

**The Bible**  
**Rightly Dividing The Word of Truth 2**  
**The Composition of The Bible**  
by Hendrik Joubert

Walking into a library for the very first time to look for a book is an intimidating experience; how are you ever going to find what you are looking for hidden in this mass? Until you learn how the system of classification and organization works. Many consider the Bible a complicated collection of books beyond man's ability to comprehend. This view results from preconceived ideas; perhaps convenient because we hope to escape the responsibilities the Bible imposes upon us. God declares that He gave us the Bible so that those who *diligently seek*<sup>1</sup> Him may be *thoroughly equipped for every good work*.<sup>2</sup> (<sup>1</sup>Hebrews 11:6; <sup>2</sup>Timothy 3:17)

When Paul exhorts Timothy to *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*,<sup>1</sup> the expression *rightly dividing the word of truth* presents us with the challenge of keeping things properly classified and organized, so we may make sense out of it all. It is important to notice that the exhortation implies that Timothy, and therefore everyone else who *handles* the word of God, may *divide improperly* or fail to *accurately handle the word of truth*, as some translations render it. (<sup>1</sup>Timothy 2:15)

Instead of ignoring the possibility that we may not properly handle the word of God, and therefore ignore inspired warnings coming from God, we need to emulate the following attitude: *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.* Acts 17:11 (NKJV) The apostle warns the Corinthians not to *learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.* 1 Corinthians 4:6 (NKJV)

In Genesis God explains where everything started and where we come from. People who, for argument's sake, were to arrive on earth on the eighth day would date things much older – mountains and trees, adult people and animals. They may dig and find diamonds, gold and oil, *created* by God, and really set the date back *millions* of years. They may decide that they cannot accept a *miraculous creation*, and think they remove *miraculous* by stretching the inherent power of self-improvement and *procreation* of a simple cell, produced by sheer chance, into such a complex being as the human, as well as every other living thing, over millions of years. God supplied the *evidence*, however many choose to ignore it. (Romans 1:18-32)

God created man for His pleasure and purpose: *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.*<sup>14</sup> *For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.* Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (NKJV) It most certainly is this *manipulative attitude* of God which causes many to rebel against Him – perhaps they hope if they ignore Him, He will *go away*. These words given us through Solomon, but also the insistence to ignore God, reveals the extent of *the power of choice*. It is not a power usurped by man, but *given by God* so that we all are responsible for our choices. Ezekiel 18 contains an extensive explanation of man's responsibility for the choices he makes. Notice for example verse 20: *The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.* Ezekiel 18:20 (NKJV)

We learn from Genesis 3 that the very first man and woman failed to remain faithful to God; however immediately the plan of redemption is announced in *code*: *“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”* Genesis 3:15 (NKJV) The Seed is again mentioned in Genesis 12:3 and 22:18, and Israel considered the promise as referring to all those who are descendents of Abraham. They insisted on arguing the point with the actual Seed<sup>1</sup>, the Messiah: *They answered Him, “We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’”* John 8:33 (NKJV) (<sup>1</sup>Galatians 3:16)

In order to convince Israel of their sins God *added* the law 430 years after He made the promise to Abraham. (Galatians 3:17) Because of what God teaches us through the apostle Paul it seems the Jews considered the Law a *confirmation* of their *election*, rather than an *addition* to convince them of their sinfulness: *What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.* Galatians 3:19 (NKJV) To the Romans Paul explains that he *would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”* Romans 7:7 (NKJV) illustrating exactly how it was to bring about the knowledge of sin and cause Israel to become convinced of their sinfulness to cry: *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Romans 7:24* (NKJV) The answer is supplied in the very next verse, *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!... Romans 7:25* Through Paul we are taught that the law was their *tutor*, or *schoolmaster* to lead, or bring them to Christ. (Galatians 3:14)

The misconception Israel had concerning the law is dealt with in almost every letter Paul writes as God explains through Him that *...by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.* Galatians 2:16 (NKJV) These statements concerning the *works of the law* is considered by many as referring to any works, and the role of simple actions in order to demonstrate faith is denied. Some suggest that Paul and James are contradicting each other; however Paul is talking about the *works of the law*, while James is discussing those

simple acts of obedience to what God says for us to do in order to demonstrate our faith in Him. As a result of this misconception many deny, for example the role of baptism (**1Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; Romans 10:12**)

Through the Scriptures we learn that the Old Covenant was a shadow of the New Covenant, pointing to the Christ: *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, <sup>17</sup> which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Colossians 2:16-17 (NKJV)* In both **Hebrews 8:5** and **10:1** the analogy of the shadow is expressed. Jesus is *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29* Everything revolves around Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God and the restoration through Him. Peter explains: *As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, <sup>11</sup> seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB)*

The Old Testament is a faith producing declaration of God's creation and His owning it. It is an illustration over time of man's imperfection and tendency towards sin, but also God's determination to redeem for Himself a number who are willing to *diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6*. It was recorded for *our learning: For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4 (NKJV)* It was recorded so we would have examples of God's dealings with His creation: *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted... <sup>11</sup>Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 (NKJV)*

The New Testament is a revelation of God's plan of salvation for all mankind<sup>1</sup> and constitutes a complete and practical *manual*.<sup>2</sup> In the *gospels* were written *that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31 (NKJV)* At the conclusion of His life Jesus gave a commission to those chosen as witnesses of His resurrection: *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV ( <sup>1</sup>Ephesians 3:1-7; <sup>2</sup>Timothy 3:16-17)*

In the book of Acts we have a real-time description of how this commandment was carried out, and how others became involved in preaching this message, which started in Jerusalem and spread the world over. (**Luke 24:46-48; Acts 2:37-39**; From this book we learn how sinners became saints, sanctified by the blood of Christ as they submitted to Him as a result of their faith in Him, and obeyed the simple commandments He gave. On the day of Pentecost we see His spiritual kingdom<sup>1</sup> coming with power, as He promised in **Mark 9:1**. Believers who submit to His will are *delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Colossians 1:13 (NKJV) ( <sup>1</sup>John 18:36)*

In the letters written to churches and individuals we learn about problem solving and find some detailed answers to doctrinal questions which came up. The locations of these churches may be identified on the historical line established in the book of Acts.

The final book of the New Testament describes things that should shortly take place, and is reminiscent of the language in **Matthew 24:34** where Jesus described things which would take place in their generation. It declares the victory over Satan for those who remain faithful when He comes to present his spiritual kingdom to His Father so we may live with Him eternally. *He who overcomes... Revelation 21:7*. The words of Jesus declaring that *only the Father knows*<sup>1</sup> when the *final* end will come helps us to rightly divide what He says in this book so that we do not *interpret* it as signs of His second coming. That coming will be like a thief in the night. **Matthew 24:43-44 ( <sup>1</sup>Matthew 24:36)**

Salvation is by faith, consider therefore the significance of **Romans 10:17** *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* (NKJV) What we believe becomes what we practice; it will either be what God tells us through His word, or what people think and decide beyond what we read in the Scriptures (**1Corinthians 4:6**), resulting in the doctrines of men, and a rejection of our worship. (**Matthew 15:9; 2John 9; Romans 10:1-3**) We must *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*