**Understanding Right Division**

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

To rightly divide the word of truth is to dispensationally study the word of God.

**How to Rightly Divide**

Paul is the one who wrote that one should rightly divide the word of truth, so let's look at how Paul rightly divided the word of truth.

(Ephesians 2:11-13 KJV) Wherefore remember, that ye *being*in **time past** Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*{12}*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*{13}***But now** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

(Ephesians 2:7 KJV) That in the **ages to come** he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his*kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

**Time Division**

* **Time Past** - distinction made between circumcised and uncircumcised - middle wall of partition erected
* **But NOW** - that distinction is done away, now there is not difference between circumcised and uncircumcised
* **Ages to Come** - When God brings to completion His plan that was started in "time past" and "but now"

Notice that it is broken up into time frame: past, present and future.

When you study the Bible dispensationally, you are literally studying a time chart. You are studying and distinguishing between the different programs that God had administered to different people in different ages.

**Time Past**

In time past there was a distinction and division between the circumcision and the uncircumcision. Whenever you find God's dealings based upon that distinction and division, you are in **time past**.

The result of that division was that the uncircumcision were *without Christ, without God and had no hope*. This was because God had given the nation of Israel a very special status and a sign of that status was circumcision.

(Genesis 17:3-14 KJV) And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,*{4}*As for me, behold, my covenant *is*with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.*{5}*Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.*{6}*And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.*{7}*And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*{8}*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*{9}*And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.*{10}*This *is*my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.*{11}*And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*{12}*And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is*not of thy seed.*{13}*He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.*{14}*And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Circumcision was for a specific purpose and this is the middle wall of partition that was erected, one was either circumcised or uncircumcised.

As we read about Abraham, we learn that before he was circumcised he already had a seed (Ishmael) but it was the wrong kind of seed because it was something Abraham produced in the flesh.

God said that Abraham would produce a seed in which the covenant would be made. God would erect a wall between the seed of the flesh and the seed of the His covenant. Circumcision was a sign, or a token, of the covenant which God made with Abraham.

Notice verse 13, my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

 Now compare that with Ephesians 2:11 - Wherefore remember, that ye *being*in**time past** Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands. The circumcision in the flesh was made with hands. In time past the circumcision in the flesh was done by man.

**How God Dealt With Man In Time Past**

(Exodus 19:3-6 KJV) And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;*{4}*Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how*I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*{5}*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is*mine:*{6}*And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are*the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

In time past, God dealt with man based upon man's obedience or disobedience to what God commanded him to do. It was based on the conditional statement: "IF you will obey...THEN..."

If Israel obeyed God then Israel would be an holy nation, a kingdom of priests. It was for this purpose that Israel was set apart from the other nations. God formed the nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests, to be His kingdom nation in the earth.

**God has a plan for heaven and earth**

(Genesis 1:1-2 KJV) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*{2}*And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was*upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

From Genesis 1:2 to Acts 7, we read about God's purpose on the earth. The purpose on the earth focused on the seed of the woman. who became the seed of Abraham, who became the nation of Israel.

(Isaiah 59:20 KJV) And **the Redeemer shall come** to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

(Isaiah 60:1-3 KJV) Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.*{2}*For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*{3}*And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

(Isaiah 61:6 KJV) But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men*shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

(Zechariah 8:23 KJV) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass,*that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard *that*God *is*with you.

On the day of Pentecost, those that were in the upper room and were baptized by the Spirit, all spoke in another language. Zechariah shows the reason for the necessity of tongues. When Israel becomes that nation of priests, they will have people come to them that speak another language.

(Isaiah 2:1-3 KJV) The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*{2}*And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that*the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*{3}*And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

 In the ages to come, God will bless the nations of the earth through Israel. The nations of the earth will come to know God because of the function of the nation of Israel on the earth. (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)

**John Calls the Nation of Israel to Repentance**

(Matthew 3:1-2 KJV) In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*{2}*And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

 Why were they to repent? Because Israel did not keep the covenant (see Exodus 19:6). In Deuteronomy 28, we read that there were blessings of they obeyed and curses if they disobeyed. Israel was in a state of disobedience to the covenant that God had made with Abraham and his seed. John tells Israel to repent because the kingdom is at hand, that is the time in which Israel is to be a nation of priests is about to begin. God is about to set up His kingdom on the earth.

**Prepare for God's Kingdom on Earth**

* Daniel 2:44 - God of heaven will set up a kingdom
* Deuteronomy 11:21 - as the days of heaven upon the earth
* Matthew 3:4-6 - all were baptized by John
* Mark 1:4 - John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.
* Ezekiel 36:25 - Cleansed by sprinkling of clean water upon them
* Acts 13:24 John preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.
* Exodus 29:4, Leviticus 8:6 - ordination of the priest was to be (1) washed with water, (2) cleansed and set apart
* Matthew 3:7 - God's wrath is to come before His kingdom will be set up on the earth. The purpose for the wrath of God is to purge out the rebel.
* Matthew 4:17 - Jesus preached the same thing that John did - "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" Verse 23 - the gospel of the Kingdom is what was preached
* Matthew 10:1-6 - this is **time past,** there is a distinction between the circumcised and the uncircumcised.
* Romans 15:8 - Jesus, in His earthly ministry, was a minister of the *circumcision*.
* Matthew 15:24 - Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel
* Luke 19:9 - salvation came to that house because he was the son of Abraham
* John 4:22 - salvation is of the Jews. The way the world was to be saved was through Abraham's seed

Did all this change after Calvary? NO...

