

INTRODUCTION

When I first got saved and started reading my Bible, I became very confused at times. I was told I needed to buy an updated version, I needed to learn Greek and Hebrew, I needed to buy commentaries, etc.... I did all of the above and was still confused!

After about six years of confusion, I was told about Clarence Larkin's material along with C.I. Scofield's material. It wasn't long until I was "devouring" their notes and soon realized the Bible was not nearly as difficult to understand as the devil would have me believe.

God began to show me what He would have shown me all along if I would have simply spent more time in the word of God and prayer, listening to the Holy Spirit of God and not men who wanted to be the final authority over the Bible. The Bible began to make sense like never before, and I could understand it without Greek and Hebrew, without all the commentaries and best of all, there was no need to read anything but God's perfect, preserved Bible, the Authorized Version, 1611 King James Bible!!! Praise the Lord.

My goal with this material is to help you avoid the years of frustration I endured. If you are already confused in your Bible study, perhaps this will help you as well. If you are helped by the material, all praise, honor and glory goes to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Preface

Dividing the Book, Not the Brethren!

It was in 1991 that I started Cornerstone Baptist Church. I was tired of “denominationalism” and in particular, politics among the brethren. My naïve thoughts were that I would start an independent Baptist Church and be rid of politics! Wow, was I in for a surprise. It seems some of the brethren are forever looking for a reason to divide, rather than work together. Please don’t misunderstand, I do believe in separation and I know we are to mark those who teach false doctrine (Rom.16:17). However, every person will have to choose where he or she “draws the line” and I am convinced that some crowds are more interested in drawing lines than they are in doing something for God. Some churches are missing great opportunities because they choose to “disassociate” for reasons not wholly scriptural.

I have NO DESIRE to compromise the word of God and I know the scriptural truth of walking with wise men and avoiding “evil communications.” At the same time, I have yet to discover the wisdom of separating myself from men that do not see eye to eye with me on every subject. There are some men who have been a great blessing to me and my church and they have the touch of God on their lives, yet they do not fully agree with me concerning dispensationalism, the gap, the millennium, etc...

Our church supports missionaries around the world. Some of those missionaries do not agree with us on every subject. And yet, they are winning souls and building churches in places I would not even want to visit!

I hesitated to put this book into print for the reasons I am discussing. I wrote the material in 1996 believing it would help the people I pastored as they started seriously studying the Bible. That was my only goal. As it turned out, various missionaries and pastors have used the material in jails, prisons, detention centers,

and various classes in order to help young believers better understand the word of God. I do not consider myself an author or writer. I am a pastor with a desire to help the people of God grow in the Lord. I therefore attempted to write this material on a level that I needed when I started studying the Bible. I am sure you will find problems, weaknesses, mistakes, and certainly unanswered questions in this little book. If your goal is to help the saints, feel free to contact me with your suggestions.

It is my contention that nobody has all the answers to what is often called “O.T. Salvation” or “Millennial Salvation” or “Tribulation Salvation.” Personally, I think we don’t have the right answers because we are not even asking the right questions! Why do we worry so much about O.T. salvation when the Old Testament is primarily about Kings and Kingdoms, especially the nation of Israel? We are not trying to win O.T. saints, Tribulation saints, or Millennial saints! Yes, we have to teach our churches what we believe the word of God says about these subjects, but do we have to agree on these subjects in order to work together?

I believe the King James Bible is the preserved word of God. I believe it is given by inspiration of God and that it is perfect. But I have been studying it for over thirty years, and there are still some very interesting subjects in that Book that I haven’t the slightest idea how to explain! I am not bothered if you disagree with me on some of the details concerning the Antichrist, the Tribulation, the flying roll of Zechariah, the exact location of the New Jerusalem, The Gap, etc... Truth is, sometimes I don’t even agree with me! That’s right, there are some subjects that I have taught on and later, after given more light, I had a different perspective. (The truth is, there are even comments in this book that I have edited as more light was given. Please remember, our Bible is a living Book! It continues to speak and we continue to learn more as the years go by!)

That being said, this book is an effort to help the saints, not divide them. It is a “skeleton” book, left vague in order to allow each student to add their own “body” of beliefs as they continue to

study over the years. I readily admit the material is very basic and simplistic. My prayer is that it will give some assistance to the beginning Bible student who will perhaps use the book as a “head start” in his or her study.

Finally, I must add one last comment. As you study the Bible, pray and ask God to allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. There is nothing wrong with studying other men and even getting their thoughts. However, if you are not careful, you will measure every book or sermon by what your favorite teacher or preacher thinks. All of us are fallible, frail creatures of dust. The final authority is the word of God and the God of the word. May God bless you as you study and learn in an effort to better serve Him for His glory.

Rightly Dividing - Chapter One

"Handle with Care"

I have been accused of being "picky" about things, and in some ways, I'm sure it's true. However, there are some areas where it is wise to be picky! For example, when I write Bible studies, tracts, booklets, etc..., I'm very careful when I refer to the word of God. If I'm speaking about the Bible as the word of God, I try to always use a small "w." When I'm referring to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word of God, I try to always use a capital "W." Some may say that is being too picky. Check my standard with the word of God and see if you don't find the same thing!

Another example of my "pickiness" is the word "reverend." I do not like to be called "reverend" due to Psalm 111:9, *"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."* While I do not set out to correct everyone that uses that title with me, it bothers me nonetheless. Is that picky? Not really. Jesus Christ himself said we should be careful about using certain titles, especially religious titles, when referring to men. (Matt.23:8-10).

I'm simply trying to point out a commonly known fact; there are some things we ought to be careful about. Paul talks about those who handle the word of God deceitfully (2Cor.4:2). Others are careless enough to wrest or twist the word of God to their own destruction (2Peter 3:16). **If there is any thing we ought to handle with care, it is the word of God!** (Deut.4:2; Prov.30:6; and Rev.22:18-19).

If there was to be singled out one key verse on how to "handle" the word of God, I suppose the best verse would be

2Tim.2:15, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" Notice, the verse tells us how to get God's approval. Any decent child wants the Father's approval. If you want God's approval, you will find three things included in the verse:

- * STUDY
- * WORK (workman)
- * RIGHTLY DIVIDE

The key to understanding the Bible is to RIGHTLY DIVIDE the word of truth. Most people have never learned to rightly divide the Bible because they are not willing to do the first two things: STUDY, which is often hard WORK!

If I owned 100 acres of land and divided it four ways to give to my children, each child would have his or her own particular plot. Stephen, my firstborn, may be given 40 acres; Jacob may be given 30 acres, and Kelley and Amie may be given 15 acres apiece. They may argue over the land, but the owner is the one who has the authority to divide it as he sees right.

