

Sunday, June 22, 2014—The Judgment Seat of Christ—The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2:11-13:If Statement Number Before

### Introduction/Review

- Before we took our 3 week detour into to considering what it means to reign with Christ we had been studying the “if statements” that comprise the faithful saying of II Timothy 2:11-13. We began that investigation by considering the traditional or books view of the passage.
- Historically many fundamental and dispensational Bible teachers have held that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> “if we” statements are statements of FACT. Meanwhile, the 2 “if we” statements in verse 12 have been viewed as CONDITIONAL.
  - For **if we** be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*:--STATEMENT OF FACT
    - **if we** suffer, we shall also reign with *him*:--STATEMENT OF CONDITION
    - **if we** deny *him*, he also will deny us:--STATEMENT OF CONDITION
  - **if we** believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.—STATE. OF FACT
- As I began to study issues related to the Joint-Heir controversy in Romans 8:17 I began to question whether or not I was understanding II Timothy 2:11-13 properly. Three things caused me to question the bookends view.
- First, was the grammatical structure of the passage. A consideration of the grammatical structure of the 4 “if statements” contained in II Timothy 2:11-13 reveals the exact same structure. This reality means that all four expressions are FACT stating, not CONDITIONAL. The mood of the verb following the condition determines which type of condition is in play. *Indicative Mood*—the indicative mood is a simple statement of fact. If an action really occurs or has occurred or will occur, it will be rendered in the indicative mood. This is the LOGICAL/FACT stating use of the word if.
  - *If Statement—Number 1 (II Tim. 2:11b)*—“. . . For if (*ei*) we be dead with (**indicative mood**) *him*, we shall also live with *him*:.”
  - *If Statement—Number 2 (II Tim. 2:12a)*—“If (*ei*) we suffer (**indicative mood**), we shall also reign with(**indicative mood**) *him*:.”
  - *If Statement—Number 3 (II Tim. 2:12b)*—“. . . if (*ei*) we deny (**indicative mood**) *him*, he also will deny (**indicative mood**) us:.”
  - *If Statement—Number 4 (II Tim. 2:13)*—“If (*ei*) we believe not (**indicative mood**), *yet* he abideth (**indicative mood**) faithful: he cannot deny himself.”
- Since statements 2 and 3 outlined above exhibit the exact same grammatical structure as expressions 1 and 4; based upon what rule of interpretation does one read statements 1 and 4 as

statements of FACT and statements 2 and 3 as statements of CONDITION when grammatically they are structured in the exact same manner? It would appear for the sake of consistency that all 4 “if we” statements should be viewed as statements FACT.

- Second, I observed an inconsistency in how the verses were read in English based upon how they are punctuated. The first three “if statements” are followed by colons. The fourth obviously is not because the end of verse 13 constitutes the end of the sentence and is therefore concluded by a period. According to the TV, the first statement is understood to be a self-contained statement of FACT. In other words, when seeking to understand the second “if we” statement in verse 12 the traditional reading does not look back to the first “if statement” to inform the second. Rather, the first stands alone as a statement of FACT. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> “if we” statements in verse 12 are not read in the same manner, according to the traditional reading of the passage. They are link with each other as statements of CONDITION.
- Third, was the realization that II Timothy 2:11-13 was a “faithful” or true saying. Nothing that Paul says here is contingent upon future circumstances. Rather everything Paul says here is categorically true when he addresses the epistle to Timothy.
  - I Timothy 3:1—a “true saying” is a “faithful saying” and vice versa.
- For there we set out to study the passage from the point of view that all four “if statements” were statements of FACT. As things stand right now we have one “if statement” left to consider.

#### “If we” Statement—# 4 (II Tim. 2:13)

- Like the first three “if statement” number 4 is also a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Condition (*if and its true*), i.e., the FACT stating use of the word “if.”
  - “If (*ei*) we believe not (**indicative mood**), *yet* he abideth (**indicative mood**) faithful: he cannot deny himself.”
- Once again it is important to note the tense on the verbs in the verse. Since it’s TRUE that we believe not in the PRESENT, it is equally TRUE that abideth faithful in the PRESENT. Both verbs are in the present tense.
  - “If (*ei*) we believe not (**Present Tense**), *yet* he abideth (**Present Tense**) faithful: he cannot deny himself.”
- When understood as a statement of FACT verse 13 is saying that all believers WILL as a matter of FACT “believe not.” On the surface we can understand how this might make some saints uncomfortable. It behooves us then at this point to consider what it means to “believe not.”
- Traditionally verse 13 viewed as a statement regarding the eternal security of the believer. The reasoning goes generally as follows. Even if believers are found in a state of no longer believing

(“If we believe not”), i.e., they deny the faith altogether and become atheists they cannot lose their salvation. The reason they cannot lose their salvation is because Christ abides faithful (“yet he abideth faithful”) and “he cannot deny himself,” i.e., since believers are baptized into Jesus Christ upon faith in the finished word of Christ they can never be found again in a position outside of Christ. Since Christ cannot deny himself the believer can never be denied their salvation even if they depart from the faith at some point in their earthly life.

