

Example of Contextualization in the Revelation of God = Women In Ministry:

KEY QUESTIONS:

Where do we see contextualization as helpful? How does this speak to inerrancy? Does progressive revelation enhance past understandings of God or negate them? How does contextualization help avoid abuses? How could contextualization be misused?

Key interpretive principles of a good hermeneutic

1. Bible is authoritative (divine author) AND context is key (human authors)
 - In order for the Bible to be human AND divine, these two elements must be non-contradictory (just as the living Word - Christ - is human and divine). Somehow the human element cannot negate the divine element. The two must be compatible. The Word has this duality (in nature of Christ & nature of Scripture). Divine understanding in light of human language, context, & audience
 - So we must make sense of all passages in one meta-narrative (overarching theme throughout), and look for possible resolutions to seeming contradictions that may arise in the text
2. Our hermeneutic (method of interpretation) must be applied consistently
 - WE must ALSO be non-contradictory. (Can't say Bible is always talking literal & then say Jesus is using rabbinic metaphor when He says "Pluck out your eye if it causes you to sin")
3. Be aware of your own biases (it tells you what you might misinterpret)
 - You will never eliminate bias completely, but you can be aware of how it affects your interpretation and thereby limit its "skewing" effect

Key passages –

- A. Against Women in Ministry - strong argument taken at face value
 - 1 Tim 2:12-15
 - 1 Tim 3:1-2 (overseer), 3:8 (deacon), 5:17 (elder-teachers can't be women according to 2:12-15)
 - 1 Cor 11:3-16
 - 1 Cor 14:34-35
- B. For Women in Ministry
 - Romans 16:1 – Greek word here is deacon. Is a deacon a role, service, or office in the church? Can it vary?
 - o Of the many words for servant Paul uses in Romans, he chooses "diakonos" specifically for Phoebe
 - o If the masculine language in 1 Tim 3:8-13 does not exclude women as deacons, should other offices talked about in the masculine mean women are prohibited?
 - Gal 3:28 – does Paul have a vision in Christ that is beyond his current context and closer to the context we have today (on this specific gender issue). Woman in Paul's day were not qualified to teach (uneducated, lacked rights, were used primarily for seduction in pagan religions, etc.)
 - Eph 2:20 – there are women prophesying in the OT & NT

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- o Luke 2:36, Acts 21:9
- o The word prophecy means “to disclose what is hidden” and is used in Scripture as revealing the word of God. Prophet instructs by delivering word of God

Moving towards a Biblical Resolution -

4 Exegetical Tools

1. What is the historical background of the text (culture, socio-political considerations, customs, economics, etc.)
2. What does the text mean in the original language (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic)?
3. How are key words used elsewhere that might illuminate its meaning (word study - is a word repeated, how is it used in the verse, paragraph, chapter, book, by the author elsewhere in Scripture, in the NT or OT, Bible as a whole, surrounding Greco-Roman culture, etc.)?
4. What type of genre am I reading (poetic, apocalyptic, historical narrative, parabolic, etc.)?

Re-examining the Text (its human and divine elements)

- 1 Tim 2:12-15
 - ἀνὴρ and γυναίκα – is it man/woman or husband/wife?
 - The immediate illustration of Adam & Eve in the text supports that the marriage covenant is in view
 - 1 Cor 7, Eph 5, 1 Peter 3 – translate these Greek words together as husband & wife
- 1 Tim 3:1-2 (overseer), 3:8 (deacon), 5:17 (elder)
 - Context? Is the point the gender or the character of these people (which is timeless)?
 - If gender - then how do we interpret Exodus 20:17 or Proverbs 22:6 (we must be CONSISTENT!)
- 1 Cor 11:3-16 – a few exegetical issues here
 - Is this husband & wife or man & woman again? Verse 3 suggests husband/wife
 - Does "the glory of man is woman" relate to marriage covenantal relationship or all man and woman relationships? (context is God, Adam, & Eve in creation)
 - Glory = praise, dignity, majesty; relates to revealing the work of The Lord. In what way was Eve the glory of Adam? What was his desire (a partner suitable for him - bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh)?
 - What then does it mean for a wife to have sign of authority on her head? How might it be related to the husband seeing her as his glory (dignity, praise)?
 - Head coverings were most often understood as a sign of being married? And to expose one's hair was a gesture of seduction
- 1 Cor 14:34-35 – the key words to interpreting “silent in church” are followed up by “if they want to inquire...ask their OWN husbands at home”. The issue here is still the sanctity of the marriage bed.
 - Women were uneducated and Corinth was a center of female fertility goddesses. Paul is addressing proper order and conduct in worship, and again not all women would adopt their husbands new found faith (see again 1 Cor 7:12) . The CONDUCT of uneducated gentile

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women asking questions to men other than their husbands is the issue. Silence is related to “inquiring” of other men versus “asking their own men at home”

- Otherwise Paul would contradict his own words in ch.11 regarding women being allowed to prophecy and pray in church while their head was covered!!
Consistency is our key hermeneutic!
- This problem frames Paul's concern with the Corinthian church in particular (being united to a prostitute, body as a temple of HS, sign of authority on the wife vs. loose hair down, sexual impurity, orgies and the like). Paul is concerned with these new believers continuing their old ways!

Other Practical/Contextual Considerations of the text and time period:

- Regardless of where we come out on this issue, Paul clearly sees an equality beyond this 1st century context, as his words of equality in Gal 3:28, mutual dependence in 1 Cor 11:11, and mutual submissiveness in Eph 5:21 confirm (see also 1 Cor 7:3-4)
- If we choose the strict interpretation for today, void of any contextualization, shouldn't we be consistent in this approach?
 - On the basis of this rationale, women should not only be kept from teaching, but should be forbidden to speak in the church
 - Women should wear their head coverings and men not cover their head – especially when praying
 - Why do people choose to accept this method of interpretation but not follow through fully? What drives them to include some aspects, but not all?
- Regardless of where we come out on this issue, of paramount importance for the life of the church is that we are taking a Biblical approach (using the Bible to arrive at our conclusions)