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Rightly Dividing The Word of Truth Arguing With God

By Harold Turner

By Leslie Leonard

In 2 Timothy 2:15 we are encouraged to study, both to show ourselves approved of God, and to be able to rightly divide the word of truth. This would stress the importance of making the right interpretations and applications to the teaching of the Scriptures. It is vitally important that we know exactly what portion of the Bible is given for the Christian of today. For example: where does one begin his search to find God's will for our day? Will one find God's plan for redemption taught in Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Revelation, and etc.? Where will one find what pleases God in worship today? Will the things that pleased God in the days of Abraham, Moses, and Jeremiah please him today? Are the same laws binding on the Christian that were binding on the people before Christ came? The answers to these questions are important, and they require a diligent study to rightly divide the word of truth.

The Bible clearly shows three distinctive periods in the history of God's dealing with his people. In each God's methods and manners of dealing with man was different. The first period was from Adam to Moses, the second from Moses to Christ, and the third from Christ until he returns again. In the following part of this article we want to look at some of the general but specific differences in the manner of God's dealing with his people.

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

The first period, from Adam to Moses, is often called the Patriarchal age. A patriarch was the father and ruler of a family or tribe. During this period God seems to have dealt primarily with these family heads. God made known his will to the patriarchs, who in turn instructed their families. During this period there were no written laws as was given in the second and third periods. We are not told specifically the laws that God gave the patriarchs, but there was some standard of righteousness given, for in 2 Peter 2:5 Noah is called a "Preacher of righteousness." However, the people of this age seemed to have had only a vague knowledge of sin. In Romans 5:13 Paul refers to this period, saying, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." In the next verse he shows that the law

referred to was that given through Moses. Therefore, until the law given through Moses, sin was in the world, but not imputed. In Romans 3:20 Paul said, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." And in Romans 7:7 he said, "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." One of the great needs for a change to be made in God's manner of dealing with his people was to give them a written law to teach them of sin. In Galatians 3:24 Paul describes the law as a "Schoolmaster." In Galatians 3:19 he states that the law was added "Because of transgressions." The law would serve as a teacher to instruct the people about sin. Therefore, at the giving of the law, God made a change in his method of dealing with man.

THE MOSIAC AGE

The period from the giving of the law through Moses to the coming of Christ is called the Mosaic age by many. During this period, as seen above, God dealt differently with his people, in that he gave them a written law to instruct them. This period actually had its beginning after God delivered the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. From this time until the new law of Christ was given God dealt with the nation of Israel.

When the Israelites came to Mount Sinai, God made a written covenant with them. In Deut. 4:13 Moses said to Israel, "And he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." In Exodus 34:27-28 the Lord said to Moses, "I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel . . . and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant the ten commandments." This law would give them the knowledge of sin, as Paul stated in Romans 7:7, "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

There are numerous statements showing that this law or covenant was given only to the nation of Israel. In Deut. 5:1-3 Moses called all Israel before him and said, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us

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Presumptuous man, a mere creation of God, has the audacity to argue with his creator. He doesn't realize that a lot of the religious disagreement that he has with other people is often in reality disagreement with God, because he is in disagreement with the Scriptures at the same time.

God has spoken to man through His inspired word, the Bible; and to disagree with it is to disagree with God. Peter wrote, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). Paul wrote, "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God . . ." (2 Timothy 3:16).

Men often disagree over what God has said, and it is possible that some of it is caused by a lack of understanding or misunderstanding, of what God has said. But to suggest that we can not understand the Scriptures is to place the blame on God by implying that He did not make His will sufficiently clear, or He was just not capable of making it clear. It is more probable that misunderstanding exists because of our attempts to foster some preconceived idea, preferred doctrine, or practice. When we use the Bible to prove our preconceived ideas we are sure to end up with the proof we seek because we overlook any information that would disapprove our pet opinions.

A lot of the religious disagreement is someone trying to prove something to their satisfaction rather than trying to discover God's will. The disagreement is not with other people. It is disagreement with God.

