

Interpreting the Bible Well: Homework

Matthew 18:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

The context of this passage is Matthew 18:15-35. Please read this through carefully.

What is the overall passage (Matt. 18:15-35) about? (i.e. Brother sins .. forgiveness ...)

How do these 3 verses fit in to that?

What else do you notice about this section that would be good to look into?

What questions do you have that if answered might help with understanding this?

Note the footnote (in ESV & NIV) for vs. 18. “... *shall have been bound.. shall have been loosed*” (See also the way some translations translate it: NASB, Christian Standard Bible, and Holman Christian Standard Bible.)

What is the significance of that wording?

What did “*binding .. loosing*” mean to the 1st century Jew? (Matthew’s audience)

(You might Google - “*1st century Jew meaning of binding and loosing*”)

The only other place these two terms occur together is Matthew 16:19. Is there any kind of parallel between these two passages? Can one help interpret the other?

Notice the connections between these 3 verses: ... vs. 19 - Again I say to you; vs. 20 - For ...

How do these verses relate to each other?

Is there a significance of the numbering?

(“two of you agree ...” or “two or three are gathered..”)