

## THE BIBLE - A GUIDE

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- Before each study, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and enlighten your mind.
- Consider the whole context of the subject, not just a single text.
- If context is ignored, the results of the interpretations can be "text-mangling" or "text-garbling." (see below)
- Set aside all preconceived ideas, and let the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit speak to you.
- Check if there are other parables adjacent to or surrounding this subject that are also given to teach the same lesson.
- Read passages from two or more translations; check out interlinear translations and word meanings as required.
- Consider the customs of the time and country.
- Determine to whom the subject is being addressed.
- Accumulate all the facts and list them.
- Consider the relevancy of the facts to the intended message.
- Consider all the pros and cons of possible interpretations and the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Now pull it all together and come up with a conclusion.
- Share this conclusion with others, asking them for their opinion on your thoughts. Be open to a different view.
- Even after having reaching a conclusion, avoid being dog-matic; always keep an open mind.

### The Importance of Contextual Study

- If the context is disregarded, then a word, sentence, or verse may be taken out from its context and interpreted as something quite foreign to the writer's original meaning.
- Every sentence and every verse has something going before it and something following after it. Consider these verses.
- It is essential to our understanding of the *words* to find out why they are placed there in that particular context.
- Disregarding the context has been responsible for many false teachings and wrong religious traditions.

### What Is Text-mangling - Text-garbling?

**Text-mangling:** The practice of extracting a few words without regard to the context in which it is found and assigning an interpretation and teaching that is *non-contextual* and therefore erroneous. Examples of text-mangling:

**Isaiah 28:10** is used to teach a method of study – *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”* However, when considering vs. 13, it shows this is not the meaning at all - *“But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.”*

**Psalms 50:5** is applied by some to Jesus' disciples – *“Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”* However, the context of this Psalm is one of judgment *against*

*unfaithful Israel*, and the *covenant of sacrifice* refers to that which was made with them at Mt. Sinai, including *animal sacrifice*.

**Text-garbling:** The practice of taking part of a verse of Scripture and connecting it with another verse to teach something that was not intended. An absurd example of text-garbling might be:

“Judas went out and hung himself. Go and do likewise.” -(A combining of Matthew 27:5 and Luke 10:37.)

Studying God’s Word correctly brings a new dimension into our lives. The Scriptures offer wisdom that can be found nowhere else in the world. God’s Word brings purpose and hope to the believer’s heart and life. It brings peace of mind, knowing that God is Sovereign and in complete control, that He has a Perfect Plan that will one day remove all evil from this earth in which we live and replace it with the peace and righteousness for which man has been searching for many thousands of years. This will be a true Utopia beyond man’s highest dreams or hopes.

While Biblical knowledge is important, what is essential is to come to *know* Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father in an *intimate* and *personal* way. This comes by spending much time in study and prayerful meditation in the Gospels with Jesus, in the Epistles to the Churches, and in the wonderful prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament which spoke clearly of the Messiah and the hope for all mankind. Jesus said, “*If you know me, you know the Father.*”

We would like to recommend two booklets that focus on knowing God and the Lord Jesus Christ better: “**How Well Do You Know God?**” and “**How Well Do You Know The Lord Jesus Christ?**” If you would like to receive these absolutely free, send your request to:

**CHRISTIAN DISCIPLING MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL**  
32 Chapel Lane, Somersworth, NH 03878