

Finding Light in Darkness – Session 4

Understanding Stuff You Find in the Bible

By Sonny Bowman

Concordance Exercise (from Session 3)

- **Find: where Jesus tells Peter to feed His sheep.**
 - ♦ **What section do you expect to begin with?**
 - ♦ **What word looked up? feed, sheep, Peter, Jesus**
- **Find: to live is Christ, to die is gain**
 - ♦ **What section do you expect?**
 - ♦ **What word looked up? die, gain, live, Christ**
- **Find: love one another**
 - ♦ **What section do you expect?**
 - ♦ **What word looked up? Love, another, one**

#1 - Expect to find in Gospels since Jesus is talking with Peter. Some words will provide a smaller list to review. If remember surrounding words, can also search for them: lamb.

John 21:15-17

#2 - Expect to find in the Epistles.

Phil 1:21

#3 - (this one's harder) Expect to find in Gospels or Epistles
search "another" NKJV (1): John 13.34

Homework Review

- **Use a concordance to find...**
 - ♦ **There's freedom where the Spirit of Lord is**
 - ♦ **Don't lean on your own understanding**
- **Use a chain reference to find the...**
 - ♦ **OT prophecy about Bethlehem in Matt. 2:6**
 - ♦ **Stoning of Paul's mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:25**
- **Use a concordance, topical Bible, Bible dictionary, or Bible encyclopedia to find...**
 - ♦ **At least two passages about the Trinity**

Concordance: Ephesians 2:8 & Proverbs 3:5

Chain Reference: Micah 5:2 (Bethlehem) & Acts 14:19

Trinity: Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14, Isa 48:16, 1 Cor 12:3-6, Matt 3:16-17, others

Single Most Serious Problem

- "It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." (*Mark Twain / 1835-1910 / in The "Wit and Wisdom, of Mark Twain of Alex Ayres / 1987*)
- **Not a lack of understanding, but obedience.**
 - ♦ **Do all things without complaining and disputing, — Philippians 2:14**

CAUTION: Mark Twain apparently did not believe in God or the Bible, but his quote is insightful.

How many of us consistently obey Philippians 2:14?

Two Tasks

- **Exegesis**
 - ♦ **Find out what the original text meant**
- **Hermeneutics**
 - ♦ **Determine how that meaning applies today**

Hermeneutics in classical sense covers both tasks: exegesis and application. We will use it in a narrower sense of determining application only.

What the text meant in the past is an essential key to determining what it means to us today (application).

Common sense is an important tool.

God gave the Bible for all to read and understand, not just the smart people. God speaks for all to hear!

... And the common people heard Him gladly. — Mk 12:37

Exegesis

- **Do not have to be an expert.**
- **Key to good exegesis...**
 - ♦ **Begin with prayer**
 - ♦ **Learn to read the text carefully**
 - ♦ **Learn to ask the right questions of the text.**

Exegesis is the careful, systematic study of the Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning. What was the original intent of the words of the Bible.

Holy Spirit inspired the writers and will open your understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 — But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

The Right Questions

- Context
 - ♦ Historical
 - What is the time and culture of author and readers?
 - What is the geographical, cultural, & political setting?
 - What is the occasion and purpose of the book (internal)?
 - ♦ Literary
 - What's the point?
 - What is the author saying and why does he or she say it right here?
- Content
 - ♦ Questions of meaning
 - What do the words mean?

Historical: Occasion and purpose of the book is the more important question of historical context. Answer usually found in the book itself. May need to consult outside sources (Bible notes, dictionary, encyclopedia, and commentary) for answers to the second two historical question areas. Many study Bibles have a good summary of information at the beginning of each book.

Literary:

Content: Words only have meaning in sentences. For the most part, Bible sentences only have meaning in relation to preceding and succeeding sentences.

