



Chapter Twelve

INTRODUCTION

NOTE: One of the most overlooked keys to understanding scripture is knowing how to apply the laws and teachings. It is one thing to read scripture. It is quite another thing to know how to apply it.

Misapplication of scripture is common in the church world. The Bible was never intended to apply to all people. It only applies to the spiritual children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ... first known as Israel, now known as the Ecclesia of Christ (or the citizens of New Jerusalem). His laws and teachings apply **ONLY** among the people of his Kingdom.

PAUL has set the stage in the first eleven chapters of this letter for his Israelite brethren in Rome. He now has prepared them to understand the rest of the Gospel of the Kingdom and how it relates to them ... as Israelites.

Paul has also set the stage for non-Israelites who might hear or read his letter. They, too, will have a better chance of understanding the gospel ... as non-Israelites.

Looking back on history, we see that the world was being, and has been, shaped by the way people responded to the concept of Jesus as King. The Gospel of the Kingdom was/is the central factor in world history. The courses and fates of nations have depended upon how they responded to the reign of Christ.

God's messengers carried this story, this light, first to Israelites in Jerusalem, then to Israelites in the nations. God's judgements (punishments or blessings) – literally the future of those nations – depended upon how those nations reacted to the Gospel as it came to them via the Israelites living there.

Christ's Kingship was established. Jesus was on the Throne, his judgment was beginning, and men were being forced to make choices between the Beast System and Christ's Reign. Jesus' Kingship was the greatest event in a series of events to manifest God's Kingdom to man. Centuries earlier Israel had received God's word about his kingdom through Moses. Then the prophets repeated the story to Israel, including the promise that was yet to be manifested through Jesus.

Thus Israel was the first nation to be so blessed ... and to be held responsible for those blessings and promises (*"For unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required."* -Lk. 12:48).

It was only right that God's judgement came first upon Israel. God's Kingdom brought both blessing and punishment. God raised Israel up and she prospered ... as long as she loved and honored Him. But in her prosperity she lost sight of the source of her blessings. She abandoned Yahweh and lusted after other gods – breaking her covenant with Him (I Sam. 8).

Thus, God divorced her and put her away (Jer. 3:6-8), demonstrating his fairness and righteousness ... even concerning His chosen ones. When Israel went astray, she received judgment. The same is true for us yet today.

In spite of Israel's decline into spiritual death God kept her in his plan. He did not withhold judgment, nor did He protect her from natural consequences of her rebellion. But He initiated a plan to revive her, and to restore LIFE to her.

Thus, through Jesus (an Israelite) God granted NEW LIFE to individual Israelites who would love Him and accept the gift of life. Those who accepted new life were called "citizens of New Jerusalem" (i.e., the new Israel) and gained a status wherein God was able once again to bless and protect them.

As God reached out to Israelites in the nations, to redeem them from their lost

condition of spiritual death, his gospel and his spirit revived those who accepted his gift of LIFE. Furthermore, that light that God shined on Israelites defused and fell on others as well (symbolized by Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman in Matt. 15).

In doing things this way God made a point. All people, especially Israelites, are deficient without God's spirit in them. Men must have God's spirit in them before they can be considered children of God.

50. This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption.

I Cor. 15:50

Flesh cannot inherit the blessings and promises of God. Only spirit can inherit the things of God. With God's spirit Israel was motivated and guided toward righteousness. However, without God's spirit, fleshly Israel lowered herself to the natural state of sin and death. All flesh is dead on its own, and is in need of God's spirit in order to be alive and enjoy "eonian life."

21. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22. Even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ, in all them who are believing, for there is no distinction.

23. For all have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God,

24. And are being justified as a gift of his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus.

Rom. 3:21-24

God called Israel out of Egypt and gave her LIFE (Deut. 30:15). That "life" was called "holy spirit." God offered to protect Israel and bless her if she would value and keep the holy spirit He gave her, and if she would keep Him as her God. This was the provision for Israel to be blessed, and for others to be blessed through Israel. These were spiritual blessings through which all other blessings of a material or fleshly nature depended. Without

the spirit, these blessings do not apply.

For these blessings to be realized through flesh, that flesh must be ALIVE (with holy spirit) ... Israel must be ALIVE to inherit God's blessings and for Him to bless other nations through her.

