hear the word said in -- whether Hebrew, or Aramaic, or Greek.

TRAVIS: So this would be really helpful -- for example, let's just throw it

out there. When you assign a scripture reading on Sunday and it has a bunch of names -- I'm not going to say the last time I read scripture it was like that, but it was, and if it has a lot of names I don't know how to pronounce, I could go to Logos and get all the pronunciation.

WES: That's true. But I will say, just as a side note, that if you don't have Logos and you have a passage that you have to read out loud and you're not sure how to say something, BibleGateway.com has audio versions of those chapters, so you can go -- like with the ESV, there's two different versions. One is sort of a British pronunciation and one is more of an American pronunciation, so check that out. That's also very helpful. I try -- not saying I always do, because obviously, you're pointing out a time when I did not, but I try, when I assign a scripture reading on a Sunday, to send people a link to Bible Gateway so they can know how to -- at least one way to pronounce a word.

But this also -- this passage guide also gives you not only important words and commentaries, but also some graphics, things like atlases, different media, maybe, that's related to -- here's some that's related to Sodom, some that's related to Egypt, so just different things so you can see, Okay, where are we talking about? And, again, yes, there are definitely print materials, there are definitely books. You can go to your church library and all of these resources may be there, but this puts them all in one place so you're not grabbing 15 different books off of the shelf and trying to figure out how to have them open on your desk. This puts them all in one place. And, again, a lot of this is available on my phone, so I can pull a lot of this up on the fly, as I'm in a Bible class and somebody says something, and I

think, Is that really that word that they just used? And I can do a lot of Bible study just kind of on the fly, which is really helpful.

But if you're teaching a class and you want to put graphics up of different things, this has all kinds of art, media, maps, atlases, all kinds of really helpful tools. There's also -- this is something I had never noticed before. I'm not sure if it's been in other versions of Logos, but there's also other outlines that outline these passages, and sometimes even sermons and other lessons that other people have taught on this passage. There's even this section called "Ancient Literature" which has, sometimes, comments that maybe second or third century, fourth century Christian writers commented on these passages. You can go and say, Well, what did this early Christian think about this passage? And you can look up those, as well, again, depending on what's in your Logos library.

So there's all different kinds of options, all different kinds of packages that you can access with Logos, and so depending on how much you want to spend, how much you want to invest in a Logos library will determine what resources are in your library, but there are all kinds of possibilities. When I first started using Logos, I just bought -- I think it was free. If it wasn't free, it was really cheap, the very base package, and it wasn't even a package; it was just the software, and then I just added a few resources to it, a couple Bibles, a couple commentaries, and just added to it. Thankfully, our friends over there have now given me the package and so I have access to a lot more now, but when I first started using it, I just kind of added things a la carte as I began.

I'm still scrolling down in the passage guide because there's so much

there, but at the very bottom, there's also access to the bookstore where you can add other books and you think, Well, I wouldn't mind spending another $30 if I can have this other commentary to add to what I already have. And, again, if you're just kind of putting it together piecemeal, that might be one of the best ways to do it and just kind of add things as you go. A lot of times they'll have sales. Like this commentary on Genesis is on sale, and you could add that to your library and then you would have access to it immediately. And, again, when you have the app for your phone or the app for your tablet, you have access to those commentaries and those Bibles and books not just when you're at your computer, but when you're on the go, as well.

Here's sermon audio. I've never actually listened to any of these, but there's different sermon audio from different preachers that have preached on that particular passage. So if you're studying Genesis 13, you might scroll down to the end and think, I know this guy, or, This sounds like an interesting lesson, and you could listen to a lesson that someone else has taught on that particular passage that might help you as you prepare your thoughts for that.

Any questions or thoughts, Travis, on any of that?

TRAVIS: So I'm curious to know -- when you're prepping a class, when you're doing a sermon, I'm interested to know how you use commentaries. You said that's kind of a latter step. Do you have a particular -- like I mentioned that they have this divided into different types of commentaries: Bible notes, concise, exegetical. Do you have a particular type that you prefer to dive into first? How do you kind of go about determining which

one is best?

WES: I stay mostly in the exegetical commentaries, and I will -- you know, I really like to use commentaries as a safety net or for someone to double-check my work. I almost feel like it's -- maybe in school, when you got into high school or maybe in college, you had the answers in the back of the textbook for some of the questions, but you really shouldn't look at those until you do the hard work first. So you work the problem and then you go to the back of the book and you check your work and you make sure you got the right answer, and so a lot of times that's what I'll do. And if I've studied through a passage and I've come up with, Okay, I think this is what Paul is saying, or, I think this is what Genesis 13 is saying, I think this is the point that I'm supposed to get from it, this is what I'm hoping to be able to draw out of it and preach from it, then I'll check my work, and if I'm the only person who got that particular idea out of that passage, then there is one conclusion and only one conclusion I can come to, is that I am wrong. I am wrong. If I am the only person who has ever come to that conclusion, I am most certainly wrong, so I need to be humble enough to check my work and to say, Okay, I do not know more than all of these Bible scholars put together, and if nobody came up with this idea from this passage, I'm probably barking up the wrong tree. And so that's the primary way that I like to use commentaries, is as someone double-checking my work and I'm able to go and say, Okay, am I way off base here, or am I drawing a good conclusion from the information that we have?

And, again, there's -- you could even -- I think there's even ways that -- there's even a tab here to -- we had it on the "Type" tab, but you could

even sort the commentaries by denomination. So it has a tab for Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed, and then sort of Other, but if that makes you more comfortable to know, Well, what's kind of their leaning, what's kind of their bent, then you might want to sort them by denomination, and then you know, Okay, well, this guy comes from an Anglican background so he's probably going to interpret things in this way. And this guy comes from a Baptist background or a Lutheran background, so they're probably going to interpret things in this way. So just knowing their bias might help you to be able to sort through, Okay, is this their denomination talking or is there really good evidence that this is the way to interpret this passage? So, yeah, that's the way -- I never want to preach a text that I haven't looked at commentaries on. I want to look at a commentary on every passage that I preach. That way, again, I make sure that I'm not way out on a limb all by myself, or if this is an interpretation that only people from a certain religious tradition -- the only people that come to this particular conclusion about this passage come from this particular religious tradition, then that's going to make me nervous, too. If this is only a Reformed Calvinistic way of interpreting this passage, then that should probably tell me something. If the ancient commentaries don't come to the same conclusion, then that's probably going to tell me something, as well, which, actually, on that point, I want to make one other suggestion. I'm going to step away from the microphone. I don't know that I've ever done that before on the podcast, but I'm going to step away from the microphone.

I have these commentaries that I've really enjoyed. They're called the *"Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*." They have every book of

the Bible. I only own the ones on Paul's epistles, so I own four volumes of this set, but it's called the "*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture,"* and it takes snippets from different ancient Christians -- first, second, third, fourth century -- and compiles them based on the passage of scripture. So if you're going through and you're studying -- this one is on I Timothy 1, and so if you're studying I Timothy 1, it will have one, two, three, four -- five different commentaries that it's taking what that author said about that particular passage. Here's what he had to say about that. And so, again, that's really helpful because these guys go back, you know, 1,500 years, and if they were interpreting it a certain way, there's reason to take that into account.

And what this version of Logos allows us to do now -- this is a brand-new feature in this newest update to Logos, is it actually allows you to add these print books. So I don't have these in my Logos library, but I have print versions of them, and so I can actually go to -- let's see. I can go to my library -- this "Library" button here, and I can look this up. And so I'm going to type in *"Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*," and I can find the volume that I own and then I can click on it and I can add it to my Logos library. I'm not sure why that one won't let me do that, but I guess some of these I already have on there. But I can add these to my library, and when I'm studying a passage, it won't give me the text on Logos, but it will tell me, Hey, you own this book, and it's on page 137 in this book that you own a print version of. So when I'm studying it, I know, Oh, okay, I have that book on my shelf, and not just do I have that book on my shelf, but here's what page it's on, and in some books that might be more helpful than

others. Obviously, a commentary, you know what page I Corinthians 1:7 is going to be on, but in other books, just because there's a reference -- Oh, where did it say that? Where was this quote found? It will help you find that by referencing what page it's on in your print library. So not only do you have these books on your digital -- some of your library in digital form, but you can also hyperlink, in a way, to the print books that you have on your shelf, so that's a really interesting new feature that they just came out with.

TRAVIS: That's awesome.

WES: Yeah, I think that's going to be really helpful. I haven't really used that yet, but I'm really excited about that. Just a few other features that I kind of want to walk through. One is this advanced timeline. This is something new in this version of Logos that they've updated. There's always been a timeline, but this is more updated. And, again, I want to keep this relevant for everybody even if you're never going to own Logos, but one of the, I think, important parts of studying scripture is knowing the story and knowing how things unfolded, so I'm a really big fan of timelines. I think it's really good for especially young people to have a timeline in their Bible class, in their classroom, for them to have a timeline, so if you're talking about Abraham, you know, Okay, well, Abraham, who came next? Isaac. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, so you kind of know how the story unfolded. You don't have to know what year it happened, necessarily, because a lot of times we don't know that. We know a best guess. Sometimes we don't know what year. But at least know the chronology of it, and things like this -- tools like this -- again, it doesn't have to be digital and it doesn't have to be

Logos, but it really helps to have a timeline, and these timelines are really helpful.

So over here it has filters so you can filter different aspects of the timeline and look at different times and different people. So maybe you just want to look at the New Testament and maybe you just want to look at the life of Paul, so you just put the checkmark in the box of the person you want to look at, and here's a timeline of the life of Paul, 32 to 62. You uncheck that and you check Jesus, and here's a timeline for Jesus. Or maybe you want to do Old and New Testaments and you want to do Jacob. So it allows you to filter the timeline by whomever you're studying. So if you're studying Paul and you want sort of a quick and easy timeline of Paul's life, you can just tell it, Okay, I want to see, when did these things happen? And, again, sometimes these dates are based on our best guesses. We don't know exactly when these things happened, but here's a best guess for when Paul wrote this book or when Paul traveled to this place or when this was going on in Paul's life, and it kind of helps you have a chronology in your head about that, or, again, if you're teaching a class, it helps you to kind of see how that happened chronologically.

TRAVIS: That's really cool.

WES: Yeah, I think that's a really helpful tool. So that advanced timeline is one of the new features in this latest update to Logos. Another feature -- and I use this one all the time. I probably use this tool more than the passage guide. I use the passage guide a lot, but the other tool that I use a lot is the exegetical guide. Again, it's so important for us to remember, even though you and I are not scholars, we're not experts in ancient languages -- which

makes these tools even more important because we've got to be able to at least -- even if I'm not a mechanic, I still need to be able to open the hood of my car and kind of understand what I'm looking at, and the better I understand what I'm looking at, the better I understand, how does this work, how are these things functioning, how is this working together, the better I'm going to be able to operate my car, and in this case, the better I'm going to be able to navigate scripture. So these tools allow those of us that are not Bible scholars, those of us that don't -- are not fluent in these ancient languages to at least have some tools where we can open the hood of the car and kind of take a look around. Again, we don't want to get overconfident with these tools, but it's really helpful to look at them.

So this puts side by side the Hebrew text and the English text so you can look at it and you can click on a word, and we're going to say -- well, we were talking about Genesis 13:10 earlier, so we have Genesis 13:10 pulled up, and here's what it says in English: "And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord." So, again, there's the reference to the creation account, watered like the garden of the Lord. So we want to see what's that word "garden," and we click on "garden," and then it'll pull up more information about each Hebrew word. And, again, you can click on the little speaker icon and it'll tell you how that Hebrew word is pronounced. And you can click on it and it will pronounce it for you, and then it will give you different lexicons on how that word is -- could be translated. And, again, when you're looking at definitions of ancient words, whether it's Greek or Hebrew, whatever, and you see these different English equivalents -- enclosure, garden, place of