God the Holy Spirit has written the Bible. He has divided it as he sees right! If you want to understand the Bible, you must RIGHTLY DIVIDE it. Don't try to claim land that belongs to the Jew!! As you continue to read, you'll see the great importance of this principle.

Now, in the next chapter, we will start showing you how the Bible is "divided." At this point, I'd like to show you why it is so crucial that we RIGHTLY DIVIDE the Bible. Let me say first of all, **THE BIBLE DOES NOT CONTRADICT ITSELF!!!** However, if you do not rightly divide the word of God, you will have a very difficult time reconciling some passages. The Bible will certainly appear contradictory if you do not rightly divide it. Consider the following six contrasts as proof of this fact.

- I - Acts 2:38 contrasted with Romans 10:9-13
- II - Rom.4:5 contrasted with James 2:24
- III - Luke 1:5-6 contrasted with Romans 3:26
- IV - Mark 16:17-18 contrasted with 1Cor.13:8
- V - Hebrews 6:1-6 contrasted with 2Tim.2:13
- VI - Solomon's Song 5:11 contrasted with Rev.1:14

Every passage above is the word of God and is profitable. However, if you do not rightly divide each passage, you will be forever confused. You must divide each passage and place it in the right dispensation as well as to the right person or group.

The reason we have groups today claiming the power to speak in tongues, groups which claim we're still under the law, groups which promote faith healers, groups which endorse women pastors, along with groups which adhere to such false teachings as baptismal regeneration (water baptism as a part of salvation), one general resurrection with no millennium, salvation by works, etc...., is due to the fact that most people fail to RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH!

When they approach the Bible, they fail to HANDLE WITH CARE! They are not "picky" enough! (Every false doctrine taught today is a true doctrine twisted or misplaced! That is why it is crucial for you to obey 2Tim.2:15.)

Now, as a way of preparing for our first lesson on Rightly Dividing the Bible, take a look at Rom.16:25-26, *"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, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to*

the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:”

Notice in the passage that Paul tells you how to be established. First, it is according to Paul's gospel! This is the gospel you'll be judged by according to Romans 2:16 and the gospel is clearly spelled out in 1Cor.15:1-4. Notice also, according to Rom.15:25-26, you'll be "*stablished*" according to Paul's gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, and ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY. It is the mystery of the church, described in Eph.3. It is not to be confused with another mystery, that of Rom.11:25. Soooooooooooooo, if you are going to be established in the word of God, you are going to have to understand some mysteries, which have been revealed as our text says. Please read on.....

In the Old Testament, did God deal primarily with Jews or Gentiles? What about now? Why are we told about three groups in 1Cor.10:32? Why is Paul the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom.15:15-16) and Peter the apostle to the Jews (Gal.2:8)?

These and other questions may seem a bit difficult for you at this point. You may already feel more confused than ever. However, I truly believe if you'll continue to read the next few chapters, your confusion will turn to understanding. But remember, you must **STUDY, WORK, AND THEN, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RIGHTLY DIVIDE!**

QUESTIONS

(1) What is the key verse on how to handle the word of God?

(2) The key to understanding the Bible is to _____
_____ the word of God.

(3) We are to be established according to whose gospel?

(4) Who is the apostle to the Gentiles? _____

(5) Who is the apostle to the Jews? _____

(6) We'll be judged according to _____ gospel.

(7) According to 1Cor.10:32, we are divided into three groups.
They are _____, _____ and _____.

*** Write down 2Tim.2:15 here, and then memorize the verse.

Rightly Dividing - Chapter Two

Having shown the necessity of "rightly dividing" the word of God, we now need to consider some of the more obvious divisions in the Bible. We will look at some of the major divisions, and by the time we complete our study, you may want to add to our list.

However, before looking at some of these "divisions" in the word of God, take a look at Hebrews 9:14-17. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."*

Do you see the importance of that statement? The New Testament is not "of force" while Jesus Christ is living on the earth during his earthly ministry. Thus, many of the events we read about in the gospels are actually taking place under the "Old Testament" dispensation. Don't forget, the people living during the Lord's earthly ministry did not have the New Testament. Until you recognize this fact, you will be likely to make the same mistake a lot of people make. You will go to passages such as Matthew 5:20; 5:29-30; 6:14-15 among others, and try to spiritualize them. And yet, DOCTRINALLY, they are to be taken just as they are written, but not for this age of grace!!! The same mistake is made with such passages as Isaiah 11:1-12 and Zechariah 14:1-9. Those who fail to

rightly divide the word of God go to those passages and spiritualize them. However, if you realize they are speaking of a future event, the Second Advent, you can take them literally! IT IS GOING TO HAPPEN!!! (Have you read the passages?)

Now, let's look at some of the more obvious divisions in the word of God:

I - Old Testament and New Testament

This may seem so obvious you think it is not worth mentioning. However, you might be surprised how often someone reads the O.T. and tries to FORCE a doctrinal passage to this age of grace.

Someone said, The OT is the NT concealed and the NT is the OT revealed! There is some truth to that statement, but if you think both Testaments have the same "effect," give serious study time to 2Cor.3:4-7.

Let me remind you of something we all have to remember; 2Timothy 3:16-17 says, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* No matter how much you learn about "rightly dividing," do not become a "hyper-divider." In other words, while we know not all scripture applies to this age of grace doctrinally, we also know all scripture is profitable. We are to read the entire Bible, not just the Pauline epistles!

II - The New Testament and the New Testament

No, that is not a misprint. You must make some divisions within the New Testament! I am going to give you four divisions,

but they do not really complete the proper division of the New Testament. Most Bible students struggle with how to divide Hebrews to Revelation. So for our purposes, we will put them together, and allow you to search the scriptures and seek the Holy Spirit's help in completing those divisions.

A. The Four Gospels

B. Acts of the Apostles

C. Pauline Epistles

D. Hebrews - Revelation

Now, this is a very basic division at best. It is by no means complete. For example, without a doubt, Matthew's gospel is much more Jewish than John's gospel. Matthew deals with Jesus as the son of man (Jewish), while John deals with Him as the son of God.

If you fail to recognize these divisions, once again you will have trouble reconciling various passages. For example, compare Matthew 19:16-17 with Acts 16:31. What's the difference? In Matthew, Jesus is dealing with a man under the Old Testament Law. In Acts, we are after the death, burial, and resurrection, and Paul is dealing with a man under the age of grace!

*** Now we will list some "divisions" which will be discussed at length in later chapters. These divisions are crucial to understanding the Bible:

III - Two Kingdoms

The Kingdom of Heaven **(They are NOT the same!)**

The Kingdom of God

IV - Two Advents

(1) The First Advent - when Jesus came as the Lamb of God; He came to die.

(2) The Second Advent - when Jesus returns as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; He comes to conquer!

