



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHOULD AND SHALL

There are a huge number of people who do not know the difference between the words should and shall. There are many who misquote scripture by interjecting a shall where there is a should. This is a very serious error and can lead some on the path to destruction.

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him **should** not perish, but have everlasting life.

I have heard many who change the *should* in the above scripture to a *shall*. This small change can have deleterious effects on the hearer. Should indicates something that is supposed to happen while shall indicates something will happen. This small change changes the whole meaning of what Jesus was teaching Nicodemus.

First we will look at the English definitions of should and shall followed by the Greek.

From The Collaborative International Dictionary of English v.0.48 [gcide]:

Shall \Shall\, v. i. & auxiliary. [imp. {Should}.] [OE. shal, schal, imp. sholde, scholde, AS. scal, sceal, I am obliged, imp. scolde, sceolde, inf. sculan; akin to OS. skulan, pres. skal, imp. skolda, D. zullen, pres. zal, imp. zoude, zou, OHG. solan, scolan, pres. scal, sol. imp.

scolta, solta, G. sollen, pres. soll, imp. sollte, Icel. skulu, pres. skal, imp. skyldi, SW. skola, pres. skall, imp. skulle, Dan. skulle, pres. skal, imp. skulde, Goth. skulan, pres. skal, imp. skulda, and to AS. scyld guilt, G. schuld guilt, fault, debt, and perhaps to L. scelus crime.]

Note: [Shall is defective, having no infinitive, imperative, or participle.]

1. To owe; to be under obligation for. [Obs.] "By the faith I shall to God" --Court of Love. [1913 Webster]
2. To be obliged; must. [Obs.] "Me athinketh [I am sorry] that I shall rehearse it her." --Chaucer. [1913 Webster]
3. As an auxiliary, shall indicates a duty or necessity whose obligation is derived from the person speaking; as, you shall go; he shall go; that is, I order or promise your going. It thus ordinarily expresses, in the second and third persons, a command, a threat, or a promise. If the auxiliary be emphasized, the command is made more imperative, the promise or that more positive and sure. It is also employed in the language of prophecy; as, "the day shall come when ...," since a promise or threat and an authoritative prophecy nearly coincide in significance. In shall with the first person,

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the necessity of the action is sometimes implied as residing elsewhere than in the speaker; as, I shall suffer; we shall see; and there is always a less distinct and positive assertion of his volition than is indicated by will. "I shall go" implies nearly a simple futurity; more exactly, a foretelling or an expectation of my going, in which, naturally enough, a certain degree of plan or intention may be included; emphasize the shall, and the event is described as certain to occur, and the expression approximates in meaning to our emphatic "I will go." In a question, the relation of speaker and source of obligation is of course transferred to the person addressed; as, "Shall you go?" (answer, "I shall go"); "Shall he go?" i. e., "Do you require or promise his going?" (answer, "He shall go".) The same relation is transferred to either second or third person in such phrases as "You say, or think, you shall go;" "He says, or thinks, he shall go." After a conditional conjunction (as if, whether) shall is used in all persons to express futurity simply; as, if I, you, or he shall say they are right. Should is everywhere used in the same connection and the same senses as shall, as its imperfect. It also expresses duty or moral obligation; as, he should do it whether he will or not. In the early English, and hence in our English Bible, shall is the auxiliary mainly used, in all the persons, to express simple futurity. (Cf. {Will}, v. t.) Shall may be used elliptically; thus, with an adverb or other word expressive of motion go may be

omitted. "He to England shall along with you." --Shak.
[1913 Webster]

Note: Shall and will are often confounded by inaccurate speakers and writers. Say: I shall be glad to see you. Shall I do this? Shall I help you? (not Will I do this?) See {Will}.
[1913 Webster]

From The Collaborative International Dictionary of English v.0.48 [gcide]:

Should \Should\ (sh[oo^]d), imp. of {Shall}. [OE. sholde, shulde, scholde, schulde, AS. scolde, sceolde. See {Shall}.] Used as an auxiliary verb, to express a conditional or contingent act or state, or as a supposition of an actual fact; also, to express moral obligation (see {Shall}); e. g.: they should have come last week; if I should go; I should think you could go. "You have done that you should be sorry for." --Shak.
[1913 Webster]

Syn: See {Ought}.

I realize that this is a really long definition from the on-line dictionary. I notice that shall implies should, but not the other way around. The translators of the Bible were very cautious about the words that they used. Shall indicates will whereas should indicates ought. This is a very important distinction and should not be confused with each other.

The original Greek definition of the word should from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.

3195 μέλλω **mello**; a strengthened form of 3199 (through the idea of expectation); to intend, i.e. *be about* to be, or suffer something (of persons or things, espec. events;

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in the sense of *purpose, duty, necessity, probability, possibility, or hesitation*): —about, after that, be (almost), (that which is things + which was for) to come, intend, was to (be), mean, mind, be at the point, (be) ready, + return, shall (begin), (which that) should (after, afterwards, hereafter) tarry, which was for, will, would, be yet.

In other words, those who believe in Jesus Christ should be saved does not necessarily mean that they will be saved. Doesn't the Bible tell us that the devils believe and tremble?

James 2:19

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

We know that the devils are not saved, but they know who Jesus Christ is. They also know their eternal destination, and there is nothing that can stop them from going to hell. Those of us who believe in Jesus Christ should not perish, but have everlasting life. We still have the choice to reject the Lord Jesus and return to our sinful ways. Jesus will not force us to be saved or force us to go to heaven. Look at the following scripture:

Matthew 7:21-28

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never

knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

There are many who want to believe that they can live in sin and at the same time escape the torments of hell. In Matthew 7 we read about people performing miracles, prophesying, and other works all in the name of Jesus. These are the ones who use the name of Jesus Christ for their own personal gain. These are the ones who preach Jesus and believe on his name, but are really unrepentant sinners. These are the ones who use the name of Jesus Christ for their own gain, without any thought about their own salvation.

There are many who will be crying, “Lord, Lord ...” on the day of judgment. Many who have preached the eternal security doctrine without a care for the portions of scripture like what is found in Matthew 7.

Thus when the Bible tells us that those who believe in Jesus Christ should be saved, the Bible means what it says. Should indicates that the believer is supposed to be saved, but

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does not mean that it is absolutely certain that he will make it to heaven. There will be many believers on the day of judgment crying, "Lord, Lord, ..." begging the Lord's forgiveness when it is too late. They believed in the Lord, but refused to obey the Lord. These are the ones who fulfill all of the lusts of the flesh though they know that they are sinning. The Bible warns us to obey the Lord and not just believe.

When we believe in the Lord, we should be saved for we will obey his commandments. But how many whoremongers and adulterers claim to be Christian?

Hebrews 13:4

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Revelation 21:8

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Just because a person says that they believe in Jesus does not mean that they are saved. It means that they should be saved. There are many who believe but refuse to turn from their wicked ways, and are still on the road to damnation! When a sinner repents, that is when he turns from his sinful ways and begins to live righteously as the Lord would have him live. Those who obey the Lord are the ones who are saved.

Obey the Lord today and ask the Lord to forgive your wicked ways.

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