

LESSON ELEVEN

CHRISTIANS ARE NOT GOVERNED BY THE LIMITED COMMISSIONS

INTRODUCTION: Many have been taught much that is not so. Before we can expect Bible students to get a clear understanding of the part of the Bible which DOES govern Christians, we must first clear away the misconceptions concerning those parts that DO NOT . . . very much like the farmer, who grubs out the stumps and clears away the weeds and rubbish before plowing his field and sowing the seed, we have felt the necessity to pay attention to this negative side of our study FIRST preparatory to a solid harvest of well-taught, truth-understanding, Bible-trained students when this course is completed.

Not that we mean the things of the Old Testament or the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist were stumps, weeds and rubbish; however, much of the erroneous teaching which has been done concerning them falls in this category.

Our concluding NEGATIVE study, before moving on to the POSITIVE side, is to show that while Jesus Christ was on earth before his death which he clearly never bound as governing Christians, when the Christian dispensation became of force later on. Now to our study of these two limited commissions. . .

I. LIMITED COMMISSION TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES – Matthew 10 (also compare Mark 6:7-13 & Luke (:1-6)

NOTE: Often a slight (or even a great) misconception of Bible teaching can be avoided simply by more-careful reading. Many religionists, nowadays, go to Matthew 10 to prove that Christians should have power against unclean spirits, be able to heal by supernatural means, cleanse lepers, and raise the dead and such like. But read the commission given in Matthew 10 (and parallel passages) more closely; observe that it was not given to all, but was limited to the 12 apostles.

- A. Matthew 10, Verse 1, reads, “And when he had called unto him his TWELVE DISCIPLES, he gave THEM power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.” Note carefully that this verse limits the “power” here given to the TWELVE. The TWELVE, thus, (not everyone), had power-
 - 1) to cast out unclean spirits
 - 2) to heal sickness and disease.
- B. As if to make doubly sure that no-one misunderstood to whom this commission was limited, the next three verses of scripture (2 through 4) NAME *which twelve* Jesus gave this power: “Now the NAMES of the TWELVE APOSTLES are THESE”—
 - 1) SIMON, who is called PETER
 - 2) ANDREW his brother
 - 3) JAMES the son of Zebedee
 - 4) JOHN his brother
 - 5) PHILIP

- 6) BARTHOLOMEW
 - 7) THOMAS
 - 8) MATTHEW the publican
 - 9) JAMES son of Alphaeus
 - 10) LEBBAEUS, whose surname was Thaddaeus
 - 11) SIMON the Canaanite
 - 12) JUDAS ISCARIOT
- C. Verse 5 says, “THESE TWELVE Jesus sent forth, and commanded THEM, (not others), saying,
- 1) “go not into the way of the Gentiles, and
 - 2) “into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but
 - 3) “go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

NOTE: Consider carefully the limitations listed so far. First, the COMMAND GIVEN was LIMITED to THE TWELVE; second, THE TWELVE were FORBIDDEN TO GO TO THE GENTILES by this limited commission (which limitation alone excludes everyone not a Jew); third, THE TWELVE were FORBIDDEN TO ENTER SAMARITAN CITIES (the Samaritans were a mixed race, descended partly from the Ten Tribes, partly from heaven immigrants); fourth, THE TWELVE were LIMITED TO GO TO THE “LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL” (i.e., the backslidden Jews).

- D. To these back-slidden Jews (“lost sheep of the house of Israel”) the twelve apostles were commissioned at this point to do a number of things—
- 1) Preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand (vs.7)
 - 2) Heal the sick (vs.8)
 - 3) Cleanse the lepers (vs.8)
 - 4) Raise the dead (vs.8)
 - 5) Cast out devils (vs.8)
 - 6) Freely give (vs.8)

NOTE: It was THE TWELVE APOSTLES (not you or I) who were commissioned to do these six things by this commission.

- E. While fulfilling this limited commission, the twelve were to
- 1) Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purse (i.e., they were to carry no money). (vs.9)
 - 2) Provide no “scrip” (i.e., valise or traveling-bag) for their journey. (vs.10)
 - 3) Neither two coats (vs.10)
 - 4) Neither shoes (vs.10)
 - 5) Nor yet staves.

NOTE: It is our observation that those preachers, who contend mightily that Verses 7 and 8 are for us today, tend to ignore the further requirements of Verses 9 and 10. The same limited commission authorizing the apostles to preach the kingdom of heaven as then “at hand” also required they have no money. These modern-day preachers (to whom this

commission was NOT GIVEN, but who try to appropriate it to themselves) want to “heal the sick”; but you will notice they all have some sort of “scrip” in their travels. They CLAIM they can “cleanse the lepers”; but almost all have more than one coat. They CLAIM they are to “raise the dead” and “cast out devils”; but how many have you seen without shoes? If they are going to claim Verse 7 and 8, consistency demands they also obey Verses 9 and 10. If they say Verses 9 and 10 do not apply to them; then neither do Verses 7 and 8. The simple fact is that NONE OF THESE VERSES ever applied to ANYONE except THE TWELVE. . .