harvest -- you should look at those things and kind of put them in a Venn diagram and say, Okay, sometimes it means this and sometimes it means this, depending on the context, or it can have this nuance or it can have this nuance, and sort of where is that overlap, and why -- based on this context or based on this usage, why did they go this direction rather than a different direction? And are there translations that do take it in that other direction, or is all of the evidence pushing it in a different direction? So it'll typically tell you the sense in which it's used. So here's the sense in which it's used in this particular passage: "A plot of ground where various plants and sometimes trees are cultivated," so it's a reference to that. And, again, this exegetical guide will walk you through every word and phrase in that verse so that you can see what's the original word -- Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic -- and what's the construction, what's the sense in which it's being used. This word that's translated "in the direction" could mean to change location, to move, to travel, or proceed. It also can be used metaphorically, and, again, just breakdowns of different ways this word can be translated and different meanings and nuances that it can have.

That doesn't necessarily mean that every nuance is possible in any particular passage. If I say the word "fishing," "fishing" can have a couple of different meanings in English. I could mean literally fishing. I could have a pole and go outside and try to catch a fish. But a person could also be fishing for a compliment, and he's just looking for a compliment. So those are two different ways of using the same word, and based on context, it can really only have one of those meanings, and it should be pretty clear, based on the context, which of those it is. So if you're translating, there's probably

a good reason that the translators went in one direction rather than a different one, but you can sort of look at these things and say, Well, is there ambiguity here? Do different translators take it in two different directions? Is it unclear whether it's being used metaphorically or literally, or is it really clear? There's one sense here, one meaning here. But these tools can help you to sort of ask those questions and also to begin to find some of the answers to them.　　　　Any thoughts on that?

TRAVIS: Just a side note. Do you think that that job of translating where there might be ambiguity was harder in the New Testament, given all the epistles and the great use of metaphor from Jesus and the apostles in talking about the pursuit of following Jesus? I just had that random thought.

WES: That's a great question. There's, I think, lots of things that probably go into that. Again, I'm not an expert on ancient languages or translation so I'm way out of my depth on that question, but I will say that with -- we have a couple of different tools at our disposal, and it kind of helps us to have some confidence in our English translations. We have -- on the one hand, with the Old Testament, not only do we have some -- we have the Hebrew texts, the Aramaic texts, but those are generally much later texts. We also have the Septuagint, which is a Greek translation of much earlier Hebrew texts that we no longer have, so we sort of have both of those things that we can compare with each other, and that was one of the things that the Dead Sea Scrolls helped with, was some of those Old Testament texts and being able to check what we had at the time and then sort of make some updates to that and have some confidence about the translations that we do have. So when the scholars and translators are translating the Hebrew into English,

they can also sometimes say -- and there's a lot of times very big differences between what, like, the Masoretic text says and what the Greek, the Septuagint, says, and they will be able to make a footnote that says, Well, the Septuagint says this. Now, maybe it says that because they were working in Greek and they had to come up with some sort of an equivalent to translate the Hebrew. Or maybe it says that because those translations, the Septuagint, was based on earlier manuscripts. Maybe the Septuagint is actually more accurate to the original than these later texts that we have. And so, again, there's some challenge there with that, and the texts of the Old Testament are much older. These are much older texts. But there's also less vocabulary in these ancient language -- in the Hebrew and the Aramaic. There's less -- I believe -- again, I'm out of my depth here, but there's less number of words, I'm assuming, I think, compared to the Greek, where there's a lot more. But with the Greek, we also have different writers that we can compare Greek to. So not only do we have the epistles that we can look at, and the gospel accounts that we can look at, and the Septuagint that we can look at and say, Well, how did they use these Greek words, but we also have tons of other Greek writing, not necessarily all from the same time period, but how did these different Greek philosophers -- how did they use this word? How did they speak about these things? And then we can compare, Well, you have these Jewish authors that are writing, obviously inspired by the Holy Spirit, but these Jewish authors that are writing, and maybe they sort of think in Hebrew thought. I think that's what they do. They think in Hebrew thought, and even if they're Greek speakers, they're probably speaking Aramaic, you know, in their personal interactions, and

then they're writing in this more scholarly, academic language of Greek, and they're writing in Greek, but I think they're also thinking in terms of the Hebrew scriptures. They're thinking in terms of the Old Testament. So even if they borrow -- and they must -- borrow language from their Greek contemporaries, they're often using those words in a very different way. So, for instance, when we think of the word "soul," we have this tendency to think of "soul" in very platonic terms, like Plato, and we tend to think of it as this distinct, ethereal, nonmaterial part of us. That's the way Plato --

TRAVIS: Separate from the body.

