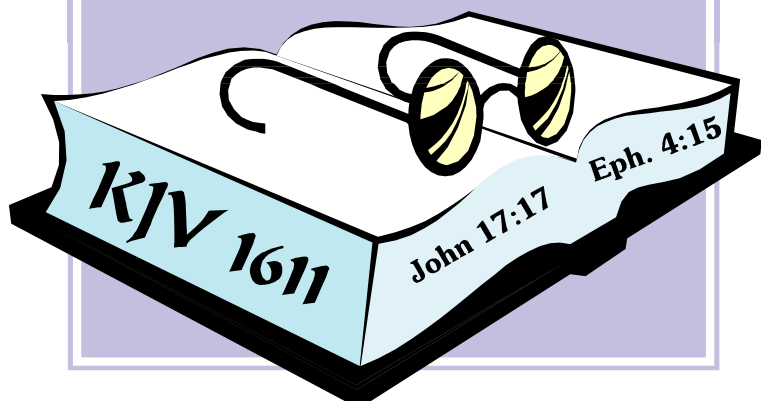


# *Gloryland's* **New Christian Series**

*Doctrinal Studies  
for New Believers*



## **Lesson Nine**

Rightly Dividing the Word—Part One



# **New Christian Series**

*Doctrinal Studies for New Believers*

## **Lesson Nine**

Rightly Dividing the Word—Part One

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This Bible course has been prepared and distributed  
as a ministry of:

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This Bible course and other gospel materials  
may be obtained from the address above.

The printed edition of Gloryland's *New Christian Series Bible* course is divided into ten booklets. These contain over 500 pages of doctrinal material for the instruction of students and teachers of the word of God. The entire course is also available on audio CD.

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“A sound and well composed catechism studied well and kept in memory, would be a good measure of knowledge, to ordinary Christians, and make them solid and orderly in their understanding, and in their proceeding to the smaller points, and would prevent a great deal of error and miscarriage, that many by ill teaching are cast upon, to their own and the churches grief! Yea, it were to be wished, that some teachers of late had learnt so much and orderly themselves.” — Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

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## RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

This is a study of *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth— Part One, Lesson #9* in the *New Christian Series*.

Our key verse is:

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth.*”**  
— II Timothy 2:15

The “word of truth” we are to “rightly divide” is the written word of God, the Holy Bible (cf. John 17:17). In order to do this we must have a thorough understanding of what is in the word of God. This comes first of all by **READING** the word of God regularly. It is good to follow a regular daily plan, and complete a certain number of chapters or pages every day. This will help us become familiar with the stories and characters in the Bible, and we will get an understanding of God’s dealings with man throughout history.

It is equally important to set aside time for the careful **STUDY** of the word of God. There is a difference between reading and study. One way to study the Bible is to select a particular subject or certain passage of scripture and try to learn everything possible about it by studying related verses. These verses can be found using study helps like the cross references in our Bibles, a Bible concordance, a topical Bible, etc. Comparing these related verses should give us a clear idea of what the Bible teaches about that subject or verse.

Paul writes to the Corinthian Church:

*“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

*“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”*

— I Corinthians 2:12-13

The “*spiritual things*” Paul is talking about is not “*the words which man’s wisdom teacheth.*” Rather it is the **words** “*which the Holy Ghost teacheth.*” In other words, we teach by comparing scripture with scripture. That is the only way to learn what the Bible *really* teaches, and that is the method we have used throughout this course. For example, in our study of the believer’s promised resurrection body, we made a list of all the scriptures we could find about that subject. Then, we examined each verse closely, noting the context. Then we interpreted the more obscure verses in the light of the clearly understandable ones. Thus we were able to determine what the Bible teaches about our future resurrection body.

The faithful men of Berea, to whom Paul preached (Acts 17:10-11), should be an example to all believers who study the word of God with an earnest desire for the truth.

These men were commended because,

*“[T]hey received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures** daily, whether those things were so.”*

— Acts 17:11

Always remember that the FINAL AUTHORITY for our faith is *the scriptures themselves*, and the only *absolutely reliable* commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. Learn to study the word of God by comparing scripture with scripture, and be careful to bathe your study in prayer.

As we undertake a sincere, in-depth study of the scriptures, we should be mindful that there are dangers. It is *interesting* to study about Bible history and to learn new doctrines, but that alone is not our goal. Instead, each believer should do all he can to DISCOVER the will of God for his life. Furthermore, he should strive to APPLY the things he learns to his daily life.

We read in the wisdom of the Proverbs:

“A **false balance** is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.”  
— Proverbs 11:1

As faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, **we must strive for balance in our Christian life.**

For example:

- What we learn from the Bible about prayer, we should put into practice as we pray.
- What we learn about holiness should help us live clean, holy lives that are unspotted by the world.
- What we learn about soul winning should be used to win others to Christ. (Remember the words of Christ: “*freely ye have received, freely give*” (Matthew 10:8).

Let’s not spend so much time *studying*, that we hinder the Holy Spirit from molding our lives according to the truths we have learned.

James says it very well:

“**But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving your own selves.

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

“For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

— James 1:22-24

James likens the Bible to a *looking glass* (a mirror). When we read the word of God, we see ourselves as God sees us— the Bible tells us about ourselves. The Holy Spirit will bear witness to the words of scripture, and HE, who moved holy men of God to speak, will drive its words home to our hearts and minds. But WE must decide if we will believe and obey the scriptures, or reject them in unbelief. WE must decide if we will follow God or pursue our own interests. Millions of Christians around the world take great pleasure in studying the Holy Bible. However, we must maintain a balance between studying the Bible and living a life that reflects the truths we have learned.

Andrew Murray said much the same thing:

“You have Christians who devote themselves most diligently to the study of God’s word, who are delighted with every new truth they discover, or every new light in which an old truth is set before them, and who yet scarce ever meet the one Divine Word, who speaks in power within them.”<sup>1</sup>

J. Sidlow Baxter also touched on this:

“In our study of the Bible, also, we need to guard against becoming so engrossed in the fascination of the *subject* that we lose sight of the *object*. As we have said, in these studies we want to get hold of the big, broad meanings in the wonderful old Book: but unless the meanings get hold of *us*, our study will have failed of its vital objective. Our Lord Jesus Himself has taught us that HE is the focal theme of all the Scriptures; and everywhere, therefore, we want to see beyond the **written word**, to Him who is the **living Word**.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Murray, in the introduction to Wholly For God—Selections From the Writings of William Law, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Explore the Book by J. Sidlow Baxter



## **Beware Of Extremes**

So we see that even a good thing like studying the Bible can be taken to the extreme. As a matter of fact, there are two potential pitfalls for the student of the word of God that should be mentioned.

