

Building Houses: Part 2

Matthew 7:21-29 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.' "Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- Which words do we follow? How do we navigate the Bible? Where do I go from here?
- Some specifics will not be immediately apparent to those new to the word of God, but I genuinely do not believe the correct approach to the Biblical text should be unique. The Bible is unique because it's the only inspired text from God, but we will still approach it the same way we would other authoritative texts. Why? Because it was written to people in their languages and style. It was meant to be understood using every day. Some cultures may have different types of approaches - that's for sure. But the overall logic doesn't change, as we'll see.

Genesis 2:1-3, 15-17, 18-24.

- Here we learn about the Lord resting on the seventh day and making it holy. We read about His instruction regarding what Adam could and could not eat. Finally, we learn that a man should leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.
- Let's say you're new to the word. Imagine reading through this for the first time. I'm not exactly sure what you would take away from this, but let's discuss some possibilities together.
- If you continue to read through the Bible, you'll learn that Adam and Eve are presented not as symbolic but as a literal living couple who had children. We'll learn that Adam lived until he was 930 years old. As you enter the New Testament, you'll discover that Jesus is a descendant of Adam's line ([Luke 3:38](#)). In other words - what you're reading is a historical record of the beginning of humankind. You're learning what happened to the first man and woman and why we no longer live in the garden today.

- **Seventh Day Rest:** We begin in [Genesis 2:1-3](#). Would you read this and immediately think, "I'm supposed to be resting on the seventh day as well!" I can't say for sure, but you probably wouldn't. However, as you continue to read the OT, you'll learn how Israel was commanded to rest on the seventh day (Sabbath - [Exodus 20:8-11](#)). However, this Law was specifically given to Israel. Did Jesus observe the Sabbath? Yes, He did as a Jew under the Law. What do I mean? Israel was unique in many ways, as Paul points out ([Romans 3:1-2; 9:1-5](#); [Galatians 4:4-5](#); [Matthew 5:17-18](#); [Ephesians 2:11-16](#); [Hebrews 8:1-7, 13; 10:8-10](#)). So many of these Laws given to Israel also set them apart, such as the Sabbath-keeping ([Exodus 31:13-17](#)) and circumcision. Does

this make sense? We're reading text, thinking it through, and seeking to harmonize. We don't keep the Sabbath today because we're not Israelites under the Law, and the new covenant has not required it in any form as far as we can tell. Would you like to rest on Saturdays? Have at it, but know that's not the will of God for you today, and we certainly should not try to force that practice on anyone.

- **Food:** Let's consider what Adam and Eve would have for food. See [Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17; 1:29](#). If we only had [Genesis 1:29](#), what would you eat? Now, when God mentioned the knowledge of good and evil, that set apart a specific tree that was off limits. They understood it would be wrong to eat fruit from that tree. It's interesting when you read [Genesis 9:1-4](#) because it reads as though they are given permission to eat something they hadn't before: animals. We continue on and learn how the Israelites received specific laws about what they could eat. As far as we know, these were new restrictions explicitly given to Israel ([Leviticus 11](#); [Deuteronomy 14](#)). All of this is straightforward. Peter was a Jew under the OT, so he still had restrictions. This explains his response to the vision in [Acts 10:10-15](#). We also read in [Mark 7:19](#) that Jesus declared all foods clean. However, it took a while before this would come into play and be understood by all. As Christians, we learn that it's acceptable to God to eat all foods when done in thanks and honor to the Lord ([Romans 14](#)). So, when non-believers criticize Christians for eating bacon, they show their ignorance. They are referring to the OT, which was binding on the Jewish nation for a time. Or when Christians try to push a vegetarian diet because that was the food source in [Genesis 1-2](#), they have also failed to consider the word in totality. Is there anything unique about our approach? Does it seem foreign?
- **Marriage:** God didn't intend for Adam to be alone. When you read [Genesis 2:18-23](#), you learn why Eve was created and the nature of their relationship. Take note of Moses' conclusion in vs. [24-25](#). We can also read about instructions to the pair in [Genesis 1:27-28](#). We learn about their roles in the curse found in [Genesis 3:16-17](#). Eve was to be led by Adam, and Adam was rebuked for allowing her to lead him astray. He should have been leading, not following her example. We'll look at this topic in more detail next week, but take note of how the leaders throughout the Bible are . . . what? Jesus came in the form of a man. He chose 12 men and gave them authority. Wives submit to their husbands ([Ephesians 5](#)), and women are not to teach or exercise authority over men ([1 Timothy 2](#)). Let's get back to marriage. Jesus would reference the Genesis account when teaching on marriage and notice His conclusion in [Matthew 19:6](#). If they're one flesh, then they shouldn't be separated. That's His takeaway. He goes on to encourage that with one exception (putting away for adultery). We're learning how to correctly apply passages such as [Genesis 2](#) with the help of Jesus' teaching and instruction, which He had the right to because of His authority. Paul, an apostle of Jesus, would uphold Jesus' teaching against divorce. However, he would never specifically bring up the one exception. What should we do? We should harmonize the passages.

