

Understanding the Bible / Scriptures

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[0 : 00] All right, good morning everybody. We'll get started. He's coming from somewhere.

Well, our family's already had a... June is like a busy time of year, isn't it? We had two parties yesterday. We had a graduation party, a friend that we know, for a long time.

I graduated this year and went to an open house. Then we had a birthday party yesterday. We have somebody who hit double digits yesterday.

Mr. Caleb, happy birthday. Ten years old. That was exciting. So also, I wanted to pitch some.

Anybody like to go to plays? You like musicals? All right, well, we've got one coming up. Now, this one, again, it's down in Wilmington, so it's a little bit of a drive.

[1 : 11] But Jamie's doing a summer theater program, and she talked me into doing it. So if you want to see me singing and dancing, come down to Wilmington.

You could do that in church. Take your camera, bro. Take your camera. Take your camera. July 1st and 2nd, so it's a Friday and Saturday. No costs.

Just ask for donations if you'd like. But it's a really neat musical. It's based on the story of Ruth. But it's set in 1930s, right?

30s Kansas, Dust Bowl era, Depression era. So it's a pretty neat story. If you'd like, I think it would be well worth your while.

It would be fun. We're enjoying it. It's something that we're doing this summer as a family. So I guess, let's see. The two girls are in it, right?

[2 : 18] Ethan, he's going to be in Columbus, so he won't be joining us. But if he wasn't, he would be up there on stage with us. So, well, we are talking about keys to understanding the Bible, and we've talked about just getting an overview, having an overview of the Bible.

We've talked about figures of speech. Today, I wanted to talk about context. And context is actually a really big topic. But we're going to kind of, well, we'll look at it kind of more immediate context today.

There's a book that I've had for a long time, and I love books with, it's a compelling title. It's kind of got a hook in the title, but it says, never read a Bible verse.

That's the title of this thing. It's more of a booklet. It's easy to read. It's just like 20 pages. But this is by a favorite author of mine, Greg Kokel. He runs a radio program out in California called Stand to Reason.

Mostly focuses on apologetics, but also getting into different Bible topics. It's kind of like an apologetics slash Bible questions program.

[3 : 34] But he's been doing this for 20 years. He was out at Cedarville just a couple years ago, so we got to go hear him speak. But never read a Bible verse.

And just kind of the general gist of this is, if your Christian life is mostly just taking single Bible verses, you know, and using them in that way, you're going to kind of get messed up.

You're not going to really understand the Bible the way that it's meant to be understood. The Bible, just like any other book that you read, individual words have meaning, but the meanings of individual words are a lot of times just individual words by themselves can't give you enough to understand things.

You have words, then you have sentences. If you step back further, you have paragraphs. In some books, you have chapters. And then obviously you have whole books. And the Bible is actually a collection of books.

And so single sentences, which we call verses, in the Bible a lot of times can be confusing if we don't understand the context.

[4 : 53] So I thought maybe I'll buy a handful of copies of these and make these available because it's just an easy read and I think it provides a lot of good information.

Okay, so we have a quote that I think is a favorite quote of mine. It's plastered on the front page of the website for this church. And it's by a guy named Miles Coverdale.

Because everybody's probably already heard this quote. But I'm going to repeat it. It says, It shall greatly help you, or ye, to understand the scriptures, if thou mark not what is spoken, or not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before, and what followeth after.

And that's Miles Coverdale, who was an English Bible translator. He translated the Bible to English. He was somewhat of a contemporary with Tyndale, I think. And in fact, I think he used, because Tyndale didn't get a chance to finish his Bible translation.

Anybody know why? Yeah, he was killed. Why? For trying to translate the Bible into something that everyday people could understand.

[6 : 24] Can you imagine? It's hard for us to imagine that people would be after you for trying to translate the most important book in the world, God's Word. But that's how things were many years ago.

Of course, it's actually that way today. Maybe not in this country, but in others. In China, for example, and other communist countries. You can get in big trouble if you try to make the scriptures available to other people.