### **I. The First Is Intellectual Christianity.**

In contrast to the noble Bereans (already mentioned), is another group to whom Paul preached, who “*spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing*” (Acts 17:21). Their *motive* for studying was not to discover the will of God, or how to live a life more pleasing to God. Their motive was to show how well-read they were, and what great *authorities* they were on the Bible and all literature.

These Christians tend to overemphasize the value of *knowledge* to the neglect of *love*. They usually do little more than *discuss* doctrine, forgetting to *live* the doctrines they believe. Often they develop some *pet doctrine* that becomes their *hobbyhorse*.<sup>3</sup> This is what we might call *intellectual Christianity*—all knowledge and no love.

We never want to become such *bookworms* that we do nothing but sit at home all the time, studying the Bible. Paul’s admonition to the Corinthian church is still true.

“*Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*”

— *I Corinthians 8:1*

Soulwinning, daily prayer, and clean holy living— each of these endeavors is just as important as study. But any one of them, pursued to the neglect of the others, will create a FALSE BALANCE. If you know the Bible well, perhaps the Lord will give you an opportunity to teach the Bible to others in a Sunday school class or home Bible study, even as Paul instructed Timothy to do.

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<sup>3</sup> **Hobby horse** — a favorite subject that becomes an obsession.

*“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same **commit thou to faithful men**, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

— II Timothy 2:2

When the Holy Spirit teaches us the Bible, He does not intend for us to become a puffed up *know-it-all*. He wants us to actively minister to others, and to *apply* what we have learned from the word of God to our daily lives as the good Samaritan did.

*“And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

*“And by chance there came down **a certain priest** that way: and when he **saw him**, he passed by on the other side.*

*“And likewise **a Levite**, when he was at the place, came and **looked on him**, and passed by on the other side.*

*“But **a certain Samaritan**, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, **he had compassion on him**,*

*“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

*“And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

*“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was a neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?”*

*“And he said, He that showed **mercy** on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”*

— Luke 10:30-37

The priest “SAW” the man, and the Levite “LOOKED ON HIM,” but neither of them took the time to *HELP* him. These *religious* men were absorbed in conducting ceremonies, spending time in prayer and teaching the scriptures, but they had no *compassion* on this poor man, nor did they show him *mercy*. When no one was watching, they failed the test of real Christianity. Sometimes we, too, get so caught up in being *religious* that we forget to have compassion. Being *religious* costs us nothing, but being the servant of the Lord will cost us everything. It means that we put the needs of others before our own needs, even as Christ did.

*“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*  
— Matthew 20:28

Have you ever felt led of the Lord to witness to some soul the Lord pointed out to you, only to think you were too busy to stop RIGHT THEN and show compassion? I am sure each of us has done this very thing at one time or another, and have quenched the Spirit of God. We should be careful to take advantage of every opportunity to minister to those about us as their needs are made known to us by the Lord.

As the Bible says,

*“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*

*“Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.”*

— Proverbs 3:27-28

Every sincere believer wants to delve into the deeper things of God, and get hold of the meat of the word of God— that’s normal. But we must be mindful of the warning given in the book of Hebrews.

“Be not **carried about** with **divers and strange doctrines**.<sup>4</sup> For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been **occupied** therein.”

— Hebrews 13:9

We know the word of God gives us a balanced diet for our spiritual growth. It provides *milk* (simple things), and it provides *strong meat* (deep things<sup>5</sup>— Hebrews 5:12-14).

The main theme of Hebrews is “*something better*”— the New Testament in contrast to the Old Testament. Hebrews 13 contains a warning that has to do with doctrine, especially regarding “*meats*” (those things allowed or forbidden under the Jewish law). They are warned not to be “*carried about*” by these relatively unimportant things (*meats*— the ceremonial things— the *letter* of the law), but to let their hearts be established with *grace* (spiritual things— the *spirit* of the law). It is not only a warning about *false doctrines*, but also about *unusual doctrines* of the word of God— it is not profitable to become “*occupied*” with those things. Through diligent study we *can* learn about the deep things of God, but we must guard against developing such a *fascination* for study that we neglect witnessing, ministering to others, worshipping, and praising God as we should. (It is even possible to spend so much time in the word of God that we neglect to spend time with God himself!) The most important thing in our Christian life is our relationship with our heavenly Father. The Lord does not look at the outward appearance— He looks at the inward heart motives (I Samuel 16:7). **Always remember it is our hearts that are important!** That will be the key factor at the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. Time spent studying the word of God is always time well spent, and we should try to learn all we can. But we must be careful not to become so occupied with Dispensationalism, prophecy, the Great Tribulation, or the Antichrist, etc. that we forget to witness and minister to others.

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<sup>4</sup> **Divers** — diverse, various; **Strange** — unusual, out of the ordinary.

<sup>5</sup> **Deep** — profound; **4.** Difficult to penetrate or understand; Very learned or intellectual; — American Heritage Dictionary

☞ We should seek **CHARITY first, then KNOWLEDGE**

Keep this in mind.

*“Knowledge puffeth up, but **charity** edifieth”*

— *I Corinthians 8:1.*

To be an expert on the Bible, but not to have *charity* (love in action), is to miss the whole purpose of studying the Scriptures. There is a whole chapter written about this kind of love (I Corinthians 13) which we need to read again and again, lest we forget the importance of *charity*. We must feed our *minds* with the strong meat of the word of God, but our *hearts* need to be “*established with grace*” (Hebrews 13:9).

In his first epistle to the young Timothy, Paul writes about some believers who had *gotten off the track* when they left off *charity* and *faith* in their desire to be teachers. (That is what happens to those who put an *overemphasis* on study.) These “*teachers*” Paul wrote about had become legalistic. “*Desiring to be teachers of the law,*” they wanted to be recognized and followed as teachers. They wanted to show how much they knew, but were really only showing how little they knew (I Corinthians 8:2). Knowledge is a wonderful thing, but it only generates *pride* when that wonderful ingredient *charity* is missing.

*“Now the end of the commandment is **charity** out of a **pure heart**, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:*

*“From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;*

*“Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”*

— *I Timothy 1:5-7*

Notice that when Paul speaks of his salvation, he recalls the **grace** and the **love** of God he experienced.

*“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”*

— *I Timothy 1:14*

Our heart's desire should be to develop such a deep personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that His love will be manifested toward others in our daily lives. We must have a love for God, a love for God's people, and a love for lost souls!

