

HOME BIBLE STUDY

LESSON TWO

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE BIBLE

The phrase "*rightly dividing*" is taken from II Timothy 2:15 as it is stated in the King James Version (KJV). Notice the rendering of the entire verse:

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

Now consider the reading from the New International Version (NIV).

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who **correctly handles** the word of truth. (NIV)*

Have you heard someone say, "*That's not what my bible says*"? That statement may be absolutely true depending on the translation one has chosen to read.

*Does "**rightly divide**" mean the same as "**correctly handle**"?*

Different words are used in the two translations. Some might conclude, since different words are used, that someone has changed the Bible. This is a false conclusion, however, because both are translations. One can only change the Bible by changing the text from which the translation is being made. Translators make every effort to convey accurately the meaning of the original language. When different words are used the meanings should be very similar. When considering the accuracy of translations, the meaning of words is of more value than whether or not different words are used.

TRANSLATIONS

Why do we need translations?

Translations are needed because most people do not read or write using the original languages in which the Bible was written. The Old Testament was written in *Hebrew* with a few passages having been written in *Chaldee*. The New Testament was written in *Greek*. Because languages always change, the *Hebrew* and *Greek* of today's times are not the same as the *Hebrew* and *Greek* of Biblical writings. Translations are necessary to communicate important documents in languages other than the original text. In the days when the New Testament was being written, the Greek speaking Jew could read the Septuagint, a *Greek* translation of the Old Testament.

What is inspired?

2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*. This means God directed the writing of the scriptures. Inspired men wrote what God directed in the language of the people who were to read their writings. Only the text written in the original language by the inspired men can be considered to be inspired. Translations are not inspired and most do not claim to be inspired.

What is a good translation?

A good translation is one that accurately conveys the meaning of original language in the language to be read. Good translations usually come from a team of unbiased scholars. Translations by one or two scholars and those that promote a particular doctrine should be avoided. Additionally, each word should be translated. Translations which seek to interpret a passage for you are for the most part nothing

more than opinions of man and should be approached with caution. The King James Version was translated by 47 scholars, the Revised Standard Version by 32 scholars who considered the review and counsel of 50 others. The New American Standard is a revision of the American Standard Version which was translated by a team of many notable scholars who, at first were in cooperation with the more than 52 scholars of the English Revised Version translating committees, and later worked independently to produce a translation using American words and spellings. There are other well accepted and good translations.

A lot of useful information about the translations and translators can be found in the *Prefaces* of the various versions. Knowing that the Bibles we use are translations can open the door to greater understandings. Various versions can be compared. Study helps are readily available to look up the meanings of Greek and Hebrews words. Unless noted, the

quotations in these lessons are from the New King James Version.

DIFFERENT AGES OF BIBLE HISTORY

A careful study of the book of **Genesis** easily reveals that God dealt with early man using the patriarchs (fathers) to lead their families. Later the *Law of Moses* was given to the Israelites. The New Testament, written to reveal the teachings of Christ, is to be followed by Christians and continues to offer salvation to every obedient believer. The Chart, ***PERIODS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY***, shows the different ages and some significant events in each period. Recognition of the different ages or periods of the Bible can eliminate a lot of misunderstandings and misapplications of God's word.

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PERIODS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY

PATRIARCHAL

ADAM

NOAH

THE FLOOD

ABRAHAM

ISAAC

JACOB

JOSEPH

EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY

2500 YEARS

MOSAICAL

DELIVERANCE

LAW GIVEN AT MT. SINAI

JUDGES

KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

DIVIDED KINGDOM

CAPTIVITY

RETURN OF A REMNANT

PERIOD BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

CHRIST IS BORN

1480 YEARS

CHRISTIAN

D
E
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T

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

LAST DAYS

CHRIST'S KINGDOM, THE CHURCH, IS ESTABLISHED

JERUSALEM DESTROYED

CHRISTIANS
GOD'S ONLY CHOSEN
PEOPLE

33 AD UNTIL PRESENT

DIFFERENT RULES FOR DIFFERENT AGES

To rightly divide the word it is necessary to understand that the different dispensations had their different rules and instructions. Each era had its own system of rules and guidelines. In the Patriarchal period the fathers ruled. In the Mosaical period people were to govern themselves by the law received from God and delivered by Moses. In the final period, the Christian age, Christ sent the Holy Spirit to his apostles and commanded that his gospel be preached to every creature in all the world. The gospel of Christ is called *the everlasting gospel* -- Revelation 14:6

BIBLE STUDY

Read the quoted scriptures and consider the following questions:

- { Was obedience required under the Patriarchal Rule? the Mosaical law?
- { Is obedience required of Christians?