So, we live in a somewhat of a Christian culture. Can I call it that? I know in this day and age, it seems like it's a very anti-Christian culture, and that is true as well.

But we have the benefit of having had Christianity as part of, you know, the culture at large for 2,000 years.

We've had all of this history. And especially in this country, for the last few hundred years, this country has a lot of Christian history. It has a lot of upsides, right?

[7 : 34] You have things ingrained in the culture that are based on scripture. A lot of times, people who aren't even Christians do things a certain way because of the influence of the Bible.

And that's great. One of the downsides, though, is that a lot of things get ingrained in a culture, sometimes in specific cultures, certain church cultures, sometimes denominational cultures, that are maybe an incorrect view of things, an incorrect view or understanding of scriptures.

And those, a lot of times, verses get quoted or posted. You'll see them a lot of times. And they're quoted out of context.

But you've heard them so many times that you just kind of assume you understand what that means or what it's supposed to mean because that's what it's been offered to mean so many times.

When it comes to context, context goes so deep. As we read in the Miles Coverdale quote, there's so many aspects to context.

[8 : 56] Just shout out some of the things that he listed or just some other things that are part of context. Get some little interaction here. What are different aspects of context when you're reading anything, whether it's the Bible or any other book?

To who? So who's the audience? Who was it written to? In the Bible, we see, you know, the Bible has all kinds of different audiences. It's written to everybody in general, but certain passages are written to specific people in particular, right?

There was another one? What goes before? So what happened leading up to this thing? That can be very important, Joe. Who said it? Yeah.

Who's the author? Who's the one that said it? You know, when it comes to the Bible, well, God said it. Well, that's true, right? The Bible specifically says of itself that it's God breathed, but it is also relevant, the human author of that, right?

And we'll actually look at a few of those in some of our examples. Today, I plan to just go through a bunch of different examples, things that tend to be taken out of context and just kind of look at them with a critical eye, looking at context.

[10 : 08] Some others? Who is speaking to? Who is speaking to? Yeah. So the audience is speaking to Israel, the body of Christ.

That's something that we look at a lot, right? Is it to Israel or is it to Christians in the body of Christ? Joe? What's the culture like at the time? Yeah, the culture. Knowing a little bit about the history, the culture.

There might be some things that aren't clear unless you understand some of those things. Any others? Yeah, why are they writing it?

So what's the purpose? Yeah. Any others? Sometimes understanding the type of writing, and that gets into why a lot of times.

Like, is it a writing that's meant to tell you about the future? What's going to happen in the future? Is it something meant to tell you about what's in the past? Is it something meant for encouragement or instruction or just historical relevance?

[11 : 15] And so context is so important, and it's something that we, whenever we read anything, whether it's a book or a sign on the street, right?

Context matters. And so we use context every day to understand things, but we need to especially use it in the Bible.

So I'm just going to go through, I've got a bunch of scriptures, maybe seven or eight of them. We're just going to look at them, so we'll open up our Bibles, and we'll talk about maybe ways that these are taken out of context, and look at what we can do to try to discern what these verses mean.

Let's open up to 1 Timothy 1. 1 Timothy 1. All right, and I don't know if some of these examples are from this book, some are just from things that I've heard, but 1 Timothy 1.

7 says this, for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind.

[12 : 53] And I don't know if any of you have this experience, and I don't know if this is just because of, you know, people come from different... 1 Timothy 1. 1 Timothy 1. 1 Timothy 1.

Oh, is it 2 Timothy? It's probably 2 Timothy. Yeah, sorry. 2 Timothy.

A few pages over. 1-7. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit... but of power and of love and of a sound mind. And so, as I was saying, you know, sometimes verses get taken out of context in different ways depending on maybe the denominational background or the kind of Christian group you come from.

And so, I don't know if this is kind of unique to my experience or what kind of coming from more of a, you know, a charismatic background or even beyond that.

But anyway, this scripture I've heard used to defend the idea that if you are experiencing fear in your life, then that may be evidence that there's some kind of spiritual demonic activity going on.