*** There are two parts to the 2nd Advent:

- * The Translation (called the Rapture) (1Th.4:13-18)
- * The Revelation (Rev.1:7; Jude 14-15)

V - Two Judgments - There are actually more than two judgments in the Bible, but we will focus our attention on these two:

- (1) The Judgment Seat of Christ - 1Cor.3:11-15
- (2) Great White Throne Judg. - Rev.20:11-15

VI - Jew, Gentile, and Church - 1Cor.10:32

VII - Different Resurrections - 1Cor.15:22-24; Rev.20:5

We will want to give special attention to the First Resurrection of which there are three parts.

*** We have listed for you seven divisions to get you started. There are more to keep in mind, but we will spend most of our time on those listed above. For your own study, consider the following:

- (1) Your Two Natures - Old and New
- (2) Salvation verses Rewards
- (3) Relationship verses Fellowship
- (4) New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem

In the next chapter, we will begin a more detailed study of some of the divisions.

QUESTIONS

(1) Who is the mediator of the New Testament? _____

(2) When did the New Testament become "of force"?

(3) What is the most obvious division of the Bible?

(4) Which of the gospels is the most Jewish?

(5) Name the two parts to the 2nd Advent.

_____ and _____

(6) Name the two kingdoms.

_____ and _____

(7) Name the two judgments.

_____ and _____

*** Write and memorize 2Tim.3:16-17

Rightly Dividing - Chapter Three

The Two Advents

Introduction - At this point, we will look at a subject which is among the most appealing subjects to all Christians, the **SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST**.

When we speak of the "two advents" we are simply referring to the First Coming of Jesus Christ and the Second coming of Jesus Christ. You may wonder why anyone would have trouble dividing these two events. Well, most people don't. The problem comes when we discover in the word of God, there are **TWO PARTS TO THE SECOND COMING**. That is where people get confused and that is what we want to spend most of our time on in this chapter.

God says the way he proves himself to be God is by telling us the end of something before its beginning! Take a look at Isa.46:9-10; 48:3-5 and John 13:19.

Hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, God told his people it was going to happen, and then gave details of the life and death of his son. For a few examples, see Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25; Isa.7:14; Isa.53:3; Zech.9:9 and Zech.11:12-13. These passages make up only a sample of the prophecies concerning the first advent. You would think the Jews would have recognized the Lord for who he really was. (Of course, that's easy for us to say "after the fact.")

In Luke 18:31-34, we see the fact that the disciples simply had a difficult time seeing the truth about the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. Why? Well, there are probably several reasons, but let's look at one in particular. Matthew 20:20-21 reveals the thoughts of the disciples and some of their family. In a nutshell,

they were expecting Jesus Christ to conquer Rome and set up an earthly kingdom with headquarters in Israel! (See Acts 1:6). They believed this as a result of reading various passages in the Old Testament such as Zech.14:3-9. So, their problem was they could not see the CROSS, because they were so focused on the CROWN. What they thought the Lord would do at His first coming, HE IS GOING TO DO AT HIS SECOND COMING!

With this very brief look at the first coming, let's look at the SECOND COMING or SECOND ADVENT. The problem we have here is that too many people assume the second coming is ONE BIG EVENT. However, that is not the case. THERE ARE TWO PARTS OR TWO PHASES TO THE SECOND COMING:

- (1) THE RAPTURE (OR TRANSLATION)
- (2) THE REVELATION

For a very simple example of how there can be two parts to the second coming, consider this illustration. One day I called a friend to tell him I was on my way to his house. I told him I would be there at a certain time. On my way to his house, I stopped at another house to pick up my children. They were to go with me, but we had to run by our house for them to clean up! We then proceeded to my friend's house and still arrived on time. And so it is with the Lord's second coming to the earth. He is going to "pick us up" (1Thess.4:13-18), drop us off at HOME in order to clean us up (Rev.19:7-8 with Eph.5:26-27), and then we will proceed together to the earth (Jude 14).

The first part of the Second Advent is what we call the "Rapture." It is when we meet the Lord IN THE AIR. We will go to the Judgment Seat of Christ (2Cor.5:10) and then return TO THE EARTH with the Lord (Jude 14-15), which is called the "Revelation."

When I first started reading my Bible, I read passages about the Revelation, the Lord's return to the earth, and dreaded the events described before the Revelation. For example, I read Matthew 24 and hated the thoughts of the terrible events I read about. Those events are described in detail in the book of Revelation. After learning to rightly divide the word of God, I realized those events are describing what is called The Great Tribulation. The great Tribulation takes place AFTER the Lord takes the church out of this world, and just before He returns to the earth. So, after rightly dividing the word of God, you can learn the order of events on God's timetable are as follows:

- (1) The Rapture - 1Thess.4:13-18; 1Cor.15:49-55
- (2) The Judgment Seat of Christ - 2Cor.5:10 and 1Cor.3:11-15.
- (3) The Tribulation - Matt.24; Mal.4; Rev.6-18
The Tribulation takes place on the earth. This is the time of "*Jacob's trouble*" (Jer.30:7) and is the time when God pours out his wrath on the nation of Israel in particular and the world in general. While this takes place on the earth, we will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ, "*for God hath not appointed us to wrath...*" (1Thess.5:9)
- (4) The Revelation - Rev.1:7; Jude 14; Zech.12:10
- (5) The Millennium - Rev.20:1-6; Isa.55:12-13 - This is when Jesus Christ sets up his earthly Kingdom for 1000 years, and rules with a rod of iron from the throne of his father David, in Jerusalem! We will discuss this kingdom in much greater detail in later chapters.
- (6) The Battle of Gog and Magog - Rev.20:7-10 - After the millennium, the Lord is going to battle the Devil and all his allies, and annihilate the enemy once and for all!
- (7) The Great White Throne Judgment - Rev.20:11-15 - This judgment is primarily for the unsaved, though the Tribulation saints will be judged here as well.

*** After this final judgment, ETERNITY BEGINS!!! There will be a new heaven and a new earth and everything will be like it was meant to be before Adam sinned!!!

If you will keep this outline in mind as you read the word of God, it will help you understand the context you are reading about. In future chapters, we will offer more details about some of the events above.

Remember, the First Coming was when the Lord came to the earth and ended up on a cross. The Second Coming is when he returns to the earth and ends up with a crown! The first part of the Second Coming is when he comes to get the church out of this world. The second part of the Second Coming is when he comes all the way to the earth to set up His Kingdom!

QUESTIONS

(1) What does God do to prove Himself to be God?

(2) What did the Jews expect Jesus to do at His first coming?

(3) What are the two parts to the 2nd Advent?

_____ and _____

(4) What is another word for "Rapture"?

(5) The tribulation is called the "time of _____ trouble."

(6) Where are we during the Great Tribulation?

(7) Which judgment is primarily for the unsaved?

