

20- They May Not Apply To You

Some of the writers of the original manuscripts that we refer to as the Bible, recorded things that **may not** apply to you, personally. One of the most important things to practice as we study the Divine Word of the Living God is to always ask ourselves (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom are they speaking and (3) what is the subject under discussion. Many, many errors have been made because the person did not ask those three questions and they have attempted to apply to themselves, the instructions that were given to another person or to another particular group. Also, many times, people attempt to claim promises for themselves, that were made to another person or to another particular group **but not to them**. Just because you read it in your translation of the Bible, does not mean that it applies to you!

One of the best examples is found in Exodus 12:6-11, "⁶ And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. ⁷ And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. ⁸ And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. ¹⁰ And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. ¹¹ And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S Passover." Exodus 12:6-11 (King James Version)

Those instructions are definitely in the Bible. Is everyone required to follow those instructions? No! **The Lord is speaking. Setting the conditions for the death angel to pass over** instead of killing the firstborn in the homes that had blood spread on the doorposts of their dwelling **was the subject under discussion**. But those instructions were only given to **the members of the Jewish Theocracy who were delivered from Egyptian captivity** and it was only to be followed **one time** in their lifetime. Although they were to continue observing the Passover at the same time every year, the instructions they received did not require them to apply blood to the doorposts of their dwellings after that night. Are the members of the Lord's local, scriptural churches required to follow those instructions because they are in the Bible? No! Do you apply blood to the doorposts of your home every year on the Jewish day of Passover. Why

not? Because those instructions do not apply to you unless you would have been a member of the Jewish Theocracy, even though they are definitely in the Bible.

Another example is the Lord's instructions in Genesis 17:10-11, ¹⁰ *This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.* ¹¹ *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.* Genesis 17:10-11 (King James Version)

Those instructions are definitely in the Bible. Is everyone required to follow those instructions? No! The Lord is speaking. Setting the conditions for a covenant is the subject under discussion. But the person the Lord was speaking to was Abraham and He was setting one of the conditions for a covenant between Himself and the descendants who made up the nation of Israel, the Jewish Theocracy.

Be careful. Some of our "scholars", in their notes, comments or sermons, sometime mention instructions or promises that were given to one group and they have applied them to a group who were never given those instructions or promises. Therefore, one of the most important things to practice as we study our translations of the Divine Word of God is to always ask ourselves (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom are they speaking and (3) what is the subject under discussion.

¹⁵ *"If a brother sins against you, go to him privately and confront him with his fault. If he listens and confesses it, you have won back a brother.* ¹⁶ *But if not, then take one or two others with you and go back to him again, proving everything you say by these witnesses.* ¹⁷ *If he still refuses to listen, then take your case to **the church**, and if the church's verdict favors you, but he won't accept it, then **the church** should **excommunicate** him.* ¹⁸ *And I tell you this—whatever you **bind** on earth is bound in Heaven, and whatever you **free** on earth will be **freed** in Heaven.* ¹⁹ *"I also tell you this—if two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask for, my Father in Heaven will do it for you.* ²⁰ *For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them." Matthew 18:15-20 (The Living Bible)*

An example of how the Bible uses the word "church" in an **institutional** sense is how we use the word "school". We both attended "school". But most of us attended and were a member of a different local "school". Yes, we both attended "school". When we say that we attended "school", we do not mean that we attended the same school nor do we mean that we attended a "universal school". We are using the word "school" in an **institutional** sense to refer to a

composite of **all** the local, visible schools combined. That is, **when we say we both attended "school", we mean that both of us were members of a composite of local visible schools that we simply refer to as "school"**. We can agree that there have been people on this earth who have never applied for membership in and received acceptance in a local school. Does that mean that those who have **not** applied for membership in and received acceptance in a local school somewhere, are still automatically members of a "*universal school*"? **NO!** And yet, people are told today that even though a saved person has never applied for membership in and received acceptance in a local, scriptural church, they are still automatically members of a "universal church". And not one of the scriptures in the list they provide teaches that doctrine. We know! We took the time to study each one of them and not one teaches that doctrine. **YOU ARE FREE TO DO THE SAME!** But when you do check them out, please ask those three questions. Some of the scriptures speak of a local, visible church and some speak of the composite of all of the local, scriptural churches combined, but not one of them speak of a "universal church". It is almost as if the authors thought that we would not check them! If you would like to read them, we included them in a paper on our website, <http://www.bayourouge.net> in the paper titled, "IS THERE A UNIVERSAL CHURCH?"

