

How To Study Your Bible (part 2—Right Divisions)

2 Tim. 2:15—“...rightly *dividing* the word of truth.”

The key to understanding the Bible is to know the principles of right division. Without an understanding of “right divisions” apparent contradictions will occur.

Besides the obvious division between the Old and New Testament, there are three other important divisions we must recognize.

- I. **MAIN DIVISION** (Gen. 1:1—The division between “*the heaven and the earth*”). God has a plan for the earth and He has another plan (though not entirely unrelated) for heaven.
 - A. God’s purpose concerning THE EARTH is the subject matter of prophecy “*spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*” (Luke 1:68-70; Acts 3:19-21).
 - B. God’s purpose concerning HEAVEN is the subject matter of “*the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began*” (Rom. 16:25-26).
 - C. Prophecy has been going on “*since the world began.*” However, “*the revelation of the mystery*” has been “*KEPT SECRET since the world began.*” This “*mystery*” is the body of truth given by revelation first to the Apostle Paul (Eph. 3:3-11).
 - D. The entire Bible is basically divided under these two main headings: **Prophecy** and “*the mystery.*”
 - Ultimately, we will see God’s purpose for the earth fulfilled in the reign of Christ in the Kingdom. Heaven concerns the exaltation of the church with Christ (Eph. 2:4-7).
- II. **ETHNIC divisions.** All the Bible is *for* us (Rom. 15:4), but not all the Bible is addressed *to*

- Three ETHNIC DIVISIONS (1 Cor. 10:32): The Jew, The Gentile, and the Church. In the progressive revelation of God's Word we see God only deals with one group at a time:
- From Genesis 1:1 to 11:9 there is only one people speaking one language.
 - From Genesis 11:10 through Acts 7 God deals primarily with the Jews. [Only in Daniel, Jonah, and Nahum does God deal with the Gentile nations.]
 - God turns from the Jews to the Gentiles to call out of them His church from Acts 8 through Philemon. In Acts 9 God raises up Paul, to be the apostle of the Gentiles (Rom 11:13).
 - From Hebrews through Revelation we see God resuming His dealings with the Jews in the end times. [James is written to the twelve tribes; 1 & 2 Peter is written by the apostle of the circumcision (Gal. 2:8).]
- A. **THE JEW** traces his ancestry to Abraham through Shem.
1. The covenants / promises are given to the Jews.
 2. The Law was given to the Jews (Ps. 147:19-20).
 3. The oracles of God (Scriptures) came through the Jews (Rom. 3:1-2).
 4. Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22).
 5. God gave "signs" to Israel. The nation of Israel began with "signs" (Ex. 4:1-9). The signs were given to Moses to verify he was sent of God (Ex. 4:29-31). Jesus had signs as well as the twelve (Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4). Therefore, the "signs" are for Jews, not the Gentiles or Church (1 Cor. 1:22).
- B. **THE GENTILES** descended primarily from Japheth and Ham.
1. Prophecy generally concerns the Jews. Any prophetic dealings with Gentiles is in association with Israel.
 2. The spiritual condition of the Gentiles is found in Ephesians 2:11-13; 4:17-18; Romans 1.
 3. God permitted the Gentiles to "*walk in their own ways*" prior to the Gospel being sent to them (Acts 14:15-17; 17:30).

4. *“The times of the Gentiles”* (Luke 21:24) began with the captivity of Judah to Babylon (2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:15-21) and will continue until the second advent of Christ.
 5. *“The fullness of the Gentiles”* (Rom. 11:25) is concerns God taking out of the Gentiles a *“people for his name”* (Acts 15:14).
 - a) God began visiting the Gentiles in Acts 10 with the conversion of Cornelius and his household.
 - b) God commissioned Paul to be the minister to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16). Paul went first to the Jew (Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14), then to both the Jew and Gentile (Acts 14:1 cf. Rom. 1:16), finally to Gentiles (Acts 13:46-49; 18:4-6; 23:11; 26:17; 28:28-31).
- C. **THE CHURCH** is the result of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the regeneration of the Holy Ghost. **The church is *“one new man”*** (Eph. 2:15) formed out of Jews and Gentiles when they are born again and baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). When a Jew or a Gentile becomes part of the church, he ceases to be a Jew or Gentile (Eph. 2:15-22; Gal. 3:26-28).
1. The Church was a mystery, unknown in the Old Testament.
 2. The Jews are a nation, not a body.
 3. The Church began on the Day of Pentecost and will be completed at the Rapture.

III. DISPENSATIONAL divisions (Eph. 1:10; 3:2-9). *“household order”* (Dispenser). God doesn’t change (Mal. 3:6), but He may change His methods (Mark 10:51-52 cf. John 9:6-7).