

UNDERSTAND THEIR HOME What Does It Mean?

Moving from exploration to interpretation...

- From what the text says to what the text means.
- From questions of content to questions of context.

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT . . .

- The definition of context...
 - ▶ Context = that which **goes with** the text.
- The dilemma created by context...
 - ▶ The Bible communicates eternal content.
 - ▶ The Bible communicates through **specific** contexts.
 - ▶ How do we go from then and there to here and now?
- The dedication to context...
 - ▶ We work to step into the author's shoes and determine his **Original** intent.
 - ▶ A biblical text can never mean what it never **means**.
 - ▶ Context **shapes** meaning.
 - ▶ The rule of context: CONTEXT **RULES!**
- The diversity of contexts...
 - ▶ Our context.
 - ▶ Their context.

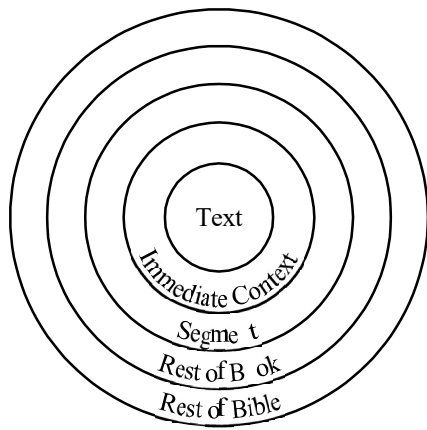
CONSIDER OUR CONTEXT . . .

- Our preunderstandings:
 - ▶ All of our preconceived **notions** that we unconsciously or consciously bring to the text.
 - ▶ Our **pride**.
 - Pride knows before listening.
 - ▶ Our **agenda**.
 - Two options:
 - b Stand over the meaning of the text.
 - b Kneel **under** the meaning of the text.
 - ▶ Our familiarity.
 - Don't skip over a text just because it's familiar.
- Our **culture**
- Language.
- Customs.
- Stories.
- **Family**.
- Values.
- Economics.
- Politics.
- Ethnicity
- **Gender**.
- Religion.
- Arts.

- **Images.**
- ▶ Our goal: **Minimize** subjectivity!
 - But not completely...
- Our presuppositions:
 - ▶ The Bible is inspired.
 - ▶ The Bible is reliable.
 - ▶ The Bible is **unified.**
 - ▶ The Bible is diverse.
 - ▶ The Bible is **supernatural.**
 - Thus the Bible has tension and mystery to it.
 - ▶ The Bible is **purposeful.**
- So how can we best understand their context?

CONSIDER THEIR CONTEXT...

- Never forget that Scripture was God's Word to other people **Before** it became God's Word to us.
 - ▶ God cared deeply about **them.**
 - ▶ God cares deeply about us.
- Literary Context:
 - ▶ Genres.
 - Different forms or kinds of biblical texts.
 - We need to know the **rules** involved with different genres.
 - Old Testament...
 - Narrative
 - Law
 - Poetry
 - Prophets
 - Wisdom
 - New Testament
 - Letters
 - Gospels
 - Parables
 - Acts
 - Revelation
- ▶ **Grammar**
 - Individual words, phrases, clauses all find meaning in context.
- ▶ Surroundings.
 - The Bible contains an integrated message in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20, NIV)

*“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”
(Revelation 3:21, NIV)*

■ HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT . . .

- ▶ The time and culture of the author and his readers, including the social, geographical, topographical, and political factors that are relevant to the author’s setting.
- ▶ Get to know the **author**...

*“This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down.
We know that his testimony is true.” (John 21:24, NIV)*

- ▶ Get to know the **audience**...

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31, NIV)

- ▶ Get to know the geographic conditions...

“When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria.” (John 4:3-4, NIV)

- ▶ Get to know the **social** conditions...

*“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ‘Will you give me a drink?’”
(John 4:7, NIV)*

- ▶ Get to know the religious conditions...

*“The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?’ (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)”
(John 4:9, NIV)*