

What Parts of the New Testament Apply to Whom?

By: Pastor Chad Wagner

The Minneapolis Church
www.MinneapolisChurch.net

To listen to the series, click here: www.MinneapolisChurch.net/what-parts-of-the-new-testament-apply-to-whom.

Table of Contents

I. The importance of context.....	2
II. Parts of the NT that apply only to the apostles.....	2
III. Parts of the NT that apply only to pastors	5
IV. Parts of the NT that apply only to Christians who lived prior to 70AD.....	6
1. Parts of the Olivet Discourse	6
2. Jesus' other warnings about the destruction of Jerusalem.....	7
3. Instructions about the sign gifts	7
V. Parts of the NT that only apply to Jews who lived under the law of Moses	8
VI. Parts of the NT that apply only to a local church or to a church service	8
1. Epistles that are addressed to a specific local church, such as the church in Corinth.....	8
2. Practices in the local church.....	8
A. Music	8
B. Communion.....	9
C. Women teaching and speaking	9
VII. Parts of the NT that apply only to the specific person to whom it was written or spoken	10
VIII. Parts of the NT that apply to all men in general.....	10

I. The importance of context

1. One key to understanding the Bible is *context*.
2. When reading any passage, ask yourself, "To whom is this written?"
3. To apply everything that is written in the Bible universally to all men or to oneself will create some strange interpretations.
4. For instance, linking together a few partial verses and applying them to yourself would be your demise: "Judas...went and hanged himself" (Mat 27:3-5), "then said Jesus...go, and do thou likewise" (Luk 10:37), "and...that thou doest, do quickly" (Joh 13:27).
5. We have already covered what parts of the Old Testament apply to Christians today: see the series on *The Christian and the Old Testament* (<http://www.MinneapolisChurch.net/old-testament>).
6. This study will examine which parts of the New Testament apply to the apostles, ministers, churches, Christians, and men in general.

II. Parts of the NT that apply to the apostles

1. How do we distinguish commands that were only for the apostles from commandments given to the apostles that apply to others or all Christians?
2. If the commandment given to the apostles was given directly to them and it was not repeated to pastors or Christians in general, then it can be concluded that it only applied to the apostles.
 - A. For example, the "Great Commission" to preach the gospel to all nations was given specifically to the apostles (**Mat 28:16-20; Mar 16:14-16**).
 - i. The apostles fulfilled their commission (**Mar 16:20**).
 - ii. They fulfilled it to the letter.
 - a. They took the gospel into "all the world" (**Mar 16:15 c/w Col 1:6**).
 - b. They "preached" the gospel "to every creature" (**Mar 16:15 c/w Col 1:23**).
 - c. They taught "all nations" the scriptures (**Mat 28:19 c/w Rom 16:26**).
 - iii. In that 1) the men to whom the commission was given fulfilled it, and 2) that it was never given to preachers or Christians in general, it can be concluded that it only applied to the apostles.
 - iv. If the "great commission" applies to all Christians today, then any Christian who has not gone abroad preaching the gospel is sinning.
 3. Some commandments apply to the apostles primarily, but also extend down to the church.
 - A. Decisions the apostles made were binding on earth and in heaven.
 - i. Jesus said that whatsoever Peter would bind on earth would be bound in heaven (**Mat 16:19**).
 - ii. Was this just to Peter, or all the apostles, or all ministers, or all Christians?
 - iii. It was not just to Peter because later Jesus said to the disciples (**Mat 18:1-3**) that whatsoever YE shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven (**Mat 18:18**).
 - iv. If two of them shall agree on anything, it shall be done for them (**Mat 18:19**).
 - v. This was spoken in the context of church discipline (**Mat 18:15-17**).

