

Are we supposed to 'bind and loose'?

by Denver Cheddie

It is not uncommon nowadays to hear people bind the devil, rebuke everything under the sun, and loose the Spirit of God / angels / blessings of Abraham. The terms bind, rebuke and cast out are used almost interchangeably and refer to some action against the devil. The term loose is a more positive term, and can release blessings or angels - the specific interpretation varies.

There is no doubt that the terms bind, loose and rebuke appear in the Bible. Jesus said that whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven, whatever we loose on earth is loosed in heaven (Matt 16:19; 18:18). There were also cases where Jesus and the apostles rebuked evil spirits. So the words themselves are definitely scriptural. It is just that the way they are put together by modern day pray warriors is not quite the same as in the Bible. Could you show me any scripture where the disciples bound the devil or loosed angels? So it is very possible to take biblical terminology, misinterpret them and end up with unbiblical doctrines and practices. That's exactly what happens with binding and loosing.

Another problem I have with binding and loosing is that it makes God look bad. The reason people bind and loose is because they feel that if they don't do it, God can't bless them. They feel that God's blessings are being hindered by the devil, so they must bind the devil and loose those blessings. They live in a world where God is handcuffed, blindfolded and gagged; and he is begging us to "please do something about the devil". Thank God I live in a world where God is big and the devil is small, where God is in control. Believe me he is not handcuffed, neither is his

arm shortened. If you feel God is not hearing you or answering you, you don't need to invent new doctrines, you just need to pray more scripturally and persistently. You might also have to either examine your life or try to understand what God is trying to accomplish. If you, as a believer, feel that Satan is buffeting you, then pray like Paul prayed. Plead with God for deliverance or for understanding (2 Corinthians 12).

Matthew 16:19; 18:18

Now let's look at the relevant scriptures. Both these scriptures use the exact same wording - whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven, whatever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven. The Matthew 16 scripture has no clear context so it is subject to misunderstanding. The Matthew 18 scripture has a clearer context – read the whole chapter.

Binding and loosing refer to exercising discipline to a member who refuses to repent of their sin. God gives the church leaders the discretion and ecclesiastical authority to exercise the necessary judgment against that person – keep him in the church (forgive him) or excommunicate him.

Why did Jesus use the words “bind and loose”? Scholars believe that Jesus was using the same language as the Jewish Rabbis, where they understood the terms “bind and loose” in a very specific manner, and differently from modern day Charismatics. The Jewish Rabbis used the term “bind” to mean forbid or to impose an obligation. “Loose” meant to permit or to remove an obligation. Some schools of Rabbis were more liberal than others, so they “loosed” the people from the obligations to which the other schools had “bound” them.

How did the apostles understand Jesus' teaching? A good example is Acts 15:20, where they forbade the gentiles from eating foods offered to idols and from fornication, but removed the obligation for them to follow the law of Moses. This is what binding and loosing refer to, and it often pertained to matters of church doctrine and practice. This is very different from the modern Charismatic interpretation.

Matthew 12:29

Well what about Matthew 12:29, where Jesus speaks of binding the strongman? In every situation, they believe, you must identify the strong man (the demon in charge), bind him, then plunder his spoils. But in this scripture, Jesus is the one who bound Satan (THE strong man), which is why we are able to cast out demons (divide the devil's spoils). Where does this scripture say WE have to bind the strongman?

Jesus was being accused of casting out devils with the help of Beelzebub. In response, He made the point that Satan's kingdom was not divided therefore he (Jesus) could not have been casting out Satan with Satan, as the scribes had intimated. His parable of the strongman clearly meant that He was the greater one who bound Satan and that was the reason he was able to cast out demons. He bound the devil, therefore we don't have to keep binding the devil. That was already done.

There appears to be phases in which Satan was/will be bound. He was bound in a sense when the Kingdom of God came (Jesus' first coming). Then he will be finally bound literally at the second coming. Each time, it is God who does this binding. Binding the devil is not something we were called to do.

Rebuking the Devil

There are quite a few scriptures where Jesus rebuked demons and rebuked the wind and waves. Interestingly the archangel Gabriel did not rebuke the devil, but simply declared "The Lord rebuke you." So what does rebuke mean? Look at the following scriptures: Luke 4:35; Mark 1:25; 4:39; 9:25.

In each of these verses, Jesus rebuked the demons. But here is the interesting part. He did not rebuke the devil by saying, "I rebuke you devil". He rebuked the devil by saying "come out of him". In other words, rebuking the devil and casting out the devil are exactly the same thing.

So if there is a demon to cast out, Jesus gave us the authority to do so (Mark 16:17). By all means, rebuke the devil, cast him out in Jesus' name. But it is hilarious when Christians use the words "I rebuke you devil, I cast you out." That's not how Jesus did it. He simply told the demon to come out. Have you ever seen a guy on TV go down on one knee, pull out a ring, and say to his girlfriend, "I propose to you"? The way modern day Christians pray is embarrassing. I'm pretty sure the devil and his demons have a good laugh whenever we pray like that. And if there is no demon to cast out, then rebuking the devil is futile.

Conclusion

Binding and loosing is very scriptural. But it does not mean what modern day Christians think it means. It has to do with church discipline, not spiritual warfare. Rebuking the devil means exactly the same thing as casting out a demon. The bible does not teach that God's blessings are being guarded by the devil and we must bind the devil to get them. If

God wants to give you something, you will get it. If you find that God is not answering your prayers, then do what Paul did. Pray for deliverance or for understanding (2 Corinthians 12). Just pray the way the bible teaches you to pray. Why do you see the need to pray in a way that no one in the bible prayed? Our prayers will be much more effective if they are scriptural.

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