*“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

— *John 13:35*

*“[T]he love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*

— *Romans 5:5*

*“But if any man love God, the same is known of him.”*

— *I Corinthians 8:3*

## II. The Second Is Emotional Christianity.

The second extreme is *emotional Christianity*, which over-emphasizes the exhibition of LOVE and EMOTIONALISM to the neglect of KNOWLEDGE. Folks in this group usually have little *systematic* understanding of doctrine since they do not *rightly divide the word*. Therefore, they develop a definite imbalance in their Christian lives. Having little understanding of the *mind of God* from their study of the scriptures, they know little about the *heart of God* (His will). Since they do not walk in the Spirit, they walk in the flesh (Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:16) and become worldly Christians.

The Bible warns us:

***“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.***

*“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

— I John 2:15-17

These worldly believers’ spiritual walk is revealed by their dress and their music. For example, so-called “gospel rock” is popularly approved by this crowd. What is *gospel rock*? This is like saying there is a “*holy devil*.”— the two words just do not go together. Gospel rock is nothing more than *secular* rock music with enough *gospel* words in the lyrics to give it a religious sound. It is still the same satanic music written and played by today’s popular God-rejecting, dope dealing, reprobate musicians. The only difference is the words, and even those usually present worldly thoughts and ambitions. Unfortunately, there are many worldly Christians (Revelation 3:14-19) who love that kind of *garbage*, so they keep trying to mix the things of Satan’s world system with the things of God.

Because of their *overemphasis on emotionalism* and so-called *love*, and their *lack of emphasis on knowledge*, these believers commonly teach heresies from the Bible. They often take scriptures out of context, and take doctrine from other dispensations to apply it to New Testament Christians. That is what happened in the Corinthian church, and that was much of the problem addressed in the book of Hebrews. Remember, love must be *tempered* with knowledge. However, this group places little emphasis on knowledge, except their *pet* doctrines. While we know that God is love, *He* still seems to think doctrine is quite important also.

Notice what the Bible says:

*“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who **labour in the word and doctrine.**”*

— I Timothy 5:17

And again Paul tells Timothy:

*“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine;”*

— I Timothy 4:13-16

*“For the time will come when they will not endure **sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;”*

— II Timothy 4:3

*“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:”*

— Titus 2:1

The Bible puts great emphasis upon the study and teaching of *doctrine*, properly balanced with *the love of God*. That is what the Lord wants for us to have— a balanced Christian life.



## LET'S REVIEW

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### Introduction (pp. 1-3)

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1. According to II Timothy 2:15, the *written* word of God is called the \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. In this same verse, the Christian is told to \_\_\_\_\_ so he can show himself approved of God.
3. A Christian must do this to understand the Bible.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. The only way to learn what the Bible really teaches is to compare scripture with \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ are the final authority for a Christian.
6. By studying the scriptures a believer can discover \_\_\_\_\_ for his life.
7. James 1:22 teaches us not only to STUDY the word of God, but to \_\_\_\_\_ what we learn.

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### Beware of Extremes (pp. 4-9)

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1. Intellectual Christians tend to overemphasize the value of \_\_\_\_\_ to the neglect of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The overemphasis of any one aspect of Christianity creates a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We learn from the story of the Good Samaritan, that *religious* people often get so caught up in their *religious duties* that they forget to show \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Christians must be careful to guard against developing such a \_\_\_\_\_ for study that they neglect witnessing, ministering to others, worshipping and praising God as they should.
5. We should seek \_\_\_\_\_ *first*, then knowledge.
6. While in our minds we may desire the strong meat of God's word, still, our hearts need to be \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Knowledge only generates \_\_\_\_\_ when that wonderful ingredient \_\_\_\_\_ is missing.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity is the opposite of intellectual Christianity.
9. It overemphasizes \_\_\_\_\_ to the neglect of knowledge.

10. Because they do not \_\_\_\_\_  
the word of God, they know little of the mind of God
11. Having little understanding of the will of God, they cannot walk in the \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Walking in the flesh, they become \_\_\_\_\_ Christians.
13. Because of their *overemphasis on emotionalism* and so-called \_\_\_\_\_ they begin to teach heresies from the Bible.
14. We know that *God is love*, but He is also *the Truth* and He desires that we establish a proper \_\_\_\_\_ between that divine love, and the study and teaching of doctrine.

# UNDERSTANDING DIVISIONS

We read in our King James Bible, how the Psalmist honors the Lord saying,

*“[I] love thy commandments above gold.”*

— *Psalm 119:127*

We should certainly love God's commandments the way David did, and one of the most important commandments in the Bible for a Christian is found in Paul's letter to Timothy.

*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**”*

— *II Timothy 2:15*

Disobedience to that command is the cause of almost all doctrinal strife among believers today. The words “*rightly dividing*” are the key to understanding the word of God. Misunderstanding, confusion and heresy result when we fail to note proper divisions in God's dealings with man. Not every verse in the Bible can be applied *doctrinally* to the born again Christian in the Church Age. Only by rightly dividing the scriptures can we know which parts apply to believers today. We will begin by looking at three of the most apparent divisions in the Old Testament.

## **1. Before the law**

## **2. Under the law**

## **3. After the law**

For example:

- We read in Genesis 20:12 that Abraham married Sarah with the Lord's blessing (even though they had the same father).
- Yet we read in Leviticus 18:6 that an Israelite *under the law* is forbidden to marry close kin.

For another example:

- We read in Genesis 9:3 that Noah could eat anything he desired.

*“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.”*

— Genesis 9:3

- But, in Leviticus 11 the Lord instructed the Israelites NOT to eat pork or shellfish.

*“And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them,*

*“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.*

*“Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.*

*“Nevertheless **these shall ye not eat** of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.”*

— Leviticus 11:1-4

- Then in the New Testament this changes again, and we see Paul teaching that the believer is free to eat “every creature” (I Timothy 4:1-5).

“**[E]very creature** of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:”

— I Timothy 4:4

Here we have three commandments from God regarding eating. Which one should *we* obey *today*? Looking at these examples, it is evident that either the Bible contradicts itself, or God has changed His manner of dealing with man regarding these things. Because *we know* the scriptures *are not* contradictory, it is clear that something has changed. While God never changes, regarding His person or attributes, He does change His *manner* of dealing with people and nations in different dispensations. If we do not obey God's command to “*rightly divide*” the word, we are confronted with a host of scriptures that appear to contradict one another. To understand what is happening, we must note the beginning and end of each division.