- a. When the church makes a binding decision regarding church exclusion or restoration, that decision is bound in heaven.
 - (i) An example of this is in **1Co 5:1-5** when the church was told to exclude a brother from membership and deliver him unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
 - (ii) God has to allow Satan to destroy someone's flesh (**Job 2:3-6**).
 - (iii) Therefore, God allows Satan to punish a brother in conjunction with the church's decision.
 - b. When the apostles would make decisions concerning doctrine or practice, the decision would be bound in heaven.
 - (i) An example of this was in **Act 15:19-27** when the apostles decided which parts of the law of Moses that the Gentiles were under.
 - (ii) This decision was bound in heaven in that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost (**Act 15:28-29**).
 - c. God would honour the words of the apostles that they wrote down as scripture inspired by God (**2Ti 3:16; 2Pe 1:21**).
 - (i) The New Testament that the apostles wrote was a more sure word of prophecy (**2Pe 1:19**).
 - (ii) It is forever settled in heaven (**Psa 119:89**).
 - (iii) The Lord gave Paul permission to write certain things which are bound in heaven (**1Co 7:25-40**).
- vi. In all three of these cases (church discipline, apostolic decisions, and scripture written by the apostles) the church or the apostles are/were reacting to something that is already settled in heaven, not the other way around.
- a. Consider the verb tense in **Mat 16:19** and **Mat 18:18**:
 - b. *Shall bind* and *shall loose* are future tense.
 - c. *Shall be bound* and *shall be loosed* are future tense in the *passive voice*.
 - (i) The passive voice has a similar effect as the perfect tense, denoting a completed action.
 - (ii) Jesus was therefore saying that whatever the apostles or the church decided on earth was in response to what had already been decided in heaven.
 - (iii) Whatever they would bind in the future would already be bound in heaven.
 - d. If the verbs are brought into the present tense, it is easier to see.
 - (i) Bringing the verbs into the present tense would make **Mat 18:18** read, "Whatsoever ye *bind* on earth *is bound* in heaven..."
 - (ii) In the present tense it is clear that whatever the church presently binds is already bound in heaven.
 - (iii) The present tense passive voice construction of "is bound" has the same effect as the present perfect tense, "has been bound."

- (iv) Likewise, the future tense passive voice construction of "shall be bound" has the same effect as the future perfect tense "shall have been bound."
 - (v) This shows that the binding in heaven happens prior to the binding on earth.
 - (vi) In other words, the binding on earth is in reaction to heaven's binding, not the cause of it.
 - e. If Jesus was teaching that God would react to the apostles' or the church's decision and be bound by it, then Jesus would have said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, heaven shall bind..."
 - f. When the church excludes a brother from church membership for an excludable sin, they are rubberstamping what God already did (**Eph 5:5**).
- B. The apostles sitting on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (**Mat 19:28**).
- i. Was this meant for only the apostles, or all ministers, or all Christians?
 - ii. Jesus said that it would be his apostles which had continued with him in His temptations that would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (**Luk 22:28-30**).
 - iii. The apostles began reigning on their thrones in the regeneration when Jesus sat on the throne of His glory.
 - a. The regeneration was the resurrection of Christ when He was raised up to sit on His throne (**Act 2:30-31 c/w Eph 1:20-22**).
 - b. The kingdom that the apostles were reigning over was given to them at the first coming of Christ (**Luk 22:29-30 c/w Heb 12:28**).
 - c. In heaven, John saw 24 seats around the throne of God with 24 elders sitting in them, which are likely the 12 apostles and the 12 patriarchs of Israel (**Rev 4:4**).
 - d. The apostles were put in positions of authority to judge matters of doctrine and practice in the churches (**Act 15:1-2, 19-20**).
 - iv. While Christians in general are not given one of the twelve thrones that the apostles were, they are still given positions of judgment in the church and in the final judgment, so there can be an application made to all Christians from **Mat 19:28**.
 - a. Christians are supposed to judge matters in the church (**1Co 6:1-4**).
 - b. The saints shall judge the world (**1Co 6:2 c/w Psa 149:5-9**).
 - c. The saints shall judge angels (**1Co 6:3**).
 - d. The saints reign as kings on the earth (**1Co 4:8; Rev 1:6; Rev 20:4,6**).
4. If the commandment given to the apostles by Jesus Christ was also given to other Christians by Jesus or the apostles, then it can be concluded that it applies to Christians in general.
- A. For example, Jesus commanded the apostles to remember his death by observing communion (**Mat 26:26-28**).
- i. The apostles then instructed other Christians in churches to observe communion (**1Co 11:23-26**).
 - ii. It can therefore be concluded that the commandment to keep the Lord's supper in remembrance of Christ's death applies to all Christians.

- B. The ordinance of footwashing was instituted on the same night that Jesus instituted the ordinance of communion (**Joh 13:1-5**).
 - i. The apostles were instructed by Jesus to continue to practice the ordinance of footwashing (**Joh 13:14-17**).
 - ii. In that communion was meant to be observed by all Christians, it can be concluded that footwashing was meant to be observed by all Christians, since it was instituted at the same time to the same people.
 - iii. This conclusion is verified by the fact that Paul made one of the qualifications for a widow to receive church support to be that she had washed the saints' feet (**1Ti 5:10**).

