



## Oral Tradition's Binding & Loosing Based on "Rules of Conduct"; Peter's Will be Based on "Classes of People": the Perfect Periphrastic of Matt 16:19b

- (20) From all these passages we are able to discern how to interpret the Lord's juxtaposition of the "binding and loosing" practiced by the Pharisees with the "binding and loosing" He is commissioning to Peter. We get important historical context from:

**Carson, Daniel A. "Matthew." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 8:478-79:**

A sizable body of scholarship convincingly argues that the first century A.D. till the Fall of Jerusalem marks the most remarkable period of Jewish missionary zeal and corresponding success. Not the least important fact is that there is no evidence that Jews in any way opposed Paul's or anyone else's Christian Gentile mission: rather, what they disputed was the basis of admission to the people of God. (p. 478)

Whether the scribes and Pharisees were winning raw pagans or sympathizers of Judaism, they were winning them to their own position. The converts in view, therefore, are not converts to Judaism but to Pharisaism. Pharisees and teachers of the law would travel extensively to make one "proselyte"—a word ... that at this time probably refers to those who have been circumcised and have pledged to submit to the full rigors of Jewish law, including the oral tradition for which the Pharisees were so zealous. (pp. 478-79)

Jesus did not criticize the *fact* of the Pharisees' extensive missionary effort but its *results*: the "converts" became twice as much a "son of hell" as the scribes and Pharisees who won them. This means that the Pharisees' interpretations and the rules deduced from Scripture became so fully those of their converts that they "out-Phariseed" the Pharisees. Psychologically this is entirely possible, as every teacher of converts knows. As for the converts of whom Jesus was speaking, the Pharisees' teaching locked them into a theological frame that left no room for Jesus the Messiah and therefore no possibility of entering the messianic kingdom. (p. 479)

- (21) Thus, the teachings of the "traditions of men" bound the converts of the Pharisees to the minutiae of the Halakah so that they could not be loosed into the kingdom of heaven through faith in Jesus as Messiah.
- (22) Consequently, we are able to understand why the Lord used the phrase of "binding and loosing" in his instructions to Peter: whereas the Pharisees bound converts so that they could not enter into the kingdom of the heavens, Peter had the keys that would loose them to enter in: the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah.
- (23) And by the time Peter is permitted to utilize his keys, he will be doing so in the Church Age—post crucifixion, post resurrection, and post ascension history.
25. Now that we know what the "binding and loosing" is all about we next have to deal with the statement, "whatever Peter shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
26. First of all, those Peter "shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" means that in certain circumstances Peter will not open the kingdom of heaven to some and therefore they will not be admitted.
27. Secondly, those Peter "shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" means that in certain circumstances Peter will open the kingdom of heaven to some and therefore they will be admitted.
28. The problem with the English translations is that they leave the distinct impression that Peter makes unilateral decisions as to who is allowed entry and who is not.



29. When this assumption is added to the claim that Peter has plenipotentiary authority over the body of local church congregations throughout the world and that this authority is passed on to alleged successors the result is a hierarchy over local churches that arrogate to themselves the power to permit or deny entrance into heaven.
30. Fortunately, this is not how the Greek reads. Let's take another look at the way the end of verse 19 is translated in the New American Standard Bible:
- Matthew 16:19b -** "... and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
31. We have already dealt with "bind" and "loose." The former means to deny entrance while the latter means to provide entrance.
32. The verbs that make up the phrases "shall be bound" and "shall be loosed" must be analyzed. Each of these phrases consists of two verbs and forms a construction in the Greek that is referred to as a *periphrastic*.
33. This construction is carried over into the Koiné from the Attic dialect. It indicates that the writer cannot get all the details into one verbal form, therefore he uses two. Thus a periphrastic forms a forceful and powerful affirmation of the principle being stated.
34. The two phrases in our context are future periphrastics which are developed by the future indicative of the verb **εἰμί, eimi** plus the perfect participle of the following verbs.
35. In verse 19 we find the perfect passive participle of the verbs "to bind"—**δέω, deō**—and "to loose"—**λύω, luō**.

**Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 626:**

The perfect participle is almost always *antecedent* with reference to the main verb.

Consequently, whoever Peter binds has already been bound in heaven and whoever Peter looses has already been loosed in heaven.

36. This is true almost without exception in both classical and Koiné Greek when the form is located in a conditional context and such is the case here [W. T. Dayton, "The Greek Perfect Tense in Relation to Matthew 16:19" (1945)]. Further, this formation is also called a "periphrastic future perfect." All of these grammatical indicators come together to produce the following translation:

**Matthew 16:19 -** "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven [ **Peter is invested with authority** ]; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven [ **Peter is commissioned to allow or forbid entrance into the kingdom** ]."

37. The translation of the periphrastics is critical to the correct interpretation of this verse. If they are considered to be in the future tense then the translation found in the major English versions would be correct:

**Matthew 16:19 -** (NASB) "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

38. This translation gives unquestioned support to the idea seized by the Catholics that Peter was given the authority to determine who would be bound and loosed and God would then ratify his decisions.
39. It was then assumed that Peter's investment and commission is extended to alleged successors thus establishing a specialized priesthood for the Church Age with ongoing authority over believers in every generation.



40. However, the correct translation recognizes that the tense should be recognized as a future perfect participle and thus translated as we have just noted:
- Matthew 16:19 -** "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven [ **Peter is invested with authority** ]; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven [ **Peter is commissioned to allow or forbid entrance into the kingdom** ]."
41. Remember the grammatical principles we have noted: (1) from Dr. Wallace that the perfect participle is almost always antecedent with reference to the main verb and from Dr. Dayton that this is true almost without exception when found in a conditional sentence.
42. The main verbs are "bind" and "loose" and the future perfect participles are "shall have been bound" and "shall have been loosed."
43. From this we can readily determine that God established a policy in eternity past that regulates who is to be "bound" and who is to be "loosed."
44. Whoever rejects the message that Jesus is the Christ is to be "bound" by Peter because in eternity past it had already been decreed by God to bind such individuals outside the kingdom of heaven.
45. Whoever believes the message that Jesus is the Christ is to be "loosed" by Peter because in eternity past it had already been decreed by God to loose such individuals into the kingdom of heaven.
46. Peter is to use this power to make a transition away from the spiritual life of the dispensation of Israel over to the spiritual life of the Church Age.
47. And it is evident that although Peter has the keys which will open the doors into this new spiritual life, his fellow apostles will also have the same authority to bind and loose:
- Matthew 18:18 -** "Truly I say to you [ plural of σός, su: the twelve disciples referenced in verse 1 ], whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."
48. Therefore, Peter has the keys by which he has the authority to allow or forbid initial entry into the spiritual life of the Church Age but all twelve have the power to bind and loose into the kingdom thereafter.
49. Consequently, because Peter was the first disciple to state the Gospel with verbal clarity he is given the honor of becoming the Church Age's "key man" with authority to allow initial entry into the spiritual life of the new spiritual household's spiritual kingdom.
50. We have confirmed several principles from Matthew 16:13-19:
- Peter correctly identifies Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel.
  - This knowledge is communicated to Peter by God the Father which the Lord confirms as a blessing to Peter.
  - The Lord uses the nickname "Peter" the little stone, which He gave to Simon to make a pun with reference to Himself as the bedrock of the church.
  - The Lord is the bedrock and upon this He will build His church.
  - Peter is the first stone laid on this foundation.
  - The souls of unbelieving men and angels have been transferred to the Torments, Tartarus, and Abyss compartments of Hades but the gates which house these dead will not be opened in the Church Age and thus cannot overpower the church.
  - Peter is invested with the authority of the keys which open the way into the spiritual life of the Church Age.



- Peter and his fellow apostles have the power to bind and loose that which God has decreed in eternity past.
- This includes not only using the power of the Gospel to offer entry to whosoever will believe but also the power to establish, regulate, govern, and discipline the local churches of the apostolic age.
- The latter supervisory powers of binding and loosing will have already been decreed in heaven and made known to the apostles through the progressive revelation of the New Testament canon.