

Understanding the Bible

(John 8:32)

- Introduction:
1. Jesus said that God's word could be understood (John 8:32), and Paul, by inspiration, took it further stating that we should understand it (Ephesians 5:17).
 2. Yet the Bible is one of the most misunderstood documents in the world today.
 - a. Ills. of being asked to read the Bible and the Reader's Digest.
 3. This situation has led some to ask the question, "Can the Bible really be understood?"
 4. I want to focus upon a tool that will help us to properly understand the Bible; and that tool is "context."

I. The Challenge of Interpretation

- A. I have heard people say, "You can prove anything by the Bible."
 1. That is one of the greatest insults we could ever level against God.
 2. What if I said, "You can prove anything by [insert your name]?"
- B. The challenge of interpretation is three-fold.
 1. Time.
 2. Language.
 3. Culture.

II. The Importance of Context.

- A. When considering a passage, we must "back away" from it if we wish to understand it.
- B. Let's examine several passages.
 1. (Job 2:4,9).
 2. (Matthew 22:16).
 3. (Matthew 18:20).
 4. (1 Corinthians 1:14).
 5. (Philippians 4:13).
 6. (Jeremiah 29:11).

- Conclusion:
1. We can come to a proper understanding of truth, but not without adequate attention being given to context.
 2. God isn't trying to trick us or trip us up, but he's trying to communicate so that we can be saved.
 3. Sometimes, it's not so much that we don't understand his commands, it's whether we want to obey them or not.