Historical Context

- Most study Bibles have useful information at beginning of each book
 - ♦ Author
 - ♦ Date written
 - ♦ Theme
 - ♦ Key words
 - ♦ Background (history)
 - ♦ Occasion and purpose
 - ♦ Characteristics
 - ♦ Content
 - ♦ Outline
 - ♦ Etc.
- Also available in commentaries, Bible encyclopedias and other resources

Look at beginning of **Book of Galatians** in a good study Bible for an example of typical information available. Remember: These are men's opinions, and do not carry the same weight as the actual, inspired Word of God.

Literary Context

- Verses before and after
 - ♦ 20/20 Rule
- Chapter or section

- Entire Book
- Other related verses
- Bible as a whole

20/20 Rule (20/20 vision): to see a verse clearly in context, you need to read 20 verses before it and 20 verses after it.

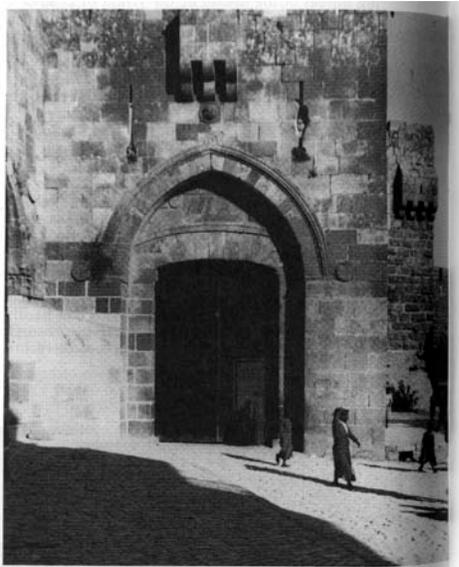
Other Related Verses: Find using cross references, topical Bibles, and commentaries.

Example: Eye of the Needle

- Mark 10:25
 - ♦ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

What is the eye of a needle?

It's a Small Gate



- The Jaffa Gate in the wall of Jerusalem, showing the “Needle’s Eye.” Small doors such as this were common features of the gates of ancient cities; humans could pass through easily, but large animals, such as camels, had to be unloaded and kneel to get through, even then with difficulty.

© MPS ,*The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, 1967, Zondervan, p. 578

Some Bible experts have said that “the eye of a needle” refers to a small gate in Jerusalem call the “Needle’s Eye” through which a camel could get through with difficulty only by unloading its cargo and kneeling.

It's Not a Small Gate

- It is often said that there was a gate in Jerusalem known as the “Needle’s Eye,” which camels could go through only by kneeling, and with great difficulty. The point of this “interpretation” is that a camel could in fact go through the “Needle’s Eye.” The trouble with this “exegesis,” however, is that it is simply not true. There never was such a gate in Jerusalem at any time in its history. The earliest known “evidence” for that idea is found in the eleventh century (!), in a commentary by a Greek churchman named Theophylact....

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, 1982, Zondervan, p. 22

Other Bible experts say the “eye of a needle” is not a small gate. (Note: This is the same publisher as for the book that said it was a small gate.)

Only the Bible can be trusted as the inspired Word of God. Authorities and experts can and will be wrong sometimes. How can we know which is right?

Eye of the Needle

- **Mark 10:25**
 - ♦ **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Did Jesus mean a small gate?**
- **What is the immediate context?**
 - ♦ **Mark 10:23-27**
- **What does it say?**
 - ♦ **Read through twice**
 - ♦ **Summarize main points**
- **What does it mean?**
 - ♦ **What is the main point Jesus is making?**
 - ♦ **Vs. 24 – extremely difficult for those who trust in riches to be saved**
- **What clue do we have in verses 26-27?**
 - ♦ **Disciples and Jesus understood it as impossible!**

Check the Context:

Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, **how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were **greatly astonished**, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is **impossible**, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.” — Mark 10:23-27

Clue:

In vs. 26, the disciples were **greatly astonished**.

In Mark 10:27, Jesus described it as something impossible. Jesus used the illustration to **illustrate an absurdity**. That is not the case with the gate theory.