We suppose that many people **will not** go to the trouble to check out what they are told the scriptures are teaching. After all, they hold those people who offered that list of scriptures in such high regard because of their background and their position. This is beginning to remind us of Hans Christian Anderson's story about the Emperor's new clothes. Of course, we admit that the story of the Emperor's new clothes is only applicable **if** we find that there are no scriptures in the Bible that teach that there is a "*universal church*". If you are not familiar with the story of the Emperor's new clothes, you can find it on the internet.

Therefore, we need to ask, "was the authority to bind or loosen given to an individual or was the authority to bind or loosen given the institution of the church" that is, to a **composite** of **all** the local, scriptural churches combined? We also need to question, what group do the members of a local, scriptural church have the authority to bind someone into? We need to question, from what group do the members of a local, scriptural church have the authority to loosen someone. Do the members of a local, scriptural church have the authority to **bind** someone into the Lamb's Book of Life which lists the names of the saved, that is members of the Family of God? **NO!** That would mean that the members of a local, scriptural church have the

authority to **bind** someone into salvation so that they become a child of God. The Bible does not teach such a thing. The Bible teaches that a person's salvation is obtained by asking forgiveness of their sin debt and asking that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ pay for their sin debt.

Do the members of a local, scriptural church have the authority to **loosen** someone from the Lamb's Book of Life which lists the members of the Family of God who will, one day be living in their heavenly, glorified bodies on the New Earth (*Revelation chapters 21 & 22*)? **NO!** That would mean that the members of a local, scriptural church have the authority to **loosen** someone from salvation so that they are no longer a child of God. The Bible does not teach such a thing.

If those who teach such a thing had searched the scriptures daily to see if the things they, themselves had been taught were so, they would have questioned what Christ meant when He gave His local, scriptural churches **the authority to forgive sins**. ¹⁹ *It was the evening of the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where **the disciples** had met were locked because they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you".* ²⁰ *After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side, and when they saw the Lord **the disciples** were overjoyed.* ²¹ *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. Just as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."* ²² *When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive Holy Spirit Power (There is no definite article in the Greek text)."* ²³ ***If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. If you retain people's sins, they are retained.*** *John 20:19-23 (International Standard Version)* If you want to know more about the power of the Holy Spirit and the lack of a Greek definite article, we invite you to read the paper "THE POWER OF THE SEVENFOLD SPIRIT OF GOD" our website, <http://www.bayourouge.net>.

As we shared earlier, one of the most important things to practice as we study the Divine Word of God is to always ask ourselves (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom are they speaking and (3) what is the subject under discussion. Many, many errors have been made because the person did not ask those three questions and because of that they have applied the instructions that were given to a particular group to themselves also. Also, many times people attempt to claim for themselves, promises that were made only to a particular group even though they are not a member of that particular group.

If they would have asked those three questions, they would have ascertained that in John 20:19-23 printed above, (1) Christ was speaking. They would have ascertained that (2) Christ

was speaking to **His** disciples (John 20:19-23, printed above), the first members of the local, New Testament church in Jerusalem. **Christ was not speaking to the disciples of John the Baptist who had remained with John the Baptist** while Jesus Christ was establishing the institution of His local, scriptural churches. And they would have ascertained that (3) the subject under discussion was the **authority** and **responsibility** that Christ was giving **His** local, scriptural churches to practice church discipline if one of their members is practicing open, unrepentant sins. What sins do the **members** of a local, New Testament church have the authority to forgive? Please note that the authority was given to the **members** as a unit and not to the pastor or any other leader of the church in Jerusalem. What sins do the members of a local, New Testament church have the authority to retain? The **members** of a local New Testament church have been given the authority to forgive **a wayward member** if that member has repented and wants God's chastisement of their material body to cease. Also, the **members** of a local New Testament church have been given the authority to retain (not forgive) the sins of **a wayward member** if that member will not repent. ¹ *It is reported commonly that there is fornication **among you**, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.* ² *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed **might be taken away from among you**.* ³ *For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,* ⁴ *In the name (by the authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, **when ye are gathered together**, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ⁵ ***To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh**, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* ⁶ *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"* 1 Corinthians 5:1-6 (King James Version)

