

Hermeneutics 2 Lesson 1

The Context Principle

Luke 4:3-4

Theme: The use of the Context Principle should become as natural to the Bible student as breathing.

Introduction: As we approach a passage of Scripture we should automatically be thinking what is the context of this passage telling me. To have the right interpretation of Scripture we must understand the context. John Phillips said, "Always be wary of the Bible teacher who ignores the context of a verse of Scripture: 'A text without a context is a pretext.' Almost all false teaching is based on a disregard of context, the use of isolated, so-called 'proof texts' to support an unscriptural point of view."

Satan took a text out of context when tempting the Lord Jesus. Having twice been frustrated by the Lord's use of the Word of God, Satan used it himself, but used it deceptively. He said, "*If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone*" (Matthew 4:6). He was quoting from Psalm 91:11-13. What the psalmist actually said was this: "*For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*" The Devil conveniently ignored the context of the quotation. It spoke of his own destruction!

Many theologians have expressed their belief in the importance of placing a text in context. To either neglect or reject the study of the context in any given passage is fraught with grave consequences. Often a passage is made to mean just the opposite because the context has been neglected. Contextual interpretation never caters to the personal ability and ingenuity of the interpreter. It lacks therefore the glamour of presenting something entirely new, for the context has always been in Scripture as much as the particular text in question. So if no attempt is made to interpret a text in its context, such an interpreter can become a false prophet.

I. Defining the Context Principle.

- A. The _____ principle that Scripture should be _____ in context, that is, in its literary, historical, and social dimensions
- B. The Context Principle is that principle by which God gives _____ upon a subject through either _____ or _____ passages bearing upon the same theme.
- C. This principle is sometimes called the _____.

II. The demands of the Context Principle.

- A. The _____ context.

B. The context of the _____ itself.

C. The context of the _____ Bible.

III. Discovering the context.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

IV. Examples of the Context Principle being neglected.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.