

## THE REMISSION OF SINS

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*John 20:23 “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”*

These words of the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection, if taken out of context, could be viewed as a license for believers or ministries to forgive sins without restrictions.

The Context to any verse tends to explain that verse. In Scripture the full context of a verse does not always appear with the verse. Ancient writers and speakers very often quote part of a quotation and assume that the readers or listeners will know the rest of it. This is very common in the Bible and in the sayings of Jesus Christ. He never spoke as recorded in the scriptures without quoting some Old Testament scripture, yet you will find as in the above instance, that the quotation is incomplete.

Let me give you here, one out of hundreds of examples: I knew brethren who built a false doctrine upon the following quote, which in itself was incomplete.

*Revelation 13:7 “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”*

This seems that there would be a time when the saints could not win, BUT when the full quote is read then one sees a qualifying statement, which changes what would be defeat to victory. The passage from which this is quoted is in Daniel 7:21 and 22:

*Dan. 7:21 “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

*7:22 “Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”*

In order to complete the quotation in John 20:23 we will have to go to Jesus' explanation in Matthew 18 and then into the doctrine of the laying on of hands.

There are two instances in which the Church can remit sins, and there are specific rules pertaining to the remittance of sins.

1. Sins committed against an individual or a group of individuals can be remitted by the individual or group scripturally.
2. Sins committed by one person and another being party to it either before or after the fact.

In the case of (1) A person who hurts or harms another can ask forgiveness of that one, and according to the word of God if he does not forgive him then he cannot be forgiven of His heavenly Father:

*Luke 11:4 "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us..."*

also

*Matthew 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

Here therefore we see a law of God for forgiveness. If one is asked to forgive a person who did you some harm, then that person MUST according to the word forgive.

In the case of (2) A person can become guilty of an act by agreeing with the person committing the act.

*I Timothy 5:22 "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins."*

This agreement can come either before or after the act. The Old Testament scripture for this would be the word, which speaks of touching a dead body and being unclean. One does not have to commit sin personally in order to be guilty of sin, but to contemplate an act or to agree with others to do the act is in itself sin.

*Romans 1:32 "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have PLEASURE in them that do them."*

#### THE LAW OF TRESPASS:

Every law of God had a recourse or release. In other words, there was no law, which did not have within itself a qualifying clause of release for the guilty party. Therefore, when the law is translated into Grace, "*Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment.*" (James 2:13)

*Levitcus 6:2-5 "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour.....then it*

*shall be because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten .....: He shall even restore it in the principal and shall add the fifth part more thereto and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering."*

Let us therefore look at Jesus' explanation of this law in Matthew 18:

*Matthew 18:15-18 "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.*

*18:16 "But if he shall 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.*

*18:17 "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.*

At the very outset it would seem that the motive of the word is to "Gain" the brother and not to expose his sin. In other words the motive must be pure and the intention of the one hurt must be to loose the brother/sister from sin and its penalty. Let us look at the verse following the above passage – Verse 18:

*Mat. 18:18 "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."*

In this sense, and in this sense only do we have power to bind and to loose men, otherwise we would be using the law contrary to the law and become guilty of penalty ourselves. The sins of the offender would be remitted by this action of the one offended.

#### FALSE TEACHING:

There is a false teaching pertaining to binding and loosing which some take upon themselves. The power to bind or to loose is not given of God to some particular group or ministry, but is an endowment of the whole church. The scripture declares:

*Luke 24:47 "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

Without repentance there can be no remission or loosing of a person. "*Whatsoever you bind on earth is bound in heaven,*" is conditional and only operates according to God's rules; so also one person remitting the sins of another.

It is entirely out of God's order for anyone to put up a Confessional and to invite others to come and confess his sins against God or against others or even against oneself, to another, then that person who hears the confession becomes party to the sin, and is obliged by the laws of God to help that person to come to repentance. This brings to us the Doctrine of the "*Laying on of Hands*":

#### THE LAYING ON OF HANDS:

Hebrews chapter 6 and verse two speaks of the laying on of hands as one of the foundation doctrines of the Church. Let us look at the roots of this word even to see if we can understand why Paul instructed Timothy not to lay hands "*suddenly*" on any man. What then is the purpose and meaning of laying on of hands? Let us go to the Old Testament or the root of the doctrine in order to understand this doctrine.

#### NUMBERS 8:

*8:10 "And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:*

*8:11 "And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the People of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord.*

*8:12 "And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for the Levites.*

*8:13 "And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD.*

*8:14 "Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine."*

In the Old Levitical priesthood the priest would take incense in his hand and offer it every day at the altar of incense, offering it as his own soul and also for the sins of the people. If the priest was unclean, the offering would not be acceptable by God.