III. Parts of the NT that apply only to pastors

- 1. The epistles of 1&2 Timothy and Titus are written to those particular men who were pastors, that they would know how to behave in the house of God (**1Ti 3:15**).
 - A. Anything written to Timothy and Titus that applies to the ministry is applicable to any minister, but not necessarily to Christians in general, though sometimes applications can be made to non-pastors. For example, every minister should:
 - i. Charge brethren that they teach no other doctrine (**1Ti 1:3**).
 - ii. Not give heed to fables, foolish questions, and endless genealogies (**1Ti 1:4; 1Ti 4:7; 1Ti 6:20; Tit 1:14**).
 - iii. War a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience (**1Ti 1:18-19**).
 - iv. Putting the brethren in remembrance of the things that Paul taught (**1Ti 4:6**).
 - v. Let no man despise his youth (**1Ti 4:12**).
 - vi. Be an example to the believers (**1Ti 4:12**).
 - vii. Spend time in reading, exhortation, and doctrine (**1Ti 4:13**).
 - viii. Meditate on the scriptures and give himself wholly to them (**1Ti 4:14-16**).
 - ix. Enforce the guidelines for church support of widows (**1Ti 5:3-16**).
 - x. Be financially supported by the church (**1Ti 5:17-18**).
 - xi. Rebuke sinners publicly when necessary (**1Ti 5:20**).
 - xii. Show no partiality (**1Ti 5:21**).
 - xiii. Preach the word in season and out of season (**2Ti 4:2**).
 - xiv. Do the work of an evangelist (**2Ti 4:5**).
 - B. The qualifications for a pastor
 - i. The qualifications to hold the office of a pastor are specifically for a pastor or potential pastor (**1Ti 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9**).
 - ii. A pastor *must* (**1Ti 3:2**) meet these qualifications, but all Christians should do so since all these things are required of them to some extent elsewhere in scripture.
 - C. Anything contained in the pastoral epistles that is not specific to a pastor, can be applied to Christians in general.
 - i. There are practical things in the pastoral epistles that all Christians can make application of in their lives, such as:
 - a. Women must be adorned in modest apparel (**1Ti 2:9**).

- b. Women must learn in silence and not teach in the church (**1Ti 2:11-12**).
 - c. Bodily exercise is not nearly as profitable as godliness (**1Ti 4:8**).
 - d. Drinking wine in moderation for one's health (**1Ti 5:23**).
 - e. Being ware of the love of money (**1Ti 6:5-11**).
 - f. Fighting the good fight of faith (**1Ti 6:12**).
 - ii. There are doctrinal teachings in the pastoral epistles that all Christians can learn from, such as:
 - a. God saves His elect by His sovereign grace (**2Ti 1:9-10**).
 - b. Our sins will be judged eventually (**1Ti 5:24-25**).
 - c. Jesus is the immortal, omnipotent God (**1Ti 6:15-16**).
 - d. We are saved by God's mercy through the regeneration of the Holy Ghost (**Tit 3:5**).
 - e. There are some brethren who have lost their faith and yet are God's elect (**2Ti 2:18-19**).
- 2. Paul's instruction to the elders in Ephesus in **Act 20:17-35** was to those specific elders.
 - A. In that it was instruction to elders (pastors), application can be made to all elders.
 - B. In that it was instruction given to elders, any of the parts of it that were specific to elders *cannot* be applied to Christians in general or the world, such as taking heed to feed the church of God, of which they were overseers (**Act 20:28**).
 - C. The parts of it that were not unique to elders can be applied to all Christians, such as:
 - i. Paul's encouraging words concerning not fearing the persecution he was about to face, not counting his life dear unto himself, and finishing his course with joy (**Act 20:24**).
 - ii. It's more blessed to give than receive (**Act 20:35**).
- 3. Paul's accounts of what it's like to be an apostle and a minister (**1Co 4:9-11; 2Co 6:3-10**).
 - A. This information applies specifically to the apostles and ministers of God.
 - B. Ministers can make applications of some of these things to themselves in that they share some of the same responsibilities that the apostles had.
 - C. Christians in general can make applications of some of these things that apply to the Christian life in general in their own lives.

