

# Scripture Interprets Scripture

DAY 21

So far in this Bible study journey, we have taken a good deal of time teaching you how to study the Bible from a relational perspective. God wants to have a relationship with us. We hear His voice through His word. We communicate back to Him by praying His Word. This is why we have taught you how to meditate on Scripture and pray the Scripture. And a variety of methods to study God's Word so that you can apply it to your life and change your life.

For the next several sessions, I, along with some guests, want to teach you to interpret the Bible. Some people have different interpretations of the same Scripture. How do we know what a verse means? If we don't understand a passage of Scripture, how do we interpret it the right way? How do we know what is right?

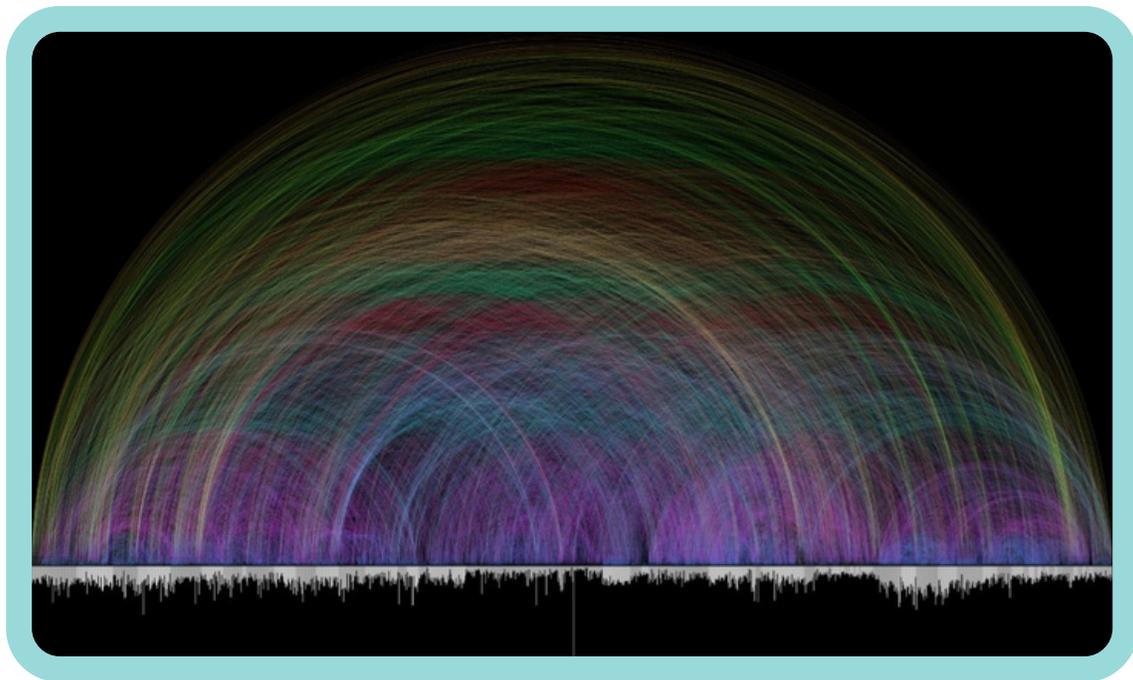
The principle of interpreting the Bible is called **Hermeneutics**.

The first and most basic rule of hermeneutics or Biblical interpretation is this: SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE. What that means is the Bible interprets itself. The Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament. The gospels help us understand the epistles. Genesis helps us understand Revelation.

Remember, there is one author of the Bible – **God**.

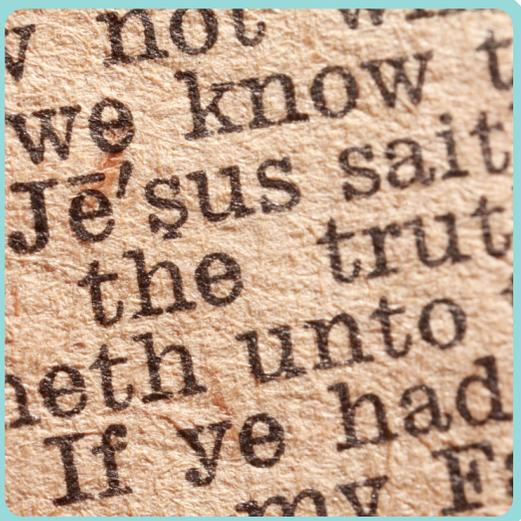
The Bible is one story. God's love for humanity and His redemption of us through His Son Jesus Christ. So Jesus is in every book. So if it is telling one story, we need the whole Bible to tell the entire story.

Our temptation is to neglect the Old Testament or other books of the Bible because they may be hard to understand – but they are worth studying because they are all part of the story.



This graphic depicts the thousands and thousands of times the Bible refers to another part of the Bible. If you look at the graph, the Old Testament would be on the left and the New Testament on the right.

Look at the number of times the Bible speaks to another part of the Bible.



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This is why we need to learn about how to cross-reference Scriptures. Your study Bible typically has a cross-reference in the middle of the page or to the side. You can use your concordance in the back of your study Bible or use [studylight.org](http://studylight.org) to find other verses addressing the same subject or issue. We have shown you how to do that.

When we are studying one passage of Scripture of one verse, we need to take the time to find out **WHAT ELSE THE BIBLE SAYS** about this subject.

Here is a simple question you need to ask often when studying the Bible – **WHAT ELSE DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THIS?**

So, if we are studying a topic like marriage in the Bible, we could use one verse or one passage, which would be helpful. But let's take all the scriptures about marriage and put them together. We get the whole picture of what the Bible says about marriage.

Together, all of these paint the picture of God's heart, God's will, and God's truth.

We need to know this because, historically, some have misinterpreted the Bible. People have used one verse or phrase in the Bible to justify racism, polygamy, and crazy things.

We do a terrible job interpreting the Bible when we use only one scripture or phrase of a Scripture to claim God or the church or money or any other topic.

When we use just one verse or one part of a verse to make a point or to support our thinking – that is called **PROOF TEXTING**.



## Example:



**Matthew 19:23** "Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Some could read that verse and think God wants everyone to be poor and that it is wrong to have money. But what else does the Bible say about money and wealth?



**1 Timothy 6:17** "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy"

And in the Old Testament, we see that Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and Joseph were all wealthy. These are all mentioned as being in heaven in other parts of Scripture. So one verse doesn't tell the whole story. We need multiple scriptures to tell us the entire story.



**2 Corinthians 13:1** "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

I don't know why this sticks in my mind, but there was a show called Little House On the Prairie. Carolyn Ingalls had an infection in her leg, and she read the verse in the Bible that said if your right hand offends you, cut it off. They made us believe she was thinking about cutting off her leg because of this verse in the Bible.

The Bible is the final authority on all matters. The Bible is the truth. Yet we need the whole Bible to get to the entire truth.

So let Scripture interpret itself. How do we do that? Remember the question we should always ask: **WHAT ELSE DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THAT?**

If you do this, you are well on your way to understanding the Bible.

What is your one takeaway from this session?