(compare: Blind guides, who strain out a **gnat and swallow a camel!** — **Matthew 23:24**)

The idea of applying “the needle’s eye” to small gates seems to be a modern one; there is no ancient trace of it. The Lord’s object in the statement is to express human impossibility and there is no need to endeavor to soften the difficulty by taking the needle to mean anything more than the ordinary instrument. Mackie points out (*Hastings Bib. Dic.*) that “an attempt is sometimes made to explain the words as a reference to the small door, a little over 2 feet square, in the large heavy gate of a walled city. This mars the figure without materially altering the meaning, and receives no justification from the language and traditions of Palestine.”

Non-Biblical “Scriptures”

- **God helps them that help themselves**
 - ♦ from Poor Richard’s Almanac (Ben Franklin)
- **Cleanliness is next to godliness**
 - ♦ An old Hebrew proverb. Used by John Wesley
- **Money is the root of all evil.**
 - ♦ Misquote: Love of money... 1 Timothy 6:10

Watch Out for... PRIDE!

Must be careful not to be critical of experts or anyone who maybe has not seen some things that you have.

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*? — 1 Corinthians 4:6-7

Good Translations

- **Important to use a good translation**
- **Best to use more than one good translation for study**

Often best to concentrate on one translation for reading and memorizing.

Translation Types

- **Literal (may be printed by verses) keeps as close as possible to exact words & phrases**
 - ♦ NASB (New American Standard Bible)
 - ♦ KJV (King James Version, or AV – Authorized Version)
 - ♦ NKJV (New King James Version)
- **Dynamic Equivalent (printed by paragraphs) words, idioms, etc., into precise equivalents**
 - ♦ HCSB (Christian Standard Bible)
 - ♦ NIV (New International Version)
 - ♦ NLT (New Living Translation)
- **Free (paragraphs, may not have verse numbers) attempts to translate ideas into new language**
 - ♦ The Living Bible
 - ♦ The Message

Literal: Also called “Word-for-Word”

Keep as close as possible to the exact words and phrasing in the original language, yet still make sense in the new language. Keeps the historical distance intact at all points (e.g., use shekel instead of converting to modern equivalent). (May be printed in paragraphs in electronic versions.)

Dynamic Equivalent: Also called “Thought-for-Thought”

Attempts to translate words, idioms, and grammatical constructions of the original language into precise equivalents in the new language. Keeps historical distance on all historical and most factual matter, but “updates” matters of language, grammar, and style.

Free: Also called “Paraphrase”

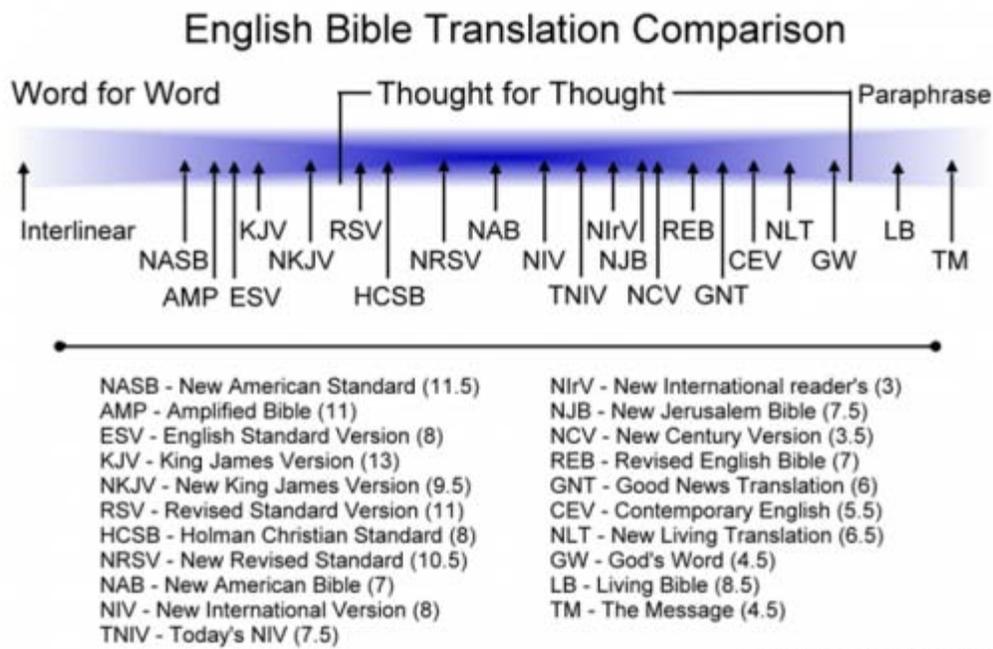
Attempts to translate the ideas from one language to another with less concern about using the exact words of the original. It attempts to eliminate as much of the historical distance as possible.

