

EXTENDED CONTEXT CONTINUED:

1. An obscure or ambiguous text should never be interpreted in such a way as to make it contradict a plain one. The words, "baptized for the dead" should not be interpreted to mean we can be baptized for dead people in order to obtain salvation for them. It would be a plain contradiction of Hebrews 9:27 and all of the other verses on baptism, and it would be establishing a new doctrine. Never build a doctrine on an isolated or obscure passage of scripture.
2. A complicated or clever interpretation should not be given preference over a simple and more natural explanation. A good example of this is found in Matthew 6:28, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." Since all who heard those words died, it is obvious that Jesus could not be referring to the coming millennial kingdom. If one continues reading to Matthew 17:1-3, it is obvious that Jesus was referring to His transfiguration when the disciples got a glimpse of His glory only six days later.

IS CONTEXT ALWAYS IMPORTANT IN SCRIPTURE? Generally yes, although there are some sayings in the book of Proverbs where there is no context. Sometimes in the Gospels it appears there is no context, but a closer look reveals connections which we might not notice at first. There are passages where the significance of the context cannot be clearly seen, but remember two things: Do not assume quickly that there is no connection if it is not apparent immediately. Further study of the passage may reveal it. The other important thing is not to try to produce a connection that is not really there. Don't read meaning into a text. Even though there are some questions, always seek to interpret a scripture in light of its context.