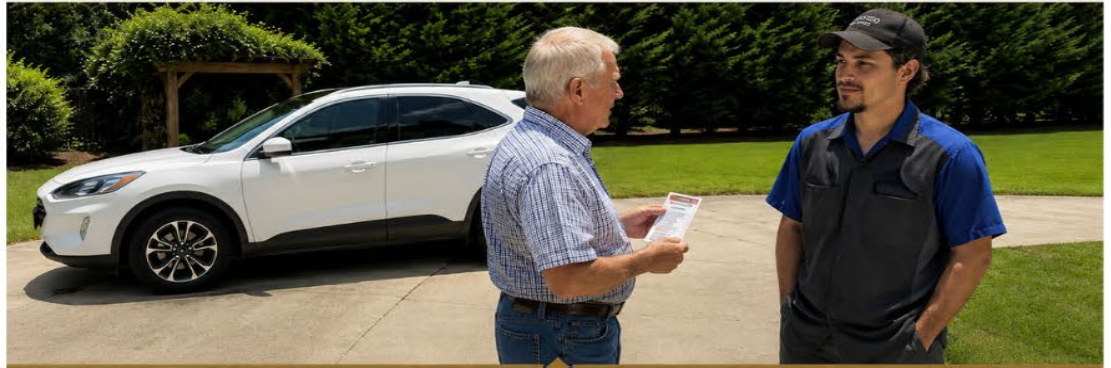


HELPING JWS DISCOVER THE REAL JESUS
LET GOD'S WORD SPEAK FOR ITSELF

Helping Jehovah's Witnesses With God's Word

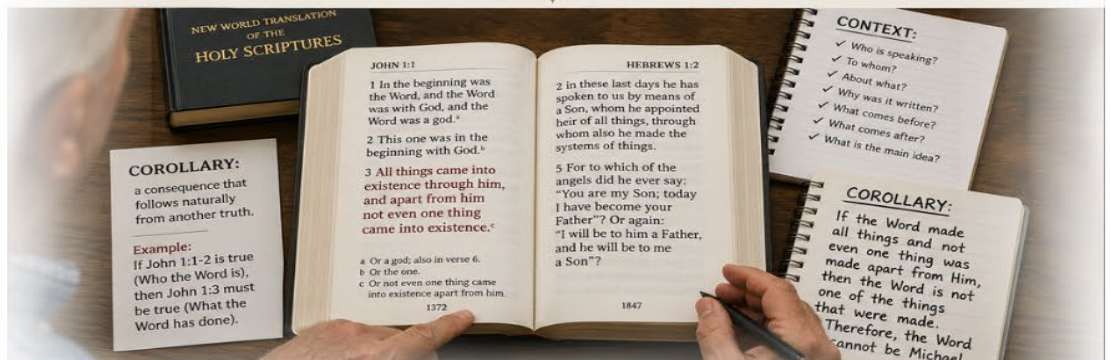
Learning to Use Context and Corollary to Let Scripture Speak for Itself



LET ALL BEGIN WITH THREE QUESTIONS

Helping Jehovah's Witnesses With God's Word

Learning to Use Context and Corollary to Let Scripture Speak for Itself



TRUTH FOLLOWS FROM TRUTH

Helping Jehovah's Witnesses With God's Word

Learning to Use Context and Corollary to Let Scripture Speak for Itself



LET THE BIBLE INTERPRET THE BIBLE

Helping JW's Discover the Real Jesus

Let God's Word Speak for Itself

Why I Wrote This Booklet

For many years I have asked the LORD to place people in my path who sincerely desire to know the truth. Sometimes those opportunities come unexpectedly. This booklet began because of one of those divine appointments. I was not looking for a Jehovah's Witness. I was simply trying to be faithful to share the gospel with every person the LORD brought across my path. What happened that day taught me once again that God's Word is more powerful than our arguments when we simply allow it to speak for itself.

A young Ford technician came to my home to repair a warranty problem on my vehicle. After he finished the repair, he handed me the paperwork to sign. As he prepared to leave, I reached into my pocket, just as I have done hundreds of times before, and handed him one of my Goodness Test cards. The card briefly explains God's Law, our sin, and the wonderful truth that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. I simply began reading the card with him, never imagining where the conversation would lead.