- It is easy to see that since the law was not given until Moses received it from the Lord, Noah did not and could not follow the instructions *not* to eat certain meats.
- However, the law was very much in force for the Jews after Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt.
- But now, God has given different instructions to the New Testament Church under grace. Now we are saved by grace through faith, and the New Testament is established in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today there are some (especially a sect called *Seventh-Day Adventists*) who teach that New Testament Christians are still required to keep the Old Testament law. Furthermore, they say that many different kinds of meats are still forbidden, as the law says in Leviticus. Not understanding the proper divisions in the Bible, these false teachers are living in direct opposition to the clear instruction of the New Testament. As we read in I Timothy 4:4, the New Testament says that AFTER THE DEATH OF

CHRIST, we CAN eat those meats formerly forbidden by the law, as long as we give thanks unto the Lord for them.

This is but one example of “*rightly dividing the word of God.*” There are many other examples like this throughout the Bible. For instance, in Exodus 20:8-11, God tells those Jews (under the law), “*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*” Furthermore, He tells them not to do any kind of work on the Sabbath day (Saturday, the 7th day of the week). Yet, when we look at the New Testament scriptures, we find something completely different being taught about the Sabbath and other holy days.

Paul says:

*“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:”*  
— Colossians 2:16

Another passage in the book of Romans says:

*“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?...”*

*“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

*“He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

*“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”*

— Romans 14:4-7

Of course, it is true that Old Testament believers were UNDER THE LAW and therefore forbidden to eat certain foods, or to do any work on the Sabbath Day. But in the New Testament, where believers are UNDER GRACE, no day is distinguished from another and believers are free to observe these days, or not to

observe them, as they wish.<sup>6</sup> It is clear, then, that there has been a change in God's dealings with man regarding *holy* days after the death of Christ. The only way to note and understand such changes is by rightly dividing the word.

Certainly, most Christians have been taught to make at least the one division that distinguishes the Old Testament from the New Testament. That division marks the *end* of God's dealing with man under the Law (before Christ's death), and the *beginning* of God's dealing with man by grace after the Lord's death. However, as we have seen, there are several other divisions in the Old Testament, and still more divisions in the New Testament. For the remainder of this lesson, we are going to study some things in the word of God that can only be properly understood and applied when the word of God is rightly divided.

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<sup>6</sup> Of course, the Sabbath was a Jewish day of rest observed on Saturday, the last day of the week. This is not to suggest in any way that believers today are not to keep the Lord's Day (Sunday), which is a solemn recognition of the sovereignty and holiness of God.



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## Understanding Divisions (pp. 15-19)

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1. The real **key** to understanding the word of God is \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. List the three most apparent divisions of the Old Testament.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. If we do not rightly divide our Bible there will be a host of scriptures that appear to \_\_\_\_\_ one another.

## THREE CLASSES OF PEOPLE

The first division essential to our study of the Bible, deals with three classes of people. Paul mentions all three of them in his first letter to the Church at Corinth.

*“Give none offence, neither to **the Jews**, nor to **the Gentiles**, nor to **the church of God:**”*

— *I Corinthians 10:32*

The three classes of people mentioned are:

- **The Jews**
- **The Gentiles**
- **The Church of God**

Although the Bible is written to these three classes of people, the greatest part of it is addressed to the Jews (Israel) as a nation. Other parts are only for Gentiles and others for the Church. We will see from the Bible what God has to say about each of these people, and learn their distinguishing characteristics.

I quote at length from Dr. C.I. Scofield's book *Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth*, beginning with:<sup>7</sup>

### **I. The Jews.**

“Whoever reads the Bible with any attention cannot fail to perceive that more than half of the contents relate to

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<sup>7</sup> Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth (Ten Outline Studies of the More Important Divisions of Scripture), by Dr. C.I. Scofield • Scripture Truth Book Co. • P.O. Box 339 • Fincastle, VA 24090

one nation— the Israelites. He perceives, too, that they have a very distinct place in the dealings and counsels of God. Separated from the mass of mankind, they are taken into covenant with Jehovah, who gives them specific promises not given to any other nation. Their history alone is told in Old Testament narrative and prophecy, other nations being mentioned only as they touch the Jew. It appears, also, that all the communications of Jehovah to Israel as a nation relates to the earth. If faithful and obedient, they are promised earthly greatness, riches and power; if unfaithful and disobedient, they are to be scattered *‘among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other’* (Deuteronomy 28:64). Even the promise of the Messiah is of blessing to *‘all the families of the Earth.’*”

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was given specific promises and covenants. It is evident that they have not yet received ALL of them; but we know they WILL receive them in full one day, because God does not lie (Numbers 23:19). They will not receive them now, during the Church Age, but later when the Lord returns to establish His earthly kingdom. Some Bible teachers claim that the Church has replaced the Jew, and that the Church will now receive the promises made to the Jew. They believe that God has finished dealing with the nation of Israel, but that is simply not true. The Bible tells us in Romans 11:25-26 that such teachers are ignorant and conceited. While God has *temporarily* set them aside, He will resume His dealings with Israel as a *nation*, *after* the body of Christ is taken to Heaven in the rapture.

*“I say then, **Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.** For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

*“I say then, **Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.***

*“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”*

*“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***

*“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:”*

— *Romans 11:1, 11, 24-26*

## II. The Church Of God.

“Continuing his researches, the student finds large mention in scripture of another body, which is called the Church. This body also has a peculiar relation to God, and, like Israel, has received from Him specific promises. But the similarity ends there, and the most striking contrast begins. Instead of being formed of the natural descendants of Abraham alone, it is a body in which the distinction of Jew and Gentile is lost. Instead of the relation being one of mere covenant, it is one of birth. Instead of obedience bringing the reward of earthly greatness and wealth, the Church is taught to be content with food and raiment, and to expect persecution and hatred, and it is perceived that just as distinctly as Israel stands connected with temporal and earthly things, so distinctly does the Church stand connected with spiritual and heavenly things.

“In the appointments for worship we still find contrast. Israel could worship in but one place, and at a distance from God— only approaching Him through a priest. The Church worships wherever two or three are gathered, has

boldness to enter into the holiest, and is composed of priests.

“Compare the instructions found in these references:

- Leviticus 17:8-9 with Matthew 18:2; John 4:24
- Luke 1:10 with Hebrews 10:19-20
- Numbers 3:10 with I Peter 2:5

“In the predictions concerning the future of Israel and the Church, the distinction is still more startling. The Church will be taken away from the earth entirely, but restored Israel is yet to have her greatest earthly splendor and power.

“Comparing, then, what is said in scripture concerning Israel and the Church, he finds that in origin, calling, promise, worship, principles of conduct, and future destiny— all is contrast.