WES: Exactly. But the way that the Hebrew word "nephesh" was translated into "soul" -- when "nephesh" was talked about, it was talking about a being, a creature, a life, and so when the Bible uses the word "soul," again, both in Hebrew and then later, when the Greek writers began to -- they were looking for a word, and they're using a word that their contemporaries are using, but how are they using it? Are they using it like Plato, or are they using it more like Moses? Are they using it more like the Torah, where they're saying "soul" in the sense of my life, my being, my existence? And I think we have to lean more towards the whole canon of scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, all shares the same worldview, even if it uses different language.

And this is one of the beautiful and difficult parts about biblical translation and interpretation, is that God spoke to the people of the time using language that's rooted in very real human history, and he's using language that was created and existed for other purposes, and he's having to use human language and human authors to explain these huge concepts and these huge ideas about who God is and what does a covenant relationship

with him look like? And so these texts are very much rooted in the people and the place and the language in which they were written, and then we are taking them and trying to translate the ideas into English and then also translate the ideas into something we can grasp. And, again, just because that English word has that particular connotation doesn't necessarily mean that that's exactly what the biblical author was trying to convey.

So, again, reading whole books of the Bible is important, reading the whole canon of scripture is important, and then leaning on these experts that are experts in the language and the culture and how these words were used in other ancient cultures or in other writings, all of this is super important. And, again, that's why software like Logos Bible Software -- but, again, that's not the only software out there, but things like this are really important, and if we're going to teach -- if we're going to teach other people, it's really important to have tools at our disposal. It doesn't have to be digital. We can have paper books, but there's just this huge wealth of information out there that we can lean on and we can use to help us have and gather the best possible information so that if we're going to try to convey these ideas to other people, we have a good grasp of it ourselves.

TRAVIS: And I will say, before we go, that, especially as you got into this exegetical guide, seeing it all laid out like this definitely makes me very thankful for the thousands and thousands of years of work that have gone into making sure that these words can be understood across cultures and in different times. That's very humbling to -- like you said, to, you know, not being a scholar, I'm very thankful that there have been many people who have dedicated their lives to being scholars and to doing this very

challenging work.

WES: Amen. Amen. We don't talk enough about people that -- many gave their life. There were a lot of people that gave their life to translate the Bible into the language of the people with whom they were working. The Latin Vulgate tended to be the only translation.

TRAVIS: I was just thinking about that.

WES: And as they tried to translate it into German, in the case of Martin Luther, or into English, or whatever, it cost many people their lives. And even today there are people groups in the world that do not have the Bible in their language, and it's not enough that we translate the King James into a certain language because then that's a copy of a copy of a copy. That really is getting into very dangerous territory, when we're translating from an English translation. We really need more people to invest their lives into translating the Bible into every language because, again, the gospel is for people of every language and nation and tribe, and Jesus is gathering us all together into his family, and people need to hear the good news in their own language. That's what Paul says in Romans 10: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news."

So with that in mind, before we close, if you would like to check out Logos Bible Software -- I know this is sort of commercially, but if you'd like to check it out, go to RadicallyChristian.com/Logos and you can check out the different packages that they have available. And I think if you use that link, RadicallyChristian.com/Logos, you will get 30 percent off your package, so it's a good deal. And, again, if you can share this software -- if maybe this doesn't apply to you or you can't see yourself utilizing it, but you

can help your preacher or an elder or Bible class teacher have this software at their disposal, it would be a huge blessing to them.

Thank you so much for being part of the Radically Christian Bible Study podcast today. We hope that you've enjoyed this episode. I want to give a special thanks to Travis Pauley and to our McDermott Road church family for making this podcast possible. As always, we love you, God loves you, and we hope that you have a wonderful day.