

God Does Great Things Which We Cannot Comprehend

“God thunders with His voice wondrously, doing great things which we cannot comprehend” (Job 37:5).

by Andy Sochor

As Elihu continued his response to Job, he affirmed God’s greatness and His place over all things. When you read through Job 37, you can see all the things mentioned by Elihu over which God has power. He focused primarily on the natural world – that which He created and which continues to be governed by the natural laws He established in the beginning.

Since the time of Job, man has made much progress in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. But even with these continued advancements, we cannot–nor will we ever be able to match–the power of God. God created the universe (Genesis 1:1). We can do no such thing. God established the laws that

allow life to continue (Colossians 1:16-17). We cannot do this, either.

Though many scientists promote theories about the universe that ignore God, they have no way to explain how the world came to be or why the natural processes are the way that they are. They just understand that certain natural laws exist, and they then speculate about the origins and hold to their conclusions in faith.

We also have faith – not in science or the speculations of man, but in God. The power, wisdom, and love that is shown in creation and continued providence attest to the existence of God.



“The fool has said in his heart, there is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

Those who are wise recognize that the power of God is behind all things, whether we can comprehend them or not.

Lisa Carter (Luke’s mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy’s father and Mac’s grandfather)	Nell Holcomb (Ben’s grandmother, Joannetta’s aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher’s grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd’s Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad’s Father)	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier’s g daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah’s cousin’s son)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland (Toni’s relatives)
Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison’s grandmother)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail’s grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon’s brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan’s brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley’s Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta’s aunt)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds’ cousin)	Charles Hunt, chuck Hunt’s dad
Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd’s family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann’s Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd’s Nephew)	James Palmer (Rachel Hobbard’s grandfather)

January Birthdays

- 1-David Ogle
- 2-Savannah Spohn
- 2-Chuck Hunt
- 4-Phillip Box
- 6-Erica Seymore
- 7-Sarah Grubbs
- 7-Charles Painter
- 9-Jordan Oldag
- 9-Liseth Aragon
- 9-Tyler Hudson
- 10-Mallory Randolph
- 11-Spencer Hall
- 11-Shepherd Hall
- 11-Jenna Vaughn
- 15-Michael Bassie
- 17-Anna English
- 18-Scott Vaughn
- 18-Nakia Strickland
- 19-Josh Green
- 21-Jacob Jerkins
- 23-Connor Godwin
- 23-Cristin Chavez
- 25-Caleb Daniels
- 25-Sara Lail
- 27-Blake Bagents
- 27-Hannah Slay
- 28-Holly McDaniel
- 28-Morgan Davidson
- 31-Jennifer Daniels

News and Notes

- ☒ - Please remember the family of Kimberlee Myers in the recent death of her grandmother, Gladys Myers. The funeral is planned for next weekend.
- ☒ - The college devo/singing is tonight at gold hill - Scott Smelser teaching!
- ☒ - Ladies interested in going to the study in Russellville Jan 27-28, please see Yvette today to register.
- ☒ - Please pray for Lisa Carter, Luke’s mom, as she resumes cancer treatments.
- ☒ - Please remember Hayden Phillips and his family in the recent death of his grandmother, Linda Phillips.
- ☒ - Congratulations to Alex and Emily-Anne Nguyen upon their recent marriage!
- ☒ - Our meeting with Scott Smelser continues through Wed! Please pass out cards in the foyer.
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Amanda Stephens, Brooke Perkins, Fallon Hartsell and Jenna Vaughn.
- ☒ - Please pray for the Anderson’s who have been matched with a baby girl due Jan 31st!

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Text, Context and Secondhand Coats

By Scott Smelser



Thoughts to Ponder

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17)

John the Baptist would not fit in well with the custom made suit industry. In addition to his general appearance, he seemed to have little concern for the need of a tailor-made single person fit: “He that hath two coats, let him give to him that has none.” Horrors.

Yet as anyone knows who has benefited from hand-me-downs or second hand shops, a good coat that once warmed person A can generally keep person B just as warm. There are some obvious exceptions; attention should be paid to whether you’re shopping in the boys section or the girls section, and a coat from Goliath is clearly not going to fit Zacchaeus.

So it is with texts and contexts. Some texts are obviously one-size-fits-all, like the two greatest commandments (Mt.22.37-39). Some texts fit one context, but not another; “Israel... remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt ... therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath” (Dt 5; but cf.

Reading random verses from the middle of Romans or Hebrews will not give good Bible knowledge just as sampling random sentences from a stack of history books would not give good history. Context helps the text make sense.

Col. 2.17). Some texts appear in a specific context, but certainly fit elsewhere just as well. When Paul warned the Corinthians that “bad companions corrupt good morals,” the context was an anti-resurrection influence; yet the applications fit far beyond that. Indeed, this simple statement of truth was already borrowed when Paul employed it here (it was a well known maxim among the Greeks).

Consider then please, some common mistakes regarding text &

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Elders
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
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Evangelist and Editor

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context.

Ignorance of Context

A man walks into the middle of a conversation. Everyone else understands what's being said, while the man coming in partway is confused. People get confused by the Bible in the same way. Reading random verses from the middle of Romans or Hebrews will not give good Bible knowledge just as sampling random sentences from a stack of history books would not give good history. Context helps the text make sense.