When a person is wrong, or holds a wrong opinion, he is in disagreement with God and it doesn't matter whether the other people he disagrees with is right or wrong. God has said through His word that we are saved in a specific way, and a chorus of voices answer those who point this out, "No! This is the way we are saved, or that is the way we are saved." God has shown that the church is to have a specific form of organization. Again a multitude of voices shout, "No! It doesn't matter. Or here's a better way." God has shown that He demands that He be worshiped in certain ways. Again the voices call out, "That's not true! As long

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WORSHIP

By Richard England

Worship is an English word used to translate a number of different Hebrew and Greek words which mean to bow down, do obeisance, glory, esteem, to be reverential, pious, to serve and to venerate. When one really understands the nature of God and appreciates Him, he will want to pay the proper tribute and service to Him. With this desire to properly worship God, one will search the Scriptures to see what it is that pleases Him. Obviously, God does not think like men do. His ways are not as man's (Isa. 55:8,9). Knowing this, there must be a revelation from God to inform us of His will (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

It is possible for people to worship in a fashion that is not acceptable to God. Only doing the "Will of the Father" is what must be done (Matt. 7:21-23). To teach and practice that which men have devised, because "they" like it, renders one's worship as vain. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Worshipping at random because of a lack of knowledge of the truth is not sufficient either. Paul told certain idol worshippers, who demonstrated a small desire to not leave God out, whoever He might be, that their ignorant worship was that from which they should repent (Acts 17:22-31).

True worship is described in John 4:23-24, "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall

age. Christ is its founder, and those who follow him are called Christians. God gave, through Christ, a perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). In Romans 8:2-3 Paul said of this law, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

It is in this age only that man could have redemption from sin. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice to take away sin. His blood is said to be the price for our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19). All spiritual blessings are extended to man through Christ (Eph. 1:3).

The gospel is an all-sufficient guide for those living in his age, as shown by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, where he wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It is under this new covenant that man can serve God acceptably today.

worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The attitude of heart makes a difference in worship. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8). "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8).

Truth is the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:5). To worship in truth is then to worship as directed in the gospel. We are not under the Old Law and are not obligated nor obliged to offer the services of that day. We do not offer animal sacrifices, burn incense, travel to Jerusalem and all the other things they had to do. We must do only that which we find in the New Testament or Will by which we are sanctified (Heb. 10:10). When we find what it teaches and find how the early church, under the watchful eyes of the inspired Apostles did, then we will know what God would have us do.

After the people on the day of Pentecost had heard the gospel and had been baptized for the remission of sins, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). They taught and practiced what the Apostles told them to teach and practice. Among other things they prayed in their worship. Even in prison Paul and Silas prayed (Acts 16:25). They also sang on the same occasion. We are to pray and sing, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). They took the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). At the same service they had preaching. They also gave of their means on the same day (1 Cor. 16:2). These five things they did. This is what we are to do if we want to be like them. Anything less is not enough; anything more is too much.

"When the church stops seeking the lost it is lost."

"We can never profit by our mistakes as long as we blame others for them."

"Don't worry about finding your station in life, someone will be sure to tell you where to get off."

Rightly Dividing the (Cont.)

here alive this day." This shows that this covenant was not made with the people prior to this time, and that it was for Israel only. In Romans 2:14 Paul states plainly that the "Gentiles have not the law." In Ephesians 2:11-12 he states that the Gentiles were "Strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

This covenant made with Israel was not designed to be a permanent method of dealing with his people. It was added because of transgressions TILL Christ should come (Gal. 3:19). It was a "Schoolmaster to bring us UNTO Christ" (Gal. 3:24). And in Romans 10:4 Paul states that "Christ is the end of the law."

There are several reasons why this method of dealing with his people was not sufficient. Transgression of the law was sin (1 John 3:4), and the penalty for sin was death (Ezek. 18:4). Under the law this penalty could not be removed. In Gal. 3:21 Paul said, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." This law could not justify the sinner, as seen in Rom. 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This law demanded animal sacrifices to be offered for sin, but in Hebrews 10:4 we are told, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

Man needed something more than a law that only brought condemnation (2 Cor. 3:6-16). The writer of Hebrews 8:6 states that Christ came to be the "Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." In Col. 2:14 Paul stated that Jesus took the law out of the way, "Nailing it to his cross." Here ended the method God had used with this nation of Israel, and a new method would be used, which would include all who would choose to follow it.

THE CHRISTIAN AGE

The final age is called the Christian

The Home - Christian Living FELLOWSHIP

By Ordell Heavin

When God was in the program of creation and observed that man was alone, He made "A help meet for him." Then as man stood with woman as husband and wife, we have what is commonly known as the home. When discussing the home at its fullest, we usually consider children being present. Now in this divine institution, for the greatest good, Christian living is very essential. A foundation for this must find a husband that loves his wife (Eph. 5:25), the wife reverencing her husband (Eph. 5:23), children obeying and honoring their parents (Eph. 6:1-2), and parents bringing up their children as directed by the Lord (Eph. 6:4). In the home divine direction places the husband as the head (Eph. 5:23). The wife and mother has the honor of guiding the house (1 Tim. 5:14). When all occupants are found in subjection to this direction, then the home will be as God intended. Our land is presently cursed with ideas and attitudes that are home wreckers.

