

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Bible Was Not Written To Us...

(Jerry Fite)

T rue, Paul wrote to specific churches and definite individuals. When we open the Scriptures today we read Paul's instructions to the church in Corinth (*I Corinthians 1:2*) and his exhortation to Timothy (*I Timothy 1:2*). But does this mean we should ignore the command to “flee fornication” today because God guided Paul to write the command to Corinth in the first century (*I Corinthians 6:18*)? Should we not feel compelled to engage in spiritual battle because Paul wrote Timothy to “fight the good fight of the faith”, not us (*I Timothy 6:12*)?

Reflecting upon the total body of completed Scripture, we see from the beginning God's intention of His word being applicable to future generations. For example, God tells the first man, “therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (*Genesis 2:24*). God is speaking to Adam about his relationship with the newly created woman, his wife. Neither Adam or Eve left father and mother to marry, but future

generations would. God's specific message to Adam included a wider audience and a broader time than the first man at the beginning of time (*cf. Matthew 19:5, Ephesians 5:31*). God's first command regarding marriage was not **to** us, but it is **for** us. Moses, Jesus and the Ephesians knew this.

A package of seed may have been mailed to your grandparents, but you can take the same package and plant it today and enjoy its fruit. The word of God is spiritual “seed” (*Luke 8:11*). Faith issued from people's hearts via the word the apostles taught. Jesus prayed for all those who would “believe on me through their word” (*John 17:20*). Did Jesus only pray for those who believed who were in contact with the apostles in their time and space; or, did He pray for those who would believe the same message the apostles taught regardless of where and when one opened their heart to the seed of God's word?

If Jesus' words recorded and written in the first century is not to us, where do we go for the

standard by which we will be judged? Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I spake, the same will judge him in the last day” (*John 12:48*). If Jesus did not speak to us, is His standard of judgment not for us? If not, we have no objective standard.

Some toy with this theory of limited application of the Bible, not to deprive us of confidence in a standard of living and judgment, but to emphasize the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. I do not have to follow the pattern of the apostles, and remain in the boundaries of what has been written (*I Corinthians 4:6, 2 John 9*); but I can follow my subjective feelings as to where the Holy Spirit is guiding me. How I “feel” therefore takes precedence over what is “written”.

Properly applying Scripture today, we will have to distinguish between cultural limitations and timeless law, but we can do so without discarding all that has been written for us. “Every good work” is at stake (*2 Tim. 3:17*).