

## BINDING AND LOOSING

*“How often misused words generate misleading thoughts.”*

~Herbert Spencer

The concept of the “power of binding and loosing” has been based on some of the most misquoted and misleadingly interpreted passages in the entire Bible, and has therefore been a source of confusion leading to abuse. This is because of the misuse of words, and also by taking the passages dealing with “binding and loosing” out of their context.

Paul said that we must learn to STUDY God’s words in order to be able to rightly divide them and avoid shame (2 Tim.2:15). So let’s do it! Let’s examine what Jesus really said to the twelve apostles:

Matt 18:18 *“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.”*

Consider... Is Jesus really saying that even heaven itself will be bound by the edicts of Peter, or His “successors?” Does this concept really make any sense?

Notice in verse 19 that Jesus said, “anything THEY ask.” “They” shows Jesus’ words were NOT given to just one man – be it Peter or another. Jesus was NOT giving license to a “Pope Peter” figure or to a “one man government” system, who alone had the keys and power. Jesus’ words say when “THEY” ask...

Notice also Jesus said “anything they ASK...” **Peter and the apostles were the ones doing the ASKING not making pronouncements that would bind God and all of His creation, i.e., both in heaven and on earth! Peter was the one doing the “asking,” not the binding.** “Asking” places him in the subservient position to heaven.

What else can we learn about what God really was saying here?

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Part of learning to study God’s Holy Scriptures is the appropriate use of different translations to obtain a clear accurate translation. There is a vast difference between the

various translations of the Holy Scriptures. This is not only because of translational differences, but is also because of small differences, or omissions, in the texts used. Some texts are more complete and older than others. A missing word or an added word can sometimes make a significant difference – especially if the translators had a bias due to their religious beliefs. Therefore it is important to look at several different translations, and check against the oldest most complete “Received Texts” to be sure the reader has every inspired Word of God – no more and no less. Those who rely upon the Alexandrian textbase for their version often have words they *include* or *exclude* in their translation. This text underlies most modern versions. According to Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor of the *Hendrickson Interlinear Bible*: “The Byzantine/Majority textbase, as represented in nearly all cases in the ‘Received Text’, is the only true text of the New Testament.” This attested text alone, known as the “Received Text,” has been uniquely preserved whole. It has been accepted in all generations and in all lands by the vast majority of people who study the scriptures. Notice what is written in the *PREFACE* to *Hendrickson’s Interlinear Bible*, concerning one reason why the many translations differ:

*“Each one claims to be the very word of God, yet there are literally thousands of differences between them – and such differences as to cause one to discern that there is much disagreement as to which Greek words are to be translated, or paraphrased. In one way the new versions agree: they all leave out dozens of references to the deity of Jesus Christ, and they add words which tend to question His virgin birth, His substitutionary, fully satisfying atonement. This is due to their decision to depend on an Alexandrian textbase, instead of the body of God’s words which has been universally received and believed in for nineteen centuries, known to us as the Received Text. These new versions are not only marked by additions, but also by subtractions, since some four whole pages of words, phrases, sentences, and verses have been omitted by these new versions. And these are words attested to as God’s words by overwhelming evidence contained in all the Greek manuscripts, in the ancient versions, in the writings of the early fathers – and these from every inhabited land on the earth where Christianity has been.”* It continues: “It is for this reason that we conclude that another interlineary New Testament is needed, so that those who love every word of God, and who live by every word of God, may be able to compare any version to the original Greek, and to thereby know if any of the words of God are being withheld from their hearts. They will know that it is important to their spiritual life to be reading the right version, one that is true in its translation of the original language, complete with all the words of God.

God warned us not to add to or take away from the words of the Torah or Holy Scriptures (Deut.4:2). A similar even more powerful warning is found in Rev. 22:18-19. Indeed, “*Let God be true, and every man a liar*” (Rm.3:4).

Since Jesus Christ in effect said *not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law until all is accomplished* (Matt.5:18), should we not BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO

LET ANY MAN STEAL AWAY GOD'S WORDS FROM US? Now let's see the passage in Matt.18 from the conservative literal translation from the full, more complete original "Received Text" of *Hendrickson's Interlinear*: Remember, Matt.18:18 is given in the context of making a judgment to settle a dispute between brethren. When we take people's words out of context, we often lose the intended meaning. The same is true with God's Words.