When I reached the statement at the bottom that reads, "Salvation is not in any religion, only in Jesus Christ," the young man smiled and quietly said, "I am a Jehovah's Witness." His words did not frighten me or make me defensive. Instead, they reminded me that this young man was someone for whom Christ died. He did not need an argument. He needed someone willing to open the Scriptures with kindness, patience, and confidence that God's Word is true.

Instead of immediately discussing doctrine, I asked him three simple questions.

Do you consider yourself an honest person?

Do you believe the Bible is the absolute authority for your faith and life?

Do you believe that no truth in Scripture will ever contradict another Scripture?

He answered yes to every question. Those three answers became the foundation for everything that followed. If the Bible is our final authority, then we must be willing to believe whatever it says. If Scripture never contradicts itself, then every passage must agree perfectly with every other passage. Those simple truths became our common ground before we ever discussed a single doctrine.

That conversation became the beginning of this booklet. My purpose is not to teach you how to argue with Jehovah's Witnesses. My purpose is to help you learn two simple biblical principles that anyone can understand. Once you understand them, you will not only be better prepared to speak with Jehovah's Witnesses, but you will also become a better student of God's Word. These principles have helped me countless times through the years because they keep bringing me back to the same conclusion: let God's Word speak for itself.

The first principle is called context.

The second principle is called corollary.

Those two words may sound difficult at first, but they are really very simple. In the pages that follow, we will learn them one step at a time. By the time you finish reading this booklet, I believe you will discover that they are as easy to understand as learning the ABCs. More importantly, you will see how these two principles allow the Bible to explain itself without forcing our opinions into the text.

Remember this one thought as you read.

Truth is never afraid of examination.

If we honestly allow God's Word to speak for itself, it will always agree with itself.

Context Always Comes First

Suppose you walked into the middle of a conversation and heard someone say, "I never want to see you again!" Without knowing anything else, you might conclude that two people were angry with one another. But what if the person was reading from a play? What if he was quoting someone else? What if he was describing something that happened years earlier? Suddenly the meaning changes because the context changes. The words stayed exactly the same, but the setting explained what they really meant. That is why context is so important.

The Bible is no different. Every verse has a setting. Someone is speaking. Someone is listening. There is a reason those words were written. There are verses before it and verses after it. When we ignore those things, we can make almost any verse appear to teach something it was never intended to teach. God did not write His Word to confuse us. He gave us the context to protect the true meaning of His Word.

Think about reading only one sentence from the middle of a letter someone sent you. You might misunderstand the entire letter because you ignored everything that came before and everything that followed. That is exactly what happens when people build doctrines upon isolated verses. They read a verse without asking the simple questions that reveal its meaning. The safest student of the Bible is the one who allows the context to explain the passage before drawing a conclusion.

Whenever you study a verse, ask yourself these simple questions.

Who is speaking?

To whom is he speaking?

What is he talking about?

Why was it written?

What comes before it?

What comes after it?

Those six questions will protect you from many misunderstandings. They are simple enough for a child to remember, yet they have helped Bible students for centuries. Before asking what a verse means to us, we should first discover what it meant in its original setting. Once we understand the context, we are ready to see the truth God intended us to see.

Jesus Himself demonstrated the importance of context when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. Satan quoted Scripture. His words came directly from the Bible. Yet Jesus never accepted Satan's application because it violated the true meaning of the passage. In other words, Satan used Bible verses as pretexts. Jesus answered by placing those verses back into harmony with the rest of God's Word. Truth agreed with truth because the context was honored.

People sometimes joke by putting unrelated verses together. "Judas went and hanged himself." Then they add, "Go thou and do likewise," followed by, "What thou doest, do quickly." Every one of those statements comes from the Bible, yet together they produce a completely false message because the context has been ignored. That humorous illustration teaches a serious lesson. Whenever we remove verses from their setting, we no longer allow God to speak. Instead, we begin speaking for Him.

Now let us learn a second principle that is just as simple and just as powerful. It is called a corollary. Once you understand what a corollary is, you will begin seeing it throughout the Bible. It will help you

discover truths that naturally follow from what God has already said, and it will become one of the most useful tools you have when sharing the gospel with others.

Understanding a Corollary

The word corollary may sound like a difficult word, but the idea is actually very simple. A corollary is a truth that naturally follows another truth. It is the conclusion that must be true because something else has already been proven to be true. In mathematics, if two plus two equals four, then one plus three must also equal four. You did not invent another answer. The second statement naturally follows the first. That is a corollary. The same principle is found throughout the Scriptures because God never contradicts Himself.