The lack of natural affection, rebellion against authority, disregard for others and the assumption of a freedom that invades the rights of others stands at the top of the list. The only power to eradicate these is that produced by "Christian Living," the basic of which is a knowledge of the law of the Lord. A home cannot be Christian when such is lacking. A measure of moral goodness and uprightness, might be present in the life of some without a knowledge of divine things, but one cannot be a new creature and a follower of Christ minus what it takes to be such.

To this end the Lord sent men to "Go teach every nation." Husband and wife relationship needs the influence of Christian living. Broken homes and discarded children are the order of the day. Marriage, divorce, and remarriage in some cases has multiplied, and is the expected way by the multitudes. The instructions in 1 Cor. 7 and Eph. 5 will assist the Christian in understanding the association of husband and wife and honor and respect each should and will enjoy, when the Lord rules their lives. Christian living in the normal home will give children mothers (not baby sitters) to care for, protect and guide them. Fathers will be present to fill their place in the upbringing and training, and such will not be left to civic organizations and neighborhood programs. In a Christian home children are to respect the Bible as the word of God and Christianity as a privilege and joy, and not as a chore.

The church and all service attendance will be the bright spots in all weekly activities. When parental advice places

certain places and actions "Off limits" there will be no questions nor arguments. "Modest apparel" for all will not be a debatable topic, and there will be no fugitives from the barber shop nor dropouts from the bath tub.

Christian living in the home will provide a far reaching influence for the children of that home as they plan their future life. When we observe the destructive influence and teachings with regard to the Bible and Christian principles that abound in our schools, it's even more important to instill in them Christian principles.

Bring up or train a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). When Christian living is a part of the home, there will be no problems or regard to the care of the aged and infirm. Each day we get older and with time some will be unable to care for themselves. The principle of care for the needy in a family is clearly stated by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:16. The community surrounding any home where Christian living is the order of the day will feel its influence in a good measure. As ten righteous men would have saved Sodom (Gen. 18), so the home that is righteous today will have a saving influence radiating to the whole surrounding area. When neighbors see demonstrated as well as hear spoken the way of the Lord impressions are more powerful.

Many times when Christian living is seen in action, the observer will desire to hear about it and a door is opened to teach the way of the Lord. As the "Salt of the earth" and the "Light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14), those who choose to be led by the nand marked by Calvary's Nails, will not go unnoticed by those who otherwise lead. Eternity bound souls who think soberly will be challenged by a family unity in their community, whose aspirations are demonstrated by daily Christian living before all and in the home (Eph. 6:4). You will have to answer to God, if you don't.

"The Christ we will not share we cannot keep."

"One of the most successful methods for cultivating unhappiness is to devote all of your time trying to please yourself."

"You always know which people have found a bed of roses - they are always complaining about the thorns."

By Glynn V. Purdy

Fellowship is defined as: "Communion, as between members of the same church." Communion is defined as: "Act of sharing, or holding in common." Does this meaning have support from God's word? Yes! The church in Jerusalem was in fellowship, each with the other, and being in fellowship, they had "All things common" Acts 2:42-44.

Can I be in fellowship with a person who walks disorderly? Yes, surely I can. How may I do this? By having "All things common" with him. There is no other way! We must embrace another's deeds to be truly in fellowship with him. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14). This does not mean that every one who believes in God is in fellowship with those who OBEY God, if so we are in fellowship with the Devil (James 2:19). Those in Acts 2, who were in fellowship, had obeyed God. So we can have fellowship with the Devil, a "Believer" but not an OBEYER. Fellowship, then calls for things in common. One who has obeyed God, cannot be in fellowship with one who does not obey God, unless he becomes in COMMON with him.

Can I extend fellowship to any one I please? Surely, MY fellowship, but I can not extend the Lord's fellowship, or other Christians' fellowship. Why? Only the Lord extends his fellowship to those who obey him, and to no one else. In Acts 2, all these people were believers in God before Peter preached to them. They were there to worship God. Yet they had not obeyed Christ. After Peter presented evidence to them concerning the fact that they were sinners, and Christ had died for them, they then wanted to know what to do about their sins. When told what to do, about three-thousand obeyed, and these are the ones who were all in fellowship, and the only ones who were. Those who did not obey Christ did not have all things in common with those who did, and were not in fellowship with them, nor with Christ. How could the other Jews come into fellowship with those who had obeyed Christ? By doing the same thing they had done, and let the Lord add them to his fellowship as well as the fellowship of all those who obey Christ. How did the church members stay in fellowship? By being willing to continue in the "Apostles doctrine," (Acts 2:42). How could the church members now have fellowship with those who refused to obey Christ? The church members would have to give up the apostles' doctrine and embrace things in

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The Purpose of Miracles

By Ted Mountjoy

Are the miraculous gifts, listed in 1 Cor. 12:28 for Christians today?