“Instead of pursuing her appointed path of separation from the world and following the Lord in her heavenly calling, she (the Church) has used Jewish scriptures to justify herself in lowering her purpose to the civilization of the world, the acquisition of wealth, the use of imposing ritual, the erection of magnificent churches, the invocation of God’s blessing upon the conflicts of armies, and the division of an equal brotherhood into ‘clergy’ and ‘laity.’”

We may also note that, while *Israel is a physical body* of men and women who compose a nation, *the Church is a spiritual body* of the souls of men and women who make up the bride of Christ. The Church has a *spiritual* priesthood (I Peter 2:5,9), while Israel had a *physical* Levitical priesthood. They are not the same.

### III. The Gentiles.

Another class of people mentioned in the Bible is the *Gentiles* (referred to as “dogs” in the scriptures— Mark 7:28-29). They are rarely mentioned, except in distinction to the Church or the Jew. In the New Testament, a *Gentile* is *one who is neither a Jew nor a Christian* (Ephesians 2:11-12; 4:17-18). Of course, when a Gentile gets saved, he is no longer considered a Gentile in God’s eyes, but a Christian, and part of the body of Christ, the Church. Likewise, a *Jew in this dispensation is an unsaved man who is born of the nation of Israel, and is not a Gentile*. So, when a Jew gets saved (by believing the gospel), he is no longer considered a Jew in God’s eyes: he is a Christian also. In Christ, all racial distinctions are lost.

#### **Determining Doctrinal Applications**

We must realize the bearing these three different classes of people have on our understanding of the scriptures. When studying the Bible, we must be careful to note who is speaking, and to whom. Then, we can determine, by the context, whether the verse is only *for the Jews*, only *for the Gentiles*, *for lost people in general*, or *for the body of Christ (the Church)*. Many times a verse will apply to all three classes.

For example:

“Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.” — Isaiah 34:1

This verse clearly gives us the context of the verses following. They are applicable to the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God— they are for everyone in the whole world, everywhere. But how can we know what scriptures specifically apply to the born again believer today, doctrinally? As I have said before, the answer lies in marking the proper divisions in scripture.

- ☞ The writings of Paul are the *plumb-line*<sup>8</sup> for the Christian in the Church Age. That is, they are the standard by which all other doctrinal truth must be compared to determine its accuracy and application for believers today.

If the teaching of other scripture agrees with Paul's teachings, they can be applied to the believer in the Church Age. If not, they must apply to someone else in a time when God is dealing with another group, and must not be taught nor applied as doctrine for today.

See what the apostle Paul says:

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*  
— II Timothy 3:16

*“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition...”*  
— I Corinthians 10:11

*“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were for our learning.”*  
— Romans 15:4

- ☞ It is true that “*All scripture... is profitable*” for believers **today** “for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”
- ☞ But while “*all scripture is profitable for doctrine*” not all doctrine is profitable for believers **today**.

However, we can use any scripture in the Bible for *doctrine today* as long as it does not contradict doctrine taught in Paul's epistles to the Church.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> A plumbline is a device consisting of a cord or string with a weight (*bob* or *plummet*) on one end that is used to determine the true vertical. Hence an accurate standard used to determine the truth.

<sup>9</sup> Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,

Paul instructs the Church:

*“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel**, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began,”* — Romans 16:25

- ☛ So, all doctrine for the Church, must be in harmony with the doctrine Paul preached, “according to the revelation of the mystery” of the body of Christ.

Of course, that means we can also apply scripture from the Old Testament, the book of Acts, the four Gospels and other books of the Bible to our life today as long as it corresponds with the *Pauline*<sup>10</sup> revelation for the Church. That is the real test.

**Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles**

In the book of Acts, we see how the Apostle Paul was saved and called to preach, and that while his own heart's desire was to see Israel saved, God gave him a new ministry to the Gentiles.

*“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth **I will go unto the Gentiles.**”* — Acts 18:6

In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul says:

*“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;*

*“(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)”*

— Galatians 2:7-8

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I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

<sup>10</sup> Belonging to or associated with Paul.



In this verse, “*the uncircumcision*” means the Gentiles, while “*the circumcision*” means the Jews.

☞ Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as **I am the apostle of the Gentiles**, I magnify mine office:”

— Romans 11:13

You will notice that most of *Paul’s* epistles are addressed to *the Church* (all *born again* believers since Acts 2). The question may arise, “Then what about all the other scriptures— are they no longer of use to us?” Of course they are! But, during the “*times of the Gentiles*,” believers are to follow the **doctrine** of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (in distinction from the Jews). And Paul himself tells us,

“Be ye followers of **me**, even as I also am of Christ.”

— I Corinthians 11:1

Paul was specially chosen by the Lord to reveal a new doctrine previously *hidden* from believers. The Lord showed Paul that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, could be saved by the gospel of salvation by faith alone.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

“How that by revelation he made known unto me **the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words,

“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

“Which **in other ages was not made known** unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

***“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:***

*“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*

*“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

*“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, **which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”*

— Ephesians 3:1-9

When he wrote to the Romans, Paul called it “my gospel,” and a “mystery.”

*“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel**, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of **the mystery**, which was **kept secret since the world began**,”* — Romans 16:25

It was certainly a surprise to all of the apostles who gathered together for this official meeting to determine its validity.

*“And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”* — Acts 14:27

- As we study the scriptures, we can see plainly that Paul’s epistles are written to **the Gentiles**. Right up through the book of Philemon, Paul is giving the Church instruction in doctrine.
- Following Philemon is the epistle to the **Hebrews**,

- ☞ And after Hebrews is the book of James, written “to **the twelve tribes**, which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1).

If there seem to be “*contradictions*” between the books written to the Jews and Paul’s epistles to the Church, then the Bible division can be drawn between Philemon and Hebrews.

- ☞ Note that **most** of the Bible is written to **Israel!**

Now, that does not mean there is no **spiritual** truth found there that can be applied to the Christian today. But, just as a Christian is not to take the *Jewish* dietary laws recorded in the book of Leviticus as **doctrine**, neither is he to look to any *Jewish* epistles for **doctrine**.

The first thing to be considered when studying a verse of scripture is its doctrinal content. That is the only way to make proper application of scripture. People get caught up in false teaching when they try to apply passages of scripture to themselves, which are not intended for them *doctrinally*. (Every false teacher can quote *some* scripture to justify his position.) We read in Matthew 4 that even the devil quoted scripture, when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Of course, the Devil took scripture out of context. The temptation before Jesus was to apply the *right* scripture at the *wrong* time. To do so would have been a serious offense to God.

- ☞ Today, all heresies come from attempts to apply a scriptural truth given for one of the three specific classes of people at a specific time, to another of the three classes of people at some other time.