*** Write and memorize 1Cor.15:51-52

Rightly Dividing - Chapter Four

Dispensations

Whether in Bible study, secular study, or life in general, I have observed a mistake made by most of us all too often. We assume things to be so, "that ain't so"! We accept ideas, words, philosophies, etc... without doing any research, and even worse, without THINKING about them. Let me try to illustrate.

Have you ever said or heard someone else say, "Well, I'm not going to argue over the Bible"? Or maybe it was said this way, "Well, if there's one thing I'm not going to do, it's argue about the Bible." Now that's a cliché that sounds pretty good. But have you ever thought about it? People will argue about whether a car was green or blue, whether something happened on Monday or Tuesday, whether the cost of something was \$3.98 or \$4.98, whether the right time is 4:30 or 4:35, etc... They'll argue over all kinds of trivial information and will not take the Bible seriously enough to argue over it! Now, I'm not suggesting we get in heated debates and knockdown-dragout fights over the Bible, but I am saying it is worth "arguing" about. (Consider Acts 6:9; 9:29; 15:2; 17:17)

Let's try another example. Have you ever said or heard someone else say, "Well, I just don't believe in PREDESTINATION." People who say that usually mean they do not believe God has predestined some to heaven and some to hell, without them having any choice in the matter. Of course, a true Bible student KNOWS man has a free will and that God wants every person to be saved, but does not force anyone to receive His son nor does He force anyone to reject His son. However, a true Bible student must also believe in predestination as it is taught in Romans 8:29-30 and Eph.1:5,11. So, you must believe in "predestination," just be careful what you say it means!

These are just a couple of examples of how people fail to think about what they hear and what they say. They assume too much. For further proof, did you know the word "animal" is NOT in the Bible? What about the word "grandfather"? What about "demon"? Have you looked for the word "missionary"? The list goes on and on. I'm simply saying, we assume too much, without checking things out!

Let me offer one other example which should bring us to the subject of this chapter - DISPENSATIONS. When I first got saved, I began to notice a statement that I struggled with: "Everybody is saved the same way, from Genesis to Revelation." Then they would "clarify" by saying, "In the OT they looked forward to the cross, and in the NT they looked back to the cross." I suppose to some people that sounds pretty good. However, to a person who just got saved and was confused by all the different denominations he had considered, I was not so quick to believe what I heard. I was so skeptical of different "religions" I was determined to check out everything against the word of God!

The same crowd that says things like we've noted above, are quick to quote Hebrews 13:8, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*" Now that's a great verse, but don't make it say something it doesn't say. Yes, Jesus Christ is the same always. His character never changes. But does he always do things the same way? DEFINITELY NOT! Have you ever compared the miracles of Jesus Christ in the gospels and noticed how he healed the blind, but in different ways? Have you ever considered the FACT that the disciples saw Jesus, ate with Jesus, saw the miracles of Jesus, heard Jesus and spoke to him FACE TO FACE? Well, how could their faith be the same as mine? You see, people just assume things "THAT AIN'T SO!"

Now, we're finally ready to discuss the subject matter of this chapter. If you are going to understand the Bible, and if you are going to obey 2Tim.2:15, you must learn something about DISPENSATIONS. The word is found four times in the Bible: 1Cor.9:17; Eph.1:10; Eph.3:2; and Col.1:25. So, like the word

"predestination," you have to believe in "dispensations." The question becomes, "What are dispensations?"

To "dispense" means to "deal out in portions" or to "distribute." Most people believe in "dispensations" without even thinking about it. The Bible is already "distributed" to us in two portions, the OT and the NT. So immediately we know the Bible is "divided" and people have no trouble accepting this basic division. Unfortunately, that is where most people stop in their efforts to rightly divide the word of God.

When Jesus Christ was on the earth, He had only the Old Testament. He clearly "divided" the Old Testament into at least three parts, *"the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms."* (Lk.24:44)

Now, let's backtrack a bit and discuss further the idea that "everybody is saved the same way, from Genesis to Revelation." I believe if you are an honest person and are willing to examine that statement in light of scripture, you'll see that it simply can't be true.

(1) Since faith is the *"evidence of things NOT SEEN,"* how could Adam's salvation be the same as mine? Didn't the disciples SEE God in the flesh? What about you?

(2) Didn't the OT saints have to offer up sacrifices every year? (He.10:1-3). What about you?

(3) Why did Saul lose the Holy Spirit (1Sam.16:14) while I am SEALED with the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:13; 4:30)?

(4) Why is the Holy Spirit promised AFTER baptism in Acts 2:38 and yet received BEFORE baptism in Acts 10:44-48.

(5) Why was John the Baptist sent to baptize (Matt.3) but Paul was sent *"not to baptize"* (1Cor.1:17)?

(6) Why is "faith alone" taught in Rom.4 and "faith and works" in James 2?

The list of questions goes on and on, but the answer is what we're looking for. The answer is simple, **WHEN YOU RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF GOD.** If you don't rightly divide the

word of God, you'll find yourself in constant confusion, or you'll end up correcting the Bible to fit YOUR DOCTRINE!

The FACT is, God deals with different people, in different ways, in different dispensations! Before you write me off, and before you falsely accuse me, let me hasten to say this: IN THIS DISPENSATION, WHICH WE CALL THE AGE OF GRACE, THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BE SAVED! From the time of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, until the Rapture of the church, it is "THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME!" Jew, Gentile, black, white, rich or poor, whatever your "lot in life," everybody is saved by trusting Jesus Christ and Him alone for their salvation, or they remain lost and undone, unprepared to meet God! So what we are saying in a nutshell is this: While there is only one way to get saved in this dispensation, that one way is not the same way to get saved in every dispensation.

Now, to meet the purpose of this book, we are going to list for you some dispensations "in time." In other words, dispensations from the time of creation until the New Heavens and New Earth. We should however at least mention the FACT that there were some things which happened before "time." Have you read about Lucifer's rebellion in Isa.14? When did that rebellion take place? Have you read about the morning stars singing in Job 38? When did that take place? Have you ever considered why Adam and Eve were told to "replenish" the earth? Have you even considered the possibility that the flood of 2 Peter 3 might not be the same as Noah's flood? (Since this book is not intended to go into all this material, let me encourage you to read Clarence Larkin's book, "Dispensational Truth." Don't assume too much without doing some research!) I mention these things only to remind you that we have material in the word of God that addresses "events" before time.

Finally, we will now list for you some "outlines" which come from various sources. While we KNOW God works in dispensations, we can not be EXACT in separating the "dispensations." With that in mind, we will offer three different "outlines" and allow you to work from those to form your own divisions.