Starting with Moses, under the leadership of the patriarchs and the judges, with Yahweh as her King, Israel prospered for approximately a millennium. Then she ran amok and abandoned her true King. She rejected the spirit and chose to follow the ways of man. She insisted on having fleshly kings and gods like the other nations (I Sam. 8), and thus, like Adam (Gen. 3:1-7), she died spiritually.

Samuel saw the end of the era of the judges in Israel. In I Samuel 8 we read of Israel's rejection of God's spirit. She thus rejected God's promise of national blessing. Israel became a fallen woman, and Yahweh was forced to put her away and divorce her (Jer. 3:8).

Later, God's plan further unfolded as Jesus was sent to rescue Israel and to put life back in her bones ... as prophesied in Ezekiel 37. Of course, the struggle between flesh and spirit is never ending, and many Israelites continued to reject the gift of LIFE.

Those who did receive life were reborn into the Reign of Jesus, and they became citizens of New Jerusalem: the City Of The Living. All who have received Christ are "living stones" built together to form the spiritual walls of New Jerusalem: the City Of The Living (I Pet. 2:4-5; Rev. 12:14).

The plan was not unprecedented. God had previously "breathed" life (spiritual life) into Adam. But Adam rebelled against God by claiming his own godship (the right to make his own laws), and thus he lost that life ("in the day you eat of it you will surely die." Gen. 2:17). From that day, Adam was dead, and was unable to engender spiritual life in his seed. Thus, death was passed on to Adam's seed:

12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;

and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.

13. For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, also over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of the One who now is.

Rm. 5:12-14

Thus, spiritual death reigned from Adam to Moses ... then God offered "life" again at Sinai. Israel, however, proved yet unwilling to accept life and sonship, so God gave them a lesser covenant (the Old Covenant) with rules and regulations fit for children. The Old Covenant was "added" as a "child tutor" for immature Israelites, to prepare them for adulthood and sonship which would be offered later. That sonship and LIFE was offered under Jesus and the New Covenant (Gal. 3).

LIFE (eonian life) was in Jesus, through whom God's spirit and truth were given.

4. In Him is LIFE, and the LIFE is the light of men;

5. And that light is shining in the darkness, and darkness cannot overpower it.

Jn. 1:4-5

2. And the LIFE was manifested. And we have seen and are bearing witness, and we declare to you this eonian LIFE – which was of the Father and was manifested to us;

3. That which we have seen and heard, we are declaring to you, that you too may share (in that life) with us; and our sharing is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

I Jn. 1:2-3

Thus LIFE came to Israel again. Yahweh sent LIFE, through his Son. Jesus offered Himself in order to reach out to Israel, and his sacrifice opened the eyes and hearts of many. Jesus symbolically demonstrated the giving of life (eonian life) by "breathing" upon his disciples (as Yahweh had breathed life into Adam) and telling them to "re-

ceive holy spirit” (Jn. 20:22). Those who accepted life were “raised” (wrongly called “resurrected” in the KJV).

The genetic family of Israel was chosen to be a vessel for God’s spirit. Through Israel God intended to shine his SPIRITUAL LIGHT far and wide. Thus we see Israel’s commission and agenda. Thus, Israel was made special ... not by genetics, but by God’s spirit that transformed her into a vessel. This agenda is still functioning through the “elect” who are called out and separated from fleshly Israel.

With God’s SPIRIT in her, New Israel (New Jerusalem) can be blessed ... and bless the nations of the Earth. This is made possible by LIFE working through her. Without LIFE, she loses her purpose upon the Earth ... like salt that has lost its savor. Israel must be ALIVE in order for God to bless her, and bless others through her.

With this in mind let us continue in chapter 12. Paul has defined the spiritual status of both Israelite and non-Israelite. Now he deals with various other topics.

ROMANS 12:1-2 IT IS LOGICAL TO SERVE GOD

Therefore I exhort you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your logical service.

And be not fashioned after this age: but be you transformed to the renewing of your mind, that you may prove that which is the good, and acceptable, and complete will of God.

IT IS logical for us to present ourselves in the service of God. Paul says “it is your logical (reasonable) service.” It is sensible and logical to serve God.