Translators are not always consistent, but one of these theories will govern the translator’s basic approach to their task.

For studying, recommend one from Literal and one from Dynamic Equivalent categories. There are others besides these (see next slide).

A general idea of the translation type can be obtained by looking at the way a Bible prints the verses. If each verse begins a new line, it is probably a literal (word for word) translation. If the text is printed with some verse numbers in the middle of a paragraph format, it is probably a Dynamic Equivalent (thought for thought) translation. If there are no verse numbers listed in the text paragraphs, it is probably a free (paraphrase) translation.

Relative Translation Positions



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Order: Left to Right – Literal (Word for Word) to Dynamic (Thought for Thought) to Free (Paraphrase)...

Taken from <http://defendingcontending.com/2009/08/31/bible-translation-comparison-chart/>

Philippians 2:1-4

- **KJV** – If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- **NKJV** – Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- **NIV** – If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.
- **NLT** – Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose.
- **TM** – If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends.

Translation Tidbit

- **John 18:4-6** — ..., “Whom are you seeking?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am *He*.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, “I am *He*,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

We often use italics to emphasize words. However, in many Bible translations, italics are used to indicate words that have been added by the translators to help make some passages easier to understand.

It is interesting to read the passage without the italicized words sometimes.

“I AM” is the name God used for Himself!

Exodus 3:14 — And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”

Biblical Communication Types

- ♦ Narrative history (stories of historical events)
- ♦ Genealogies (list of ancestral descent)
- ♦ Chronicles (chronological record of events)
- ♦ Laws of all kinds
- ♦ Poetry of all kinds

- ♦ **Proverbs (short, profound sayings)**
- ♦ **Prophetic oracles (Words of God via prophets)**
- ♦ **Riddles**
- ♦ **Drama**
- ♦ **Biographical sketches (individual's life overview)**
- ♦ **Parables (short allegorical story showing truth)**
- ♦ **Letters**
- ♦ **Sermons**
- ♦ **Apocalypses (divine revelation)**

There are many types of communication in the Bible... Important to recognize the type of communication for proper understanding of what it says and means.

Allegory: A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms. A symbolic narrative.

Hebrew poetry form is different from modern poetry.

Approximately one-third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. This includes entire books (except for short prose sections), such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. Large portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Minor Prophets are also poetic in form and content. Many scholars consider the Book of Job to be not only the greatest poem in the Old Testament but also one of the greatest poems in all literature.

Poetic elements such as assonance, alliteration, and rhyme - so common to poetry as we know it today - occur rarely in Hebrew poetry; these are not essential ingredients of Old Testament poetry. Instead, the essential formal characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. This is a construction in which the content of one line is repeated, contrasted, or advanced by the content of the next - a type of sense rhythm characterized by thought arrangement rather than by word arrangement or rhyme.

Very little poetry is found in the New Testament, except poetry quoted from the Old Testament or hymns which were included in the worship services of the early church.