[14 : 22] I don't know. Has anybody else kind of heard that idea or anything? Maybe it's just unique to me. Okay, Roger's giving me a nod back there. And so, people talk about, I've heard people talk about, well, if you're afraid you need to bind that spirit of fear.

And if you do that, kind of bind that demonic activity, speak to it, speak to that spirit, and you can overcome fear in your life.

But is that what this is saying when it's talking about a spirit of fear? I think we've talked about this in the past, about different definitions for the word spirit.

Are there different definitions for the word spirit? What does the word spirit mean? I'm going to throw this out there. Intangible.

Something that's intangible? Okay. Spirit. Yeah, the word spirit. Yeah. It can mean a basic idea or concept that is the spirit of the law.

[15 : 33] Okay. A basic idea or concept, the spirit of the law. It can mean, okay, go ahead. An attitude could mean an attitude. Yep.

It could mean the human spirit, right? We, the Bible says that we are spirit beings, that God breathed life into us. God has a spirit.

There is the Holy Spirit, right? You do have demon spirits and the Bible talks about those, right? Right? And so, but spirit can have multiple meanings.

So how do we know? Because if you look at the Greek, a lot of times we try to look at the Greek, right, to try to understand better, but the Greek, it's the same word. It's spirit, pneuma.

And so, what is it here? So, we, I think we're all pretty familiar with the human spirit or demon spirits in the Bible. some examples if we look over at 1 Corinthians 4.2, we can see an example of some of the other definitions that you all have shared.

[16 : 49] 1 Corinthians 4.21. It says this, what do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

an attitude of gentleness or a disposition of gentleness, right? And then Galatians 6.1 also uses spirit in this way.

Galatians 6.1 says, Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. So an attitude or a disposition of gentleness.

And the Bible doesn't just use it this way, right? We do too, right? We talk about, you know, having a spirit of gentleness or somebody we might even call a person a gentle spirit, right?

A person is a gentle spirit. So how do we know what he's talking about here? Which definition of spirit is in mind here?

[18:07] Well, I think looking a little bit at the context, and also, do any of you ever do this when you're reading the Bible? I think this is a good practice.

This has helped me over years and years. As I'm reading the Bible, sometimes I'll take the time to paraphrase something, especially if it's not clicking.

clicking, if it's not clicking, I'll take the time and I'll just reread it in my own words. And that helps me to try to think through and understand what's being said.

So 2 Timothy 1.7. Let's go. Joe, did you have something? I was going to say, you know, speak out. Don't be bashful.

Don't be timid, you know, the fear here. Yeah, so if we just go back one verse, or, you know, sometimes you can just go back one verse and it'll provide a lot of understanding, or you can go back, you know, a few verses, kind of look, you start to just look at the broader picture.

[19:20] So if you hear somebody quote a verse and it seems to, you know, say something, go to that verse and just, you know, look up a few sentences. Kind of look at paragraph breaks or things like that.

In this case, kind of a good starting point in my Bible is verse three. It says, I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you and my prayers night and day.

He's talking to Timothy. Greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears that I might be filled with joy. When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

So he's talking about Timothy's faith. Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind. So he's encouraging Timothy to stir something up, to stir up a gift.

[20:34] And he could be timid, right? You could decide, well, I have this gift or I have whatever and I'm not going to use it. But he's encouraging, for God has not given us a spirit of fear but a power of love and of a sound mind.

But even with this particular verse in mind, we could look just at the one verse and try to apply these different definitions of the word spirit in both cases.

So let's try to paraphrase it a little bit. If we paraphrased it with kind of the demonic spirit version, we might say this, for God has not given us a demonic spirit of fear but rather he's given us a demonic spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

Or maybe he might say an angelic spirit, right? But is there any such thing as an angelic spirit? Some people think that way. I think a lot of people think in those terms.

But that doesn't seem to make sense. For God has not given us a demonic spirit of fear but a demonic or an angelic spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

[21:53] But if instead we read it this way, for God has not given us a disposition or an attitude of timidity but a disposition of power and of love and of a sound mind.