The Lord, speaking of the promise made to Abraham when he was living in Canaan, says to Isaac:

³ *"Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."*-- Genesis 26:3-5

When Moses is about to receive the Law and the Ten Commandments, The Lord tells him --

⁵ *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Exodus 19:5-6

Moses speaking to the Israelites says --

"Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. ² "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. ³ "The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.

Deuteronomy 5:1-3

Jesus giving his disciples what is referred to as the great commission tells them --

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20

Jesus also said --

If you love Me, keep My commandments

John 14:15

THE LAWS ARE DISTINCT FOR EACH AGE

GOD TOLD NOAH --

"MAKE YOURSELF AN ARK OF GOPHERWOOD."

Genesis 6:14

MOSES TOLD ISRAEL--

"KEEP THE PASSOVER."

Numbers 9:5

PAUL TOLD THE PHILIPPIANS --

"LET YOUR CONDUCT BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST."

Philippians 1:27

MOSES DID NOT BUILD AN ARK OF GOPHERWOOD. NOAH DID NOT KEEP THE PASSOVER. CHRISTIANS DO NOT BUILD ARKS OR KEEP THE PASSOVER. NEITHER MOSES OR NOAH LIVED ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

COVENANTS AND LAWS

Noah was given a covenant that we, even in today's times, are reminded of frequently.

¹³I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. ¹⁴"It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;¹⁵ "and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. -- Genesis 9:13-15

God also gave Noah and his descendants some rules to follow. We learn from Genesis 9:1-7 that Noah was to populate the earth, have charge over the animals, and that anyone who shed a man's blood was to have his blood shed by man.

Abraham received a covenant and was also given a sign. The sign that Abraham received is forbidden to be practiced as a "religious requirement" for the followers of Christ.

BIBLE STUDY

Read Genesis 17:1-12 and Galatians 5:1-4 and considering the following.

- { When was circumcision first introduced?
- { When did circumcision stop being a requirement for those who would follow God.

The law which Moses delivered to Israel was a covenant which Israel did not keep. Christ came with a New Covenant which was promised to Israel and was for all nations. The covenant of Christ brought forgiveness of sins.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and consider the following:

- { What does the Lord promise to do for his people in the New Covenant?
- { Was the covenant broken by Israel the Law of Moses? (should be yes)
- { Why would the New Covenant be different?

Note: Covenant and testament are used interchangeably.

Read Isaiah 2:2-3 and consider the following:

- { From where would the word of the Lord go forth ?
- { When was the prophecy to be fulfilled?

The covenant given by Moses to Israel was fulfilled in Christ. Colossians 2:14 speaks of Christ nailing the old law to the cross.

having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Colossians 2:14

FOR A RULE TO BE BINDING IT MUST BE IN THE LAW TO WHICH ONE IS SUBJECT

CIRCUMCISION WAS REQUIRED OF THE PATRIARCHS AND ISRAEL BUT NOT UNDER CHRIST

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY" WAS JUST FOR ISRAEL

CHRISTIANS DO NOT PRACTICE CIRCUMCISION NOR KEEP THE SABBATH DAY

THE BIBLE RECORD

The Bible, God's word, tells the story of salvation. God's plan existed even before the world was created.

¹³He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

-- Colossians 1:13-17

The Bible is not a book of science, although many scientific facts are mentioned, some of which we probably have not discovered yet. It contains the history of God's son and the preparation of the world to receive him.