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### Three Classes of People (pp. 23-32)

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1. List the three classes of people mentioned in I Corinthians 10:32. a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Most the Bible is written to the \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. God has temporarily set aside the nation of \_\_\_\_\_ but will resume his dealings with them after the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church.
4. Israel is a \_\_\_\_\_ body of men and women who compose a nation, while the Church is a \_\_\_\_\_ body of the souls of men and women who make up the bride of Christ.
5. In the New Testament a \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who is neither a Jew or a Christian.
6. When studying the Bible we must determine \_\_\_\_\_ is speaking and to whom.
7. Paul's writings are the standard by which all \_\_\_\_\_ truth must be compared to determine its application for the believer today.
8. ***"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for \_\_\_\_\_ , for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ in righteousness."*** — II Timothy 3:16

9. But NOT ALL scripture is *profitable* for believers \_\_\_\_\_ .
10. All doctrine for the \_\_\_\_\_ must be in harmony with the doctrine Paul preached.
11. Paul (the apostle to the \_\_\_\_\_) said, "*Be ye followers of \_\_\_\_\_, even as I also am of Christ.*"  
— *I Corinthians 11:1.*
12. All \_\_\_\_\_ come from attempts to apply scriptural truth given for one of the three specific classes of people at a specific time, to another of the three classes of people at another time.

# THREE APPLICATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Here is the second thing we must note in rightly dividing the scriptures:

➔ Every verse of scripture in the Bible has **three** applications.

1. The **historical** application.
2. The **doctrinal** application.
3. The **spiritual** or devotional application.

Now, we will take a closer look at these three applications so we will be able to identify them.

## I. The Historical Application.

When I say “*historical application*,” I mean that the verse is talking about something that actually happened in history (or will happen in the future). For example, we read about the birth of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem, etc. All of those things happened sometime in the past. That is the historical application of the verse.

## II. The Doctrinal Application.

The doctrinal application is the most important, because it reveals the exact meaning. Every verse in the Bible is aimed at a specific person or group of persons living in a certain time period. We must know the true doctrinal application of a verse in order to

interpret it correctly. In order to determine the correct doctrinal application of a verse we must answer the following questions:

1. Is the verse aimed at the Jews, the Gentiles or the Church?
2. Is the verse speaking to someone living *before Calvary* or *after Calvary*, before or after the rapture, etc.?

If we follow these simple guidelines we can be confident that we are making the proper doctrinal application of scripture.

### **III. The Spiritual Application.**

Another important application of scripture is its spiritual (or devotional) application— that is the practical application of the passage to the life and conduct of the believer. God uses His word in this way to speak to us personally concerning His will for our lives. We must always remember that every verse in the Bible can be used “*for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” The spiritual application of any verse can be made today, regardless of its doctrinal application.

Remember what Paul wrote:

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*  
— II Timothy 3:16

#### **Here are four examples:**

1. Paul used several verses from the Old Testament to instruct Church Age saints. These Old Testament verses had nothing to do with the Church doctrinally.

In his letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul wrote:

*“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath*



*said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

— II Corinthians 6:16

Paul quoted Leviticus 26:12 (Old Testament), and applied it to New Testament Christians. Studying that verse in its context, we find it is a reference to the Jew entering the *Millennium*. But Paul is not making a *doctrinal* application, as is made in Leviticus, nor is he using the *historical* application, also found there. No, Paul is making a practical, *spiritual* application of the passage to Christians in this Church Age. That is perfectly acceptable, because it doesn't contradict anything that the Lord revealed to Paul.

2. Another example is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

*“As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”*

— II Corinthians 8:15

The context of II Corinthians is *giving* (tithing). Notice that in verses 12, 13, and 14, Paul is talking about giving *money* in the Church Age. But the Old Testament verse he quotes (Exodus 16:18) is talking about the Jews going out and gathering up the *manna* that God fed them in the wilderness. So he is making a practical, *spiritual* application of a verse from the Book of Exodus to believers today.

3. One more example is found in Acts 13.

Paul writes:

*“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;*

*“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”*

— Acts 13:40-41

Preaching to the men in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia, Paul quoted the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:5). We see that, in its context, the original statement is a reference to the invasion of the Chaldeans. Doctrinally, that had nothing to do with those to whom Paul was speaking in Acts 13; but that is an example of how we can make spiritual application of scripture to ourselves, even when it has nothing to do with us *doctrinally*. Proper *spiritual* application of every verse in the Bible can be made to the Church Age, but the *doctrinal* application of every verse *cannot* be made to the Church today.

**Remember:** *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for...”*

- **Doctrine,**
- **Reproof,**
- **Correction and**
- **Instruction in righteousness.**

4. Now, let's compare Hosea 11:1 with Matthew 2:15, and make all three applications to one verse.

Matthew says:

*“And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”*

— *Matthew 2:15*

Here, Matthew is referring to Christ. Indeed, Joseph and Mary did take Jesus down to Egypt to escape Herod. Then they came back *“out of Egypt.”* Matthew is saying that the Old Testament prophet, Hosea, spoke of this when he said, *“out of Egypt have I called my son.”*

Now, turn back to the book of Hosea:

*“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called  
my son out of Egypt.”* — Hosea 11:1

In Hosea, “my son” is a reference to the nation of Israel. We know this, because we read in Exodus 4:22 that God had already used this term “my son” in speaking of them. Hosea was speaking of the past deliverance of Israel out of Egypt under Moses.

- Now, looking at all these together, we see in Hosea 11:1 a perfect example of the three applications of scripture from one verse.
- The **historical** application of Matthew 2:15 and the one in Hosea, is Israel coming out of Egypt.
- The **doctrinal** application of Hosea 11:1 is a future reference to Jesus Christ coming out of Egypt. We know that from reading Matthew 2:15.
- The **spiritual** (practical) application can be made to the believer in the Church Age. We could liken “my son” to the Christian who has become a son of God (John 1:12; Galatians 4:5-6) and is called out of “Egypt,” the world system and worldliness (Egypt is a type of the world).

Seeing these *three applications* of Hosea 11:1, you can understand how important the proper application of scripture is in determining Bible doctrine for us today.

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## Three Application Of Scripture (pp. 35-39)

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1. List the three applications of scriptures.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
2. The first application is that the verse is talking about something that actually happened in \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. The second application reveals the exact \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. The third is the \_\_\_\_\_ application of the passage in the life and conduct of the believer.
5. Paul often used historical references from the Old Testament to make \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ application to those he was addressing.

## DISPENSATIONS

This third guide for making proper divisions in scripture is *dispensations*. And just what is a dispensation?