- The problem with this reading should be obvious. Being understood as a statement of FACT, this verse cannot mean that all believers WILL as a matter of FACT “believe not” in the sense that they depart the faith and become atheists. That this cannot be the proper way of understanding the first portion of verse 13 is evidenced by the very fact that not all believers deny or renounce their faith.
- The phrase “we believe not” is a translation of the Greek word *apisteō*, which is found 7 times in the Greek text supporting the King James Bible. Strong’s Concordance offers the following definitions for *apisteō*: 1) to betray a trust, be unfaithful, 2) to have no belief, to disbelieve.
- Of the 7 times this word occurs in the New Testament 3 of them are in the context of the reports of Christ’s post-resurrection appearances circulating among his follows.
  - Mark 16:11—And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, **believed not**.
  - Luke 24:11—And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they **believed them not**.
  - Luke 24:41—And while they yet **believed not** for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
- In these verses it is evident that the second definition presented above is in play. The followers of Christ after his resurrection “believed not” in the sense that they did not believe that Christ rose from the dead, i.e., they disbelieved the reports. The same could be said for Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that **believeth not** shall be damned.” He that “believeth not” is one who has no belief or disbelieved the preaching of the twelve Apostles. The same usage is apparent in the following verses as well:
  - Acts 28:24—And some believed the things which were spoken, and some **believed not**.
  - Romans 3:3— For what if some did **not believe**? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?
- The “faithful saying” of II Timothy 2:11-13 is not addressed to those who have “believed not,” in the sense that they “have no belief” or are lost. All of the “if statements” that comprise this faithful saying are only true for those who have believed in the finished word of Christ for their salvation.

- If Paul had the second definition of *apisteō* presented above in mind when he wrote II Timothy 2:13, then he would be stating as a matter of FACT that all believers WILL “have no faith or disbelieve.” In short, Paul is not stating that every believer will depart the faith as a matter of FACT.
- Conversely, the first definition of *apisteō*: “to betray a trust, be unfaithful” can and does apply to all believers. Please honestly consider the following questions:
  - Is there any member of the body of Christ that is faithful ALL the time?
  - Are we ALWAYS faithful to the word of Christ through the Apostle Paul in the details of life?
  - Do we ALWAYS operate by faith in God’s written word and allow it to work effectually in us who believe?
- No! Sometimes, unfortunately more often than not we try to operate by trusting in our own power, strength, and wisdom and don’t operate by faith in God’s written word.
- I Thessalonians 2:13—the word of God works effectually in us that believe. We have to choose to operate by faith in God’s written word in the details of our lives. I am guilty of this type “believing not” quite often.
- The issue of faithfulness is a recurring theme in II Timothy 2. The words translated “believe not” are the opposite of the word translated “faithful” in the same verse.
  - Verse 2—faithful men
  - Verse 11—faithful saying
  - Verse 13—he abided faithful
- What II Timothy 2:13 is doing is stating the FACT that even when we are unfaithful and not operating by faith in the details of life Christ ABIDETH or remains faithful to us.
- If one were to read this as a statement of CONDITION they would be forced to conclude that Christ only abides faith when we are not.
- I Thessalonians 5:24
- Ephesians 2:10—as believers we are Christ’s workmanship.
- Philippians 1:6—Paul is confident that Christ will continue to “perform” the work in the Philippians until the day of Jesus Christ.
- II Timothy 2:13—the reason that Christ abides and remains faithful when we are not is because he cannot deny himself. When we trusted in the finished word of Christ as the only total and

complete payment for our sins Christ placed his life in us. We became the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

- Galatians 2:20—the life that we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God.
- II Timothy 2:13—in the end this verse is a security verse but for a different reason than I used to think. This verse is highlighting the fact that based upon of justification by grace through faith Christ remains faithful to us even when we are unfaithful to him. In fact, he must remain faithful to us because he cannot deny himself.
- When we are unfaithful as we are sure to be; Christ abides and remains faithful to us because he cannot deny himself. This follows from the role the faith of Christ played in our justification (Gal. 2:16).
- II Timothy 2:12—when we deny Christ through our works he is perfectly just in denying us reward at the JSC.
- II Timothy 2:13—when we believe not, i.e., do not operate or function by faith Christ abides and remains faithful because our justification was/is not contingent upon our ability to remain faithful.
- II Timothy 2:14—Paul wanted Timothy to cause people to remember these four FACTS:
  - Verse 11—Those who ARE dead with Christ (Present) SHALL ALSO live with him (Future)—“If Statement” #1
  - Verse 12—All believers SUFFER (Present) therefore all believers SHALL ALSO reign with him (Future)—“If Statement” # 2
  - Verse 12—All believers DENY HIM via their works (Present) therefore Christ SHALL ALSO deny believers reward that they otherwise could have had at the JSC (Future)—“If Statement # 3
  - Verse 13—All believers BELIEVE NOT in that we don’t always operate by faith in God written word (Present) yet Christ abideth faithful (Present) because he cannot deny himself.
- All of this follows from the notion of a “faithful saying.” It is quite possible that in the absence of a complete Bible that these faithful/true sayings served the function of an early doctrinal statement to help believers remember/recall key truths of Paul’s teaching. There is nothing in this passage that is not in-line with Paul’s teaching elsewhere in his epistles.