OUTLINE NUMBER ONE:

- (1) Edenic Dispensation - From Creation to expulsion from the garden
- (2) Ante-Diluvian - From the Fall of man to Noah's flood
- (3) Post-Diluvian - From the flood to Abraham
- (4) Patriarchal - Abraham - The Exodus out of Egypt
- (5) Legal - The Exodus - Jesus Christ
- (6) Transitional - During the life of Jesus on the earth
- (7) Ecclesiastical - From the Cross until the Rapture
- (8) Tribulation - God deals with Israel; 7 year period
- (9) Messianic - From the Millennium when Jesus Christ comes back to the earth, to the beginning of eternity

OUTLINE NUMBER TWO:

(REMINDER: What you need to keep in mind as you read from any of the following contexts, is that God works differently with people in one context than he does another. When you read a passage that seems to contradict another passage, it may be due to the fact that you are in two different dispensations!)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Gen. 1-3 | |
| (2) Gen. 4 - Ex.19 | Remember, these are |
| (3) Ex.20 - Matt.26 | Dispensations in which God |
| (4) Matt.26 - Acts 2 | deals with different people |
| (5) Acts 2 - Rev.4 | in different ways! |
| (6) Rev.5 - Rev.19 | |

(7) Rev.20 - Rev.22

OUTLINE NUMBER THREE:

(This outline is the most "vague" of the three. It is an oversimplification of dispensations. However, it is given to remind you that when you are reading within the following divisions, you should know there is a difference in the way God is doing things. It definitely needs more divisions.)

- (1) Gen.1-Ex.20
- (2) Ex.21 - Malachi
- (3) Matt. - John
- (4) Acts
- (5) Romans - Philemon
- (6) Hebrews - Rev.20
- (7) Rev.21-22

QUESTIONS

(1) Does Jesus Christ always do things the same way? _____

(2) What "bible" did Jesus Christ have access to?

(3) How did Jesus Christ divide the Old Testament?

_____, _____ and _____

(4) What dispensation do we live in? _____

(5) In this age, is everybody saved the same way? _____

(6) Does the Bible teach dispensations? _____

(7) Who in the OT lost the Holy Spirit? _____

*** Write and memorize Eph.4:30

Rightly Dividing - Chapter Five

Jews, Gentiles, Church

Introduction - There are many different ways to classify people. You could actually say that all people from all parts of the world belong in one big group, with one "heading" to cover them all - SINNERS! (Romans 3:23) Or, you could say every person in the world belongs in one of TWO groups: Saved or Lost! (There was a time when you could even say there are only two classes of people - male or female - but now, who knows?!) As the title of this chapter indicates, there is also a way to accurately classify every person into one of THREE groups: Jews, Gentiles, or Church - 1 Cor.10:32.

Just as we must learn to "rightly divide" by understanding dispensations, we must also learn how to apply a passage according to who it is addressing. For example, in my Bible, at Isa.43, the marginal notes say God is comforting the church. And yet the very first verse says, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee....." God is speaking to Israel, NOT THE CHURCH! One of the mistakes most often made in Bible study is that of trying to apply a passage to the church, when it is actually addressing Israel.

Another good example of how people ignore the context of a passage is in Acts 22. Notice in verse sixteen, SOMEBODY says, "*...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" Plenty of people have read this verse and adopted the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" simply because they failed to find out who was speaking in vs.22! Verse 12 tells us who was speaking, "*...one Ananias, a devout man, ACCORDING*

TO THE LAW, HAVING A GOOD REPORT OF ALL THE JEWS which dwelt there." Is he teaching doctrine for believers in the age of grace? I think not!

The point is simple. You need to consider the context when you are reading the Bible. And you need to consider whether or not the passage is primarily Jewish, Gentile, or Church! With that in mind, we'll take a brief scriptural look at each group hoping that it will help you understand the Bible when it is "divided" according to those groups.

I - The Jews

We can safely say, the most remarkable history of any group, any place, any time is that of the Jews. Frederick the Great asked a court preacher for UNANSWERABLE PROOF, in one word, of the inspiration of the Bible. The answer he received, "Jews"!

Often in discussing the Jews or the nation of Israel, some skeptic or naive saint will quote a passage such as Gal 3:28, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."* Notice, that passage is speaking of those IN CHRIST JESUS! When you come into this world, you come in as a Jew or a Gentile. When you get saved, you become a child of God, or part of the church!

Another verse they like to quote is Romans 2:11, *"For there is no respect of persons with God."* They forget to consider the context and they also forget to consider other passages such as Exodus 2:25 and 2Kings 13:23.

The simple fact of the matter is, the Jews are God's chosen people for a particular purpose. When they rejected Jesus Christ, God temporarily blinded them as a whole (with individual

exceptions), and after he is through building His church, He will once again deal with the nation of Israel! (Romans 9-11)

Why did God choose a nation in exclusion to all others? Why did God even choose a nation to begin with, any nation? Of all nations to choose from, why Israel? Well, if we fully understood all the answers to these and other questions, we'd probably be sitting where He is! I could answer all these questions with one verse, Psalm 115:3, "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" However, we should consider a few other facts.

As you begin reading through Genesis, you find the nations given over to the worship of many gods; God therefore raises up a nation to reaffirm and teach there is but ONE GOD! God would then use that nation and people to give us the Bible (Rom.3:1-2) and to deliver us the Savior!!! (John 4:22)

The origin of the Jewish nation of Israel begins with Abraham (Gen.12:1-3; 13:14-15). The nation is preserved through Jacob and his sons (Gen.28:10-15; 32:24-28). The history of Israel is one of great highs and lows, a history that is unquestionable proof of the hand of God on that nation! There have been many efforts to destroy Israel, with Satan himself no doubt leading the way. From Egyptian efforts (Ex.1:16) to Hitler's holocaust, God has preserved this nation, as we said earlier, with a particular goal in mind.

Do not be deceived by false teachers who would have you believe God has completed His plan for Israel. Be especially careful of listening to those who would have you believe the church has replaced Israel, it simply is not true! Romans 11 alone is proof enough that God is not through with Israel!

When Jesus Christ showed up the first time, the Jews expected Him to conquer Rome and the world and set up a kingdom which would center around Jerusalem, where the Lord himself would sit upon the throne of David! Well, it didn't happen, but it is going to happen! See Luke 1:30-33; Matt.19:28; Zech.14:1-9; among many others.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." 1Cor.1:27-29

II - The Gentiles

Since Abraham was the first Jew, I guess we could say up until that time, all were Gentiles. Then, with the formation of the nation of Israel, we would say that all those who were not Jews, were Gentiles. So, when you are reading through the OT, you are reading primarily about the nation of Israel. The "other nations" and "strangers" make up the Gentile nations.

