

# Rightly Dividing the Word

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*Note: Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV)*

In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul exhorts Timothy to “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” In our day and age, many believers have fallen prey to the demonic spirit of passivity. They don't want to pay the price necessary to become disciplined in study. Furthermore, today in our lukewarm “Laodicean” (Revelation 3:14) Christian society, most believers will no longer “endure sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3).

We must not permit ourselves to become like the majority which derives their truth from their subjective emotions, and which resides within them. But we must discover truth from the objective Word of God, which is a source outside of ourselves. Also, we must not let a *denominational* emphasis, nor the experiences of life determine our foundation for truth. We must follow the lead of these “noble-minded Bereans” (Acts 17:10-11), who “searched the scriptures daily,” seeking for truth. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said it better than anyone else could, “What saith the scripture?” (Galatians 4:30).

As we explore the precise categorical truth contained in God's Word, we will use the principles of “exegesis,” which is the exploration of the original languages in which the scriptures were written -- Hebrew and Greek. Exegetical studies will give us a much clearer understanding of the original intent. We'll also look into the “isagogics,” which is the study of the historical background of the biblical letters concerning why and to whom these were written. This will give us tremendous insight.

Now as we come to the conclusion of this article, we must also point out one of the most vital truths concerning the understanding of God's Word. “Rightly dividing” also means that although all of the Bible was written “for” the believer, not all of the Bible *is* written “to” the believer. Now, before you label me a heretic, let me explain further. We know that “All scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction,” (2 Timothy 3:16), and we know that what happened to Israel was written for our example and admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11). But not all of the Bible was written to the church -- much of the Old Testament was written specifically for the nation of Israel. Many teach and represent *Truth* in a confusing manner by not realizing this principle. We must not take verses written for Israel and try to force them to fit into the church. This is the reason why many believers are mistaken regarding doctrine, although they might be sincere in heart.

So let us pursue truth with a heart of meekness, which will cause our studies to result in the word becoming “engrafted” (James 1:21) in our souls -- meaning, that we will not only have an intellectual pursuit of truth, but that it's our desire to apply God's Word in obedience to our lives.

## THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

In the book of Acts 20:27, Paul declares that he had not failed to declare “all the counsel of God.” The Greek word for “all” in this passage is “*pasan*,” and it literally means that Paul has declared the full scope of God's thoughts on each and every category of doctrine. In comparison to some present-day Bible teachers, Paul did not over-emphasize one aspect of doctrine, while neglecting “the whole counsel of God.” Many Bible teachers have done this with the doctrine of salvation, and therefore, they have no true understanding of most Bible passages which deal with the doctrine of salvation. To show you more clearly what we mean, we'll look into a portion of scripture found in Hebrews 9:24-28 as following:

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, *now to appear* in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world *hath he appeared* to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him *shall he appear* the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Our salvation has three divisions if you will; first we have been saved from the penalty of sin (Romans 8:1) through the death of Christ on the cross; secondly, we are presently being saved from the power of sin over us (Romans 5:10) as we reckon ourselves dead to sin and yield to the Spirit of God within us (Romans 6:11-16); and thirdly we will be saved from the presence of sin (Hebrews 9:28) when Christ returns or when this “corruptible” is replaced by “incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:42, 53) at our death -- for “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

From this we can see that the Bible makes a clear distinction between the three aspects of the believer's salvation.