As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. -- 2 Peter 1:3

The value of the Old Testament is immeasurable. In it we have a record of God

always keeping his promises. The prophets prophesied about events that did not take place for hundreds and even thousands of years. Their record confirms the truth of God's word and indeed proves the Bible is inspired of God. The old records give us faith and hope. They are examples to give strength.

¹¹Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

-- 1 Corinthians 10:11-12

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

-- Romans 15:4

Future lessons will show the Bible's continuity in the development of God's plan.

We have quoted several scriptures in this lesson. A reminder to the student.

STUDY FROM ONE'S OWN BIBLE IS STRONGLY URGED.

It is recommended that each one pursue individual Bible study in addition to these lessons.

QUESTIONS

LESSON TWO

NAME _____

MULTIPLE CHOICE (mark the correct answer)

- Rightly dividing** means:
 - to cut exactly in half.
 - to correctly handle.
 - have a conservative understanding.
 - none of the above.
- When teaching people who spoke Greek, the teachers of the gospel in the first century could show that Christ fulfilled Old Testament prophecies by quoting from:
 - the Chaldean Bible.
 - the Hebrew Bible.
 - the Septuagint.
 - the official Latin translation of the Hebrew scriptures.
- When seeking a good translation of the Bible:
 - a lot of confusion can be avoided if the translation is by one person.
 - it is good to find one translated by those who agree with your choice of doctrine.
 - insite is gained if the translators use words which support their view of the passage.
 - useful information can be found in the prefaces of the Bible translations.
- In each of the three ages of Bible history:
 - the laws are distinct.
 - the covenant terms or laws were delivered differently.
 - obedience was/is required.
 - all of the above.
- Circumcision was required of:
 - Noah.
 - early Christians.
 - those under *the law* given by Moses.
 - all of the preceding.
- Rightly dividing** the word of God includes:
 - considering translations
 - considering different dispensations.
 - considering to whom a teaching applies.
 - all of the preceding.

MATCHING (Select the age in which you would find the persons or item on the left.)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1. Christians | _____ | P) Patriarchal |
| 2. Noah | _____ | M) Mosaical |
| 3. Abraham | _____ | C) Christian |
| 4. Birth of Christ | _____ | |
| 5. Ark filled with animals | _____ | |
| 6. Christ's church | _____ | |
| 7. The apostle Paul | _____ | |
| 8. Rule by judges | _____ | |
| 9. Last days | _____ | |
| 10. Law of Moses | _____ | |

TRUE OR FALSE (Answer *true* or *false* to the following statements)

- _____ 1. Translations are inspired?
- _____ 2. ***Rightly divide*** means to ***correctly handle***?
- _____ 3. Abraham was promised that his descendants would receive the land of Canaan.
- _____ 4. Obedience is not required of Christians.
- _____ 5. God set the rainbow in the cloud as a sign that Christ rules the universe.
- _____ 6. A Christian falls from grace if he is circumcised.
- _____ 7. A Christian falls from grace if he is circumcised in obedience to *the law of Moses*.
- _____ 8. The Bible contains the complete histories of all the people on the Earth.
- _____ 9. The Bible contains all the scientific facts that a scientist needs to know.
- _____ 10. The Bible contains all things that pertain to *life and godliness*.
- _____ 11. We should obey all the *Ten Commandments* today.
- _____ 12. The Holy Spirit taught the apostles what to teach to all nations.

ANSWER IN A FEW WORDS

- 1. What is inspired of God? _____
- 2. Name at least one important consideration when looking to purchase a new Bible?

- 3. What should one avoid when purchasing a new translation of the Bible? _____

- 4. How did Abraham's family know what God wanted them to do?

- 5. Considering the scriptures given in the *Bible Study* beginning on page 3, what are some considerations to becoming a disciple of Christ? _____

- 6. Why isn't the *Law of Moses* binding on anyone now? _____

- 7. According to prophecy, Isaiah 2:2-3, from where was the word of the Lord to go forth?

- 8. Why would a Christian not offer an animal sacrifice? _____

- 9. How old is God's plan for man's salvation? _____
- 10. What can one gain by studying the *Old Testament*? _____