And again, if you look, sometimes looking at words helps. What is a disposition of a sound mind? that's actually talking about self-control or discipline.

And so he's saying God has given you a gift and you need to use it and he's given you this disposition. God has put in you this disposition not of fear but of bravery, not of timidity but of courage.

And that includes power, love, and soundness of mind or self-discipline. All right. Moving on. Let's go to Colossians chapter 3.

Colossians. We'll go back. Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians. No, Philipians, Colossians.

[23:01] Colossians. And this verse says this, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which also you were called in one body and be thankful.

A lot of times, and again I'll ask anybody if they've heard this, a lot of times it's in kind of popular Christianity, and again I'm not sure how much this relates to care, because I've heard this across a lot of kind of Christian circles.

If you need to make an important decision, you really want to find out what God wants you to do, right? And so how do you know what God wants you to do?

Because most people, they're not getting visions or dreams, you know. Not a lot of people get those. Some people claim to, sometimes I'm not always sure if that's true or not.

But still, people are looking for answers for decisions, especially bigger ones, right? Should I take this job? Should I go to this school?

[24 : 19] Should I do this adoption or something like that? Joe? Should I take the COVID vaccine or not? Yeah, that's a big decision.

I just tell you that. Okay. Okay. And so one thing that I've heard a lot which points to this passage is, well, if you have a big decision to make, you can pray about it.

Pray. And then according to this verse, let the peace of God rule in your heart. And this word rule, a lot of times they'll even point to this actually means to make a judgment or arbitration, like a discernment.

And so they'll say, well, pray about it, and if you have a peace about it, has anybody heard of that? If you have a peace about it, then you can maybe go forward with the decision that you were considering.

And this verse will be used. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. But is that what this is saying? Well, let's look.

[25 : 34] When you're reading a Bible verse just like this, it's hard to tell, right? Roger, did you have something? Well, I was just going to ask. Jonah was going against God.

And he was down in the ship sleeping. He was at peace running from God. But Paul writes, that every day I bear the burden of all the churches.

Oh, that's good, Roger. Did he have a peace in his heart? I mean, to a certain degree he did, but there was a lot of turmoil along with it. He had an assurance, but sometimes I use that peace of God business because I want God to agree with me.

Yeah, Chris? I think oftentimes people are really concerned about God's will for decisions that they make about buying houses, cars, stuff like that.

Right. Whereas in reality, God wants you to do this will as relates to the word of God, and these things are not what they're important to him.

[26 : 44] Amen. If you live your life, as the Bible says, then the other things really are not that's exactly right. I think that's the right view of understanding the will of God.

God has a will for us as believers, as his children, on how we ought to live our life, and they are general principles for how to live a life that's honoring to him, to love him and to love our neighbor. And a lot of the details, and sometimes they're important details, they're important to us, these big decisions. But a lot of times, they are just up to us.

And we ought to live our lives in a way that honors him, and so we want to make decisions that honor him, but sometimes, whether you buy that house or don't, you can honor the Lord either way, right?

But to us, it feels like the weight of these decisions can have these tremendous impacts, and sometimes they can have a tremendous impact, but it's not always for ultimate spiritual good or ill, right?

[27 : 53] It might just be, well, I'm paying too much of a mortgage payment, that might be a bad decision, right? You buy too much house, and now you're three years later, you wish you hadn't bought so much house, things like that, but anyway.

But let's look specifically, what is this talking about? Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. So like I said, that word rule can mean to judge or arbitrate or even discern.

And actually sometimes knowing, I put this note, sometimes knowing the Greek can be a little bit dangerous, right? Because we look at the Greek words, and it kind of adds a little bit of extra confidence, right?

Oh, we're looking at the Greek words, and so now we really understand this a lot better. Sometimes that's not enough, just knowing the Greek doesn't help. But peace just like the word spirit can mean multiple things.

And it's interesting that it's just in any language, words can have multiple meanings, and sometimes very different, right? I mean, the word rose is one of those great examples, right?

