

MSB202

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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RIGHT DIVISION

by John C. Ribbens

Christendom today is suffering from acute malnutrition. This deficiency is manifest in the hostility within the rank and file of many major denominations. Social conditions have become a significant burden bearing upon clergy and laity. Among our youth there is a rebellion against much of professing Christianity. Questions innumerable plague those who, in the face of this religious confusion, are genuinely seeking the truth. It seems incredible to most men when they are told that it is not only possible but exceedingly rewarding to practice religionless Christianity.

It is my conviction that there is a way of life that can be lived in this the dispensation of the grace of God that is truly satisfying. Without boasting, I can say that a quality of spiritual life is the direct result of having made an honest commitment to the important principle of right division.

The principle of "**rightly dividing the word of truth,**" **2 Timothy 2:15**, is absolutely essential to obtaining a proper appreciation of all that God has ever done, all that He is doing now, and all that He will yet do. I claim to be a dispensational Bible student. The mere mention of this claim often brings raised eyebrows and cries of heresy. This doesn't bother me knowing that the Apostle Paul said, **But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers. Acts 24:14.**

I maintain that unless men are willing to free themselves from the bondage of religious tradition they will never really understand all that God has planned, much less that One. **In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Colossians 2:3.** The Psalmist David declared,

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. Psalms 107:23,24. Very few are willing to sail in uncharted waters as it pertains to spiritual things. Yet it is in the never ending search of the truth and in progressive Bible study that the believer is privileged to perceive the great vistas of truth that adorn our God. Only as this commitment is made to be perfectly honest in dealing with the inspired word of God can one begin to find answers to the myriad questions that trouble men today.

Romans 11:33-36 provides a further declaration of all that is germane to truly knowing God. Read this passage prayerfully. How many are willing to enter into these riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? How inscrutable, that is beyond tracing out, are His judgments, and how unsearchable are the ways of God. Who has ever known the mind of the Lord, or shared His counsels? **Isaiah 40:13-14.**

Why is it that men are so confused today? Why is it that antagonism fills so many hearts? Why the dilemma of a society in which great material wealth has produced such spiritual poverty? Is it because God does not exist or that He does not care? Is it because "the church has lost its mission"? Is it because man has turned his back upon God?

Any answer that will satisfy the inquiring mind must come from the unswerving conviction that the only source of God's truth is found in the book we call the Bible. There is no other foundation.

In the study of the Bible one needs to put into practice the principle of the right division of scripture. This principle is set forth in **2 Timothy 2:15.** In this passage Paul declares, **Be eager to present thyself approved to God, a workman unashamed, cutting straight the word of truth.** Notice what Paul says:

1. We need God's approval and only His approval in knowing His will. I repeatedly hear men say, but my church teaches "so and so." Beloved, what is more important, to obtain God's approval of things we believe, or have the approval of the denomination or religious organization with which you may be affiliated? I join with the Apostle Paul in his declaration, **Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... Philippians 3:8.**

2. But Paul also adds the fact that we need be workmen who are unashamed. This Greek word for "unashamed" signifies the attitude and the conduct of the one who studies God's word and seeks out the truth. Anticipating that this course of spiritual conduct would trouble some, Paul says in **2 Timothy 1:8, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me His prisoner: But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.**

3. Finally, Paul states in **2 Timothy 2:15**, the necessity for "cutting straight the word of truth." This word for "cutting straight" is the present active participle of the Greek verb *orthotomeo* which occurs only here in the New Testament. It is found in **Proverbs 3:6** and **11:5**. In **Proverbs 3:6** we are told to **trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.** When you put this principle of right division to work in your life, even in this time of God's silence, you will find that He will work behind the scenes to direct your path especially in regard to His Word.

Right division then is the exercise of that principle of allowing the word of truth to provide the way that leads into perfect understanding of the facts contained in God's word.

Let me illustrate. Read **Mark 16:15-18**. If ever there was a passage of scripture that has been placed on the torture rack of interpretation, this is it. Exactly what is the truth stated here?

1. The Lord is doing the speaking.
2. He is addressing the eleven disciples.
3. These instructions were given to them in view of and with the guarantee that this is exactly what men would experience upon believing.
4. Those who believed would cast out demons, speak with new tongues, i.e., languages foreign to their native tongue, take up serpents, drink any deadly thing with no physical harm, lay hands on the sick with the guarantee of instant recovery.

Consider these questions:

When did you last "cast out demons?"

When did you last without learning it, speak in an intelligent language foreign to your native tongue?

When did you last handle a venomous snake or drink poison and experience no ill effect?

When did you by "laying on of hands" provide a terminally ill person with instant healing and perfect health?

Before you answer these questions, suppose you were asked to stand before the Almighty God and were told that to falsify your answer could lead to divine retribution or death. Do you in all honesty believe that you could answer (any of) these questions in the affirmative?

Peter in **Acts 3:6-8** declared, **Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him up by the hand and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.**

Is there a way of explaining why our present day experience does not match those of the believer in Peter's day? I believe the answer lies in the proper application of that great principle of right division.

With all my heart I believe that in the Acts period and in the life of the apostles, that all who believed through their ministry could cast out demons, drink deadly things, lay hands on the sick and enjoy the powers of God in a positive and manifest manner. I hold that no believer living in the present dispensation of grace has this authority from God. The great work of God progressively bringing into the earth the blessings of His kind and beneficent government were "temporarily set aside" at **Acts 28:28** in order that God might positively display His active and passive grace. During the past 2,000 years of human history God has done nothing but show love and favor to the undeserving. All display of evidential miracles came to a complete and total halt at the close of the Acts dispensation. Grace has been flowing like a great river since that time. No human event or human government, has been able to diminish or retard that flow of grace.

However, this administration of pure and absolute grace will not go on forever. In the Words of the psalmist David, this inspired promise: **Our God shall come, and not keep silence...Psalms 50:3.**

ISSUE NO 202 Published Sept. 10, 1994