(Above quote from: www.angelfire.com/sc3/we_dig_montana/Poetry.html)

Type Influences Interpretation

- **The type of literature used for communication in the book or passage affects the way it should be interpreted and understood.**
- **Poetry should be evaluated differently than Epistles**
- **Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing.... — Song of Solomon 6:6**

Epistles

- **Epistles were written to address specific situations or occasions.**
- **Must be careful to distinguish principles that apply universally from instances that apply only to their immediate situation.**

Types of Laws

- **Moral Laws**
 - ♦ Always valid in all circumstances
 - **Shall not murder**
 - **Shall not commit adultery**
 - **Shall not steal**
 - **Love your neighbor as yourself**
- **Ceremonial Laws**
 - ♦ Apply only to specified occasions or circumstances
 - **Feast of Tabernacles**
 - **Animal sacrifices**

Moral Laws: Exodus 20:1-7 & Matt 22:35-40

Ceremonial Laws: Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering (booths) kept for 7 days in the Fall where the Israelites constructed temporary shelters to live in for seven days to remind them of their nomadic travels between leaving Egypt and entering the land of promise.

Animal sacrifices – done away by sacrifice of Jesus. Hebrews 10:1-10, 18

The Three “Whats”

- **What does it say?**
 - ♦ **Observation (exegesis)**
 - ♦ **Consider words used, circumstances involved, and context to determine what is being said.**
- **What did it mean?**
 - ♦ **Interpretation (exegesis)**
 - ♦ **Broaden the context, consider the motivation and the reactions to determine what was meant.**
- **So what?**
 - ♦ **Application (hermeneutics)**
 - ♦ **Evaluate how the message of the passage can and should affect daily decisions and life.**

This is similar to the **Inductive Bible Study** technique described in *The New Inductive Study Bible*, © 2000 by Precept Ministries International. Compiled by K. Arthur

Says vs. Meant

- **Difference between what a verse says and what it meant.**
 - ♦ **Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.” — Matthew 16:5-7**
- **Job of exegesis to find out what it says and what it meant.**

Jesus warned disciples against *leaven* of Pharisees, but did not mean the *yeast* that is used to make bread. Disciples tried to understand what Jesus meant by considering the context. However, they considered only the immediate context where they forgot to take bread.

Observation: What to Ask

- **Ask the standard observation questions**
 - ♦ **Who**
 - ♦ **What**
 - ♦ **When**
 - ♦ **Where**
 - ♦ **Why**
 - ♦ **How**
- **5 W's and an H**

These questions help with observations. As you practice asking them of passages, they help you develop your ability to observe what is being said and meant.

Typical “Who” Questions

- **Who**
 - ♦ **Who is speaking?**
 - ♦ **Who is this about?**
 - ♦ **To whom is it addressed?**
 - ♦ **Who are the main characters?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**
 - ♦ **Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.”**

Speaking: Jesus & disciples

About: Pharisees & Sadducees

To whom: Disciples & disciples to each other

Characters: Jesus, disciples, Pharisees, & Sadducees

Typical “What” Questions

- **What**
 - ♦ **What is happening?**
 - ♦ **What was said?**
 - ♦ **What was done?**
 - ♦ **What led to the situation?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

Happening: Traveling by boat, arrived at shore

Said: Beware of leaven... We have no bread...

Done: Jesus warned disciples, Disciples tried to figure out what He meant

Lead to: encounter with Pharisees & Sadducees, traveling by boat, forgot to take bread/food

Typical “When” Questions

- **When**
 - ♦ **When did this occur (time, season, event)?**
 - ♦ **When will something take place?**
 - ♦ **When will it end?**

When: after arriving by boat on other side of lake (16:4-5)

future – watch out for Pharisees & Sadducees leaven

“Where” Questions

- **Helpful to find more information**
 - ♦ **Broaden the range – Matthew 15:32 to 16:13**
 - ♦ **Parallel passages – Mark 8:1-27**
- **We learn...**
 - ♦ **Miraculously fed 4,000 near Sea of Galilee**
 - ♦ **Got in boat, crossed Sea of Galilee**
 - ♦ **Came to Dalmanutha/Magdala (western shore)**
 - ♦ **Pharisees disputed and asked for sign**
 - ♦ **Got back in boat, crossed Sea of Galilee (to northeast shore)**
 - ♦ **Forgot to take bread with them**
 - ♦ **Jesus warns about leaven of Pharisees**
 - ♦ **Healed a blind man in Bethsaida**
 - ♦ **Went on to Caesarea Philippi**

Need to broaden the range to answer the “where” questions. Since this is in the Gospels, may find a parallel account.