On page five of the *Old Scofield Reference Bible*, we find a good definition of the word “dispensation”:

“A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.”

Dr. Peter Ruckman adds:

“The Greek word for *dispensation* is ‘*oikonomia*’ (οικονομία).” It “...does not mean a ‘*period of time*’ at all; it means ‘*the laws by which a household is operated, or the way the master of a house arranges his household.*’ Our word ‘*ecumenical*’ comes from this word. Still, this word has been used, ever since 1700, to mean ‘*a period of time.*’ This, of course, is due to the fact that as the Master of the house (Hebrews 3:2; Ephesians 2:19), God, sets up different ways of running His ‘*family*’ at different times, according to His own wisdom. ... Clarence Larkin’s *Dispensational Truth* is the real granddaddy of all the work done since 1929. It is a superb, scriptural work; but, in constructing the charts, the time element is very conspicuous; it has to be. The law was given at a certain time, in a certain place. Christ died on the cross at a certain time, in a certain place, etc. Larkin’s charts are well done; they are excellently drawn, and everything in them, that is true, scripturally, can be found in ANY edition of a *King James Bible*. No knowledge of Greek or Hebrew is necessary to

understand one '*dispensational teaching*' in the entire book of over four hundred regular pages. Before Larkin (Scofield, 1909, for example), a number of dispensations were listed and commented on with several hundred scriptural cross references (see p. 6).<sup>11</sup>

➡ Dr. C.I. Scofield lists *seven dispensations* in his notes. We will divide it just a little further, and show *ten dispensations*.

Of course, anyone can pick up a King James Bible and see immediately that there are at least two different dispensations: the Old Testament and the New Testament. But with more study, we see that there are other divisions as well. For example, when we look more closely, we see that the Old Testament and the New Testament each have *five dispensational divisions*.

I quote again from Dr. C.I. Scofield's excellent booklet *Rightly Dividing the Word*.<sup>12</sup>

"The scriptures divide time (by which is meant the entire period from the creation of Adam to the '*new heaven and new earth*' of Revelation 21:1) into seven unequal periods, usually called '*Dispensations*' (Ephesians 3:2), although these periods are also called '*ages*' (Ephesians 2:7) and '*days*'— as '*day of the Lord*,' etc.

"These periods are marked off in scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, in respect of the two questions: of SIN, and of MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment— marking his utter failure in every dispensation."

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<sup>11</sup> How To Teach Dispensational Truth by Dr. Peter S. Ruckman • Bible Believer's Press • P.O. Box 7135 • Pensacola, FL 32534

<sup>12</sup> Dr. C.I. Scofield's booklet serves as the basis for this study. It is not quoted in its entirety and I have edited it to conform to the King James Bible and expanded it somewhat.

The purpose of this lesson is to merely survey the main elements by which right divisions can be made in our Bible. Now, here are the ten dispensations as they are found in the King James Bible.

## I. The Dispensation Of Innocence

(Sometimes called *The Edenic Dispensation*)

**“Man Innocent**— This dispensation extends from the creation of Adam, Genesis 2:7, to the expulsion from Eden. Adam, created innocent, and ignorant of good and evil, was placed in the garden of Eden with his wife, Eve, and put under responsibility to abstain from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Dispensation of Innocence resulted in the first failure of man, and in its far-reaching effects, the most disastrous. It closed in judgment; ‘*So he drove out the man.*’ See: Genesis 1:26; 2:16-17; 3:6; and 3:22-24.”

## II. The Dispensation of Conscience

(Sometimes called *The Adamic Dispensation*— Genesis 3:22-8:19)

**“Man Under Conscience**— By the fall, Adam and Eve acquired, and transmitted to the race, the knowledge of good and evil. This gave conscience a basis for right moral judgment, and hence the race came under this measure of responsibility— *to do good and eschew evil*. The result of the Dispensation of Conscience, from Eden to the Flood (while there was no institution of government and of law), was that ‘*all flesh had corrupted his way on the earth*’; that ‘*the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*’; and God closed the second testing of the natural man with judgment— the flood (Genesis 3:7, 22; 6:5,11-12; 7:11-12, 23).”

### III. The Dispensation Of Human Government

(Sometimes known as *The Noahic Dispensation*, this period begins with Noah's commission to replenish the earth and ends with the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel—Genesis 8:20-11:32.)

**“Man in Authority Over the Earth**— Out of the fearful judgment of the Flood God saved eight persons, to whom, after the waters were assuaged, He gave the purified earth with ample power to govern it. This, Noah and his descendants were responsible to do. The Dispensation of Human Government resulted, upon the plain of Shinar, in the impious attempt to become independent of God and closed in judgment— the Confusion of Tongues. See: Genesis 9:1,2; 11:1-4; 11:5-8.”

### IV. The Dispensation Of Promise.

(Sometimes called *The Abrahamic Dispensation*— Genesis 12:1 through Exodus 20— this period begins with the calling out of Abraham and ends with deliverance from bondage in Egypt.)

**“Man Under Promise**— Out of the dispersed descendants of the builders of Babel, God now calls one man, Abram, with whom He enters into covenant. Some of the promises to Abram and his descendants were purely gracious and unconditional. These either have been, or will be, literally fulfilled. Other promises were conditional upon the faithfulness and obedience of the Israelites. Every one of these conditions was violated, and the Dispensation of Promise resulted in the failure of Israel and closed in the judgment of Bondage in Egypt.”

The book of Genesis which opens with the sublime words, *‘In the beginning God created,’* closes with, *‘In a coffin in Egypt.’* See: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:5; 26:2; 28:12-13; 13:14-17; Exodus 1:13-14.”



## V. The Dispensation Of The Law.

(Sometimes referred to as *The Mosaic Dispensation*— Exodus 20 through John 1:6— it begins with the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai and ends with the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist)

*“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”*  
— Luke 16:16

(This is a variation from the Scofield notes; He ends the law with Calvary. There’s nothing wrong with ending it at Calvary, but I make a further division here, because the Bible does say that *“The law and the prophets were until John.”*)

**“Man Under Law**— Again the grace of God came to the help of helpless man and redeemed the chosen people out of the hand of the oppressor. In the wilderness of Sinai He proposed to them the Covenant of Law. Instead of humbly pleading for a continued relation of grace, they presumptuously answered: *‘All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.’* The history of Israel in the wilderness and in the Land is one long record of flagrant, persistent violation of the Law, and at last after multiplied warnings, God closed the testing of man by Law in judgment: first Israel, and then Judah, were driven out of the Land into a dispersion which still continues. A feeble remnant returned under Ezra and Nehemiah, of which, in due time, Christ came: *‘Born of a woman— made under the law.’* Him both Jews and Gentiles conspired to crucify. See: Exodus 19:1-8; II Kings 25:1-11 Romans 3:19-20; 10:5; Acts 2:22-23; 7:51-52; Galatians 3:10.”