IV. Parts of the NT that apply only to Christians who lived prior to 70AD

- 1. Parts of the Olivet Discourse
 - A. In the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Jesus was answering two main questions: 1) when would the temple be destroyed?, and 2) when would He return and the world end? (**Mat 24:3**)
 - B. **Mat 24:4-13** applies in general to both questions and therefore applies to all Christians.
 - C. **Mat 24:14-29** and **Mat 24:32-35** applies to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and therefore only applies to the early Christians living prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.
 - D. **Mat 24:30-31** and **Mat 24:36-51** applies to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, and therefore applies to all Christians.
 - E. For proof of these statements, see the series on the [Olivet Discourse](#).

2. Jesus' other warnings about the destruction of Jerusalem only specifically applied to the Christians living prior to 70AD (**Mat 10:17-23**).
 - A. Though these warnings only directly applied to first century Christians, all Christians can apply the principles found in this warning such as:
 - B. Being ware of men who will persecute us (**2Ti 4:14-15**).
 - C. Not worrying about what we will say in that day (**Mat 6:31-34; Phi 4:6-7**).
 - D. Knowing that family will sometimes betray us (**Mat 10:34-37**).
 - E. Fleeing persecution when possible (**Mat 12:14-15; Act 9:24-25**).

3. Instructions about the sign gifts
 - A. The sign gifts were given to Jesus and the apostles for a period of 40 years beginning with the ministry of Jesus and ending in approximately 70AD (**Mic 7:15 c/w Psa 78:12,43 c/w Joh 2:11 c/w Mar 16:17-18,20**).
 - i. They were given for two purposes:
 - a. To convince the unbelieving Jews who were accustomed to seeing signs and wonders (**1Co 1:22; Joh 4:48**).
 - b. To confirm the word of God that was being written (**Mar 16:20; Heb 2:3-4**).
 - ii. In 70AD Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and many of the Jews were killed and the rest were taken captive.
 - iii. By 70AD the majority (if not all) of the New Testament was written.
 - iv. Once these two reasons for the sign gifts were no longer needed, the miraculous gifts ceased (**1Co 13:8-10**).
 - B. Therefore, all the passages such as (**1Co 12:4-11, 28-31; 1Co 14; etc.**) which give instruction for using the sign gifts in the church were only applicable to the first century churches and Christians.
 - C. The instruction concerning the sign gifts can be useful to Christians today to understand the gifts that the church had in the past.
 - D. It can also be used to critique the claims of people who say they have those gifts today to see if they meet the scriptural criteria, such as:
 - i. There can only be at most three people speaking in tongues in the church, one at a time (**1Co 14:27**).
 - ii. There must be an interpreter, otherwise the tongue speaker must be silent (**1Co 14:27-28**).
 - iii. Women can't speak in tongues in the church (**1Co 14:34**).
 - iv. No more than three prophets can prophesy in the church, and only one at a time, and another must judge what they say (**1Co 14:29-31**).
 - v. The people exercising the gifts must acknowledge that what Paul wrote are God's commandments (**1Co 14:37**), and if they say anything contrary to the scripture, there is no light in them (**Isa 8:20**).
 - E. If the use of the sign gifts in a modern charismatic church doesn't match the previous requirements, then they are not doing them by the Holy Spirit, but rather by another spirit who does lying signs and wonders (**2Th 2:9**).

V. Parts of the NT that only apply to Jews who lived under the law of Moses prior to Jesus dying on the cross, and thereby fulfilling and abolishing it

1. Jesus lived under the OT law of Moses and He fulfilled and abolished it (**Mat 5:17; Eph 2:15; 2Co 3:13-14**).
2. While the OT was still in effect, Jesus and the disciples kept the law including the sabbath, the dietary law, the holy days, the sacrificial laws, and the feasts.
3. When Jesus died on the cross, the law of Moses was nailed to it with Him and was taken away (**Col 2:14**).
4. When the law of Moses was taken away, all of its ordinances such as the dietary laws, holydays, feasts, and sabbath laws were no longer binding on God's people because they were a shadow of Christ who fulfilled them (**Col 2:16-17**).
5. Any part of the law of Moses that is not repeated in the NT is not applicable to Christians today. See the series on *The Christian and the Old Testament* (<http://www.MinneapolisChurch.net/old-testament>).