Misapplication of Context

Another man steps up to a conversation, hears a name, and jumps to a premature conclusion. He thinks he understands, but may discover he does not after offering congratulations or condolences to the wrong person. Likewise with the biblical texts, when attention is not paid to context people jump to flawed conclusions and end up misinterpreting the text. Consider some examples: **1Cor.3.15** "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved"

Is Paul referring to a man walking in sinful works, but being saved regardless (in contradiction to ch. 6.10,11)? Read and see the context to be the construction of the Corinthian church, with Paul, Apollos and others being workers (**v.9ff.**), and the Corinthian converts being the work (**3.9, 9.1**); with some converts enduring like gold, and others being burned up like stubble (**3.12**), to the reward, or loss, of the worker in the gospel (**cf. Php. 2.16**).

Isa. 55.8-9 "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are my way your ways"

Clearly, we have biblical texts that focus on the omniscience of God (Job 38ff, etc.). But is that the point of this particular text? In this text, is the point: you are not ex-

pected to be all knowing as God is (**cf. Dt. 29.29**)? Or is the point: you are expected to stop being carnally minded and become godly minded (**cf. Col.3.2**)? Let the context tell you: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (**Isa. 55.7-8; cf. Php.2.5**).

Textual dismissal by contextual strait-jacketing

Respecting context is good Bible study. Abusing context to the point of hindering the text is not. Perhaps you've heard some of these: **Acts 2:38** is not applicable to us since it was addressed to Jews in Jerusalem. **2 Thess. 3:6ff** is not applicable beyond busybodies that won't work. None of the instructions in 1 Cor.14 apply today, since the context is spiritual gifts. **1 Cor.16.1-2** ought not to be read before collection since the context was a special collection for needy saints.

Yes, Acts 2 was addressed to Jews, but doesn't it apply to those afar off (v.39)? Yes, 2 Thess. addressed a particular problem, but is discipline limited to lazy gossips (cf. 1Cor.5)? Yes, the context of 1 Cor. 14 is spiritual gifts (ch.12 and 13 as well). Does that negate the teachings on love, edification, maturity, gender roles, or decency and order? Yes, the instructions of giving in 1 & 2 Cor. related to benevolence. But for other works of the church, ought we to abandon them in favor of giving grudgingly, in assigned amounts, regardless of income, every time the doors are open? Or ought we to let the biblical principles, precepts and precedents be applied to more than just the details of their first application?

Let's respect the original contexts, but let's also not leave the word in the first century. The word is living and active, and needs to be brought into our contexts too. As the old saying goes: if the shoe fits, wear it.



Dealing With Others

By Donnie Rader

Dealing with others is not always easy. What should I say? How much should I believe of what I hear? Is there another side to the story I've been told? Am I being fair in my dealings with others? These and other questions must be answered.

When we deal with others there is always the potential for differences to arise. When those differences come it is easy to forget to use some common sense rules in our conflict. We are not always as fair in dealing with those we disagree with as we are in defending ourselves or those with whom agree.

For some time I have been thinking about how brethren treat one another. I have thought about how many problems are simple misunderstandings. It seems to me that we are not always as careful as we ought to be. As I have thought and talked with others, some basic rules come to mind that we ought to follow.

1. Pray for wisdom (Jas. 1:5). If there is any time we need wisdom it is when we deal with those with whom we disagree. Let us pray that we may have the wisdom to know: (a) how to approach others, (b) what we should say and what we should not reveal, (c) what I should believe and what I should reject of what I hear, (d) the good that is in other people, and (e) how slow or fast I need to be in my conclusions.

2. Be careful what you say. Any of us could easily get carried away and say things that we would later wish had not been said. The proverb writer said, "He who restrains his lips is wise" (**Prov. 10:19**). We must be careful what we say to and about others. It may be information that others have told us in confidence. It may be that the one to whom we give the information may not honor our request to keep it confidential. Let us be "slow to speak" (**Jas. 1:19**) knowing that "a tale bearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (**Prov. 11:13**). We don't have to tell all we know. "A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back" (**Prov. 29:11**).

We must be careful how we choose our words. Let's make sure we are conveying the right idea. If we are not cautious, our words can be like the "piercing of a sword" (**Prov. 12:18**). We must watch what we say and how we say it. Remember, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Prov.**

15:1).

Let us also be careful lest we say something detrimental to others. "The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor" (**Prov. 11:9; cf. v. 13; 20:19**). It is possible that I could be telling things about others when I don't have all the facts. What I say could destroy the name and reputation of others.

3. There are two sides to the story. In some situations there is some fault on both sides. Thus, both of the parties at odds have some legitimate points. However, there are some situations where the two sides are the right side and the wrong side. Still, there are two sides.

The questions I must ask myself are: Am I listening to and believing the wrong side? Am I taking the wrong side? Have I considered the other side of the story? There may be more that I need to know before I draw my conclusions and state them. The proverb writer said, "The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him" (**Prov. 18:17**). Whoever tells his side first makes it sound good.

4. Don't jump to conclusions. Too often we take a little information and fill in more gaps than are there. We can easily assume motives that we have no way of knowing. I wonder how often our talk and criticism about others would change if we deleted everything but the real facts that we know.

The proverb writer warned, "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (**Prov. 18:13**). Let us not be hasty in our words (**Prov. 29:20**).

5. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Love "believes all things" (**1 Cor. 13**). It gives a person the benefit of the doubt. That means when a questionable situation arises where you could put more than one construction on it, believe the best. When a problem arises and you can put either a good or bad motive on it believe the best. After all, don't you want others to do that with you (**Matt. 7:12**)?

Yes, these rules are simple. But, with a little application we can avoid a lot of friction and misunderstanding.

