

I am a certified bibliophile, especially in the area of patristic literature and scripture. I owe nearly everything that I know and share in this work to this love for books. I encourage anyone to explore the topics that strike them about scripture. The available literature on these topics is boundless.

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Books can be an expensive habit. This I know from personal experience. But there are some alternatives to keep the budget in check. If you want to have your own copy of the book consider purchasing used. The web site [www.bookfinders.com](http://www.bookfinders.com) is a great search engine for a lot of bookstores. This includes results from major new resellers and used sources.

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WorldCat is a service that libraries use to help in cataloging their collections. A large number of institutions participate all over the world. This service helps the libraries keep their catalogs up-to-date. They can simply copy the existing descriptions and catalog entries that other institutions have created when they add new books to their collections. This on-line catalog also makes it easier to know what other libraries have in their collections.

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You can also create an account to save books on your virtual bookshelf. Once there you can write reviews to share with others in the system. You can also add labels to help find and sort the books you keep on your shelf or add notes to yourself on the books in your collection.

<http://www.amazon.com>

Amazon is the largest on-line bookstore. They have a very large collection in their catalog that includes many specialty items related to scripture studies. The two features that are most helpful for research in scripture are the “look inside” feature and customer reviews.

Once you find books of interest certain publishers participate in making the table of contents and select portions of the book readable on-line in the Amazon store. These previews are helpful in determining if the issue that you are looking into is dealt with in the book.

Even if the publisher does not participate in the book preview program most of the catalog contain customer reviews that also help to nail down where the book is most helpful. In addition, Amazon has a grouping technology that will suggest similar books when you are looking at any selection. This can bring to light other books on the same subject that you may not have been aware of.

These on-line resources are a good first stop to determine if a book really can fill the need you are pursuing. They provide good information and the ability to preview the contents before going through the trouble of acquiring and reading the book.

### **Interlibrary Loan**

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I have had great experiences with interlibrary loan. I have received books clearly marked "Reference Room only" from two different college libraries over the years. These include obscure photo reproductions of Church Slavonic manuscripts and a multi-volume Church Slavonic Lexicon. Libraries really do want to share their collections with interested people. Just ask.

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The trick is to be prepared for this field trip. Most schools now make their catalog available for search on the Internet. Do your searches before hand and come with the list of books in hand.

If the school is local you can check into taking non-credit classes there. Many times taking some kind of classes there will get you library privileges. Then you will be able to checkout books too. This can be more convenient than using interlibrary loan.