

## *How to Study the Bible, Part 2*

### *2 Timothy 2:15-17*

Theme: Bible Study

Aim: To show the importance of context to the study of the scriptures.

1. Many is the time I have heard a politician claim when a quote from him seems to put him in a bad light, "I was quoted out of context."
2. In no realm of consideration is context more important than the study of the Bible.

I. We are considering "How to Study the Bible." For some a matter of review and emphasis, for others new ground.

A. We talked last week about the need for diligence in our Bible Study.

1. Yes, some parts are easily understood. But notice in our reading the need for diligence, effort.
2. In depth Bible study is hard, but well worth the effort.
3. We also talked about the need to handle accurately the Word.

B. We considered three questions and the covenants.

1. Who wrote it? To whom was it written? What were the circumstances of the writing?
2. We must recognize the distinction between the Old and the New Covenants. The Old is authoritative for the Jew, the New for the Christian.
3. We also talked about some of the tools for Bible study that will help with the answers to these questions.

II. This morning we turn our attention to the matter of context.

A. Were I asked to state the most important principle for good Bible study, I would say "Give proper attention to context."

1. Perhaps you have heard the phrase "A verse taken out of context becomes a pretext."
2. Meaning, if we ignore the context, we can indeed make the Bible say almost anything.
3. Of course, putting a verse in its proper context relates to the matters we discussed previously.

B. What do we mean, "Put a verse in its context"?

1. Place it in its remote context.
  - a. Which covenant is it a part of? What period of Bible history is involved?
  - b. Does it apply to the Jews or to the Christian?
2. Place it in its context as far as what type of literature it is.
  - a. Is it a part of the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament?
  - b. Is it part of the wisdom literature? Prophecy?
  - c. In the New Testament is it part of the gospels, history, epistles?
3. Place it in its immediate context.
  - a. The rest of the book in which it is found.
  - b. The verses immediately preceding and immediately after it.

III. Why is this important and how does it apply?

A. To "rightly divide" or handle accurately the Word gives the importance.

1. We do not want to be guilty of making the text a pretext.
2. We should look and see what the Bible actually teaches, not look for support for our preconceived ideas.

B. A couple of examples to illustrate the point.

1. Jesus taught we must keep the Old Law: Matthew 19:16-22.

a. Putting the verse in its context we see this is in one of the gospels, before the cross, in the Old Covenant. Who was he speaking to?

b. Jesus' answer very appropriate to a Jew, a child of Israel, but not to one who wishes eternal life under the Christian system.

2. Romans 11:26 teaches all Jews will be saved!

a. In its context, it is found in Paul's letter to the Roman Christians, Romans 1:7.

b. In this epistle he is talking about being saved by faith in Jesus Christ apart from the works of the Law of Moses, Romans 1:5, 15:26, 1:16-17.

c. If the Law is no longer in effect, how can Israel be saved? That is the question being answered in the context.

d. Romans 11:11-26 teaches us how Israel will be saved, if they are saved, it will be by accepting Christ, or to use the language of Paul's analogy to "be grafted back in again, 11:23-26.

3. Jesus said: "Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:8. Therefore we ought to freely give of our money!

a. A close look at the context tells us Jesus was talking to His disciples as He sent them out to preach. What He wanted them to freely give away was the message and miracles He had given them.

b. Compare that to Luke 6:38. What is to be given is love and forgiveness.

c. That doesn't mean we are not supposed to give freely or generously, just that such is not the teaching of these verses.

1. If the knowing and doing what is in this book, the Bible, is the means by which we obtain eternal life, then it is critical we know how to mine its riches.

2. Yes, it is challenging. Yes, it takes effort, diligence. Yes, some things are hard to understand.

3. But the rewards make all the effort worthwhile, for no knowledge will profit the student like the knowledge gained from a diligent study of the Bible.

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