When Jesus Christ showed up, he said, *"...I will build my church."* As we saw earlier, those *"in Christ"* are neither Jews nor Gentiles. Thus, if an individual Jew were to trust Jesus Christ and be born again today, from God's perspective he would no longer be a citizen of Israel, but a citizen of the *"kingdom of God."* And so it is with the Gentiles. When I got saved, I became a citizen of the *"household of God"!!!* That's why we can sing, "This world is not my home." (Eph.2:11-22)

There are two phrases in the Bible which you should separate in order to understand the meaning:

(1) The "*fullness of the Gentiles*" - (Rom.11:25) - This is a reference to the Church in particular, especially the concept of God bringing Gentiles into the body of Christ. When this is completed, the church age will end.

(2) The "*times of the Gentiles*" - (Luke 21:24) - This has to do with the dominion or rule of Gentiles among the nations. From the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the end of the Tribulation, we see Gentile rule over the world. This will end with the beginning of the Millennium, when a Jewish King will rule from Jerusalem!!!

III - The Church

As we've already seen, since the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is one way to be saved. The gospel is clearly spelled out for us in 1Cor.15:1-4. In this age, a Jew or a Gentile can be saved by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone (Jn.14:6; 1Tim.2:5; Rom.10:9-13; Acts 16:31; John 3:16; 1:12; 1John 5:13; Eph.2:8-9).

Once a person is saved, he/she immediately receives the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:9; Eph.1:13), and this "baptism of the Holy Spirit" places them in the body of Christ, which is THE church (1Cor.12:13). From God's perspective, the saved person is no longer a Jew or Gentile, but a child of God, belonging to the unique body which is called the church.

The church age was not seen by the OT prophets, and is therefore called a mystery by the Apostle Paul. This mystery was revealed to Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. (Study Eph.3)

CONCLUSION: Knowing we have three separate groups, as we've just seen, will help you understand different passages in the Bible. Do not force a passage to the Jews into a church context! With

time, you'll be surprised as to how much this clears up certain passages.

QUESTIONS

(1) Explain why Acts 22:16 would promote "baptismal regeneration." _____

(2) The most remarkable history of any group would be that of _____.

(3) Why did God raise up and call out the Nation of Israel? _____

(4) The origin of the Jews begins with _____.

(5) If a Jew is born again, from God's perspective is he still a Jew? _____

(6) Where is the gospel "spelled out" for us? _____

(7) What places you in the church? _____

*** Write and memorize 1Cor.12:13

Rightly Dividing – Chapter Six

The Two Kingdoms

Introduction - What good is a king, without a kingdom? Or perhaps we could ask, what kind of Kingdom would you have, if there was no king?

Ps. 74:12 says, *"For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth."* 1Tim.6:15 says, *"Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."*

People have overlooked the fact that the last question the disciples asked the Lord before his ascension was, *"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the KINGDOM to Israel?"* When the Lord showed up, they were expecting him to conquer Rome and establish an earthly kingdom, just as foretold in Luke 1:31-33 along with many other passages. However, Israel's rejection of the Messiah has temporarily postponed such a kingdom. (Luke 1:31-33 will come to pass in time!!!)

We will have more to say about this kingdom as we move along. At this point, I want to establish in your mind, the FACT that the Bible is a book about kings and kingdoms. Ultimately, it is a book about THE King and HIS kingdoms! The word "king" or one of its forms (King, Kings, Kingdom, etc.) is found in the word of God 3274 times in 2504 verses! It must be a fairly prominent subject.

You need to understand two primary kingdoms in the word of God in order to rightly divide the Bible. We will look at those two kingdoms individually, while showing they are two separate and distinct kingdoms. These two kingdoms are not the same!

The two kingdoms to learn and study are:

- (1) THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
- (2) THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Col 1:12-13 says, *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

Paul is clearly speaking of something that had already taken place. He had already been placed into a kingdom, whatever that kingdom is, and we'll see that it is the Kingdom of God.

Rev.11:15 says, *"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."*

This passage is clearly future, as the book of Revelation is PROPHECY about what is going to happen. At this present time (1997), not all kings have surrendered their kingdom. Not all kings have bowed down to Jesus Christ, YET! BUT THEY ARE GOING TO!!! (Ph.2:10-11)

There are a lot of different views on the kingdoms of this world. The world's view is that man is getting better and better. We might call this the Darwinian view. The cultic view is that we can bring in the kingdom ourselves or we can bring in the kingdom without

the King! The philosophical view is that we can create a better world and then the people in the world will be better. If that's the case, why did Adam and Eve sin in a perfect environment? No, none of these are the correct view. We shall see the correct view as we look at the Two Kingdoms.

Notice the following passages and play close attention to references concerning the kingdoms.

* Mat 3:1-2 - *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

* Mark 1:15 - *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

* Matt.4:17 - *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Most people read the above passages and assume the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of Heaven" are interchangeable terms. That simply is not the case. If God and Heaven are not the same, then why should the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven be the same?

Did you know the phrase "kingdom of Heaven" is found in the Bible 32 times? And every time is in the New Testament? And every reference is in the gospel of Matthew!!! Since Matthew is a primarily Jewish book, that should really get your attention.

By way of contrast, the phrase "kingdom of God" is in the Bible 69 times, and only five in Matthew! This is no coincidence, as God does everything for a reason!

So let's see what we can discover about the two kingdoms. In order to do so, we must not limit our study to the gospels. We must begin where God begins - **IN THE BEGINNING!**

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What was God's purpose for his creation? Well, if nothing else, it was created to be inhabited - Isa.45:18 and Ps.33:6.

As we mentioned briefly in an earlier chapter, there were "beings" here before Adam and Eve. Job 38:1-7 clearly teaches there were beings (sons of God) here at the time of creation! We know these "*sons of God*" were not human beings because Adam was the first man (1Cor.15:45).

Even a casual study of the word of God reveals that God created Lucifer as an anointed cherub. (Study Ezek.28 and Isa.14.) Along with cherubim and seraphim, there were also angels. We also know some of these angels rebelled with Satan (Jude 6 and 2Pe.2:4).

Since God is love (1Jn.4:16), we assume He wanted someone or something to love. And, as we mentioned, he created beings to inhabit his creation. Also, they were created to bring him pleasure (Rev.4:11).

Most people know that Satan rebelled against God, and drew some of the other created beings with him. Unfortunately, most students of the Bible accept that truth without going any further. They think of Satan as a "fallen angel" when in actuality, he is a "demoted cherub" and the fallen angels are those who followed him. Some of these beings are referred to in Scripture as "*gods*" in such passages as Psalm 82 and Jer.10:10-11. When you come to Gen.6, the "*sons of God*" are wicked creatures who commit sexual sins with the daughters of men. Notice the comparison of this sin in Jude 6-7.

Now, what does all this have to do with the two kingdoms? Well, we know a good leader has to learn how to delegate authority. Since everything has its source in the Bible, is it not logical to assume that God would delegate authority? Did he not delegate authority to Adam and place him in charge of the earth (Gen.1:26)?

