

Interprets Itself: To Whom Addressed

We shall move from how God's Word interprets itself 'In the Context' into 'To Whom Addressed.'

To whom Addressed

Most Bible believing people affirm that the entire Bible is addressed to them from Genesis to Revelations. There are some sections that do not seem to apply, and the problem is with 'to whom addressed.' Different sections are addressed to different groups of people; there are three major groupings of people—Jews, Gentiles and the Church of God. Generally, all scripture is addressed to these groups including sub-groups within these major groups.

Why is this important? Suppose that a letter was sent to me. Now, suppose a total stranger intercepts this letter, one that is addressed to me. The Postal service can fine and imprison a person for this because it's wrong to steal and read another's mail.



We understand this regarding mail, but when it comes to God's Word, we completely ignore this principle. This has caused no end of misunderstandings for students of God's Word. The solution is simple: we need to understand two little words: 'to' and 'for'.

I shall show you examples of how God addressed the Bible.

The church of God

(1 Cor 1:2 KJV) Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Je-

sus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Here, the addressees are the church of God, and these people are further qualified as 'saints' and those who 'call upon the name of Jesus Christ.'

Gentiles

(Rom 9:24 KJV) Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

'Gentiles' is referring to its own major grouping, otherwise called 'nations.'

'Us' is referring to 'the Church of God.'

Jews

(1 Cor 1:22 KJV) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

Two groups are mentioned in this verse, Jews and Greeks. Greeks fall under

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the major grouping called Gentiles.

(Rom 3:29 KJV) *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:*

Again, we can see reference to two major groups of people.

At the time the Bible was written, there were two major teaching centers: Jewish and Greek. These centers promoted the major ethical reasonings of the time. This answers what great learning centers were available in this time period. If one was not Jewish, he fell under the category of the Gentiles of which the Greeks were a part. The Gentiles were the grouping of people that were also called the 'nations.' From a purely spiritual sense, there were only two groups of people before and during Christ time: Jews and Gentiles (unbelievers).

When considering 'to whom' the Bible is addressed, this question can only be answered by going to every book in the Bible and checking each in detail. From a cursory indication, all of the books from Exodus to John

are written to the Israelites and Judeans. Each of these has instances of revelation warning unbelievers of their unbiblical actions as well as revelation to the Israelites and Judeans themselves. Then, from Acts through Jude, these books are written to the Jews, Gentiles including Greeks, and the Church of God (Christians). There are variations of addressees including the twelve tribes scattered abroad and the Christians still zealous for the law. Then we have Revelations which is addressed to an entirely different grouping of people including:

The seven churches

The seven churches which are in Asia:
the **church** of Ephesus
the **church** in Smyrna
the **church** in Pergamos
the **church** in Thyatira
the **church** in Sardis
the **church** in Philadelphia
the **church** of the Laodiceans

The major addressees listed in the Bible include:

Old Testament:

Israelites and Judeans

Acts through Jude:

Gentiles including Greeks, and the Church of God (the Christians).

Variations of addressees including the twelve tribes scattered abroad and the Christians still zealous for the law.

Revelation:

The seven churches which are in Asia:

Already mentioned.

All scripture is written for our learning.

(Rom 15:4 KJV) *For whatsoever things were written aforetime [the day of Pentecost] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Some sections are addressed specifically to us, but all Scripture is written for our learning. The Mosaic Law was before the day of Pentecost and those things written in the law are addressed to the Jews. We can learn from

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the Mosaic Law, but it was not addressed to us.

Old Testament teachings

The Old Testament was before the day of Pentecost. All scripture before the Day of Pentecost is for our learning. They are all addressed to the Jews or to the Gentiles because the Church of God had not yet come into existence. We can learn great things from the Old Testament. The thing that we must remember is that it is for our learning. Take for instance, the 10 Commandments. Where are they? In the Old Testament. Therefore they are for our learning. Are they written to us? No, they are in the Old Testament. Can I learn anything from them? Yes. Then why are we teaching the 10 commandments as if they are addressed to us? There is something wrong with our understanding of 'to whom addressed.' Why not teach all of the commandments if we teach 10 of them? They are law, and are for our learning.

Gospel teachings

What about the Gospels? They begin with Jesus Christ and terminate with the ascension. Therefore, the Gospels are not addressed to us,

they are for our learning. If the Church understood this, we'd be out of a whole mess of problems today. We must remember that the Word divides itself in part, to whom it is written. The four Gospels belong in the Old Testament. Jesus came unto his own people, the Judeans. He was The Prophet who entirely fulfilled the Law. He was a fulfillment of the Old Testament because He came to minister to the circumcision only. The Gospels complete the Old Testament. Had the Gospels been placed where they should have been placed, we wouldn't have all of this confusion.

New Testament teachings

Acts is the transitional book about the Law abiding people who were learning of the New Church God had established. Romans then begins the New Testament. Let's look at examples of 'to whom' the Bible is addressed.

(Rom 1:7 KJV) To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some scripture is written to us. Who are the saints? You are the saints, the born again believers. This is so simple because the entire Bible is addressed to one of three major groupings of people.

(Col 1:2 KJV) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Phil 1:1 KJV) Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Who are the twelve tribes? Hebrews is not addressed to the church in the sense of the church as it was established on the day of Pentecost. These people never walked in the freedom available to them. James is the same. James is addressed to the 12 tribes scattered abroad. You can't pick out verses, trying things like the anointing of oil, etc... This is Old Testament doctrine, and these folks were having a problem walking away from the Law.

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(Acts 15:5 KJV) But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

There were so many Jews that believed, but they wanted to continue following the Law. Sounds like the modern fundamental Orthodox Church today, doesn't it? They try to do every law that they can think of.

(Gal 2:4 KJV) And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

'Liberty' means, 'to stand fast boldly with a fearless mind.' All of this accounts for the differences in the other books of the New Testament. These people were still entangled, for they would not walk in the freedom that Jesus Christ had made available. If it is for our learning, it is for our learning.

The authority of the Gospels

Do you know that most people can't walk away from the great authority that has been given the Gospels by our religious teachers. The Law of Love overrides the 10 commandments.

(Gal 5:14 KJV) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

If you live according to love, would you break the 10 commandments?

The Lord's Prayer

Where is the Lord's Prayer? Is it after the day of Pentecost? Jesus taught it to his disciples. It is Old Testament, yet it is prayed in almost every church on Sunday morning. That prayer is not for us. In the epistles, God has supplied our every need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. That includes our daily bread. There is no contradiction. How about 'forgive us our debts as we forgive others?' In Romans, we have been forgiven once and for all. There is no contradiction. It becomes so simple if

you get 'To Whom' correct. Then the entirety of God's Word will fit together. It will work with exactness and precision all the way through.

Much love in Christ,

Jerry D. Brown

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