

You Sure? pt5

Ryan Abernathy / General

You sure? / Matthew 4:1–11

Philippians 4:13 ESV

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Jeremiah 29:11 ESV

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Matthew 7:1 ESV

“Judge not, that you be not judged.

Romans 13:1 ESV

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

I could go on...Bible verses that when we look at their actual context, mean some very different things than what they seem to mean when printed on a bumper sticker or coffee cup.

And these are the mild ones. There are some verses of scripture that when taken out of context have led to some really bad events in history.

I didn't take a hermeneutics class until I was working on my graduate degree. I was sitting in this class- halfway thru my Masters by the way- and the professor stood up in the front on the class on the first day and made a statement that has stayed with me since that day. *“The text cannot mean something to us, that it could not have meant to its original hearers. Context matters and it is often the key to understanding the most controversial parts of the Bible.”*

I was floored.

But the truth is, I should not have been. If I had been paying attention I would have realized that for scripture to have the authority that it claims to have it would have to be consistent. And to be consistent, it would have needed to make sense to its original hearers, as much as to me.

And...there is also no reason to think that the Enemy would not be smart enough not to use the Bible against us...to take the Word and twist it to make us doubt or to sin or to fall for something wholly other. That's what the Enemy does...and he tries to do it with everyone...He even tried to do it with Jesus.

Read [Matthew 4:1-11](#).

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

It is no coincidence that Jesus' temptation immediately follows his baptism. Many of God's people have had similar experiences. **Right after conversion or some other significant spiritual event, precisely when a certain level of victory or maturity seems to have been attained, temptations resume more strongly than ever**

The temptation of Jesus is a true trial by Scripture. The fasting was just a precursor to what the Enemy had in store for Jesus. *Coming to Him at His weakest, Satan hits him with a challenge "...if you are the Son of God..."*

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

The first-class conditional clause, "If you are the Son of God," does not imply any doubt on the devil's part (cf. Jas 2:19). **Rather, what is in doubt is what type of Son Jesus will be.** If stones can become children of Abraham (3:9) or provide water for the Israelites (Exod 17:1–7), then they can surely satisfy Jesus' hunger

Jesus responds with a verse of Scripture, one that speaks to the very situation before Him.

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

Jesus, however, replies by quoting **Deut 8:3**. In fact, for each of the three temptations he will refute the devil with Scripture, always from Deuteronomy, continuing the link with the Israelites' desert experience. In this instance the text he cites originally underscored God's provision of manna as an alternative to the Israelites' reliance on their own abilities to feed themselves. The principle applies equally well to Jesus' situation and to any other context in which people are tempted to give physical needs priority over spiritual needs

So Satan does what he does, he takes the Bible and twists it. Look at verse 5-6.

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

This time the devil asks Jesus to demonstrate miraculously God's ability to preserve his life. The devil again knows that Jesus has the power to do this, and he cites **Ps 91:11–12** to justify it. There God promises all who "dwell in the shelter of the Most High" (Ps 91:1) safeguarding and protection. The devil's mistake is to confuse the psalmist's stumbling so as to fall with Jesus' deliberately jumping off

He takes these passages out of their context and tries to use them to get Jesus to do something that would be against God.

Folks, that's not a one time trick. (Story of slave castle in Africa...)

That's just one example. Out of context verses of the Bible have been used to justify the crusades, the subjugation of women, manipulating God (anyone remember the prayer of Jabez? 1 Chronicles 4:9-10) the list goes on. When we don't check the context, what the hearers would have understood, we can be led very far astray.

And it's not just led astray for the purposes of mass genocide or war, it can even be led astray to another religion entirely, one that does not even resemble Christianity. We see that a lot today in our country, as people push back against the ungodly co-option of Christianity by a segment of far right politicians, we have a segment of people, who in trying to answer the false claims of American Christian Nationalism veer into an unorthodoxy of a different sort- denying basic doctrines of the faith like Jesus dying for people's sins, embracing universalism, and generally turning Jesus into a good teacher/philosopher rather than a Savior and King.

All because we stopped reading the Bible in context.

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

We must not test God's faithfulness to his word by manufacturing situations in which we try to force him to act in certain ways. **We dare not deliberately put our lives in danger as some kind of fleece.** Jesus thus replies by quoting **Deut 6:16** on not testing God. The original context alluded to Israel's rebellion against the Lord at Massah

So how can we combat this? Well, the book we recommended this week is a great help, but let me give you some simple steps to help you get started: (ex from Philippians 4:13

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/victory-suffering/>)

- Where does the verse fit with the verses around it? How do the verses around it affect its meaning?- referring to Paul enduring suffering and trial
- What is happening in the lives of the people reading the verses? What would it have meant to them in their time? How does that make your reading different?- Paul is under house arrest and suffering

- What do the words MEAN? (Accordance app) If any of the words have a variety of meanings let's be sure we know what the word was intended to be.- "can do" is better prevail over in regard to suffering for the sake of the Gospel
- How do the verses and their meaning fit into the over all message of the Bible? (Synthesis)- that God is the source of our strength and not our own efforts

When we begin to read the Bible like this we are BETTER equipped to deal with temptation. Take a look at verses 8-10.

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

After having tempted Jesus to satisfy a legitimate bodily appetite in an illegitimate way and then to use his supernatural power to rebel against God even while seeming to demonstrate great faith, **Satan now makes the most brazen offer of all. He will give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in return for worship.** Ironically, Jesus would receive this glory anyway after his death and resurrection; but here the devil tries to seduce him with instant power, authority, and wealth apart from the way of the cross. *Satan regularly tempts Christians in the same way— with the success syndrome, empire building, or alleged guarantees of health and wealth. But the devil's price is damning. He requires nothing short of selling one's soul in worshiping him, which leads inexorably to eternal judgment*

This was a HUGE temptation for Jesus. Have the whole world without the cross. No suffering. No pain. No death. But at a HUGE cost. And Jesus answers with Scripture.

Matthew 3. Jesus Alone: The Messiah's Temptation (4:1–11)

Jesus rightly rejects the devil's offer and quotes Deuteronomy for a third time (**Deut 6:13**). Only one is worthy of worship, the One who redeemed Israel from Egypt, the Lord God Yahweh himself. Jesus' insistence on worshiping God alone makes the characteristic Matthean theme of worshiping Jesus (e.g., 2:2; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:17) all the more significant as evidence for his divinity.

And the Enemy flees. The Enemy flees from truth y'all. (v11)

Our struggle is often that we are not fully grounded in that truth, or that we twist what God has told us is good into something more or less than what He actually said. That's [Genesis 3](#). God tells Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of one tree. The Enemy misrepresents God, and then they misquote what God has said- adding a prohibition about touching...and the Enemy pounces. Calling God unreasonable and implying that He is denying them something because He is selfish. That leads to the entry of sin into the world...all because the Word was misinterpreted.

That extends not just to followers of Jesus, but to those of you who are still on the fence and debating who Jesus is and what He is asking of you.

For some of us, the deception of twisted scripture has kept us away from Jesus. Let me share some verses in context with you this morning ([John 3:16-17](#))

Jesus loves you. He wants to meet you where you are this morning. And when He meets you there, He loves you too much to leave you there. He has a plan for you, for your good, and to carry you through the bad..the valley of the shadow...

(this sermon is partially indebted to <https://rockthis.org/faith/context-101-your-comprehensive-guide-to-understanding-scripture>)

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