[29 : 05] It can mean to get up, or it can be a flower, right? Those are completely different things. peace. But sometimes words can have different meanings, but they're related to each other.

And I think in this case, the word peace, and the same with spirit, right? There's a relation there.

Even though they mean very distinctly different things, there's a relation there. An attitude or a disposition towards something is something that you can't see, just like a spirit, right?

And so, in this case, we have the word peace can mean two different things, but they are related.

And so, one meaning of the word peace is kind of what's in view in this kind of wrong, I think, view of this.

And it's about a subjective feeling. To have a peace in your heart is more about how you feel, right?

And so, it's like I wrote down, and I can't remember if I got this from the dictionary, an inner harmony or an emotional tranquility.

And I think the Bible actually uses this for the word peace. If we look over at Philippians 4, verse 6, I think it's actually talking about that kind of peace, Philippians 4, 6.

[30 : 23] Just over a few pages. And Paul says this, be anxious for nothing. To be anxious is to be worried.

That's an emotional state, right? But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

That's an emotional tranquility. You can be worried, or you can allow God's peace to rule your heart. peace to love. But then, there's also an objective definition of the word peace.

And in this case, it's the antonym for peace is the word war, or conflict. You have conflict or war between two groups or two people.

And to have peace is where you have a reconciliation or a harmony between them instead of a conflict. Romans 5.1 says this, therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[31 : 36] And some people might think, oh, well, that means you have a peace in your heart. That may be true, that we do have a peace in our heart, but when you come to the Lord, when you're reconciled to the Lord, you remove the conflict.

The Bible says that there was previously enmity. You know, that's not a word that we use typically today. enmity, but it means you were enemies of God. We were enemies. We were at odds with him.

And when we come to him and we humble ourselves and we put our trust and faith in him, that conflict is removed. And now there's harmony, there's peace. We have a loving relationship with God rather than conflict with him that leads to judgment ultimately.

So, though we might have peace in our hearts when it comes to the Lord now, this verse, Romans 5, 1, is actually talking about an objective state where we are at harmony with God instead of a conflict with him.

And so, let's go back to, what is it, Colossians 3, 15, and let's go back a few verses. Colossians 3, 15, and let the peace of God.

[32 : 48] Let's look at verse 9. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

So, don't lie to each other. He's talking to this church in Colossae and saying, don't lie to each other, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

And he says this in verse 11, where there is, and he's talking about the new man. He says, you are part of the new man. He says this, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and all.

So, he said, it used to be that there are all these different groups, Greek and Jew. Did the Greek and the Jew, did they get along? Circumcised and uncircumcised?

Nope. Didn't get along. Barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, there's conflict, right? It can be, at least, between slave and free or slave and master.

[34 : 01] Then he says this, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and long suffering. Then he says this in verse 13, bearing

with one another.

So bearing, bearing a load, or we might say in today's parlance, putting up with one another, right? Putting up with each other and forgiving one another.

If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you all so must do. You need to forgive. Be willing to forgive, just like Christ did. But above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

So he's been talking about conflict. There's this conflict that you might have in your church. Has anybody ever experienced that? We have conflict with people in a church, whether it's a local church, or sometimes it's the wider body of Christ, right?

But there can be conflict. And he's saying, hey, listen, it used to be there were Jews, and Gentiles, uncircumcised and circumcised. And he's saying, it's not that way anymore.

[35 : 15] We're all one in Christ. We're one people. And so we need to live as if that's the case. We need to live that way, and we need to bear with each other. We need to be willing to forgive one another.

And so when he says in verse 15, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were also called in one body, he's saying, let this peace, not conflict with one another, where there's the uncircumcised and the circumcised, where there's the Jew and the Gentile, but peace, harmony. Don't allow conflict to rule in your dealings with one another. pastor Marv? It's impressive here in the Greek that these are imperatives, which means Paul is not making suggestions.

These are commands. These are orders. And they call for an activation of your will. You say, well, compassion thing. That's just not my thing.