* Luke 24:46-47 - They were to begin their ministry at Jerusalem
* Acts 1:8 - they were to begin in Jerusalem, then go to Judaea, then Samaria, and finally unto the uttermost part of the earth.
* Matthew 10:23 - it is when Christ comes bas to set up the kingdom on earth that Israel will go to the uttermost parts of the earth.
* Acts 2:8 - God will give the heathen nations as the inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for*possession.
* Matt 28:19 - Go ye... the "ye" is referring to the nation of Israel. It is the nation of Israel that is to go and teach all nations.
* Numbers 23:9 - Israel is not to be reckoned among the nations.

In Matthew 28, we read of the kingdom commission, Israel is to teach the Gentiles and bring blessing to them but this is to occur only Israel has been blessed.

(Hebrews 8:11 KJV) And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

Once the kingdom is established there will be no need to evangelize, for all shall Know God.

**Ministry of the Twelve to the Jew Only**

(Acts 2:14 KJV) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, **Ye men of Judaea, and all *ye*that dwell at Jerusalem**, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

(Acts 2:22 KJV) **Ye men of Israel**, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

(Acts 2:36 KJV) Therefore let **all the house of Israel** know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

(Acts 3:25 KJV) Ye are the **children of the prophets**, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

(Acts 5:35 KJV) And said unto them, **Ye men of Israel**, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

(Acts 11:19 KJV) Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.**

**But NOW**

The preaching the word to none but the Jew only changes when Paul comes on the scene.

(Romans 11:11-13 KJV) I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather*through their fall salvation *is come*unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*{12}*Now if the fall of them *be*the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*{13}*For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

 Paul speaks to the Gentile and circumcision is no longer and issue.

(Galatians 5:6 KJV) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

God is no longer the God of just Israel, he is also the God of the Gentiles. (Remember in Ephesians 2, it said that the uncircumcised were without Christ, having no hope and were without God in the world). What a marvelous change that has taken place!

(Romans 3:29 KJV) *Is he*the God of the Jews only? *is he*not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

 In Acts 17:30, it says that God now commands every man to repent. It is no longer just for Jew to repent.

The BUT NOW time division is Paul's ministry and both Jew and Gentile are included for there is no difference between the circumcision and the uncircumcision.

Paul tells us that we have a heavenly position.

(Colossians 3:1-2 KJV) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*{2}*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

**Ages to Come**

In Romans 11:12, we learned that Israel had fallen from the special status that God had given. When the "but now" is finished God will resume His dealings with the nation of Israel. Israel will become that kingdom of priests.

(Hebrews 2:3-5 KJV) How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him; {4}*God also bearing *them*witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*{5}*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

The author of the book of Hebrews refers to the salvation that began to be spoken of by the Lord; this is referring to the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. This was then confirmed by the twelve apostles, it is what we read about in Acts 1-7. The twelve at that time were continuing what Jesus had taught - prepare for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. What happened at Pentecost was not something new but a continuation of what had already been taking place.

What does the writer of Hebrews think he is writing about? The writer of Hebrew was writing about the world to come. Would this be time past, but now, or ages to come? The writer is referring to a future event, ages to come.

**Distinction is back between Jew and Gentile**

In Hebrews through Revelation, we see that the distinction is back. The book of Hebrews is written to the Hebrews. The books of James and Peter  are written to the twelve tribes that are scattered, etc.

It is interesting to note that what we call the New Testament is laid out exactly like the time division:

* Matthew, Mark, Luke and John **(Time Past)**
* Acts (transition because God gives Israel every chance to repent)
* Romans - Philemon **(But Now)**
* Hebrews - Revelation **(Ages to Come)**

Hebrews through Revelation is written for the ages to come, which is the time when God will bring Israel's program to perfection.

**Different Messages**

In Paul's writings alone do we find the doctrine, the position, the walk, the duty, and the destination of the body of Christ.

**Secret**

Paul preached Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, that is until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul.

(Romans 16:25 KJV) Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

**Spoken**

But Peter spoke of what was already revealed since the foundation of the world.

(Acts 3:21 KJV) Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

**Purpose of the mystery program**

The mystery program, that which was revealed to the Apostle Paul, has to do with the forming of the church which is the body of Christ. This is accomplished by taking both the Jew and the Gentile and putting them together through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, both are now reconciled together into one body by the cross. This body will be used to restore the headship of Jesus Christ in the heavens.

God's purpose is to restore the headship of Jesus Christ on the earth through the instrumentality of the nation of Israel and in the heavens through the body of Christ.

God had made known His plan for the earth but He kept His plan for the heavens a secret. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:8 that had Satan knew what would happen he would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Hebrews through Revelation brings Israel up to date in light of the new revelation given to Paul. (See 2 Peter 3:15-16)

The Word of God, rightly divided, is fully sufficient, fully capable to provide all the equipping and guidance that you will ever need to know God's will.

We need to walk by faith in the reality of who God has made us in His Son. Our lives ought to reflect who we are in Christ.

Calvary is the secret to the Christian life. Our faith stands in the facts of the finished work of Christ, that He died for our sins and was raised again for our justification. It is your faith in the facts of your identity in Christ that gives you the daily benefits of growing in the grace of God. As you renew your mind to the word of God, rightly divided, it gives the Holy Spirit the freedom to bring that identification in Christ into your daily life.

(2 Timothy 1:13 KJV) Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul puts the doctrine he taught in a form of sound words to renew your mind and transform your life.

(Romans 12:1-2 KJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is*your reasonable service.*{2}*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is*that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

By having that doctrine resident in your soul, you are reeducating your thinking process and transforming your outward behavior by faith based on the truth inside of you.

(Philippians 4:11-13 KJV) Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith*to be content.*{12}*I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*{13}*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Paul made an adjustment on the inside that allowed him to deal with the outside. The adjustment was based on a learning process, it did not happen over night.