

## God's Spokesmen

The careful Bible student observes that God gives His message to a spokesman (**Hebrew 1:1**). The spokesman, in turn, gives God's message to the world. God requires the world to listen to the spokesman He has chosen for each time period. A spokesman during one period does not necessarily carry God's message for any other time period. Thus, following the wrong spokesman is as dangerous as ignoring the right one.

"If Moses is the central figure amid the witnesses for God in the Old Testament, Paul is the central figure amid the witnesses for Christ in the New Testament. ...Moses enfranchised a nation. Paul liberates a soul. Moses stamps the name of Jew on the world, Paul stamps the name of Christian on the world. Moses reveals God as Lawgiver, Paul reveals God as Grace-giver. Moses points to the kingdom, Paul points to the church. ...Peter may represent the Christian in the flesh, James the Christian under the Law, John the Christian walking in love, but Paul represents the Christian as risen and seated at the Right Hand of God."

—I.M. Haldeman, *How to Study the Bible*

But contrariwise, when they saw that **the gospel of the uncircumcision** (Gentiles) was committed unto me (Paul), as **the gospel of the circumcision** (Jews) was unto Peter (**Galatians 2:7**).

## Peter or Paul

Peter and Paul did *not* initially preach the same message or minister to the same group of people. Peter's ministry phased out of focus once Paul came on the scene. Peter initially preached the **Gospel of the Kingdom** to the nation of Israel, but they were cut off. Israel will not come back into prominence until the return of the Lord that takes place after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (**Lk. 21:24**). Although the Bible does refer to more than one gospel, the following point cannot be minimized. No one, from Adam throughout the Millennium, gets to heaven apart from the shed blood of Christ. Even those that died prior to the cross awaited the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Lk. 16:26, 23:43**). Although it is incorrect to teach that they "all looked forward to the cross," they still did not go to heaven without the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ being shed for them either.

## Paul Overemphasized?

Is it really that important to recognize that Paul's name is the first word in Romans through Philemon? Surely those before the flood thought that Noah took a lot upon himself too. The Bible tells us about Korah and two hundred fifty "princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown" who gathered themselves against Moses and Aaron. They said, "Ye take too much upon you...wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" The 250 were the religious leaders of the day—sons of Levi (**Numbers 16:1-3**). They were wrong to doubt God's spokesman and God proved it to them (**Numbers 16:35**). The scriptures also reveal Paul's willingness to be used by God to fulfill His word.

*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 (**Colossians 1:25**).*

*"The Apostle Paul was principally, though not exclusively, the agent of the revelation of the grace of God for this dispensation. Christ himself brought the grace of God to mankind in His incarnation (**Titus 2:11**), but Paul was the one who expounded it. To be sure, the dispensationalist does not say that there was no grace ever displayed before the coming of Christ (any more than he says there is no law after His coming), but the Scriptures do say that His coming displayed the grace of God in such brightness that all previous displays could be considered as nothing."*

Since Paul laid the foundation (**I Corinthians 3:10**), he is the spiritual father of us all. As a proud father he will be given the opportunity to present us (the church) as a bride to Christ. It is important to listen to and learn (**Philippians 4:9**) from our earthly father, our heavenly Father, and also our "spiritual father."

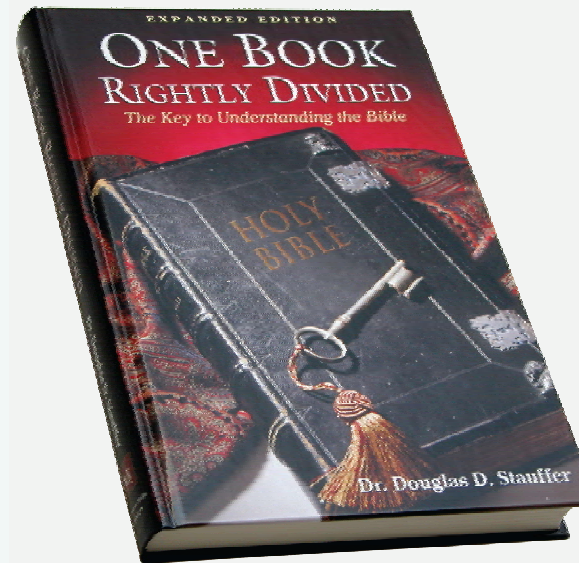
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# Bible Study God's Way

