

24-1013p - Detailed Summary

24-1013p - *Context Is Important*, Mike Mathis

Bible Reader: John Nousek

This detailed summary by ChatGPT

See the transcript: [Transcript HTML](#) - [Transcript PDF](#)

(Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

Context Is Important

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 37:12)

Scripture Reading (0:04 - 0:53), Acts 1:9-11, John Nousek

Outline, Preacher: Mike Mathis

CONTEXT IS IMPORTANT

Intro: Some people, when they read the Bible, seem to think that every time a word or phrase appears in a passage of scripture the same thing is meant. Sometimes a word or phrase may be literal or it may be figurative. Listening to a lesson given on You Tube, it seemed as if the speaker was trying to point out the particular phrase meant the same all the time it appeared. One thing he asked was, "Is context necessary?" The obvious answer is, "Yes!" What is this word or phrase? "Coming, or riding, in the clouds."

I. Figurative

- A. Riding through the heavens to help. (Deut. 33:26)
- B. The LORD rides upon a swift cloud (Isa. 19:1)
- C. Son of man coming in the clouds (Matt. 24:29-35)

II. Literal

- A. Parted, taken up through the cloud (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11)
- B. Those who have fallen asleep (died) (1st Thess. 4:13-18)
- C. The day of the LORD (2nd Pet. 3:1ff)

III. Using 1st Corinthians 15

- A. Not talking figuratively
- B. Not talking about nation rising against nation
- C. Resurrection chapter

Conclusion: Yes, context is important. Does a word or phrase always mean the same? That is determined by the context of passage it is set in. Is the word or phrase literal or figurative?

Invitation The transcription follows...

Transcript - Context Is Important

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading, Acts 1:9-11, John Nousek

(0:04 - 0:53) Introduction and Reading from Acts The transcript begins with a passage from the Book of Acts (Acts 1:9-11), describing the moment when Jesus ascended into heaven, witnessed by His disciples. Two men in white garments appear and tell the disciples that Jesus will return in the same manner He left. Following this, the speaker introduces the theme of the lesson: the importance of context in interpreting the Bible.

Sermon

Preacher: Mike Mathis

NOTE

This transcript emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between figurative and literal language in scripture, using examples from both the Old and New Testament to illustrate how different contexts shape interpretation.

1. (0:57 - 2:01) Context in Biblical Interpretation

The speaker emphasizes that context is crucial when interpreting scripture. He critiques a tendency by some readers to assume that every word or phrase in the Bible has a singular, unchanging meaning. However, the speaker argues that words can be used both literally and figuratively, depending on the context, referencing a YouTube lesson where the speaker misunderstood the meaning of certain phrases.

2. (2:03 - 5:17) "Coming or Riding in the Clouds" in Deuteronomy

The speaker introduces a recurring phrase, "coming or riding in the clouds," and how its meaning changes based on context. Using Deuteronomy 33:26, where God is described as riding the heavens, the speaker points out that this imagery reflects God's readiness to help, not a literal depiction of Him riding the clouds. The metaphor serves to remind people of God's ever-present assistance, as Moses reassures the Israelites that God will be with them.

3. (5:18 - 10:55) Judgment Against Egypt in Isaiah

The speaker shifts to Isaiah 19:1, where the Lord is described as riding a swift cloud to bring judgment on Egypt. This passage portrays Egypt's downfall, with internal strife, collapse of leadership, and conquest by a foreign ruler, the Assyrians. The speaker elaborates on how these events represent God using nations to execute His judgment, but again, this is figurative language describing political upheaval, not a literal image of God riding clouds.

4. (10:57 - 14:48) Jesus' Return in Matthew 24

Moving to Matthew 24:29-35, the speaker explores Jesus' prophecy about the "Son of Man coming on the clouds" after the tribulation. However, the speaker clarifies that this passage refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, not a future, final return of Jesus. He

underscores this interpretation by pointing to Jesus' assurance in verse 34 that "this generation" would witness these events, indicating the immediacy of the prophecy rather than a distant future event.

5. (14:50 - 17:20) **Literal and Figurative Language in Acts**

Returning to Acts 1:9-11, the speaker contrasts the figurative language previously discussed with the literal event of Jesus' ascension. Here, Jesus physically ascended into the clouds, and the angels assured the disciples that He would return in the same manner. This stands in contrast to the symbolic uses of "coming in the clouds" seen in earlier passages.

6. (17:21 - 23:43) **Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians**

The speaker addresses 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, where Paul comforts believers by explaining the resurrection of the dead and the return of Christ. Paul describes how the dead in Christ will rise first, followed by those still alive, to meet the Lord in the clouds. This passage, unlike others, is literal and speaks of a future event. The speaker clarifies that this is not referring to a nation rising against another but rather the hope of resurrection for believers.

7. (23:45 - 25:57) **Differentiating Figurative and Literal Meanings**

The speaker further contrasts the imagery in 1 Thessalonians with the figurative language in Isaiah and Matthew, explaining that the two should not be conflated. Each instance of "coming in the clouds" must be interpreted based on the context, whether referring to historical events like the destruction of Jerusalem or future events like the resurrection and return of Christ.

8. (26:00 - 27:14) **The Scoffers in 2 Peter**

The final section shifts to 2 Peter 3, where Peter addresses scoffers who question the promise of Christ's return. The scoffers argue that nothing has changed since the beginning of creation. The speaker introduces this passage to explain how Peter counters their argument by pointing to God's past actions, particularly the flood, to remind them of God's power to intervene in human history.

9. (27:14 - 28:42) – **The World Flooded and Future Destruction by Fire**

The speaker references the biblical story of the flood from Genesis 6-9, emphasizing that the floodwaters were literal, and similarly, the fire that will destroy the heavens and the earth in the future is also literal. The earth, along with the elements of the heavens, will be destroyed by fire, signaling the day of judgment for ungodly men.

10. (28:44 - 30:15) – **The Heavens and Earth Passing Away**

The speaker explains that the heavens (outer space, planets) will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt in intense heat. The earth and everything in it will be consumed by fire. This emphasizes the need for people to live in holy conduct and godliness, preparing for the day when the heavens and earth will dissolve in fire.

11. (30:16 - 31:53) – **Distinction from Old Testament Language**

The speaker notes that some Old Testament passages use similar language about the heavens being dissolved, but these refer to different situations. He clarifies that 2 Peter 3 specifically refers to the destruction of the world by fire, not metaphorical or figurative language. The speaker also references 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, discussing how the Lord will come with angels and fire to bring vengeance on those who do not know God or follow the gospel.

12. (31:57 - 33:06) – **Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15**

The speaker brings up 1 Corinthians 15, emphasizing that it focuses on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the future resurrection of believers. It is not about nations rising against nations, but about the hope of eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus serves as the foundation for the promise that believers, too, will rise from the grave.

13. (33:07 - 34:44) – **Hope of Resurrection 1 Corinthians 15**

assures Christians that Christ is alive and reigning in heaven, and those who have died in Christ will be resurrected. The language of the Son of Man coming on the clouds may appear in other places, but the context is key in determining whether it is figurative or literal.

14. (34:45 - 35:41) – **Importance of Context**

The speaker stresses that understanding whether a word or phrase is literal or figurative depends on its context. The same word or phrase might have different meanings in different passages. Careful reading and consideration of the context are crucial for accurate interpretation.

15. (35:43 - 37:12) – **Caution in Interpretation**

The speaker concludes by acknowledging the difficulty in distinguishing between literal and figurative language. Misinterpretation often happens when readers fail to consider the context. To avoid this, one must thoughtfully examine the text and cross-reference related passages.