Imagine someone tells you that a man built every house in a neighborhood. If every house was built by that man, then no house in that neighborhood was built by anyone else. You did not have to be told the second statement because it naturally follows the first. The first statement already contains the answer. Once you understand that principle, you are ready to see one of the greatest corollaries in all of Scripture.

Sometime after speaking with Timmy, I saw a husband and wife standing outside a Waffle House beside a literature display filled with Watchtower and Awake magazines. As I walked toward them, they kindly offered me one of their magazines. I smiled and said, "I always enjoy talking with Jehovah's Witnesses because I always learn something." They smiled back, and the conversation immediately became friendly rather than confrontational. They were no longer expecting an argument. They were simply having a conversation with someone who respected them enough to listen.

After we talked for a few minutes, I asked them a question they were not expecting.

"Do you know what a corollary is?"

Both of them reached for their iPads and quickly found the definition. They read that a corollary is a conclusion that naturally follows another proven truth. I thanked them for looking it up and then asked them another question.

"Did you know that John 1:3 is the corollary to John 1:1?"

They looked at one another with puzzled expressions. I then asked them to read John 1:3 from their own New World Translation. They read aloud, "All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence."

I then asked them to think carefully about what they had just read. If all things came into existence through Jesus Christ, and not even one thing came into existence apart from Him, what does that tell us? Every created thing belongs in the group of things that came into existence. Angels came into existence. Men came into existence. The heavens and the earth came into existence. Everything that has ever been created belongs in that one group.

Then comes the corollary.

If Jesus brought all created things into existence, then Jesus Himself cannot belong to the group of created things. The Creator cannot be part of His own creation. That conclusion does not come from a denomination. It does not come from a preacher. It comes naturally from the words of the verse itself. John 1:3 is the unavoidable conclusion that follows from John 1:1. The Word is eternal because the Word is the Creator of everything that was created.

The husband and wife quietly looked at one another. They packed up their literature, placed it in their vehicle, and drove away. I never saw them return to that location again. I have often prayed that the Holy

Spirit continued speaking to their hearts long after our brief conversation ended. That day reminded me once again that there is great power in allowing God's Word to speak for itself.

Now let us return to Timmy. The very same principle that helped me speak with the husband and wife became the foundation of my conversation with him. This time, however, the Lord added another passage of Scripture that strengthened the same truth even more.

Let God's Word Speak for Itself

When Timmy told me he was a Jehovah's Witness, I did not begin talking about the Watchtower Society. I did not criticize his religion. I simply asked him to read two passages from his own New World Translation. My purpose was not to prove that I was right. My purpose was to let God's Word speak for itself. I have learned through the years that people may disagree with me, but it is much harder to disagree with the plain meaning of God's Word when they are reading it with their own eyes. The Holy Spirit delights in using the Scriptures to accomplish what no human argument can ever accomplish.

I first asked Timmy to read John 1:3. After he finished reading, I asked him to notice two expressions that the translators had emphasized by their wording. The first was "all things." The second was "not even one thing." Those two expressions are the key to understanding the verse. They leave no room for exceptions. John was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit chose those words very carefully. God wanted every reader to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of everything that was ever created.

I then asked Timmy a simple question. "If Michael the Archangel is a created being, where would he belong?" The answer is obvious. He would belong in the group of things that came into existence. Every angel belongs in that group because angels are created beings. Then I asked another question. "According to John 1:3, who created

everything that came into existence?" The answer was equally clear. Jesus Christ created all things, and apart from Him not even one thing came into existence. The corollary follows naturally. If Jesus created every created thing, Jesus cannot Himself be a created being. The Creator cannot belong to the class of created things.

Notice what happened. I did not tell Timmy what to believe. I simply asked him to follow the words of the verse to their natural conclusion. That is one of the great blessings of understanding a corollary. Instead of forcing a doctrine into the text, we simply allow the text to lead us to the conclusion God intended. Truth follows truth because all truth comes from God.

Then I asked Timmy to turn to Hebrews chapter one. Again, we read from his own New World Translation. Hebrews begins by telling us that God made the worlds through His Son. That agrees perfectly with John chapter one. Then we came to verse five. There the Father asks a remarkable question: "To which one of the angels did He ever say, 'You are My Son'?" The answer is obvious. The Father never said that to any angel. Not once. Not to Gabriel. Not to Michael. Not to any angel who has ever existed.