## VI. The Dispensation Of Jesus’ Earthly Ministry

[Sometimes called *The Intermediate Dispensation*— it begins with John the Baptist (John 1:6) and ends with the Day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).]

This is another dispensation that Dr. Scofield doesn't recognize. We will study it more thoroughly later.

## VII. The Church Age.

(Sometimes referred to as *The Dispensation of Grace* — it begins with the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, and ends with the rapture of the Church. We are NOW living in this period of time.)

“**Man Under Grace**— The sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ introduced the dispensation of pure grace— which means undeserved favor, or God GIVING righteousness, instead of God **requiring** righteousness, as under the Law.

“Salvation, perfect and eternal, is now freely offered to Jew and Gentile upon the acknowledgment of sin, or repentance, faith in Christ.

*‘Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye **believe** on Him whom he hath sent’*

— *John 6:29*

(cf. John 5:24; 6:47; 10:27,28; Ephesians 2:8,9.)

“The predicted result of this testing of man under grace is judgment upon an unbelieving world and an apostate Church. See: Luke 17:26-30; 18:8; II Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 3:15-16.

“The first event in the closing of this dispensation will be the descent of the Lord from heaven, when sleeping saints will be raised and, together with believers then living, caught up *‘to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord’* (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).”

## VIII. The Great Tribulation

(Also called *The Time of Jacob's Trouble*, or *Daniel's 70th Week*.)

We read about this time of tribulation in many places in the Bible. Revelation 6-19 gives us a detailed account of the Tribulation Period. Matthew 24 is also about this terrible time of trial upon the earth that begins after the rapture of the Church and lasts for 7 years. It ends with Christ's second coming and the Battle of Armageddon.

## IX. The Millennium.

(Also referred to as *Christ's kingdom upon the Earth*, this period begins with the Judgment of the Nations found in Matthew 25, after the Second Advent and after the Battle of Armageddon. It lasts for one thousand years.)

You will find the Millennium mentioned in Revelation 11:15; 20:1-6 and hundreds of other places in the Bible. It ends with the release of Satan from the bottomless pit. Then follows the rebellion of Christ's enemies. Finally, following the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:7-15), this present Heaven and earth will be destroyed and a new universe created for eternity.

### **“Man Under The Personal Reign Of Christ —**

“After purifying judgments which attend the personal return of Christ to the earth, He will reign over restored Israel and over the earth for one thousand years. This is the period commonly called the Millennium. The seat of His power will be Jerusalem, and the saints, including the saved of the Dispensation of Grace, viz., the Church, will be associated with Him in His glory. See: Acts 15:14-17; Isaiah 2:1-4; the whole chapter of Isaiah 11; Revelation 19:11-21; 20:1-6.

“But when Satan is ‘loosed a little season,’ he finds the natural heart as prone to evil as ever, and easily gathers the nations to battle against the Lord and His saints, and this last dispensation closes, like all the others, in judgment.”

## X. The Dispensation of the Fullness of Times

[(Ephesians 1:10; I Corinthians 15:24-28) This final period begins with the creation of a new Heaven and new earth (Revelation 21 and 22) and goes on into never-ending eternity.] *The 'great white throne' is set, the wicked dead are raised and finally judged, and then come the 'new heaven and a new earth' — eternity is begun. See: Revelation 20:3, 7-15 and 21:1-22.*"

There are many good works available on dispensations. Below is a list of some that I have profited by. Beginning from the simplest to the more advanced:

- *God's Plan of the Ages*, by Louis Talbot<sup>13</sup>
- *The Scofield Reference Bible*, by Dr. C.I. Scofield<sup>14</sup>
- *The Salem Kirban Reference Bible*, by Salem Kirban<sup>15</sup>
- *How To Teach Dispensational Truth*, by Dr. Peter S. Ruckman<sup>16</sup>
- *Systematic Theology*, by Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer<sup>17</sup>
- *Dispensational Truth*, the classic work by Clarence Larkin<sup>18</sup>
- *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, by Clarence Larkin<sup>19</sup>
- *One Book, Rightly Divided* by Douglas Stauffer<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The Bible Believer's Guide to Dispensationalism, by David Walker, Day-Star Publishing. This is the best book on Dispensationalism in print.

<sup>14</sup> The Scofield Reference Bible, with notes by Dr. C.I. Scofield • Oxford Press (the original edition of the Scofield Bible with the King James Text. Note; the New Scofield Reference Bible is *not* the King James Text.

<sup>15</sup> Salem Kirban Reference Bible, AMG Publishers • Chattanooga, TN

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer was the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. His 8 volume set is

<sup>18</sup> Clarence Larkin Estate • P.O. Box 334 • Glenside, PA 19038. This is the classic work on dispensational truth. It is a large book with many charts.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> This volume is well done in a simple format that is easy to understand.

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## Dispensations (pp. 41-48)

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1. Define the word “*dispensation.*” \_\_\_\_\_

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2. List the ten dispensations in the order given in the text.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

(6) \_\_\_\_\_

(7) \_\_\_\_\_

(8) \_\_\_\_\_

(9) \_\_\_\_\_

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Match each dispensation above with the correct characteristic of that dispensation given below.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Kingdom of Heaven established on earth

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This and all the books above may be purchased from **Seed for the Sower Bookstore**, P.O. Box 587, Adamsville, AL 35005-0587. Write and ask for a catalog. Store is located at Gloryland Baptist Church, 1829 Circlewood Drive, Forestdale, AL 35214

- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Tower of Babel built
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon on the Mount preached
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ Adam walked with God
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ Israel chosen as God's nation
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ Noah builds the Ark
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ Ten Commandments given
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul converted
- i. \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Jacob's trouble
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ White Throne Judgment
- k. \_\_\_\_\_ Crucifixion
- l. \_\_\_\_\_ Ethiopian eunuch is saved
- m. \_\_\_\_\_ The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is forbidden
- n. \_\_\_\_\_ New heavens and new earth are created
- o. \_\_\_\_\_ Birth of John the Baptist
- p. \_\_\_\_\_ Daniel's 70th week
- q. \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham receives his covenant
- r. \_\_\_\_\_ All flesh is corrupt
- s. \_\_\_\_\_ Satan is loosed for a season
- t. \_\_\_\_\_ Races were supposed to separate.

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