He adds, “Be not fashioned after this age.” This is an essential admonition for all ages, especially today. It is so easy for people to conform or adapt to the age in which they live. Letting bad displace good in our minds is easy in today’s society. There are people and organizations in high places whose purpose it is to distract us with bad things; to possess our minds and divert our thinking in directions that are not productive. Paul rightly taught that we should not conform to this age.

“The renewing of your mind” is just another way of saying “being born again” or receiving “eonian life.” The only way to rise above the ways of the flesh and to overcome the evil age in which we live is to accept the renewing of our minds through Christ. That is done by accepting the “life” that Jesus offers us. To be “renewed” is to be born in the spirit.

QUESTION: Does the Bible contradict itself? How can Paul say in verse 2 to not be fashioned after this age, and then in verse 18 tell us to live peaceably with all men?

ROMANS 12:3-8 HUMILITY IS ESSENTIAL

For, by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he should; but to think soundly, as God has given to every man the measure of faith.

Just as we have in one body many members, but all members have not the same function:

So we, the many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us; whether prophecy, according to the faith apportioned to us;

Whether a service in the ministry; whether a teacher in the teaching;

Whether a supporter in the support: he that gives, with sincerity; he that leads, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

MEMBERS of the Body of Christ must function as a unit. Paul says to do this we must not be high-minded or arrogant. The arrogant and the conceited act as if everything revolves around them ... instead of around Christ. Self-centered people think of self as the center of their world.

Unregenerate people worship themselves. They raise their children to be brats and self-centered. They are arrogant and often cruel. They are not humble ... and thus, they are unable to hear and learn truth.

The point Paul makes is that arrogant (high-minded) people don’t look to Christ ... because they are too wrapped up in themselves. To be in the Body of Christ we cannot be self-centered. We must be Christ-centered.

What’s Your Calling?

Paul says that each member within the Body has a work, a job description, a “calling.” Each of us are equipped with

gifts to answer to the needs of “the Body” itself. Together, the members work as a unit.

Paul says that as God calls us He also equips us to do what we are called to do. If you have a calling for service in God’s Kingdom, then do your work according to the faith and grace that God has given you.

There are seven callings Paul mentions in this passage:

1. **Prophecy:** to discern and speak the words of God. This can include prophecies of future events, but not necessarily – not all prophets predict the future.
2. **Ministry:** service or assistance.
3. **Teaching.**
4. **Supporting:** to comfort or strengthen.
5. **Giving**
6. **Leading**
7. **Mercy**

Paul was not suggesting that these were all the gifts that existed. He just mentioned these seven as examples. Whatever gift we are called to do, we should do it with faith.

10. *Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might;*

Ecclesiastes 9:10

ROMANS 12:9 HYPOCRISY: FLUCTUATING STANDARDS

Love without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is wicked; hold to that which is good.

HYPOCRISY is the act of being disingenuous or fake. The term “hypocrite” was once used for actors on stage. Actors are fakers. Paul says our love should be genuine, not faked or acted.

When we think of hypocrites in today’s world there can be no greater hypocrites than politicians! These “leaders” of America are in fact the lowest form of human life. The fact that most people look to politicians as leaders explains why most people are lost. If we would follow God instead of politicians then we would have ministers to serve the public interest instead of politicians serving the bankers’ interests. The reign of the politicians (where they say whatever sounds good, and then proceed to do just the opposite, or anything they please) would be finished.

Psalm 36:1-4 gives a description that fits a politician:

1. *In my heart, the transgression of the wicked speaks, saying there is no fear of God before his eyes.*
2. *For he flatters himself in his own eyes to find iniquity, to find hate.*

3. *The words of his mouth are evil and deceit: he ceases to be wise or do good.*

4. *He plots evil upon his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he abhors not evil.*

Psalm 36:1-4

He who does not abhor evil must be comfortable with it. This kind of man does not seek goodness. He should be avoided because nothing good can come from him. He is unstable and uses fluctuating standards. You can never count on him to stand by what he says.

In Lewis Carol’s *Through The Looking Glass*, Alice asked Humpty Dumpty about a word he had just used. She wanted to know what he meant by it. Humpty Dumpty responded: “*When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – nothing more nor less.*”

Humpty Dumpty-type words and standards can mean whatever the user may want them to mean ... changing at the users’ whim. This philosophy fits perfectly with modern political method. Politicians choose their words to mean one thing today, and another thing tomorrow ... whatever suits them or serves their purposes. The same is true with the courts and judges who define a law to mean one thing today, and another thing tomorrow. They do not abhor evil. The only thing they abhor is losing ... and they will do or say anything to win.