VI. Parts of the NT that apply only to a local church or to a church service

1. Epistles that are addressed to a specific local church, such as the church in Corinth
 - A. Some of the issues dealt with in 1&2 Corinthians were specific to that church, such as excluding a specific fornicator (**1Co 5**), and their strife and divisions (**1Co 3:1-4**).
 - i. In that these problems were found in a local church, and Paul taught the same things in every church (**1Co 4:17**), the principles can be applied to all local churches.
 - ii. Every local church must exclude commonly known sinners.
 - iii. No Christians in any local church should be saying that they are of one minister or another.
 - B. In that the epistles are addressed to local churches, problems and prohibitions that are specific to local churches *cannot* be applied to life in general or other organizations.
 - i. A member of a local stamp collecting club is not forbidden by **1Co 5:9-13** from eating dinner with a member of the club who is a fornicator.
 - ii. A member of a community Bible study or a parachurch organization is likewise not forbidden from saying he is of so-and-so, his favorite theologian.
 - iii. The church has no authority over them that are outside of its membership (**1Co 5:12**).
2. Practices in the local church
 - A. Music
 - i. Local churches are given instruction concerning music in church.
 - a. Music in church is to consist of *singing* (**Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**).
 - b. Ephesians, Colossians, and James are all written to churches (**Eph 1:1; Col 1:2**).
 - c. Jesus *sang* hymns to God *in the church* (**Heb 2:12 c/w Mat 26:30**).

- d. There is no commandment in the NT to use musical instruments in the church.
- e. The commandment is to *sing*; therefore using instruments is adding to God's commandments.
- f. The argument from silence applies (**Heb 7:12-14**).
- ii. Instruction concerning music in the church doesn't apply to life in general because it is given to churches.
 - a. Musical instruments are perfectly acceptable outside of church.
 - b. It would be fine for a Bible study group to sing hymns accompanied by a piano or a guitar.
 - c. There are plenty of things that can be done outside of church which are forbidden inside of church, such as women speaking (**1Co 14:34-35**). (More on this later.)

B. Communion

- i. Paul gave the Corinthian Church much instruction concerning how *they* were to partake of the Lord's Supper (**1Co 11:20-34; 1Co 10:16-21; 1Co 5:8,11**).
- ii. Communion was to be served when *the church* came together to eat it (**1Co 11:33 c/w 1Co 14:23**).
- iii. The *principle* of Paul's instruction to the church at Corinth concerning communion is applicable every local church, as Paul taught the same thing in every church (**1Co 4:17 c/w 1Co 11:1-2**).
- iv. Therefore, since communion is a local church ordinance, and every example of communion being partaken of in the scripture was in a local church, communion ought to only be served in a NT local church.
 - a. This means that a communion service should not be conducted in private outside of the assembly of the church such as in a hospital room, home, etc.
 - b. This means that communion should not be offered at a parachurch organization such as a Campus Crusade meeting, etc.
 - c. This means that individual Christians cannot decide to have communion by themselves at home.

C. Women teaching and speaking

- i. Women are prohibited from speaking *in church* (**1Co 14:34-35; 1Ti 2:11**).
- ii. Women are forbidden to teach or be in authority over a man *in church* (**1Ti 2:12 c/w 1Ti 3:15; Rev 2:20**).
- iii. These commandments do not apply to life in general and do not mean that women cannot speak or teach anywhere.
 - a. This is obvious because women are to *ask* their husbands at home, which demands that they are allowed to speak outside of church (**1Co 14:35**).
 - b. To forbid women from speaking altogether would be a punishment greater than they could bear!
 - c. Women are also supposed to teach the younger women how to be good wives and mothers (**Tit 2:3-5**).

- d. This teaching should happen in the home or somewhere else outside of church.

- VII. Parts of the NT that apply only to the specific person to whom it was written or spoken
 1. Sometimes something only directly applies to someone to whom it was spoken, but an application or an example can be extrapolated from it for others.
 2. For example, the epistle to Philemon was written by Paul specifically to Philemon beseeching him to receive his slave who had run away (**Phm 1**).
 3. Though this epistle was written specifically to Philemon, many lessons can be drawn from it and applied to our lives today, such as:
 - A. How to win someone over by persuasion rather than force (**Phm 1:8-9**).
 - B. Having mercy on a wayward servant, employee, or child who has been humbled and wants to return.
 - C. Using godly manipulation to influence someone for good (**Phm 1:17-21**).
- VIII. Parts of the NT that apply to all men in general
 1. The NT gives moral laws that all men are bound to keep such as:
 - A. Laws against fornication and adultery (**Heb 13:4**).
 - B. Laws against murder, theft, lying, and dishonoring parents (**Mat 19:18-19**).
 2. All men everywhere are commanded to repent (**Act 17:30**).