The passage above describes the method of forgiveness of sins under the Levitical priesthood. The people would confess their sins over the priest and place their hands upon him, thus TRANSFERRING THEIR SINS TO HIM by consent of both parties. The PRIEST BECAME THE SINBEARER; The priest in turn, because he had no efficacy to dispel sin, had to lay his hands upon the sacrificial animal, then the sins he took upon himself would pass unto the animal.

THE ONLY SIN BEARER IS CHRIST: Therefore if in our dispensation any man puts up himself as the sinbearer, he is working under DECEPTION. The priest therefore under the Levitical priesthood who was allowed to operate in this

office must have been a type of Christ in the Church rather than a type of any present day ministry.

#### TOUCHING THE DEAD CARCASS:

Men can participate in other men's sins. This happens when a person learns of the sin of another, or talks about the sin of another without doing that which is scripturally right towards that person. The thing that would be scripturally right in some cases would be to apply Matthew 18:15-18. Of course, this could only be applied where it is "*thy brother*" and where the trespass is "*against thee*". Another scripture in this instance would be Matthew 5:23-24:

*Matthew 5:23 "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;*

*5:24 "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*

The Laying on of Hands works in both directions. It can impart and it can receive. It works like electricity. If you attach a high volt to a low voltage, the high voltage will push back the low voltage. When the priest allows himself to receive the sins of the people in the old Levitical priesthood, it is a position he accepts and there is an understanding between himself and the congregation, therefore the sin goes to him. It is thus the same with the Lord and our sins. On the other hand if the priest or any person under the law touched a dead body it would defile them. (Numbers 9:6). The laying on of hands, therefore in the New Testament Church is a very important doctrine.

Hands are laid for ordination; for blessing and for healing. If hands are laid carelessly, without proper knowledge and without proper thought, it can involve the person laying the hands in the sin of the other, in his sickness or even worse.

If, for instance a person should lay hands on an unfit person and ordain him/her into the ministry, then that person would be a partaker in an act which is against God. The laying on of hands identifies the one person doing the act with the other. In effect that person is saying I am giving you of my life for the deliverance of yours. The same concept came from the Levitical priesthood where the priest would approach the mercy seat in fear and trembling for his own life while seeking forgiveness for the sins of the people. It is an act of impartation of life. A scripture that brings out this point most poignantly is found in Numbers 11:16-30 where God takes of the Spirit which rested upon Moses and gave unto the Seventy Elders who immediately began to prophesy. The following are scriptures which bring for the more understanding of the subject:

## ORDINATION:

*Deuteronomy 34:9 "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel harkened unto him, and did as the Lord COMMANDED MOSES."*

*I Timothy 4:14 "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."*

## BLESSING:

*Matthew 19:13 "Then were there brought unto Him little children that he should put His hands on them and pray:....."*

*Mat. 19:15 "And He laid His hands on them and departed thence."*

## HEALING:

*Mark 16:17 "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

*16:18 "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."*

The LOOSING AND THE BINDING of the people of God are in the hands of the Church. If we could but get the message in the right place, I am sure, we could at this moment cast off every yoke of Satan and be the overcomers God is waiting to come forth. For this reason Satan is causing brother to fight against brother, causing our petty jealousies to block our view so that we cannot discern clearly the body of Christ in the earth. We do however have the promise of God that soon and very soon there will be a great revival and a coming together of the faithful. Already we see signs of a separation within the ranks of the church and on the other hand a coming together of the faithful.

## THE TIME OF THE FINAL LOOSING:

I hear the Spirit of God crying "Let my people go." The institutions and forces of Babylon are slowly but surely loosing their hold on the Elect of God. Many of us are happy to hear about GREAT REVIVAL, but not so many like to know that this revival must come with great REPENTANCE. The Church has so

far departed from God that she does not even know what she is being asked to repent of. In any event it is going to take something very big and something very cataclysmic to bring her to her knees. In conclusion I would like to quote two scriptures, which complement each other:

*Daniel 12:1 "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a TIME OF TROUBLE, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*

*Revelation 12:7-9 "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

These verses speak of a time we have been praying for daily. When we pray, "*Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*": we are asking God to fully possess the soul even as he possesses the spirit. The above scriptures represent the last battle for the area of the human realm called the soul, where God is planting His Kingdom.

MAY GOD HELP US TO REALIZE THE FULL POWER OF THE SCRIPTURE, "*WHATSOEVER YE SHALL LOOSE ON EARTH IS LOOSED IN HEAVEN*". Let us loose men and bind devils. In the time of Christ Jesus when he was in the flesh, the devils reminded him that it was yet too early to send them off to the abyss. At this time however the sons of God should be reminded that we now have no such restriction.