Hypocrisy is the cause of God’s judgment upon America. That would not be the case if we didn’t know better. But we do. It isn’t as though we never heard God’s word, or never had the chance to stand for what is right. The option has always been there, but most Americans haven’t taken it. Americans are not holding that which is good; they are not abhorring evil. Thus, America is sick because of her fluctuating standards.

Instead of standing for what is right, Americans tend to accept and adapt to changing standards. They’ve adapted to comfortable lies, and they’ve not valued truth. America lives with fluctuating standards, changeable

laws, throwaway morals, and situation ethics. America today is no different in spirit from fleshly Israel of old.

One obvious example is the fluctuating standard of US currency laws. We have no idea what US currency will be worth tomorrow. It fluctuates hour by hour. US money operates on a Humpty Dumpty standard: it's changing value is whatever the bankers declare it to be at any given time.

The lack of standards is the hallmark of the United States Government. What was right yesterday may not be right today. What is right today may not be right tomorrow. People adapt their ethics to the situation as they see fit. America is reaping the seeds she has sowed ... and American children are losing hope.

Americans are taught to judge right and wrong based upon popularity rather than on solid ethics. Standards are being set by lying politicians and depraved celebrities. Modern criteria for ethics is to win at any cost. It is acceptable for America to go to war for evil reasons ... as long as she wins the war. America's soul is for sale ... and America's ethics are changeable as deemed necessary.

Nine people on the Supreme Court decide what's moral or immoral; right or wrong. And Americans never stop to think that four of the judges can disagree with the majority opinion, and it still becomes law and is labeled "right." Think about it. If just one judge changes his vote, suddenly right becomes wrong, and wrong becomes right. The American system runs on that basis. Americans believe and trust this system. They think it is "God inspired." What nonsense!

The US government is a forum of gods ... made of supreme court judges, congressmen, and senators. They decide the standard of "right" and "wrong" ... one day at a time, with standards changing day to day.

So, you see, Americans have adopted fluctuating moral standards. They live with them and think nothing of it. They assume it is normal. They tell themselves that it was always this way. They take it for granted. They have done what Paul says not to do: they have conformed to this age.

And those few of us here and there who do not conform are social outcasts ... which is OK with us.

There is something to be said for taking a stand. We must hate the Beast System, and refuse to voluntarily support it. We must resist the Beast – even if we are powerless to stop it at this point.

QUESTION: Isn't there a difference between "situation ethics" as you put it and adapting to technological advancement? Don't we need flexible standards for changing times in order to eliminate chaos?

ROMANS 12:10-21 DEFER TO BRETHREN

In brotherly love and fondness toward one another; in honor, deferring to one another;

Not slow in diligence, fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Rejoicing in hope; enduring in tribulation; attentive in prayer;

Sharing in common according to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality.

Speaking well of them that are pressing forward: speaking well, and cursing not.

Rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep.

Being of the same mind one toward another. Not exalting yourself, but being led together with humility. Being not arrogant in yourselves.

Repaying to no man wrong for wrong.

Presuming good things in the sight of all men.

If possible from you, being peaceable with all men.

Not avenging yourselves, beloved, but rather giving place to the wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.

Therefore if the one you hate hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink: for in doing this you shall heap fiery coals on his head.

Be not overcome with the wrong, but conquer the wrong with the good.

FROM verse 10 through verse 21 Paul describes specific standards for citizenship – not citizenship in man's kingdom, but citizenship in Christ's Kingdom.

Community: Being In Common With The Saints

Verse 13 tells us to be in common with the saints. "Saints" are, by definition, separate.

"Saint" is translated from the Greek "hagios" which means "that which is separate." "Hagios" is also translated as "that which is holy." "Holy" and "separate" are thus synonyms. A "saint" (holy one) is one who is "separate." The "holy (hagion) spirit" is therefore an inner drive (motivation) to be separate. We are to share in the blessings and the spirit of separation (holiness).