Matt.18:18 *"Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall occur, having been already bound in Heaven. And whatever you loose on the earth shall be, having been already loosed in Heaven."* (Hendrickson's Interlinear)

Notice the literal translation shows that **any "binding" FIRST takes place in heaven, not by Peter**. Peter was being instructed by Jesus to follow or apply those laws or edicts from heaven, in his decisions upon earth! Notice the literal translation shows that **any "loosing" FIRST takes place in HEAVEN**, and Peter was bound to loosen what heaven (God in heaven) had **ALREADY LOOSENED!**

There are sometimes seemingly unimportant small dependent particles in the Greek, that if not taken into the translation, can sometimes change its meaning. The *Hendrickson's Interlinear Bible* scholars are not the only ones who have translated this passage literally and correctly – and in a way that **does not "bind" God by man's will, but "binds" man by God's!**

Notice the similar translation from the respected (NAU) [New American Standard Version, Updated Edition], and the (YLT) [Young's Literal Translation] versions:

Matt. 18:18 *"Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. (NAU)"*

Matt. 18:18 *"Verily I say to you, Whatever things ye may bind upon the earth shall be having been bound in the heavens, and whatever things ye may loose on the earth shall be having been loosed in the heavens. (YLT)"*

While not quite as clear as *Hendrickson's*, notice that these translations also show that the binding and loosing originate in heaven, and not with Peter or the ministry! The (LITV) [The Literal Translation Of The Holy Bible, formerly named King James II], and (EMTV) [English Majority Text Version] and other translations have similar renderings, which clear up any misunderstandings.

**God does the binding and loosing or forgiving, not Peter or those who claim to be his successors! And Peter and the ministry are bound to carry out the binding and loving will of God, not the other way around!**

This verse has been used (and misused), perhaps more than any other, in an attempt to

claim power over other people's lives and over their beliefs by having God's scriptures "interpreted" for them, and by demanding submission and obedience, even sometimes contrary to scripture. It has been called "apostolic authority," the "authority passed down to the ministry" (and a host of other things) to maintain a mind-controlling influence over the people. God's people are very special and believing and do not want to be rebellious, so they have been easy prey to these false concepts.

The truth is, in Matthew 18, Jesus was teaching a principle of how to judge in a matter of controversy or offenses between men, based upon the Statutes and Judgments that God gave to His people, and by which GOD BOUND kings and judges to rule. Jesus was teaching – in the New Testament period – the Precepts (principles) and Statutes of Deut.17.

*Deut 17:8 "If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, **matters of controversy within your gates**, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses."*

Deut.17:8 speaks of how to judge or resolve "matters of controversy." Those involved were to be taken before the LORD, where He had placed His Name, and be brought before the king, priest, Levite or "judge in those days" (verse 9), for a judgment to be rendered, and the matter to be resolved. How were they to decide the judgment? Just as they saw fit to "bind" or "loose?" Hardly! God specifically commanded the one who was doing the judging to judge "**according to the sentence of the law**" (verse 11). The judge was to APPLY God's laws (already bound in or from heaven) in all cases as they came up on earth! The judges were commanded to show God's judgments to the parties from scripture. They did not rule of their own accord. They APPLIED scripture – they APPLIED GOD'S WRITTEN JUDGMENTS which God gave them from heaven! How much more plain can God's Truth be? These are the Statutes of God! God does not change (Mal.3:6 & Heb.13:8)!

God also commanded each future king in Israel to study God's Statutes, and to write himself a copy of the Law, "**so that his HEART NOT BE LIFTED UP ABOVE HIS BRETHREN**" (Deut.17:18-20).

Have the hearts of some church leaders indeed been "lifted up above their brethren?"

Do the ministers or evangelists whom you know judge only by applying God's written Statutes, Precepts and Judgments?

It's another subject altogether, but it can be clearly shown from God's Word that judging (New or Old Testament) is ALWAYS the application of God's Statutes and Judgments. See the articles on the Statutes, Testimonies and Judgments on our website.

Truly it is wished that this book did not need to be written. However, too many of God's people have been hurt, abused, HELD BACK and misled by ignorant and abusive misapplications of misquoted and mis-understood scriptures concerning "church government." IT'S TIME THE TRUTH IS MADE PLAIN.

Since there is a significant number of men in church leadership positions who apparently have become narcissistic and egotistical (a conceited and excessive feeling of self-importance), which results in abuse to God's people, this book has become necessarily lengthier, in order to sufficiently cover the subject. Yet even still, this book does not cover all aspects of this subject, but it does cover the main foundational passages from God's Word about loving shepherding, leadership and church structure.