Well, was Satan not here before Adam? What about the angels? What was their job?

A study of Satan reveals he was evidently placed in a position of leadership over the other created beings. He is called the "*king of Babylon*" in Isa.14:4. Even now he is "*a king over all the children of pride.*" (Job 41:34). In Ezek.28:12 he is called the "*king of Tyrus.*"

Now, if you are still with me, we can learn about the TWO KINGDOMS. When God created Satan and the other spiritual beings, they were placed over God's kingdoms. But after Satan's rebellion, he loses his position. God then created Adam and placed him over the kingdoms.

Adam was over the earthly kingdom, which is called the Kingdom of Heaven. Why the kingdom of Heaven? Well, first of all, you have to get past the idea of Heaven being only the place where God resides. Remember, there are three Heavens. But putting that aside, we need to remember what Jesus told the disciples to pray for, "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*" You see, what all of us really would like to have is "HEAVEN ON EARTH"!!! That is the kingdom of Heaven. It is exactly what Adam had before he sinned, heaven on earth.

But we also have the "Kingdom of God." While the Kingdom of Heaven is primarily PHYSICAL, the kingdom of God is primarily spiritual. As spiritual beings, Satan and his crew were over this kingdom until they rebelled. Then Adam had the opportunity to rule over this kingdom (see Heb.2:6-8). Satan must have been jealous over Adam, since Adam took Satan's old job. So what does a jealous person do? He goes after Adam's wife! Adam eventually sins, and when he sinned, HE DIED SPIRITUALLY. Therefore, as a fallen creature, with a DEAD SPIRIT, (Eph.2:1; Col.2:13), Adam lost his place in the kingdoms as well.

Now, it would be good if you understood at this point something about Old Testament Saints. We will not go into details in this chapter, but from Adam until Jesus Christ shows up on the earth, not one person is BORN AGAIN. Every person from Adam until Christ was born in sin, and while they could have their sins forgiven, they were not born again (Ex.34:6-7; He.10:1-4). That's why OT saints went to Abraham's bosom when they died, which is somewhere in the heart of the earth (Luke 16:22). When Jesus died, he went down to the heart of the earth and applied His blood atonement on the OT saints and led them to heaven. (Study carefully Matt.12:40; 1Pe.3:19 and 4:6; and Eph.4:8-10.) Now, before you write me off as a lunatic, have you looked up the passages? Have you?

O.K. With Satan and man falling, God is left with a choice to make. Who will he place in charge of the spiritual kingdom? It seems, with no spiritual leader available, God puts the kingdom of God "on hold" until he sends his Son to the earth to "revive" the spiritual kingdom.

What about the Kingdom of Heaven? Well, since man is now a fallen creature, God allows a fallen creature to "rule" the world, at least temporarily. Yes, he gives part of Satan's job back to him. Satan becomes the "ruler" of the world's kingdoms. (Now you know why the world is in the mess it is in!) For scriptural proof, see Luke 4:5-6 and consider also Jer.27:5-10, remembering that God sometimes refers to Satan as the King of Babylon (Isa.14:4-12). Eph.6:12 says, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* 2Cor.4:4 calls Satan the *"god of this world."* You see, man chose to serve Satan in the garden, so God gave man what he wanted.....for now. God certainly has other plans, and

we'll see His plan as we take another step in this study of the two kingdoms.

Remember, The Kingdom of God is the spiritual kingdom (Luke 17:20-21 and Rom.14:17). The Kingdom of Heaven is a physical kingdom (Matt.8:11-12) with the capital on the earth, in Jerusalem.

It appears as if God gave man every opportunity to regain the kingdom, but man kept messing up. Adam was given dominion, but sinned. Noah was given dominion, but sinned (Gen.9:1-2, 20-24). Abraham was given dominion, but sinned (Gen.12-16). And so it was with Isaac, Jacob, Judah, etc... Finally, it appears God allowed Satan to have the job "by proxy." As each man failed, God chose to propagate the kingdom of heaven through a nation, namely the nation of Israel. And so, just as Satan hated Adam (as well as us), he now hates the nation of Israel (Rev.12:1-8).

Now we are back to our first scriptural references in this chapter. Jesus Christ shows up preaching both kingdoms. The Jews were looking for a Physical King to conquer Rome and set up a Physical Kingdom. However, the Lord had to first restore the spiritual kingdom and in particular, make a way for man to fellowship with God once again. I mean, a King does not want a kingdom filled with rebellious, wicked servants! So, the first job is to restore the spiritual kingdom. You will see this in Hebrews 7:1-4, where Jesus Christ, as Melchisedec (who is at the least a type of Jesus Christ, but most likely a pre-incarnate, Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ), is *"FIRST being by interpretation King of righteousness, and AFTER THAT also King of Salem, which is King of peace."* You see, the first goal is to restore man spiritually, or as it is here, righteously. Then, he'll come back as King, to restore things politically or physically!

God's original plan was to populate His kingdoms with perfect created beings. When Satan and man chose to rebel, God sent man on a detour to get us back to where we began! While Satan is busy

trying to destroy the kingdom of Heaven, in particular the Jews, God is busy building the spiritual kingdom. When God is ready, and just before the devil completely destroys Israel, the Lord will return to become KING over both kingdoms. We will be back where we should have been all along.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev.11:15

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Ph.2:10-11

QUESTIONS

(1) Why was an earthly kingdom with Jesus Christ postponed? _____

(2) Name the Two Kingdoms.
_____ and _____

(3) The phrase "kingdom of Heaven" is found in only one gospel; which one? _____

(4) Is Satan a fallen angel? _____

(5) After Satan's fall, who was placed over the kingdoms?

(6) What is the earthly kingdom called?

(7) What is the spiritual kingdom called?

Write and memorize Rev.11:15

Rightly Dividing - Chapter Seven

"Some Helpful Outlines"

I remember well when I was first told there were different baptisms in the Bible, different mysteries, judgments, etc... I remember the initial confusion, due primarily to the fact that what I was reading and hearing did not fit into my way of thinking! Now, some 15 years later, that same information seems so obvious, and makes the Bible so much easier to understand. In this last chapter, I want to offer some of that information in outline form which I believe will help you in your understanding of the word of God.

***** SEVEN MYSTERIES *****

If you will read 1Cor.4:1-2, you'll find we are to be faithful stewards, not just of money, but of the MYSTERIES OF GOD! A mystery is something you can know, you just can't explain it! It is the "unexplainable."

There are at least seven mysteries you ought to know about:

(1) The Restoration of Israel - Romans 11:25-27

You must remember, God deals with individuals, families, races, and nations. Often in reading the Bible, God will be addressing the nation of Israel and the reader will make the mistake of applying it to a Christian or the church. This can lead to false doctrine and confusion.