Map is also helpful. Bethsaida was near the Sea of Galilee on the northeast side. Caesarea Philippi is about 25 miles north of Bethsaida.

Typical “Where” Questions

- **Where**
 - ♦ **Where did this take place?**
 - ♦ **Where was it said?**
 - ♦ **Where did they come from?**
 - ♦ **Where are they going?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

Take place: Northeast shore of Sea of Galilee near Bethsaida

Where Said: between place where boat arrived and Bethsaida

Came from: Dalmanutha/Magdala on western shore of Sea of Galilee

Going to: Bethsaida, then Caesarea Philippi

Typical “Why” Questions

- **Why**
 - ♦ **Why was it done?**
 - ♦ **Why was it said?**
 - ♦ **Why did it happen? (or will happen)**
 - ♦ **Why the people involved?**
 - ♦ **Why at this time?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

Why the disciples: Jesus training them for the Kingdom work

Why this time: Just had encounter with Pharisees and Sadducees’ deceptive tactics

Typical “How” Questions

- **How**
 - ♦ **How was it said or done?**
 - ♦ **How did the people react?**
 - ♦ **How many were affected?**
 - ♦ **How far did it go?**
 - ♦ **How will it happen or how often?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

How said: seriously, warning

React: confused, tried to figure it out

How many: Not listed, but at least the 12 who followed Jesus

How far: long enough for the disciples to go aside and discuss among themselves

Context

- **Context includes...**
 - ♦ **Surrounding verses**
 - ♦ **The book it is in**
 - **Chapter notes for book background & purpose**
 - **Type of book (poetry, history, etc.)**
 - ♦ **Related verses elsewhere**
 - ♦ **The entire Bible**
- **Context is critical**
 - ♦ **“There is no God” Psalm 14:1**
 - ♦ **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’”**

You cannot properly understand what a verse means without considering its context. Often, getting the context is as simple as reading a few verses before and after the particular verse. As you spend time regularly reading the Bible, you also develop a growing understanding of the overall biblical context.

This is similar to putting a 10,000 piece puzzle together. At first it can be confusing, but as you get more and more pieces in place, it gets increasingly easier to see how new pieces fit in.

Recommend at least one chapter a day from OT and NT. May be helpful to read OT first time through in paraphrase or New Living Translation.

Bible needs to become your best friend—very familiar with it.

Jesus Uses Context

- **But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, “O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. — Matthew 16:8-12**

Reminds them about two different times when He multiplied the bread to feed the multitudes with bread left over. Points out that He is not concerned by a lack of bread and wants to know why they are hung up on it.

The immediate, worldly condition (took no bread with them) was blinding them to the meaning of what Jesus was saying. Once they saw the bigger context, they understood that the “leaven” Jesus spoke of meant the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What Did It Mean?

- **Interpret literally whenever possible.**
- **Symbols**
- **Figures of Speech**
- **Parables**

Leaven is obviously not intended literally in this passage. It is used figuratively of the doctrine of the Pharisees

Symbols

- **A picture or an object that stands for or represents another thing.**
 - ♦ **Leaven represents doctrine (Matthew 16:6)**
 - ♦ **Seven candlesticks represent seven churches (Rev 1:20)**
- **An item used as a symbol can symbolize different things.**
 - ♦ **Water symbolizes the Word of God (Eph 5:26)**

- ♦ Water symbolizes the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39)
- In a given passage only a single parallel is intended.
 - ♦ Water symbolizes the Holy Spirit in John 7:37-39, not the Word of God

