

## Biblical Interpretation Key #1 Understand the Context

Who is writing?

Who is the text written to?

In what genre is it written?

Never read a Bible verse.

### Jeremiah 29:11

Context:

- Jeremiah – The (Weeping) Prophet
  - Major prophet – wrote longest book
  - Born into priestly family
  - King Josiah’s reform and return to the Lord early in his ministry
  - Young prophet – Jer. 1
  - Witnessed deportation of Israelites to Babylon
  - Imprisoned repeatedly-Considered a traitor to his people
  - Carried off to Egypt against his will
  - Focus of book: The Lord’s relationship with his rebellious people
  - Prophesied 70-year exile for God’s people
  - Message: “to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow” but also “to build and to plant”.
- Recipients
  - (Unfaithful) Israelites – Baal worshippers
  - Listened to false prophets who spoke of peace and prosperity
  - Taken captive to Babylon
- Genre: Prophecy - The human report of (divine) revelation.

God’s instructions to the Israelites

- Settle down as prisoners in Babylon
- Pray for the peace and prosperity of the city
- I have carried you into exile
- After 70 years – your (grandchildren) will see my promise fulfilled

Conclusion: God is a God of hope. But His determinations will be fulfilled and ALL His promises – of consequences AND restoration – are assured. This text cannot mean that we receive everything we hope for and our future is pain-free.

### **Matthew 18:20**

Author: Matthew, Speaker: Jesus

Recipients:

- Jesus' disciples were immediate audience
- Matthew wrote to Jews primarily

Genre: Narrative, Jesus' dialogue

Section Heading: Dealing with Sin in the Church

List of Christ's instructions:

- If your brother/sister (sins), privately confront
- If they do not receive and repent, take others as witnesses
- If still no progress, expose the sin to the church
- Refusal to repent requires exclusion from worship community
- Goal is always restoration and rehabilitation, not (retribution)!

Conclusion of study: Two or 3 witnesses of verse 16 is repeated in verse 20. The context teaches that God is intimately interested in the health and holiness of the church, NOT that "church" can exist when only 2 or 3 people are present!

### **Matthew 7:1**

Author: Matthew, Speaker: Jesus

Recipients:

- Jesus' disciples and crowds were immediate audience
- Matthew wrote to Jews primarily

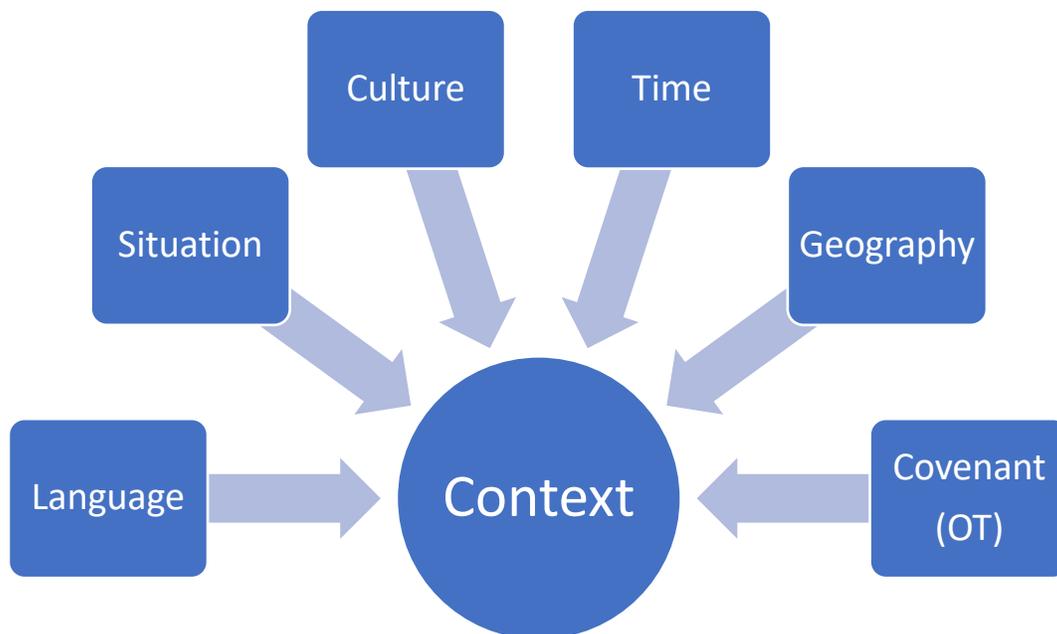
Genre: Narrative, Jesus' dialogue

Context:

- Matt 6:25-34 Do not worry. Father knows what we need. Seek first His kingdom
- Judge: condemn or judge overly harshly (study Bible notes)
- Judgment in the sense of analysis or discernment is always necessary
- “Same way” and “same measure” vs. Matt. 23:1-1 Pharisee’s hypocrisy
- (Brother) has the speck
- Address your sin first – “...then you will see clearly to remove...”

Last week we covered the 1<sup>st</sup> step –

1. Context



- Cultural Impacts
  - (Individualist)/Collectivist
  - Honor/Shame
  - Race
- Tools:
  - Study Bibles
  - Other Translations

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ONE

### Key #2 **Look for Differences**

How is the original audience (unlike) me today?

### Key #3 **Find a Principle**

What theological principle can I find?

- Tools
  - Paraphrase the text
  - Summarize the text
- Descriptive: what (is)
- Prescriptive: what (should be)

### Key #4 **Review the Bible**

Is the principle I think I've discovered reinforced through other Scriptures?

- Consider the Big Picture
  - Creation
  - Fall
  - History
  - Redemption
  - Restoration
- Tools
  - Cross References
  - Commentaries

### Key #5 **Application**

What do I (do) with this principle today?

- Does this text give me a command to obey?
- What does this passage reveal about God and his character?

- What sin do I need to address from this text?
- How should this passage change my actions or attitudes?
- Is there a point to pray about?

## DISCUSSION TWO

### **Eye of the Needle Myth**

- Camel can fit if:
  - Unloaded of all its burdens
  - Kneels

The danger is not whether a Jerusalem gate exists that is called the Eye of the Needle, but that the interpretation contradicts Jesus' message vs. 26!

### **Holy Spirit's Role – the (Illuminator)**

- Teach – John 14:26
- Guide – John 16:13
- Give knowledge, wisdom & understanding – Colossians 1:9
- Sanctify – 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE: **Search the Word** by The Daily Grace Co.