

God's Final Say (Part II)

As we found out during the first session, God alone is in control, regardless of what is said or done by people. He knows people's thoughts and intentions, even if they are intended to be hidden. In today's study, we are going to look for other examples of where the scriptures use the contrast conjunction "But" to show God's omniscience and omnipotence in the lives of people in the scriptures and also apply these truths to our own lives.

Key Verse: "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts." Psalm 119:97-100

Approach: We are going to continue our journey in the scriptures as we use the contrast conjunction "but" to gain wisdom, and insight into understanding God as revealed in His Word, and interactions with people for daily living.

Using the four steps to explore the use of contrast in scriptures:

1. Judges 2:19 "But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways."

Step 1: Context: The people of Israel during the period of their continued commitment, then rebellion, then commitment, then rebellion against God. Before finally being taken captive by the Babylonians. Apostasy: Abandonment, rejection of God.

Step 2: What happened before this? Judges 2:18

"When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them."

Step 3: What if... would have happened if there were no verse 9?

Step 4. Application. How can I apply this?

2. 1 Samuel 16:7 "But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Step 1. Context: Prophet Samuel being obedient to God as he goes to Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons because Saul had been rejected by God.

Step 2. What happened before this? “When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’S anointed is before Him.’”

Step 3. What if... What if there were no verse 7? King Eliab?

Step 4. Application: Thankfully, the Lord doesn’t look at outward appearances to decide who will be His one to serve Him and His people. David was the youngest, probably not the tallest, but we see later at the battle line of the battle with Philistines and Goliath that He chose the right one. We also cannot make our choices of who and what is best for the Kingdom based on appearance. Many times it is the first that are last and the last that are first! (Matthew 20:16)

3. Matthew 19:26 “... but with God all things are possible.”

Step 1.Context: Jesus speaking after responding to the wealthy young man who asked what good thing he should he do to inherit eternal life.

Step 2. What happened before this? Verses 24-26” Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, “Then who can be saved?” And looking at them Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Step 3. What if...? If there were no second part of verse 26..., we would be left with the limits of what we can see and understand. We would be left with limits of what is reasonable and imaginable.

Step 4. Application.

God alone sets limits, thankfully, for salvation. Although something may seem to us to be unreachable, illogical or impossible. More than the girl singing “Square Root of Possible” in Jingle Jangle, or Whitney singing “Impossible Things” in Cinderella, we have a real God who does amazing things in real life!

Conclusion:

We can rest assured that if God is for us, who can be against us. (Romans 8:31). If we continue to apply God’s written word to our lives and our hearts, we will have a greater understanding of life, and gain a greater understanding of God’s immeasurable faithfulness and love for us.