

Who Fits The "Whoever"?

In Joel 2:32, the Bible says, "And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls." Peter repeats this on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:21.

On both occasions when the statement was made that "whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved," there was a Jewish audience. Yet, we understand that they were not the only ones the Spirit intended in the statement--every man was/is included in "whosoever." In other words, all men have the opportunity to call on the name of the Lord and be saved (1 Jn. 2:2). Jesus died for the sins of the world, not just the Jews or some other select group (Jn. 1:29, 34). This is why the Spirit said, "Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." How thankful we ought to be!

As simple as this truth is, some brethren have a hard time applying the same principle to the Lord's command in Matthew 19:9. He said, "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

We ask, who does the "whoever" include? Was it just the Jewish audience to whom the Lord was speaking? Is it just a few Christians who have pledged allegiance to Christ? Or, does the "whoever" include "whoever"? This is somewhat ridiculous, we admit. However, it must be noted because there are brethren who say the "whoever" does not apply to "whoever." They say it only applies to men and women who have obeyed the gospel. If this is true, then what do you do with the couple in which one is a Christian and the other is not?

Dear reader, we both know that "whosoever" spoken by Joel and Peter applies to all men. Likewise, "whoever" spoken by the Lord includes anyone and everyone who marries, divorces, and remarries. It's that simple. Only the doctrines and commandments of men make it complicated (cf. Matt. 15:1-9).

Steven F. Deaton