F. Some ADDITIONAL FEATURES of this limited commission to the twelve apostles were as follows:

- 1) Upon entering a city or town, they were to search out who in it was worthy; and there abide until departure. (vs. 11)
- 2) Upon entering a house, they were to salute it. (vs. 12)
 - a. If the house was WORTHY, they were to let their “peace” come upon it.(vs. 13)
 - b. If the house was UNWORTHY, they were to let their peace return to themselves. (vs.13)
- 3) If a house or city would not “receive” them, they were to shake off the dust of their feet upon departure. (vs. 14)
- 4) They were to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves”. (vs.16)
- 5) They were to “beware of men” who would deliver them to the councils. (vs. 17)
- 6) When the APSOTLES were delivered up to the councils, they were to take no thought as to HOW or WHAT to speak, (vs. 19)
 - a. God would give them the words to say as needed. (vs.19)
 - b. Thus it would be God’s SPIRIT speaking IN them, not the apostles speaking in their own right. (vs. 20)

NOTE: This passage, especially, has been much abused by some, who falsely claim it to justify their evident lack of study and preparation. Like the rest of the foregoing, as we have observed. Verses 19 and 20 were given to THE TWELVE APOSTLES ONLY.

- 7) When the apostles were persecuted in one city, they were commanded to flee into another. (vs. 23)

NOTE: Something Jesus said in this same verse 23, indicates the DURATION as well as the EXTENT of this limited commission to the twelve : “YE SHALL NOT HAVE GONE OVER THE CITIES OF ISRAEL, TILL THE SON OF MAN BE COME.” Connect this thought with the first verse of the SUCCEEDING chapter : “And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.”

- 8) The apostles were commanded not to “fear” (vs. 26,28,31)
- 9) What Jesus told them “in darkness”, he commanded them to speak “in light”. (vs. 27)

- 10) What Jesus caused them to “hear in the ear”, they were to preach that “upon the housetops”.(vs. 27)
 - 11) Although commanded not to fear men, yet they were to fear God. (vs. 28)
 - 12) The apostles were not to think that Jesus came to send peace on earth, but a sword. (vs. 34)
- G. Mark’s account of this same limited commission supplies one or two points not covered by Matthew’s account. See Mk. 6:7-13. For instance, Mark shows—
- 1) The twelve were sent forth “by two and two” (vs. 7)
 - 2) Whereas Matthew showed they could not have “staves”, Mark shows that “a staff” (singular) was permitted. (vs. 8)
 - 3) Matthew said nothing about food *en route*, but Mark indicates they were allowed “no bread” for their journey. (vs. 8)
 - 4) Matthew’s account forbade “shoes”; however, Mark’s account permitted “scandals”. (vs. 9)
- H. Luke’s account of this same limited commission is found in Luke 9:1-6. For your own edification, you should read this, so you shall have read all that the New Testament has to say on this subject; however, Luke merely corroborates (but adds nothing to) what Matthew and Mark have already said.

II. LIMITED COMMISSION TO THE SEVENTY (Luke 10:1-20)

- A. In addition to the limited commission to “the twelve apostles”, Jesus appointed “OTHER SEVENTY” also, to whom he gave a SIMILAR COMMISSION. (vs. 1)
1. He sent these 70 “two and two”,
 2. They were to go to every city and town where Jesus was about to come.
- B. These 70 were told to pray the Lord for laborers to be sent forth into his harvest. (v. 2)
- C. General instructions given to the seventy:
1. Not to carry purse, scrip or shoes. (vs. 4)
 2. To salute no man by the way. (vs.4)
 3. Upon entering a house, these 70 were to say, first, “Peace be to this house” (vs.5)
 - a. If the son of peace be there, their peace should rest upon it. (vs. 6)
 - b. If not, their peace should turn to them again. (vs. 6)
 4. They were to remain in the same house. (vs. 7)
 5. They were to eat and drink such things as those in the house provided. (vs. 7)
 6. They were to “go NOT from house to house”. (vs. 7)

NOTE: Many nowadays, who try to claim PART of this commission, tend to ignore Points 2 and 6 immediately foregoing. They salute (i.e., greet) everyone they can, and make a practice of going from “house to house” with their teachings. If any man tries to APPROPRIATE a PART of this commission, he should abide by ALL of it. If any man REJECTS PART, in effect he REJECTS ALL. However, it should be evident already that THIS commission was not for us today, or even for the 12 apostles; rather IT WAS FOR THE “SEVENTY” ONLY.