Now the Scriptures stand together in beautiful harmony. John tells us that the Son created everything that was created. Hebrews tells us that the Father never called an angel His Son. One passage explains the Son's work. The other explains the Son's relationship to the angels. Together they leave us with one glorious conclusion. Jesus Christ is not Michael the Archangel. He is the eternal Son of God, worthy of the same honor, worship, and glory as the Father.

When Timmy heard those passages, he did not become angry. Instead, he looked at me respectfully and said that he appreciated my knowledge of the Scriptures. We shook hands and parted as friends. I have often prayed for him since that day. Only the Holy Spirit can open

a heart to the truth. Our responsibility is not to win arguments. Our responsibility is to faithfully open the Scriptures and trust God to do what only He can do.

Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned that day was this. We do not need to memorize dozens of arguments. We need to understand God's Word well enough to let one passage explain another. When context and corollary work together, the Bible becomes its own best teacher. That is exactly how God intended His Word to be understood.

A Method Every Believer Can Learn

Perhaps you are thinking, "I could never do what you did." Let me encourage you. You certainly can. I did not have a seminary classroom standing beside me that day. I simply had God's Word, a willing heart, and confidence that the Holy Spirit knows how to use the Scriptures. The same Holy Spirit who opened the hearts of people in the Book of Acts still opens hearts today. He delights in honoring His Word. If you will faithfully plant the seed of Scripture, He will take care of the harvest in His own time.

Do not feel that you must become an expert on every false religion before speaking with someone. That would be impossible. New teachings appear continually, and human reasoning can become very complicated. Instead, become an expert in allowing God's Word to interpret itself. Learn to ask simple questions. Learn to read the verses together. Learn to honor the context. Learn to recognize the corollaries that naturally follow from the text. Those simple habits will help you far more than memorizing long lists of arguments.

Always remember that you are talking with a person, not a religion. Jehovah's Witnesses are often sincere people. Many have devoted years of their lives to what they believe is true. They deserve kindness, patience, and respect. Never ridicule them. Never embarrass them. Never make them feel that your goal is to win an argument. Instead,

let them see the love of Christ in your attitude as well as in your words. A gentle spirit often opens doors that harsh words immediately close.

When the opportunity comes, begin by finding common ground. Ask questions that encourage the other person to think. Ask whether the Bible is the final authority. Ask whether Scripture can ever contradict itself. If the answer is yes to the first question and no to the second, then both of you have agreed upon the foundation before opening the Bible. From that point forward, allow the Scriptures to lead the conversation. You are no longer defending your opinion. You are simply following the Word of God wherever it leads.

Always ask the JW to read the Scriptures from his New World Translation. Sometimes the Holy Spirit uses a second reading to impress a truth upon the heart. Resist the temptation to do all the talking. Good teachers often ask good questions. Jesus frequently asked questions because questions cause people to think. They invite the listener to participate in discovering the truth instead of merely hearing someone else's conclusions.

I hope these two simple principles will remain with you for the rest of your life.

First, always honor the context.

God placed every verse exactly where He wanted it. Read what comes before it. Read what comes after it. Allow the setting to explain the meaning. Context protects the authority of God's Word by keeping us from making the Bible say what we want it to say. The context always takes precedence over any interpretation. It would good to memorize this last sentence. When you say it a JW is not likely to forget it.

Second, always look for the corollary.

Ask yourself, "What truth naturally follows from what God has just said?" Many wonderful doctrines become beautifully clear when we simply follow Scripture's reasoning. God is the greatest Teacher, and He delights in leading willing hearts from one truth to another.

As you continue reading the Bible, I believe you will begin noticing these two principles everywhere. Your confidence in the Scriptures will grow because you will see how perfectly they agree with one another. More importantly, you will become better prepared whenever the Lord places someone in your path who sincerely wants to know the truth. Whether that person is a Jehovah's Witness, a member of another religion, or simply someone searching for answers, the method remains the same.

Let God's Word speak for itself.

When God's Word speaks, the Holy Spirit speaks.

When the Holy Spirit speaks, hearts can change.

That is my prayer for every person who reads this booklet.

You do not have to become an expert on every false religion.

You simply need to become skilled at letting God's Word speak for itself.

May the Lord use you to help many discover the real Jesus.

With love and prayers,

Dave Weeks

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