

How To Interpret Scripture

Lesson - 7 — Language, Text, and Context

TEXT “ONLINE” to 40544

Memory Verse

Deuteronomy 31:26 (NKJV) “Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;

More than 6,000 languages are spoken among the world’s billions. The complete Bible has been translated into more than 600 languages, with the New Testament or some portions translated into more than 2,500 other languages, as well.

Understanding the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV) *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Deuteronomy 5:29 (NKJV) *Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!*

Deuteronomy 32:46–47 (NKJV) *and he said to them: “Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. [“all the words of this law” the Torah, or “instruction”]⁴⁷ For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”*

Joshua 1:7–8 (NKJV) *Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

Words and Their Meanings

Eros: romantic, passionate love. ... **Philia:** intimate, authentic friendship. ... **Storge:** unconditional, familial love. ... **Agápe:** empathetic, universal love. The Hebrew word *chesed* (mercy) is one of the richest and most profound words in the Old Testament.

1 Kings 3:6 (NKJV) *And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.*

Psalms 57:3 (NKJV) *He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.*

Psalms 66:20 (NKJV) *Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!*

Psalms 143:8 (NKJV) *Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.*

Micah 7:20 (NKJV) *You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.*

The Hebrew word *shalom* is often translated as “peace.”

Aloha is the most Hawaiian word. In the Hawaiian language, it can mean hello or goodbye. It also means love and affection. It can be used with a good morning good afternoon and good night.

Numbers 6:24–26 (NKJV) *“The Lord bless you and keep you;²⁵ The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;²⁶ The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.” ’ *shalom**

Job 3:26 (NKJV) *I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.”*

Psalms 29:11 (NKJV) *The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.*

Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV) *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Repetition, Word Patterns, and Meaning

Genesis 1:26, 27 (NKJV) *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Notice the threefold repetition of the word “create.”

Genesis 2:1–3 *Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.² And on **the seventh day** God ended His work*

which He had done, and He rested on **the seventh day** from all His work which He had done.³ Then God blessed **the seventh day** and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Isaiah 6:1–3 (NKJV) *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.³ And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”*

In Daniel 3, we have a repetition (with variations) of the phrase “**the image which Nebuchadnezzar set up**” (Dan. 3:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 18, NKJV). This phrase, or variations of it, is repeated 10 times in the chapter to contrast Nebuchadnezzar’s action in defiance of the image God revealed to him through Daniel (Dan. 2:31–45).

John 8:58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

Texts and Contexts

- Understanding context begins with four principles: literal meaning (what it says), historical setting (the events of the story, to whom it is addressed, and how it was understood at that time), grammar (the immediate sentence and paragraph within which a word or phrase is found) and synthesis (comparing it with other parts of Scripture for a fuller meaning).

Genesis 1:27 (NKJV) *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Genesis 2:7 (NKJV) *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

Genesis 5:1–5 (NKJV) *This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.² He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.³ And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.⁴ After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters.⁵ So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.*

- In order to read the Bible in context, we need to read it in its historical context—beginning with the author and the original audience.

- And in Revelation 3:15–16, the Laodicean church is described as neither “hot” nor “cold”—reflecting the cultural features of two nearby cities: Hierapolis had hot springs that were of medicinal value, while Colossae had cold springs that brought nourishment and refreshment; Laodicea’s water was lukewarm, tasteless, and useless. The cultural features of Laodicea inform the historical circumstances: “the spiritual life of the church had become like her city’s water supply— lukewarm and useless”
- For example, we read about Abraham and his journey from Moses’ point-of-view as he led Israel through the wilderness on the way to the promised land. An important question to ask, then, is: “What is Moses teaching the Israelites about Abraham and the Patriarchs?”

Books and Their Messages

Genesis 15:1–5 (NKJV) *After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”² But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”³ Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”*

Genesis 22:17–18 (NKJV) *blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”*

“As the years rolled on, and he [Moses] wandered with his flocks in solitary places, pondering upon the oppressed condition of his people, he recounted the dealings of God with his fathers and the promises that were the heritage of the chosen nation, and his prayers for Israel ascended by day and by night. Heavenly angels shed their light around him. Here, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 251.