God's people have always been called out and separated from the ungodly ... as the Children of Israel were called out and separated from Egypt. Thus, Paul instructs the brethren to join in the separation that differentiates between citizens of New Jerusalem and those who are not citizens. Being "different" – a misfit in modern society – is a necessary earmark of a child of God.

Regarding matters among brethren within the ecclesia, Paul says brethren ought to be kind to one another; deferring to one another. When

it is possible, defer rather than fight. This, of course, applies between citizens inside New Jerusalem – not to foreigners or outsiders. Thus, Paul defines it as “brotherly love.” Brethren should treat each other with respect ... not as foreigners or enemies.

Paul is telling us how to treat the brethren. He is NOT telling us how to treat anti-Christ enemies. The teachings of the Bible are applicable only to the called-out: the saints. Outside New Jerusalem (outside the ecclesia) these teachings are not applicable. Thus, Paul is NOT teaching us to love and defer to anti-Christ enemies. Rather, he is telling us to love and defer to brethren within the ecclesia; within the Body of Christ.

Yes, there are differences of opinions within the brethren. Ecclesians do not always see perfectly eye-to-eye – but they are not enemies. The word translated “enemies” in the KJV should actually be rendered “hated one.” In other words, when Jesus told us to “love our hated ones” (Lk 6:27) He was telling us how to treat brethren with whom we have differences. He was NOT telling us how to treat anti-Christ enemies or those with whom we are at war.

Also, we should note that the word “hate” in Scripture does not mean the same as it has come to mean in modern times. Today, “hate” has come to mean “despise fervently.” Originally, however, it only meant “to vex.” Thus, God “hated Esau” (Rm. 9:13). Vexation was set between God and Esau even before Esau was born. Also, there can be vexation between brethren, but they are not “enemies” per se.

When we find ourselves at odds with our brethren, we are to defer when possible. Deferring means to turn the other cheek to avoid conflict. This we are commanded to do out of love and common courtesy for one another, and out of respect for Jesus who is our King. This is the Christian ethic. In fact, in a Christian community, when you defer to your brother, even if he is not right, chances are the Lord will show him his error, thereby saving him the embarrassment of being publicly shamed.

In our day and time, deferring to a brother is perceived as weakness. Today, parents teach their children to not defer ... but to assert and demand all they can ... at the expense of others. Americans are taught to be selfish and pushy ... not self-effacing as the Bible teaches.

For those of us with eyes to see, we can perceive who has or has not conformed to this age. We are to follow God’s Way and not man’s way, even though it will render us misfits in modern society and in the eyes of the world.

SPEAK WELL OF WHO?

Verse 14 is often misunderstood because of poor translation. The KJV, for instance, has Paul saying that you should “bless (speak well of) them which persecute you.” English readers find this a bit confusing since five verses earlier Paul tells us to “abhor that which is evil.”

However, the seeming conflict is cleared up when we point out that the “evil” is NOT part of the ecclesia. Dealing with the “evil” is another subject altogether. When dis-

agreement arises within the ecclesia, we should disagree respectfully – while abhorring the evil outside the ecclesia.

Verse 14 makes sense only when we realize that the Greek word (diokontas), usually translated “persecute,” can also mean “pursue” or “press forward” (see Lk. 17:23; Rm. 9:30-31, 12:13, 14:19; I Cor. 14:1; Phi. 3:12, 14; I Th. 5:15; I Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim; 2:22; Heb. 12:14; I Pet. 3:11). In other words, Paul is talking about those who pursue and press forward for truth: PIONEERS. He tells us to “speak well of pioneers; speak well and curse not.” Pioneers risk everything to press ahead to open new frontiers ... in freedom, in knowledge and in truth. Don’t speak ill of them when they find new truths that contradict old errors!

Pioneers are lonely and hated men. They are hated by weaker men who have not the faith or bravery to press beyond conventional wisdom. They are hated by people with the “dog in the manger” mentality (“if I can’t take credit for it, I’ll deny it”). Pioneers risk losing friends and fortune for the sake of discovery. Pioneers are the fore-runners; those whose faith is stronger ... strong enough to risk their lives and their fortunes.

Those of us who seek truth can relate to that! Paul asked his brethren in Gal. 4:16, “Am I now hated by you because I tell you the truth?” I can personally attest to the fact that truth is usually unpopular. Truth has often come between me and “friends.”