(2) The Woman and the Beast - Revelation, chpt.17

Notice especially Rev.17:3-7,18

Revelation 17 is what we would call Spiritual Babylon, normally connected to Rome, while Revelation 18 is literal Babylon. Don't forget who was in power at the Lord's first coming!

(3) Mystery of Iniquity - 2Thess.2:1-10

Some good verses to study together would be John 17:12; Acts 1:25 and Rev.17:8. In the Bible, there is much more material on the AntiChrist than most people realize. Study also, 1Jn.2:18; 2:22; 4:3; and 2Jn.vs7.

(4) The Mystery of "Christ in you." - Col.1:25-27

Study also 1Cor.3:16-17 and 6:19-20

It is mind-boggling to consider the FACT that a genuine born-again child of God has the Lord Jesus Christ living within! Praise the Lord.

(5) The Mystery of Christ and the church - Eph.5:30-32

Study also Rev.19:7-8 and 2Cor.5:1-3

One of the reasons this is called a mystery is because it was not revealed to the OT prophets. It was revealed to Paul, and even still is "unexplainable."

(6) The Mystery of the "Rapture" - 1Cor.15:50-52

The graves will one day be emptied! Our bodies will be resurrected as immortal, incorruptible bodies!

(7) The Mystery of Godliness - 1Tim.3:16

Let me remind you again, a mystery is something you can know, you just can't explain it! For example, the mystery of godliness is the FACT that God became flesh and dwelt among us! Who can explain it? Not me! Who can believe it! I'm one!

SEVEN BAPTISMS

As you read Eph.4:4-6, it is abundantly clear that there is ONE BAPTISM. But it also says there is only one God, and yet we know there are many "gods" according to 8:5. Of course, there are no contradictions in the Bible and the solution is obvious. There may be many gods, but only one true God.

When it comes to the subject of "baptism," we have a similar situation. There are at least seven different kinds of baptism in the Bible, but there is only one true baptism in terms of eternal significance.

(1) 1Cor.10:1-2 - Here we have an Old Testament baptism according to the word of God. Have you ever heard a sermon on "Moses' Baptism"? The FACT that there was a scriptural baptism BEFORE the Lord built His church would certainly blow some folks "out of the water"!

(2) Matthew 3:7,11, 13-16

This is John the Baptist baptizing Jews into the nation of Israel (Jn.1:29-31), preparing them for the coming king and kingdom. You will notice in Acts 19:1-5, Paul rebaptized John's disciples. A serious student will also discover that Jesus Christ also rebaptized Andrew, even though John had obviously already baptized him! (Jn.1:35-41; 3:22-24; and 4:1-2).

(3) Acts 2:38 - This is Peter dealing with the Jews. You will notice this baptism is not in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as was commanded in Matt.28. That is because this is not the same baptism. Peter is preparing a nation for the rapture, which the disciples thought was going to take place in their lifetime. (Have you looked at Acts 2:21 with Joel 2:32 and realized the term

"saved" is not always referring to being born again? Just like the word "baptism" does not always refer to water!)

*** You should keep in mind, John the Baptist baptized Jews preparing for a kingdom which did not take place, because the Jewish elders rejected the Lord. Peter baptized the Jews preparing for a rapture, which did not take place, possibly because the Jews rejected the message of Stephen in Acts 7 (Where the Lord is "standing" at the right hand of the Father, as if he's getting ready to come. Now he is seated.) So the rapture and the Kingdom are yet to come, but it will happen!

(4) Acts 10:34-35, 44-48 - Peter dealing with Gentiles.

This is AFTER Peter's vision where God reveals some things to him (Acts 10:10-43), and he gets a better understanding of the Jews being saved by grace which is obvious by Acts 15:7-11.

(5) Matt.3:11-12 - You have the baptism of FIRE or damnation which you don't want! Remember, Rev.20:14-15 talks about a LAKE of fire.

(6) Matt.20:20-22 - This is the baptism of DEATH, and is connected to Romans 6:1-6 and has nothing to do with water!

(7) 1Cor.12:13 We've found THE ONE BAPTISM! It is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and if you have been born again, you have the Holy Spirit! It is not a "second blessing" nor do you have to pray to get it. When you get saved, you get the Lord Jesus Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. See Rom.8:9; Eph.1:13; and 1Cor.6:19-20

I should add this final comment. Water baptism today is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is to be by immersion, which means to go all the way under water. As an old preacher once said, they don't bury a man by leaning him up against a tree and sprinkling a little dirt on his head!

*** Different Judgments***

(1) Of sin at Calvary - 2Cor.5:21; read the gospels

The wages of sin is death (Rom.6:23); and when the Lord Jesus Christ took on my sin, and your sin, the judgment was death! If you are "*in Christ*," then Jesus Christ has taken your "*curse*" for you (3:13). If you are unsaved, you will have to face the curse alone (Matt.25:41)

(2) Of sinners - Great White Throne Judgment - See Rev.20:11-15. Whether we like it or not, or understand it or not, the unsaved will be judged. It is not to determine if they are lost or not, but to determine the degree of suffering. (Matt.23:14 talks about the "*greater damnation*" suggesting different degrees of punishment. (Study also Deut.32:22; Lk.10:12; and Jn.19:11)

(3) Of sons - God's children are judged as we live this life serving him. God disciplines or chastises his children just as a father is taught in the word of God to discipline his children. See 1Cor.11:32 and Hebrews 12:6-11

(4) Of Saints - All the saved will one day be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This judgment is NOT to determine if you get eternal life; you are given eternal life when you get saved. This judgment is to determine your eternal rewards! Study 1Cor.3:11-15 and 2Cor.5:10-11.

*** People forget that there is more to eternity than "heaven." There is a new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem (Rev.21:1-2). God's kingdom will spread throughout eternity (Isa.9:7), and what we do in this life will affect what we do then!

(5) Of Self or Self-judgment - We are to judge our own sin and deal with it so that God will not have to! See 1Cor.11:31 and 1Cor.2:15.

(6) Of Angels - This is a future judgment for angels that rebelled against God. 1Cor.6:3; Jude 6

(7) Of Israel - Rev.4-18; He.10:30-31; - This refers primarily to the Great Tribulation when God pours out His wrath on the Jews. It is called the time of "*Jacob's trouble*" and you can praise the Lord, if you are saved, you will not be on the earth during this time!

(8) Of the Nations - Matt.25:31-46. This passage gets used a lot to teach various things, and spiritual lessons from the passage are plenty. However, we should remember the passage is God dealing with NATIONS!

If you forget everything else about the judgments, you should keep in mind when studying the Bible, the Judgment Seat of Christ is for the saved to determine our rewards, and the Great White Throne Judgment is primarily for the unsaved as well as Tribulation saints.