7. When the seventy were “received” in any city, they were to eat whatever was set before them. (vs. 8)

NOTE: We are especially happy that this commission is not to US: for in some CITIES where we are “received”, we observe that many things set before us are hardly edible (from our viewpoint) or even clean! However, we are free to pick and choose what we eat, since this commission was binding upon THE SEVENTY, not upon anyone else, including ourselves.

8. The seventy were to heal the sick. (vs. 9)

NOTE: This passage limited such power to the seventy, as far as THIS commission was concerned. No one, to-day, has any right to look to this passage for authority to heal the sick; the seventy, to whom the authority was here given, are all dead.

9. To those healed, the seventy were to say, “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”
10. Any city that did not “receive” these seventy, they were to go into the streets of that city, and say, “Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” (vs. 10-11)

D. Jesus pronounced a curse upon those cities which would not receive his seventy. (vs. 12-15)

1. Jesus said that he who “heard” the seventy also heard HIM. (vs. 16)
2. He said that who despised the seventy also despised HIM. (vs. 16)
3. He said, “.....he that despiseth me despiseth HIM THAT SENT ME.” (vs. 16)

E. The seventy, upon having fulfilling this limited commission to them, “returned” and made report. (vs. 17)

F. Jesus gave them further power. (vs. 19)

1. To tread on serpents and scorpions
2. Over the enemy

G. Jesus commanded them to rejoice, not because of their having been given such power, but because their names were written in heaven.(vs. 20)

NOTE: Thus far in our series of studies, we have established the following facts:

- 1) That those commandments God gave to individuals and families before Moses were binding only upon those to whom originally given; thus, when they died, the force of said commandments died with them.

- 2) That the law which included the Ten Commandments, given by God through Moses on Mount Sinai, was binding only upon the children of Israel, and its force ended at Calvary (A.D. 33), when it was figuratively “nailed to the cross” with Christ.
- 3) That both the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist likewise ended at the cross.
- 4) That the special commission (Matthew 10) was limited to the twelve apostles, who in turn were limited to go to the cities of Israel “till the Son of man be come.”
- 5) That a second special commission (Luke 10) was limited to “the seventy” who were sent before the Lord “into every city and place, whither he himself would come.”

These seventy fulfilled this commission, which applied only to themselves, returned and reported. Since Jesus finished going to every city and place whither he himself would come, then was crucified, the fact that they were to go BEFORE him, proves their commission completed.

NOT ONE COMMANDMENT comprehended by ANY of the foregoing IS BINDING UPON OUR CONSCIENCES IN THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION. Truly, by studying the patriarchal commands, Jewish law, John’s preaching and baptism, as well as these limited commissions, we can LEARN a lot. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11) But, for what GOVERNS US look forward to our next lesson.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON ELEVEN

1. How many “limited” commissions did Jesus give?

2. To whom was the first of these limited commissions given?

3. According to this first commission (Matt.10). Jesus gave certain ones power to cast out unclean spirits (or devils), to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and to raise the dead. Specify TO WHOM such power was given:

4. How did Jesus make doubly sure that we do not mistake the ones to whom this commission was limited?

5. Were those governed by this limited commission to go to Gentiles? or To the Samaritans?

6. If not, then to whom were they to go?

7. Who were the “lost sheep of the house of Israel?”

8. Could a person governed by this limited commission carry any money? If not, why not?

9. What about their having a traveling-bag, two coats, shoes and staves?

10. Can a person today be consistent in claiming from this passage the power to heal the sick, while at the same time trying to get money? Explain:

11. With whom were the apostles to stay upon entering a city?

12. If a house or city would not “receive” them, what did Jesus command them to do?

13. Which persons were told not to think HOW or WHAT to speak? Under what condition?

14. Did this passage tell anyone else this?

15. Since the words were supplied them to say, under the condition mentioned, who was to do the speaking?

16. Does this commission justify people today claiming to speak by direct operation of the Holy Spirit? Explain:

17. Whom were the apostles commanded to fear - man or God?

18. Did Jesus come to send peace on earth – or a sword?

19. What similarity existed between the limited commission to the twelve apostles and the limited commission to the “other seventy”, relative to how many should journey together?

20. Where were the seventy limited to go?

21. Were the seventy to salute anyone by the way?

22. Were the seventy to go from house to house?

23. What were the seventy to eat?

24. Who else, other than the seventy, were authorized to heal the sick by the limited commission in Luke 10?

25. Is either of these two limited commissions binding on anyone NOW?