“Not exalting yourself,” “being led together with humility,” and “being not arrogant” are essential qualities for those in the unified Body of Christ: being in common with each other. This takes into account that at times we may find ourselves at odds with a brother. But disagreements do not make us enemies. Paul is not talking about mortal foes. He is talking about disagreements within the ecclesia: among brethren.

TWO WRONGS DON’T MAKE A RIGHT

“Repay no man wrong for wrong.” In other words, do not wrong someone to repay him for having wronged you. Some interpret this to mean that you cannot defend yourself, but that is not what it says. A “wrong” is an act which breaks God’s law. God’s law does not preclude self defense. Jesus even told his disciples to sell their cloak and buy swords (for self defense).

So does the Bible contradict itself?”

No. The Bible does not contradict itself ... but many teachers do.

Paul is merely saying that we can’t correct a sin with another sin. In other words, breaking God’s law is not the right way to confront a law-breaker. God’s law provides for proper ways to confront criminals. There are right ways, within the scope of God’s law, to protect yourself and even to avenge yourself. So don’t go outside God’s law to punish a wrong. To go outside God’s law is to repay wrong for wrong.

Paul does not say it is wrong to defend ourselves. God’s law has rules for confronting wickedness and enemies, both

foreign and domestic.

A man who is defending himself – whether physically or verbally – should do it in a righteous manner. He shouldn't resort to breaking God's law. In other words, if someone steals from you, it would be wrong for you to steal from him to get even. If someone lies about you, it would be wrong for you to lie about him to get back at him.

Now, if someone assaults you or attempts to hurt you, it is not wrong to defend yourself – as long as you act within the scope of the law of God.

So, the point is, there are right ways to do things ... including defending yourself. God's ways are wise and beyond question. God's word provides for every possible problem that may arise, and it shows us how to conduct ourselves so as to not bring harm or shame upon ourselves and upon our God.

ALLOW FOR GOD'S WRATH

Verse 20 refers to "a hated one." Notice that this is not necessarily one who hates you, but rather one whom you hate. Thus, the onus is upon you ... because it is you who are doing the hating. This "hated one" (Gk: *echthros*) is usually translated "enemy" in most Bible versions. Translating it as "enemy" makes the assumption that he seeks to harm you ... which would be consistent with today's use of the word.

However, an "echthros" is someone you hate or dislike ... not necessarily someone who hates you. Thus, the word actually puts the onus upon you, as the hater ... not upon the one to whom the hate is directed. Again, Paul is admonishing members of Christ's Body on proper behavior within the ecclesia. In this case, "echthros" (hated one) refers to a member of the ecclesian community – not an outside enemy. This particular "echthros" is someone you dislike or disagree with. The word "hate" in Scripture usually means merely "to vex" and does not necessarily indicate hostile or evil intent ... as it means in modern definition.

Paul says to allow for God's wrath.

This tells us that this action is taking place all within the ecclesia. God's justice (vengeance) works within the Body of Christ: the ecclesian community. It does not apply outside the body. We do ourselves a disservice when we don't allow for God's wrath and judgment when there is a problem within the ecclesia. So, Paul says wait for God's justice with a brother. Don't fly off the handle and act unwisely.

If you have a difference with a fellow ecclesian, and you think he has wronged you, if he hungers you should feed him. If he thirsts, you should give him drink. And in doing so you will cause your brother's conscience to burn ... and that will bring him to repentance.

In this way we can overcome bad with good, in accord with the Bible.

BIBLE IS FOR GOD'S CHILDREN ONLY

These Bible laws and instructions are meant for the Kingdom of God – they do not apply outside the Kingdom (*"For outside are dogs, druggers, fornicators, murderers, idolaters, and all who prefer to make a lie"* - Rev. 22:15). God's laws and instructions are not for those outsiders ... who know not the God of Israel and will not listen to God's word.

God's rules of life apply only to the living, and thus only within the city of the living (New Jerusalem). They do not apply to the dead (outside the city). *"He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for they are all living for Him."* (Lk: 20:38).

God's word and the principles embodied in it have only applied to God's Covenant People and no one else. Today they apply to those who have been reborn into the New Covenant city of New Jerusalem.

This key to understanding the teachings of the Bible can be applied throughout God's word. The Bible will never be understood or used correctly by any people other than the citizens of God's Kingdom.