Figures of Speech

- **Metaphor**
 - ♦ An implied comparison between two things that are different. Words of comparison (like, as, so is,...) are not used.
 - ♦ John 6:48 “I am the bread of life.”
- **Simile**
 - ♦ An expressed comparison of two different things or ideas that uses the words *like*, *as*, *as...so is*, and/or *such as*.
 - ♦ Rev. 1:14b “His eyes were like a flame of fire.”
- **Hyperbole**
 - ♦ A deliberate exaggeration for effect or emphasis.
 - ♦ Ps 119:20 “My soul is crushed with longing”
- **Personification**
 - ♦ An object is given characteristics or attributes that belong to people.
 - ♦ Isa 55.12 – trees clap hands, mountains sing
- **Irony**
 - ♦ A statement which says the opposite of what is meant. Irony is used for emphasis and effect.
 - ♦ 1 Cor 4:8 – already filled, become rich, become kings without us...
 - ♦ Try it first as a true statement. Then try it as figurative irony. Accept which one makes best sense and fits the context.

Corinthians were not really already filled, had not already become rich, nor had they become kings.

You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!
— 1 Corinthians 4:8

Parables

- A story (not usually factual) that is true to life and teaches a moral lesson or truth.
- Must consider the context to understand it
- Determine the main point communicated
- Avoid conclusions not intended by the original context

Parable: The Rich Fool

♦ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be

merry.” ’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” — Luke 12:16-21

What is it NOT saying? This parable is not saying...

It is wrong to prosper from your investments

It is wrong to put money in a retirement plan

It is wrong to build bigger

God will kill you if you prosper

Context: Luke 12:13-34

What issues does it address? It is addressing...

the issues of covetousness and materialism

Worry or fear about your needs being met

Seeking God and His Kingdom is more important than building your own kingdom.

Conclusion: verse 21. It is a serious mistake to invest in this life only.

Hermeneutics

- **To ask questions about the Bible’s meaning in the “here and now”**
 - ♦ Application
- **Must begin with good exegesis**
 - ♦ **What a passage means to us now must begin with what it meant at the time and occasion which it was spoken or written.**

Hermeneutics: the science of interpretation, esp. of the Scriptures. (to) make clear, interpret. In the classical sense, hermeneutics includes exegesis and application. Here, we are using it in a narrower sense of determining the application only.

Bring My Cloak

- **Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. — 2 Timothy 4:13**
- **Who?**
 - ♦ Paul, Timothy, & Carpus
- **What?**
 - ♦ Cloak, books, & parchments
- **Why?**
 - ♦ It’s getting cold soon. “Do your utmost to come before winter.” — 2 Timothy 4:21
- **Application?**
 - ♦ None for us today – only to Timothy

Who: Paul and Timothy

Why: Paul needed his cloak and documents that he stored with Carpus at Troas. See v 21 where Paul is urging Timothy to come before winter when he will need the cloak due to cold weather.

Application: Does not have an application for today. We are not being commanded to bring Paul's cloak and documents to him.

We naturally are involved in exegesis and hermeneutics in regularly using common sense to determine what passages apply to us today and which only applied in the setting in which they were given.

So What?

- **Application**
 - ♦ **What different should it make to me?**
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - ♦ **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**
- **Scripture is given for a purpose.**
- **Doctrine**
 - ♦ **What the Word of God says about a particular subject. It is always true.**
- **Reproof**
 - ♦ **Exposes areas in your thinking and behavior that do not align with God's Word. Repent.**
- **Correction**
 - ♦ **Adjust your thinking and behavior to align with God's Word.**
- **Training in Righteousness**
 - ♦ **The Bible is also a handbook for living.**
Scripture has a purpose – to be applied to our lives

Summary

- **Begin with prayer**
- **Identify immediate context**
- **Read through twice**
- **What does it say?**
- **Identify larger context**
 - ♦ **The section, the book, the entire Bible**
- **Locate related verses**
 - ♦ **Cross references, topical Bible, etc.**
- **What did it mean to speaker/hearers?**
- **What principles apply today?**
- **What changes do I need to make?**

Be Like the Bereans

- **Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.**

When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. — Acts 17:10-12

Be always ready to adjust your beliefs to match the Bible rather than adjust the Bible to match your beliefs!