

BRINGING BIBLE TRUTH to those in foreign lands and cultures is interesting and challenging! Traditions, ours and theirs, have to be evaluated to see if they are biblical or not. Our tendency is to repeat what we have been taught, rather than doing serious research to find Truth. Confronting various religions puts the pressure on! Sometimes published Bible translations are not accurate enough, and one has to do his own literal translation. Such is the case with Matthew 16:19 and 18:18.

Roman Catholicism claims about 85% of Filipinos. We taught Bible in the Philippines for 32 years and saw many congregations formed among the basically animistic mountain tribes people. However, many mountaineers have been influenced by and some have been converted to Roman Catholicism, so that a knowledge of RC teachings was necessary to help them see how the RC had twisted, abused, and mistranslated Scripture. Auricular confession with the power to forgive sins is one.

Another is the power of the Pope to decide on earth what religious practices and beliefs will be followed, claiming that heaven will approve them. Many English translations of Matthew 16:19 and 18:18, including the Jewish New Testament, give the impression that whatever Peter and others decide to bind or loose on earth will be approved in heaven, as if Yeshua has given away his authority and that He will rubber stamp their decisions. This is Roman Catholic teaching, resulting in the "vicar of Christ" title of the Pope and his priesthood, with many abuses. Most of us have a gut feeling that something is backwards here. Yeshua said that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him! When did He give away any of this? He never did!

The tenses in the Greek provide the answer. Both verses are in the subjunctive mood using *ean* (if), a probable future condition. The first use of the verbs would be "if whatever you might bind upon the earth..." and "whatever you might loose upon the earth." The "if" and "might" indicate a "probable future condition."

The second set of verbs are the crucial ones. They are both perfect passive participles. My Greek grammar book says, "English

has no corresponding tense adequate for expressing the significance involved...(the perfect tense) indicates a completed action with a resulting state of being, as...it has been written and stands written'... the perfect tense is the tense of 'past action plus existing result.'"

So let's translate with several words to give the

complete meaning, rather than a deceptive one. The second set should be, "having been bound and still bound in the heavens..." and "having been loosed and still loosed in the heavens." That is, whatever is decided on earth (halakhah and doctrine) must be in agreement with whatever has already been decided in heaven, not the other way around!

By using a future tense in English for a Greek perfect tense (past action), as most translations do, the door is opened for many abuses. Some Roman Catholic abuses have been cited above. The Pharisees in Yeshua's time were doing the same, so that Yeshua had to rebuke their inverting the Torah by their traditions. Rabbinic Judaism has been doing the same ever since. Messianic Judaism can fall into the same trap. By using the perfect tense (past action), Yeshua is GIVING A WARNING that all basic decisions HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE IN HEAVEN, and contained only in the *Tanakh*¹ and *Brit Hadasha*.² Therefore, whatever decisions and applications might inevitably have to be made in the future must be made only on these two sources. God is not going to approve anything that is not in full agreement with the Bible. There is nothing new.

For Matthew 16:19, we offer: "I will give you (Peter) the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and if whatever you might bind upon the earth shall be having (already) been bound in the heavens, and whatever you might loose upon the earth shall be having (already) been loosed in the heavens."

Clergy have been the guilty parties in mistranslating Scripture, sometimes denying the Bible to the people, and dominating the people by their assumed powers. In his *Parashat Korach*, Michael Moshe writes, "Korach himself is well on the way to establishing his own 'clergy' (verse 10) to exalt himself above the laity, the common people. This division of laity

¹ "Old Testament."

² "New Testament."

and clergy (the deeds of the Nicolaitans) is something that Yeshua hates, yet is a common practice in the heart and minds of many congregational leaders today. 'But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate' (Revelation 2:6). 'So have you also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate' (verse 15). [This is written to the *kehillah* at Laodicea, which commentators frequently refer to as illustrating the *kehillah* of YHWH in the last days.]

"This practice is common today. It is against Torah. The leaders of the *kehillah* of YHWH are to guide, to lead, to direct by example those who YHWH has entrusted to their leadership. All things being 'equal,' these leaders are to become the servants of the people. 'Be not called Rabbi: for one is your Teacher even Mashiach; and all of you are brothers...neither be called masters: for one is your Master, even Mashiach. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant'

(Mattityahu 23:8-11)." *Bikurei Tziyon*, Issue 65, p. 31.

Whatever God decided before Creation has not and will not change. He has recorded it all in our Bible, building through the ages on the foundation of the Torah. When Yeshua was tempted by Satan, He also used this same perfect tense construction, "it has been written and is still written," to rebuke Satan, showing His reliance upon the Torah. We need to strive to know our Bibles well, to have the confidence that we know that what we are teaching is Truth, and live it out humbly no matter what our position may be in a congregation. As we all share our discoveries, we all will grow in our joy as we walk with Him through the pages of His Word, and make halakhic decisions in the Spirit, as in Acts 15. All Believers are responsible to Build Up The Body Of Messiah, not to promote themselves. n

rogwalkwitz@att.net Phone (352) 528-2740