I just, you know, to me, that's weakness. But Paul is really saying that is within your purview, within your capability.

[36 : 28] So it isn't a matter of inability. It's a matter of unwillingness. So he's kind of saying, get with the program. And we say, well, that's just not my style.

Well, make it your style. That's the imperative coming through. So we see that as, like I said, not an option, but it's a command.

Yeah. And it comes from the Lord. Yeah. If you couldn't hear that, Pastor Mark was just saying, these are imperatives. These are commands, not suggestions or recommendations. This is how we ought to live as Christians.

And we have the ability to do so. It's not a matter of necessarily training. Though we can develop habits, good habits, right? But it's just doing what we ought to do.

Here's another one. And this is, maybe I should skip around some of these, because some of these I think are more common in the kind of megachurch thing.

[37 : 32] But we'll do this one. I've heard this in the past a lot of times from worship leaders. Jesus said that if I am lifted up, he will draw all men unto him.

And so if we lift up the name of Jesus today in praise and worship, people will see that and they'll be drawn to Jesus. Anybody ever heard that or is that just me? Anybody? No?

Okay. And that comes from John 12, 32. Let's look at that real quick. We'll do this one pretty quickly because I think this one is easy to see.

John 12, 32. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

Now, did you notice that there was something missing when I first quoted that? Yeah, from the earth. Well, that right there is some context. I'm lifted up from the earth.

[38 : 35] Okay. And then just all you have to read is one more verse, right? And what does it say? Thus, he said, signifying by what death he would die.

Right? And so, when he's talking about being lifted up, what's he talking about? The cross. In fact, there's another passage, in fact, I wrote it down here, in the book of John, where he talks about just like something that happened in the wilderness.

And what happened in the wilderness? Moses lifted up. This is such a bizarre story, right? He lifted up this staff, right?

It was a staff with a snake on it. And if everybody, if people would just look up at that snake on that staff, they would be healed of their, what was it, snake bites, right?

These poisonous snakes. And what a funny story in the Old Testament. But Jesus brought it up and he said in John 3, 14, he said, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, lifted up that staff, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in him should not perish but have

eternal life.

[39 : 50] And Jesus, I mean, just in the same way, right? That cross, he was nailed to it and then it was lifted up. And even today we look up, you know, this is a figurative sense, but we look up at the cross, what Jesus did for us on the cross.

And that is where eternal life is, looking to him, putting our faith and trust in what he did on the cross. And so when Jesus said, and if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself, that I'm sure was confusing to people when he was speaking it, right?

Because it was before the cross. But looking back, it's very obvious and clear. And even in the scripture here, John tells us, well, he was talking to about his death. So that was, all you need sometimes is just read one more verse and you get the context.

Let's see, what else should we look at here? We've got ten more minutes. Let's do, let's do Jeremiah 29, 11.

Jeremiah 20, this is, I think so far we've been in the New Testament, so this is an Old Testament one. Jeremiah 29, 11. This is a passage or a verse that is quoted a lot, that is on a lot of printed material.

[41 : 20] People will sometimes have this in their homes. And it says this, for I know the thoughts, or some versions I think say plans, that I think or have towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a hope, or a future and a hope.

Anybody, who's heard that verse quoted before? Everybody, right, basically. And it's a very, it can be a very encouraging verse, especially if somebody's going through a very difficult time in their life, right?

Somebody's going through a difficult time, and you think, man, the Lord has just forgot about me. You know, sometimes you can feel that way. You're going through a lot of difficulty, it seems like the Lord doesn't care, he's not looking after me, it's just me, and somebody will give this verse.

And the interesting thing about this verse is it's actually true. Does the Lord have a future plan for us? Does he give us hope?

He does. Is his thoughts toward us evil thoughts, or are they good thoughts? They're good thoughts. Is his plans for us good? All of that is true.

[42 : 43] But is this verse directed towards us specifically? Not at all. So let's look at it. Jeremiah 29, let's look just at the beginning of the chapter.