QUESTION: Our society is so wrapped up in lawyers, regulations of specific performance and everyone wanting to sue everyone else, we don't even think about God's justice in the affairs of men. If we forgo suing our enemies in man's courts of law, then how will we know if God's justice ever gets done? I've been wronged by people and they are STILL going their merry way, ten years later, seemingly never paying the consequences for the wrongs they've done to me. Where is God's justice for me?

END OF ROMANS CHAPTER TWELVE

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POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. This letter to the Romans was sent to Israelites in Rome. Thus, the message was tailored to address the particular interests of Israelites. While the message was sent expressly to Israelites, non-Israelites were permitted to hear, learn and benefit from it.
2. God's word, his blessings and benefits came first to Israel. Consequently, Israel was also the first to be judged by God. Thus, Israel was chosen to hear and be raised (Dt. 30:15-20), then they fell (Heb. 3:8-19), then called to repent (Ez. 18:31; 33:11), and called again or REBORN (Jn. 3:3-7)).
3. "LIFE" (spiritual life) is the theme of the Bible. The giving and losing of "LIFE" is the story of Israel. Adam was given "life" and lost it. Israel was given "life" and lost it. Jesus was given life, and He kept it. He then was able to share "LIFE" with the repentant who were "called-out" of Israel ... thus raising Israel's "dry bones" of Ez. 37, giving them "life" again.
4. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (I Cor. 15:50). Only the LIVING are able to enter New Jerusalem (i.e., his Ecclesia and City of The Living).
5. To be "renewed in your mind" is to be reborn ("raised") to new "life" through the spirit of Christ.
6. The Body of Christ (the ecclesia) is made up of individuals, each with a distinct calling (ability). Together, the members with their particular abilities/callings function as a unit.
7. Honesty and non-changing standards are qualities of New Jerusalem.
8. Fellow citizens of the Kingdom of God (New Jerusalem) are expected to be brotherly with one another, deferring to one another, working together for each other's benefit, living peaceably with each other.

Without this, the Body of Christ cannot function correctly. Furthermore, any member that cannot conform to this standard must be "cut off" from the Body.

9. Within New Jerusalem, brethren are supposed to allow for the working of God's wrath to settle differences among themselves ... before taking personal action against a brother.

ANSWERS:

pg. 3

The messages of verse 2 and verse 18 are not contradictory. In verse two, "... *be not fashioned after this age:*" and verse nine, "*Abhor that which is wicked;*" both tell us how to respond to wickedness outside the Body of Christ. Remember, wickedness is not allowed inside the walls of New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:14-15). Conversely, verse 18 speaks to our prescribed conduct within the Body of Christ (inside the ecclesia/New Jerusalem).

When we deal with Babylon we are dealing with a foreign entity. Our relationships with Babylonian entities are on a different basis than our dealings between brethren in the Body of Christ.

pg. 5

Flexible standards are NOT the answer to modern times and new technology. Standards should not change. Murder is always murder, and theft is always theft ... whether in our day or in Moses' day. The law/standard never changes, but the application of the law may change. Today, theft may be of an automobile, whereas in Moses' day it may have been a chariot ... but the principle and standard are no different. Advancement of technology does not change the standard although it may change the application.

Don't be fooled by slick word-

smiths who try to confuse the issues of morals and standards. God's laws are good, and they never change. Only the applications change.

pg. 7

The fact that modern society is wrapped up in lawyers, regulations, and volumes of ridiculous and oppressive laws is, itself, evidence of God's justice for a rebellious people (our generation). The Father chastizes his children.

If we had followed God's laws and instructions we would be free instead of oppressed, and He would protect us from outside evil. The fact that God does not come to our rescue today when we are wronged is due to the judgment we have brought upon ourselves.

Since we, as a people, have preferred man's justice over God's justice, we are reaping the judgment we deserve.

This, in itself, is the righteous justice of our God. When we follow Him, He keeps justice alive in our societies. When we do not follow Him, He allows injustice to rule over us.

Thus, criminals in the world system are not being brought to justice ... because they live outside the realm of Jesus' Kingship. For us to avoid the injustices of the world system we must move over into the world of Jesus' Kingship. We must move into New Jerusalem ... where God's justice reigns.

It is our/your choice. If you choose to live in the world system, then expect injustice.