
2 CORINTHIANS VERSE-BY-VERSE | DR. RANDY WHITE

SESSION 14 | 2 CORINTHIANS 6:16-7:1

2 CORINTHIANS 6:16-7:1 | THE CALL TO SEPARATION

- Verse 6:16 -
 - In the first part of the verse, Paul the previous conversation of being unequally yoked. His concluding argument is that there is no place for **idols** in the **temple of God**, and then says **ye are the temple of the living God**.
 - While this is normally taken individually, the pronouns are plural (not *thou art the temple*, nor *ye are the temples* but **ye are the temple**. Compare Galatians 4:7 which uses the singular.
 - Further, Paul quotes Leviticus 26:12, which is a quote about God dwelling in the Jewish nation, not in the individual. To develop a personal indwelling of God one would need to use other passages of Scripture.
 - Notice that this verse is really about God the Father, not the Holy Ghost.
 - While the word *ye* can sometimes refer to individual blessings/benefits/obligations held by individuals under a group umbrella, the use of *ye* with a singular noun refers to a group experience, just as it would in English (e.g. "*we are the church*."
 - The more typical is seen in Romans 2:24 where Paul uses the group "umbrella" but immediately speaks using both the singular pronoun and the singular verb in the next verse.
 - Therefore: when ye is used in conjunction with a singular noun or verb, it refers to the group as an entity. When ye is used with a plural noun or verb, it refers to individual benefits held by group members.
 - Examples of *ye* with a singular noun or verb (thus referring to the entity): 1 Cor. 3:9, 3:16-17, 12:27, 2 Cor. 3:2,
 - Examples of *ye* with plural nouns or verbs (thus referring to individual benefits): 1 Cor. 3:23, 4:8, 4:10, 5:2, 5:4, 5:7, 6:11, 15:2
- Verse 6:17 -
 - The "corporate" *church* was said to be **the temple of the living God** (v. 16), and now the individuals are instructed to **be ye separate**.
 - Note that this verse does not contain the actual pronoun *ye*, but it is inherent in the second person *plural* verb-the plural belongs to *individuals in the group* and the singular belongs to the *entity of the group*.
 - This instruction to **be ye separate** is often used to teach the *Doctrine of Separation*, a doctrine to which I hold. However, that doctrine concerns the church and this passage concerns the individual's holiness.
 - IMPORTANT:
 - Verses 16-18 are quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures and are given to support Paul's argument that believers should not be **unequally yoked** (v. 14).
 - If you do not recognize that these verses are *illustrative material*, you will create a doctrine of works within Christianity, because verse 17 clearly says **touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you**. This is being received to God on the basis of works.
- Verse 6:18 - Notice the clarity of the **ye** with the plural **sons and daughters**, thus this is an Old Testament quote with reference to the individual.

- Verse 7:1 -
 - This verse belongs with the previous chapter rather than with this chapter break.
 - The challenge is interpreting what **these promises** are. The *plain sense* would be the promises quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures in 2 Cor. 6:16-18. However, since **these promises** cannot be adopted by the church, the only possible interpretations are:
 - That Paul is speaking to the Jewish audience within the church concerning the promises, and that there is an overlap in the matters of the Kingdom offer and the matters of salvation. This would be an appropriate interpretation if (a) the pronoun **us** is consistent with the previous six chapters, in which it was a reference to Paul, Sylvanus, and Timothy (three Jews) and (b) the Corinthian church had a large contingent of Jewish believers (as all the text indicates).
 - That Paul is saying, "since this was the standard under the law, **let us [the church] cleans ourselves [also] from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit....** This approach seems to be seen in the Young's Literal Translation.
 - That the age of grace had not yet begun on any measure (the approach of Bullinger late in life, an approach that brings more questions than answers. For example, "why was the Apostle of the church age an Apostle *before* the church age?").
 - That **these promises** do not refer to the promises just quoted, but rather to something less obvious, perhaps promises of unstated promises of fellowship for the believer who is living a separated life.
 - That **these promises** are a reference to the preceding three verses and that the promises were prophetic of God's presence in the church and the status of believers as sons and daughters (likely a position that would be held by the *already/not yet* position of progressive dispensationalism).
 - That the church owns Israel's promises because it is the "new Israel," a position held by Covenant theologians but rejected by those who use a literal/grammatical/historical method of interpretation.
 - That a Christian who doesn't follow **these promises** was never a son/daughter of God to begin with (the Lordship Salvation approach).
 - Regardless of the interpretation, no interpretation says that believers are free from the need to refrain from immorality.
 - It is interesting to note that the instruction to work at **perfecting holiness** is 1 Corinthians 1:30 which uses the same root word saying that Christ is our **sanctification**. However, **as many as be perfect should be thus minded** (Phil. 3:15) to consider themselves **not as though [they] had already attained, either were already perfect** (Phil. 3:12). Thus there is a tension between having been made perfect in Christ and struggling with our perfection in the flesh.