We could look and say, well, who's speaking? That's an easy one. It's Jeremiah. Who's Jeremiah? He's a prophet of the Lord. So it's the Lord speaking through Jeremiah. But if we go to the beginning of the chapter, it says, now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.

And if we go down a few more verses to verse 4, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon. So Jeremiah is giving a message from the Lord to all of these Israelites who God had intentionally made to be carried away by the Babylonians from their land, away from their land, to this foreign land into captivity, into exile.

And so when we get down, so that's the context. And so when we get to verse 11, or let's read verse 10, the verse before, it says this, for thus says the Lord, after 70 years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word towards you and cause you to return to this place.

[44 : 26] So he said, I'm giving you 70 years in this captivity. It's interesting, I was just reading this in a commentary, and you kind of take this with a grain of salt, but one of the things that the Israelites were supposed to do was to have a day of rest for the land.

How often were they supposed to do that? Every seven years. And they didn't do it, did they? The Bible says that they didn't do it. Yeah.

And so 70 years, what's 70 times 70? Or seven times 70? 490. And so they were saying that for all these years under the kings of Israel, or something like that, I can't remember who it was from.

It was 490 years, and they hadn't done this sabbatical year through all that time. So these 70 years kind of made up.

This was the land of Israel rested, at least when it came to the Israelites, right? They didn't plant or sow in their fields because they were taken captive. Anyway, that's just a side note I just read recently.

[45 : 45] Interesting. Okay. So just lied fallow. Yeah. Yeah.

So that rest that God commanded, they got caught up on that. But verse 10, thus says the Lord, after 70 years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word towards you and cause you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. So he's saying, I sent you out on exile, but my thoughts towards you Israel is still for good.

And I'm going to bring you back to this place. And so don't think that I forgot about you. I didn't forget about you. Even though it might feel that way, I didn't. My plans for you, I have a future plan and a future hope for Israel, for the people of Israel.

And it's in an actual location, the actual location of Israel, the land that he promised to them. Yeah, Pastor Marv. Here's a perfect example of how humans can allow their own logic and their own reasoning to override that of God.

[47 : 03] He said, let the land lie idle for seven years. They think, well, that would be great in theory. In reality, we can't afford to do that.

We just have to have the crop that comes from that land. We just can't give it a year off. It would be nice if we could, but that's not reasonable. They paid for it.

They did. Should we make a big deal out of this? People want to use that verse and apply it to themselves. I think we should.

I think we should hold people to account, especially when it comes to unbelievers. Somebody will see that, or maybe even somebody who's a young Christian. They'll see, here's a verse, and I'm applying it to myself.

I can just do that with anything in the Bible. I can just take any verse I want and apply it to myself, regardless of the context, regardless of the audience, regardless of who it's being spoken to.

[48 : 07] That puts people in a dangerous position, or a position where they're not really trying to understand the Bible for the purpose for which it was written, but are just using it as kind of a devotional, I don't even want to say devotional, but kind of like a self-help type of book, something to make me feel good, rather than trying to understand it for the purpose for which it is written.

And is there any lack of verses written to the body of Christ about our hope and our future? No, there are all kinds. Ephesians 1.11, God has in Him also in Him predestined, predestined means planned, God has a plan for us, according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and He is the guarantee of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory.

Is that a hope and a future? It is, and it's a hope and a future for the body of Christ. And so, we should be pointing to those kinds of scriptures for us in the body of Christ.

Yeah? If for no other reason, it behooves me to be careful, God spoke these words, I have no right to misuse them.

[49 : 45] Yeah. Yeah, that's good. These are God's words, and He doesn't, you know, He has an intention and a purpose with them.

And like the Bible says elsewhere, and we'll actually get into this later, the Bible is not a book for private interpretation, not something just for us to interpret however we think is good for us.

But there's an objective interpretation for the scriptures, and we ought to be understanding the Bible rightly. So we'll finish there. Any other thoughts before I finish up? All right, thanks everybody.

Good■. Instead of coming out to everyday, littlegeb New Harris and All right, say the first■ of the Israelites or the Kann create an vine gap Cor