Do you know what we used?

- Hermeneutics.
- Deductive reasoning.

- Harmonization.
- Commands.
- Examples.
- Implications and Necessary inferences.
- Silence.

The key is to understand the context and then harmonize the passage with the word of God. If you don't do that, every command you read about must be followed, but you'll get yourself in trouble. Are we commanded to be circumcised? You'll force every example. Are we supposed to choose 7 deacons if we have a physical need in the church? Nor does it mean that because we don't read a specific command against or for something, it isn't against God's will or approval. I can't find a specific passage against the use of cocaine. Still, I feel confident in preaching against getting high for fun ([Galatians 5:19-21](#); [Romans 1:30](#)). Nor can I show a specific passage showing an exact order of worship. There's no example of a local body using a school for worship long ago (not considering Paul's individual use of the school mentioned in Acts - haha). Still, I do not read anything that leads me to believe we are breaking any principle or the will of God by doing so?

There's a good reason why we do what we do. Often the church is challenged, not in gray areas, but in clear ones. Do I think we have to be careful? Absolutely! For example, you can bind a model that's not meant to be bound. We all have to watch out for that. You shouldn't tell someone you have to kiss each other when you meet because Paul wrote to "greet one another with a holy kiss." They can go on and on. We can absolutely abuse unnecessary inference, but it holds value. It just needs to be necessary. In [Acts 8:35](#), we learn how Philip began to teach the Ethiopian eunuch, starting with [Isaiah 53](#). He then went on and told him the good news about Christ. The next verse explains how they came to water, and the eunuch immediately wanted to know what prevented him from being baptized. What should we infer from that? To preach the good news about Christ included baptism. Isn't that a necessary conclusion? Was baptism sprinkling water on someone's head? If the eunuch came out of the water . . . Or what about who should be baptized? If those who were baptized were to believe in Jesus, confess Him, and repent of their sins, do you think a two-year-old child can meet those expectations? So, it absolutely has value, but it needs to be necessary.

Having said that, I'd like to bring all this full circle to where we began. We want God to build all and any houses. We want Him to build this local body and have control over our one-on-one relationship with Him. He graciously extended His help, love, and leadership to us all. We must honor His authority, but brethren, let's be reminded: having a great mind does not mean we have great hearts. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep My commandments." ([John 14:15](#)). Knowing how to understand God's authority doesn't mean He has your heart. It doesn't guarantee that we are growing closer to Him or, for that matter, honoring Him. We have a tendency to codify everything. We like formulas. We want transaction-like relationships. Please, let's encourage each other to truly seek God because, brethren, when you find Him and allow Him to build your house, your life will forever change. So with that, I leave you with the Hebrew writer: [Hebrews 3:1-6](#) Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was

faithful to Him who appointed Him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses - as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a Son. And we are His house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope."