

KNOWING THE MEANING OF THE BIBLE

*The Bible is the world's most important book. It is absolute truth.

A. As we have listened to other ministries, there are a lot of ideas/opinions with various teachings.

One says that salvation is by keeping the Law and eating certain foods; while another says it is religious rituals and what their denomination says. Another says it is water baptism, then keeping the sacraments. With another, it is faith plus evidence of miraculous gifts. Then the correct truth is that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ's finished work (D.B.R.).

*All of these groups claim that their belief comes from the Bible...and that is true! They all have verses to support their beliefs.

B. What is the answer to all of this confusion? There is one verse that gives us the solution:

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

*Romans 16:25 - 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,

2. Rightly dividing, dispensational Bible study, is about drawing a timeline showing how God deals with man in different periods of history. It is recognizing the differences in how God dealt with pre-Israel, Israel's prophetic program and their being put on hold, the mystery program of grace today, and then God's restoring of Israel's prophetic program as He promised!

3. Paul lays out God's programs:

a. Time Past - Ephesians 2:11-12 - Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

*(Past)

b. But Now - Ephesians 2:13 - But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

*(Present)

c. Ages To Come - Ephesians 2:7 - That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

*(Future)

4. The [ages to come] will be the fulfilling of Time Past's promises made to Israel. These fulfillments wait for the fullness of the Gentiles.

Romans 11:25-27 - 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. Rom. 11:26 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: Rom. 11:27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

*Remember "Time Past's" promises to Israel:

- a. The **land** and throne were promised to Abraham's and David's descendents.

Genesis 15:18 - In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

II Samuel 7:16 - And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Isaiah 9:6-7 - For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Matthew 1:1 - The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

- b. Israel's nation and kingdom are to be heaven on **earth**.

Deuteronomy 11:21 - That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

- c. Israel is to become a kingdom of **priests**.

Exodus 19:5-6 - Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: Exo. 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Revelation 20:6 - Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

- d. Israel's Messiah Jesus **Christ** will sit on the throne as Israel's King.

Zephaniah 3:15 - The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.

- e. Through Israel, their kingdom is to bless **all** nations.

Genesis 12:3 - And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Zechariah 8:22-23 - Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Zech. 8:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

*"Time Past" promises to Israel are her **future** hope.

C. A dispensation is a particular set of instructions that God has **progressively** given along His timeline for man to obey and believe.

1. Time Past (Ephesians 2:11-12)

- a. God divided people from Genesis 12 to Acts 7. He did this by faith and circumcision to Israel, because she was **chosen** by God to be in **covenant** with Him.
- b. The uncircumcision (Gentiles) were lost, not being in covenant with God. They had no hope unless they converted to Israel's God. Only through Israel could a Gentile be saved, and history records there were only a few! It is somewhat like the Jews today!

God's basis of dealing with man was this circumcision **distinction (and heart) of Jew and Gentile.

2. But Now (Ephesians 2:13)

Romans 11:11,13 - 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. Rom. 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

*Today God has **removed** the previous distinctions of Jew and Gentile. That has been done away with and now we are on **equal** footing.

Ephesians 2:13-16 - But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Eph. 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Eph. 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; Eph. 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Galatians 3:26-28 - For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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.

3. Ages To Come (Ephesians 2:7)

God will fulfill His purpose for **both** Israel and the Body of Christ. We, the Body, will be in **heaven**; and Israel, having gone through the Tribulation, will enter the kingdom on **earth** to be the lead/favored nation in the world....**again!**

D. What is the importance of these distinctive dispensations?

1. Seeing these differences, or not seeing them, **determines** what we believe and that determines the application we will use for our lives.
2. Some conservative believers (they take the Word literally) understand we are in the dispensation of grace, calling it the Church age. However, most **fail** to see Paul's distinctive message and apostleship.
3. *Failing to see and accept Christ-given Pauline truth of the gospel of grace, they often read Body truth **back** into the four Gospels and early Acts.
 - a. Example: When the Four Gospels talk about salvation or the kingdom of heaven, they read Paul's grace gospel into salvation by grace and the Body's hope of heaven into the kingdom of heaven!
 - b. **In doing this, they constantly take us back to Christ's earthly ministry to the Jews and their prophetic program under **Law** as today's conduct to obey.
4. Our question? How could the Four Gospels and early Acts be speaking to today's [But Now] Body of Christ if the Body did not come into existence until Acts 9 with **Paul**?

1 Timothy 1:15-16 - This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1Tim. 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Matthew 10:5-7, 15:24 - These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: Matt. 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matt. 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

5. So many conservative believers who say they read the Word literally take one of four views:
 - a. They bring Christ's earthly teachings (Law-Israel-Kingdom-Prophecies) over **into** Paul's mystery revelation of the Dispensation of Grace.
 - b. Or, they take Paul's gospel of grace - gospel according to revelation - **back** into Israel's Jewish prophetic, law, kingdom hope program.
 - c. Or, they completely do **away** with Israel by saying the Church today has replaced Israel; and all of Israel's promises in the O.T., Four Gospels, and Romans-Jude are ours today. (Much of Christendom holds to this view.)
 - d. The correct interpretation is literal, dispensational, and rightly dividing.

Colossians 1:25-27 - Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Col. 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

*This method **leaves** the kingdom gospel with the Jewish nation and embraces Paul's mystery gospel of grace to us, the Body Church, for today.

6. Example 1: Israel

Matthew 19:16-17 - And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? Matt. 19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Example 2: Body Today

Romans 4:5, 24-25 - But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Rom. 4:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Rom. 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

E. Remember the eight ways in which Scripture is wrongly interpreted:

1. They mostly spiritualize when interpreting, in order to give application to help others in their lives.

*They say the primary or real meaning of Scripture is a **hidden** meaning beyond what the words say.

Why is this wrong? _____

2. They are liberal and say the Bible contains the Word of God. Some of it is **not** God's Word, and they interpret according to culture's morals.

Why is this wrong? _____

3. They embrace the neo-orthodox method which says that only the verse or portion that **speaks** to you is the Word.

Why is this wrong?

4. Then there is the group that interprets by their own reasoning. Their minds cannot or do not want to handle the **super**natural. They try to explain away what they cannot understand (virgin birth, miraculous, resurrection, etc.).

Why is this wrong?

5. There are those who view the Word through tradition. This is determined by one's background, church's beliefs, and years of pass-me-**down** beliefs from family. They put man's and the church's traditions equal to, or even superior over, Scripture.

Why is this wrong?

6. Then there are those who interpret the Word by their experience. Their feelings and emotions are often above the Word. Their healing, tongues, slain in the spirit - even if contrary to Scripture - because it **felt** good, must be right!

Why is this wrong?

7. Then there are others who interpret with their already-made-up minds. They have **pre**conceived ideas. So when they go to the Word, they try to find a verse that suggests the belief they **al**ready have.

Why is this wrong?

8. Finally, there are those who are ignorant of spiritual truth. They interpret by what they think it says or agrees with their opinion. This is just the pooling of **ign**orance.

Why is this wrong?

F. This is why it is important to interpret the Bible **dis**pensationally, **lit**erally, and by rightly dividing.

This helps so much to take away most of the confusion the church, as a whole, has created.

*To know what God is truly saying, we must know the **dis**tinctions between God's plan for Israel and His plan for the Body of Christ - us.

Prophecy Program

1. Salvation - He is **Messiah**
2. Lifestyle - Kingdom - Law
3. Mature in - Prophecy, **Covenant**
4. His Next Coming | At **end** of Tribulation To Earth
5. Israel's Destiny - On Earth
6. Israel's Truth Known | Was **known** since the world began

Mystery Program

1. Salvation - Gospel (D.B.R.) of **Grace**
2. Lifestyle - Grace and Love
3. Mature in - **New** Mystery Truths
4. His Next Coming | **Before** the Tribulation We meet Him in the air
5. Body's Destiny - In Heaven
6. Body's Truth Known | Was kept **secret** since the world began
*Known to Paul **first!**

Prophecy Program

7. Israel's Apostles -
It had **12** main apostles
8. Israel's Main Scriptures -
*Genesis 12 - Acts 7

Mystery Program

7. Body's Apostle -
It had **one** main apostle
8. Body's Main Scriptures -
*Paul's books

*So God wants us to learn, to understand, to **mat**ure, and to share Pauline mystery truth:

Colossians 1:9-10, 25-26 - For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; Col. 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Col. 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Col. 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

II Timothy 1:13 - Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

II Timothy 2:2, 7-8 - 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. 2Tim. 2:7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. 2Tim. 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

If not: II Timothy 1:15 - This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.