## The Key To Understanding Your Bible



*"Any person is a dispensationalist who trusts the blood of Christ rather than bringing an animal sacrifice, and any person is a dispensationalist who observes the first day of the week rather than the seventh."*

—Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Dispensationalism*

*For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me (**I Corinthians 9:17**).*

*"Because the Bible is a supernatural book, it addresses individual passages to any one of three distinct groups—Jews, Gentiles, or Christians (**1 Cor. 10:32**). Applying the hermeneutical discipline of "right division" is the only way to ensure that a message intended for one group is not accidentally intercepted and incorrectly applied by another."*

—Dr. William Grady, Foreword 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

## Rightly Dividing

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

The most basic Bible study tool is to divide the books of the Bible into groupings based upon the group of people to whom God is primarily speaking. Consider this: does every passage of scripture equally apply to each of the following:

- *The Jews under the Law?*
- *The Christians living today?*
- *The Tribulation saint?*
- *The person living in the Millennium?*

NO! Therefore, as you read a passage, ask yourself this question: "to whom does this book directly address?" For example, the Bible deals differently with the Old Testament saint living under the Law, the Spirit-filled Christian's attempt to live the will of God in the Church Age, and the Tribulation saint's avoiding the Mark of the Beast. There is no disputing the fact that the Bible contains scriptures which fundamentally apply to groups of people in other time periods, but which do not directly apply to the child of God today.

*"In the study of Scripture, it is most important to understand that scriptural revelation falls into well defined periods. These are clearly separated, and the recognition of these divisions and their divine purposes constitute one of the most important factors in true interpretation of the Scriptures. These divisions are termed "dispensations," and in successive periods of time different dispensations may be observed . . . It is probable that the recognition of the dispensations sheds more light on the whole message of the Bible than any other aspect of Biblical study."*

---Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*

To "rightly divide" your Bible is simply to divide it into sections based upon the **primary** group of people God addresses in each section. You must remember that the entire Bible is **for** you, but not all of it is written **to** you.

*"Dispensationalism avoids confusion and contradiction and at the same time unites all the parts into the whole...The basic scheme involving the different dispensations remains the most helpful tool of consistent, noncontradictory interpretation of Scripture."*

—Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*

*“The doctrines of grace are to be sought in the Epistles (of Paul), not in the Gospels; but those doctrines rest back upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and upon the great germ-truths to which He gave utterance, and of which the Epistles are the unfolding.”*

—Scofield Reference Bible, p. 989

## Paul Taught By God

How did Paul learn about the gospel if no one taught him? God revealed the gospel directly to him.

*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is **not after man**. For **I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).***

Paul could not receive something *from man* that God had hidden from all men (**Luke 18:34**). Neither Peter nor the other apostles completely understood the death, burial, and resurrection (that is, the gospel) until after they had been following Christ for over three years. Nor did they readily accept God’s changing plans concerning the Gentiles. Peter even rebuked the Lord when the death, burial, and resurrection was mentioned (**Mark 8:31-32**). After the resurrection, Peter ran to the sepulcher to see what had taken place (**Luke 24:12**). These events occur toward the end of his recorded ministry (**in Acts chapter 10**). Peter learned that God was beginning to minister directly to the Gentiles. Initially, he defiantly refused to obey the Lord on three different occasions when the sheet with the “unclean” animals was let down (**Acts 10:8-10**). God used this sign to signify to Peter His change of direction concerning the Gentiles.

*“Jesus Himself did not give revelations concerning the course of this age with its rejection of the gospel, its wars, wickedness, and the worldliness of professing Christians, until after He ceased to preach that the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. To Paul the apostle was first given an understanding of some of the mysteries concerning the church in this age. Ephesians 3:1-10 tells us how Paul was given this grace to understand and teach how that Gentiles would be in the same body with Jews, the church. And Ephesians 3:5 expressly says that this mystery was not made known in other ages.”*

—John R. Rice, *The Coming Kingdom of Christ*

## Paul Ministers to the Gentiles

*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that **by revelation he made known unto me the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, **when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:1-4).***

Our apostle, the Apostle Paul, tells us to read so that we may understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ. This complete revelation of the mystery was not given to anyone else prior to Paul’s writings. All truth must be revealed to someone initially. God chose Paul to be the recipient of this revelation. Paul, in turn, recorded the revelation so that we might gain the understanding of it when the Holy Spirit uses the scriptures to reveal this truth to us. The Bible says that God appointed Paul to be the apostle of the Gentiles. In addition to being appointed, the scriptures state that the Apostle Paul was ordained to his position.

*Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the **Gentiles in faith and verity (I Tim. 2:7).***

*“...the truth concerning the Church was never made known until the beginning of Paul’s Apostleship (Eph. 3). We must not, therefore, except in types and symbols, expect to find it in Matthew.”*

—William L. Pettingill, *Simple Studies in Matthew*

Prior to Paul’s conversion (**Acts chapter 9**), the complete mystery was not revealed to anyone. Paul says it is *now* revealed. Here is the mystery:

*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God **given unto me** by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should **preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 3:6-9**).*

Paul’s calling involved making all men see the mystery that was hidden in God from the beginning of the world. A person cannot search the Old Testament scriptures and understand this truth without the knowledge of the revelation of the New Testament.

*“The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold, but not explained by Christ (Mt. 16:18), was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.”*

—Scofield Reference Bible, p. 544

*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the **hidden wisdom**, which God ordained before the world unto our glory (**1 Corinthians 2:7**).*

Had Satan understood the cross prior to its fulfillment, he would not have entered into Judas Iscariot and instigated the betrayal of Christ. Satan as the prince of the power of the air (**Ephesians 2:2**), did not understand the mystery prior to the cross.

*Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (**1 Corinthians 2:8**).*

## Paul Sets our Foundation

*That I should be **the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles**, ministering the gospel of God, that the **offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost (Romans 15:16).***

Paul’s writings minister Jesus Christ to us (the Church). He reveals the truth, thus enabling the Gentiles to be an acceptable offering to God when presented to Him. Furthermore, as the apostle to the Gentiles, he is the God-called vessel to lay the foundation (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**), which is that:

- Christ died for our sins
- He was buried
- He arose again

To claim any other foundation means rejection of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. **God accepts no other foundation!** Paul establishes this foundation, expounding upon it beginning in Romans and continuing through each of his 13 Church Age epistles.

*According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, **I have laid the foundation**, and another buildeth thereon. (**1 Corinthians 3:10**).*

Our responsibility is to take heed how we build upon the foundation already settled and established in Paul’s epistles. Everything we learn, believe, and teach must be based upon these revealed truths.

*“The Church, doctrinally, was alone fully revealed to Paul...The Church is a mystery hidden from the beginning of the world in God, and known only to God.”*

—I.M. Haldeman, *How to Study the Bible*

## Paul—Apostle for the Church Age

***Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.** Now I praise you, brethren, that ye **remember me in all things**, and keep the **ordinances**, as I delivered them to you (**1 Corinthians 11:1, 2**).*

God instructs us to remember Paul in every area of our lives (“**all things**”). Paul only mentions two ordinances:

- Baptism (**1 Corinthians 1:14-17**)
- Lord’s Supper (**1 Corinthians 11:23-34**).

We are to follow Paul, as his epistles explain how to follow Christ. We are not to follow Moses or the ordinances that he gave concerning things God previously required (**Col. 2:14-16**). We are not to follow the baptismal format given by John the Baptist (**Acts 19:3-5**) or the Apostle Peter (**Acts 2:38**). Paul even re-baptized John’s converts who had been baptized with the “baptism of repentance.” One should consider why Paul would re-baptize John’s converts if nothing changed (**Acts 19:1-7**).

***Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things (II Timothy 2:7).***

We are told to consider what Paul says. The Lord promises to give us understanding in **all things**. You cannot consider what Paul has said unless you study his thirteen Church Age epistles. Once we understand what Paul says to us during this Church Age, the other portions of the Bible will be easier to understand too.

*“No matter what may be the equipment of the Christian, no matter what intellectual, moral, or spiritual endowment he may have, unless he understands dispensational truth he will never fully lay hold of Bible doctrine...”*

—I.M. Haldeman, *How to Study the Bible*