Perhaps, if we can understand from the Bible the purpose for miraculous gifts, we can come to a better understanding of why no one today has the miraculous gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12:28.

Jesus performed miracles to cause people to believe that he was the Son of God, and that what he taught was from God (John 12:32-38). How many followers do you suppose Jesus would have had if he had not performed these miracles? Few, if any. Yet, we read in the Bible where multitudes followed him (Luke 12:1). If a man today claimed to be the Son of God, how many would listen to him. Very few, if any. But, if this man could make blind people see, crippled people walk, raise people from the dead, he would have multitudes following him everywhere he went. Not only would these miracles get your attention, but they would give you a good reason to believe that what he said was true. The purpose for these miracles that Jesus performed was to confirm that what he said was true. This was also the purpose of the miraculous gifts that the apostles and some of the Christians in the first century had. These miracles, or signs, simple confirmed that what they said was truth, the word of God (Heb. 2:1-4). In Mark 16:20 we are told that "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs following."

Because God's power hath given unto us ALL things pertaining to LIFE and GODLINESS (2 Pet. 1:3), and because we are to "Earnestly contend for the faith which was ONCE delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) there is no additional revelation from God to be revealed, and thus the purpose for miraculous gifts no longer exist. There is nothing to confirm that hasn't already been confirmed. This is proved further by the fact that many who proclaim to possess these gifts use God's word to prove their gifts rather than using their gifts to prove that what they say is truth. Just the opposite of what is revealed to us in the New Testament.

Confirmation is a one-time thing (Gal. 3:15). God's word has been confirmed once. The function of Jesus' miracles, and all the other recorded miracles are now fulfilled by the WRITTEN WORD. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing, ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

Arguing With God (Cont.)

as you're sincere God will accept our worship." And so, the argument goes on and on, but the argument is with God not with men.

Instead of arguing with God we should seek to find out what God requires and do it. Failure to do this is rebellion, and rebellion is sin.

Jesus has been made Lord. Peter said, "...let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). The word Lord could be translated ruler, so God has made him the ruler. Now is Jesus is going to rule in our lives we must let him rule. He, and only He, can set the conditions of entrance into His kingdom, the organization, and the worship to be offered up to the Father by his church.

But men refuse to let him rule. They argue with the Scriptures and insist that their opinions are of equal value. They dethrone Christ as Lord and place themselves on the throne. In arguing with the Lord they are rebelling, and that rebellion is sin. To put it another way, a lot of the religious disagreement is simply a manifestation of the sinful rebellion of men.

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We are so thankful for your contributions this month. This will greatly assist us in the purchase of a new addressing machine, which we were needing so badly.

"What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God."

"Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone."

"When you are at the end of your rope, it's a good idea to keep your feet on the ground."

Fellowship (Cont.)

common with the disobedient. But even then, the members of the church could not extend the Lord's fellowship to them. No one can extend the Lord's fellowship, or the fellowship of faithful disciples of the Lord, to any one in error, or who "Walks disorderly." This we need to know.

How can one get into fellowship with the Lord and his church? "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). What if I say I am in fellowship with God and error at the same time? "If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). Christians have been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). When they go back into darkness, they are again out of fellowship with God. The kingdom of darkness is the kingdom of the devil. Two can not walk together, except they agree. To walk with Christ, we must agree with Him. To walk with the devil, we must agree with him. We cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). The answer is to choose whom we will serve and to serve him. Our choice should always be God. We should be very careful who we call "Brother" and who our "Brother" is. We may be fellowshiping the "Unfruitful works of darkness" the Devil. After all he is a believer (James 1:19). So, let us not try to extend our fellowship, much less that of the Lord (Which we cannot do) to those who are "Believers" but not obeyers of the gospel of Christ (James 1:22-25). Remember, those who were in fellowship with Christ and with one another, were those who had been baptized into Christ and walked in the light of God by continuing in the apostles' doctrine. This is the Gospel truth. If you are doing this, then be careful who you call brother. Also be very careful about tossing around the Lord's fellowship.

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