After the man repented and wanted to be restored back into the membership of the local church in Corinth, Paul wrote in a second letter, ⁵ *If anyone has caused pain, **he has caused pain** not so much to me but to some degree—not to exaggerate—**to all of you**.* ⁶ *The punishment [inflicted] by the majority is sufficient for that person.* ⁷ *As a result, you should instead forgive and comfort him. Otherwise, this one may be overwhelmed by excessive grief.* ⁸ *Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.* ⁹ *I wrote for this purpose: to test your character [to see] if you are obedient in everything.* ¹⁰ *If you **forgive** anyone, I do too. For what I have forgiven—if I have forgiven anything—it is for you in the presence of Christ.* ¹¹ *[I have done this] so that we may*

not be taken advantage of by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes." 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

If "the church" was composed of all the saved across the world and that command was given to "the church" it would be necessary for all of the members around the world to meet in one location at the same time so that they could vote to discipline **a wayward member** by loosening them from membership in that great big universal church and delivering them unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Then, if that member repents and wants the chastisement to cease, it would be necessary for all of the saved around the world (if they were all members of a great big universal church), to meet in one location at the same time so that they could vote to forgive **a wayward member** and restore them back into their membership so that Satan would no longer be able to discipline their **fleshly body**. IF A UNIVERSAL CHURCH DID NOT VOTE TO FORGIVE A WAYWARD MEMBER, SATAN'S DESTRUCTION OF THE WAYWARD MEMBER'S FLESHLY BODY WOULD NOT STOP **SINCE CHRIST GAVE THAT AUTHORITY TO "THE CHURCH"**.

*"¹⁵ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto **the church**: but if he neglect to hear **the church**, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. ¹⁸ Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:15-20 (King James Version)*

Again, some of the writers of the original manuscripts that we refer to as the Bible, recorded things that may not apply to you, personally. For instance, we find in Matthew 21:43, Jesus Christ told the chief priests and Pharisees, "⁴³ Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." That statement is certainly in your Bible. Was that meant to apply to all the Jews? Does that mean that from that moment forward, no Jew could be saved? If so, since the first members of the church in Jerusalem were Jews, does that mean Jesus Christ began to build the institution of His

churches with lost people since the first members were Jews? That scripture would also contradict what He told the members of His first scriptural church in Luke 12:32, "³² *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*".

If the kingdom Jesus Christ referred to **was not** the kingdom of the saved who are recorded in Heaven, what kingdom was Jesus Christ referring to? Could the kingdom Jesus Christ referred to in Luke 12:32 (printed above) be the same special group in Heaven that Jesus Christ gave the members of His local, scriptural churches the authority to bind a saved person into or loosen a saved person from? "¹⁵ *If your brother acts wrongly towards you, go and point out his fault to him when only you and he are there. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.* ¹⁶ *But if he will not listen to you, go again, and ask one or two to go with you, that every word spoken may be attested by two or three witnesses.* ¹⁷ *If he refuses to hear them, appeal to **the Church**; and if he refuses to hear even **the Church**, regard him just as you regard a Gentile or a tax-gatherer.* ¹⁸ *I solemnly tell you that **whatever you as a Church bind on earth will in Heaven be held as bound, and whatever you loose on earth will in Heaven be held to be loosed.***" *Matthew 18:15-20 (Weymouth New Testament)*

Why should that be important to you? Because you should take whatever steps necessary to make sure that you have been bound into that special group in Heaven who will share in the greatest rewards on the New Earth which the Lord will create for His children to dwell on for eternity. It is that important!

Now if a church tells the world that as long as you are saved, you will benefit from all the gifts that Christ promised the members of His local, scriptural churches whether they attend and support a local church or not, the material bodies of many saved people will see little need to attend or support. It is little wonder why many saved people do not see a need to be a faithful, supporting member of one of Christ's local, scriptural churches. They have been promised all the rewards regardless of how they live and regardless of what they do.

"¹⁰ *According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.* ¹¹ *For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* ¹² *Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—* ¹³ *each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.* ¹⁴ *If the work that anyone has built on*

the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (English Standard Version)

You are welcome to correspond with us.

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