

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

Does the Bible contradict itself? Absolutely! Unless... you rightly divide it.

Romans 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

- For not the hearers of the law are just before God
- but the doers of the law shall be justified

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

- Therefore by the deeds of the law
- there shall no flesh be justified in his sight

Life Experience: I recall many years ago, as a visitor, sitting in a Sunday school class when Romans 2:13 was read. This text caught the class members by surprise as there was an acceptance, of the fact, that the law had nothing to do with justification today. However, it was as though they never saw this verse before? I offered to add solution to the seeming contradiction, from their viewpoint, which was immediately rejected. In the few services attended afterwards all that was heard, from behind the pulpit, was that works never had anything to do with justification; Romans 2:13 was never addressed.

What is meant by, 'rightly dividing the word of truth'? The text is found in Paul's second epistle to Timothy.

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

- Study to shew thyself approved unto God
- a workman that needeth not to be ashamed
- rightly dividing the word of truth

Classic Example of Right Division

Timothy & Titus

Paul's action & reaction with scenes involving Timothy & Titus are great illustrations of need to rightly divide the word of truth, else these episodes don't make bible-sense!

Though this next point is dealt with in much more detail under another chapter of the *Theme Study*, suffice to say now is that these events took place during time when newly converted Gentiles were being made aware of what they were being excused from, by the Apostles, in observing the law and customs of Moses (Acts 15). Timothy was half Jew and half Gentile; his father being a Greek speaking non-Jew.

Timothy, a son of a Jewess mother and Greek father was compelled, by Paul, to be circumcised because of the Jews in the region in which they were ministering (Acts 16:1-4).

Acts 16:1-4 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

- Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess
- but his father was a Greek
- Him would Paul have to go forth with him
- took and circumcised him
- because of the Jews which were in those quarters
- for they knew all that his father was a Greek
- they delivered them the decrees for to keep
- that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem

Titus, a Greek (Greek speaking non-Jew; thus a Gentile), was not compelled to be circumcised in accordance to the decrees agreed upon by the Apostles, to which was then enforced by Paul (Galatians 2:3).

Acts 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

- that we trouble not them
- which from among the Gentiles are turned to God

Acts 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

- Forasmuch as we have heard
- Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law
- to whom we gave no such commandment

Galatians 2:1-3 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

- I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them
- that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles
- But neither Titus
- being a Greek
- was compelled to be circumcised

What is Sound Doctrine for Today?

This begs the question as to how do we know what applies for us today and what if any changes have been made in God's dealings between Jew and Gentile, since the Acts period? This question is answered in Paul's first epistle written to Timothy.

1 Timothy 1:1-11 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

- that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine
- But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully
- if there be any other thing that is contrary
- to sound doctrine
- According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God
- which was committed to my trust

Sound doctrine recorded before Paul does not necessarily apply today as sound doctrine revealed to and through Paul. Is a converted half Jew and Gentile compiled to be circumcised today as witness when living among Jews? We think not, but **when** and **why** did these changes come about? This answer is hinted to in above passage. In the 2nd letter written, Timothy was compelled, by Paul, to discern between what was 'custom' before, to what was now revealed through Paul that he refers to as ***sound doctrine according to the glorious gospel of God committed to his trust***. Notice that Paul didn't say... ***according to the gospel committed to the trust of John the Baptist nor of the Twelve Apostles***.

Paul made a clear distinction, in that first epistle to Timothy, regarding the uniqueness of his purpose and ministry.

1 Timothy 1:12-16 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Howbeit **for this cause** I obtained mercy:

- that in me first
- Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering
- for a pattern
- to them which should
- hereafter believe on him to life everlasting

There is a **Book Marker** to be placed at the conversion of Paul (Acts 9). There was a 'cause...' for Paul's conversion that set a '**first**' showing '**longsuffering**' for a '**pattern**' to '**them**' which should '**hereafter**' believe on Christ to life everlasting. The '**longsuffering**' was a pause in the aggression of the kingdom gospel evidenced by Israel's rejection (Acts 7; 13; 18; 26; 28). The conversion of Cornelius' household (Acts 10) gives indication which direction God was beginning to move in extending His mercy. The '**pattern**' isn't a mirror of Paul's conversion in that he was physically blinded, but letters that would be written giving '**pattern**' to '**them**' that would '**hereafter**' believe.

Words should be important in any translation in determining sound doctrine. **Rhyme** and **reason** are seen in a KJB enforcing the fact that the words '**first**', '**longsuffering**', '**pattern**', '**them**' and '**hereafter**', serve as an outline relating to a designated time and direction that God was heading. Following is contrast with the NIV.

1 Timothy 1:16 (KJB) Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

- first
- longsuffering
- pattern
- them
- hereafter

1 Timothy 1:16 (NIV) But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

- worst of sinners
- immense patience
- an example
- those
- would

If the reader stays engaged, in this study, they'll see this outline worked out during Paul's Acts ministry and reflected in the epistles he writes. The student can then determine if the NIV is as faithful in interpretation to its outline, for cross referencing, as the KJB is to its outline?

A KJB instructs us to rightly divide the word of truth whereas the NIV simply encourages the reader to correctly handle it; however, that is to be interpreted?

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

- rightly dividing
- the word of truth

2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV) Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- correctly handles
- the word of truth

Life Experience: I was once told that my application of 2Timothy 2:15, wasn't what the verse was really implying.

Where would that notion come from?

Rightly dividing something and correctly handling something suggests two different connotations. Perhaps, being stated with some sarcasm, one would want to handle a freshly baked pie *correctly*, in transporting it from the oven to the kitchen table, to then *rightly divide it* among the group being served.

To avoid contradiction and confusion in studying and reading the Bible, it's always a good thing to keep in mind the 'who', 'what', 'why', 'when' and 'where', in context of any passage. There's an expression that goes something like... 'All the Bible is for us, but not necessarily to us.' This can easily be demonstrated over and over in the Bible so! In keeping with the theme of this study, the following two examples will be used: The Covenanted Versus the Non-Covenanted & Gentile Versus Gentile.

The Covenanted Versus the Non-Covenanted

Paul, in addressing Gentile converts that found themselves outside the covenant promises of Israel (Eph 2:11-12; Col 1:26-27), gave explicit instruction as to not allowing others to judge them concerning meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days. These are the *very ordinances given /Israel/* that not only were to distinguish them from the Gentile heathen nations, but were covenanted to be Israel's righteousness allowing them to remain in the promise land unmolested by the heathen nations. These ordinances were nailed to the cross!

Israel Under the Mosaic Covenant

Exodus 19:5 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:

- if ye will obey my voice
- and keep my covenant
- then... peculiar treasure unto me above all people

Exodus 18:20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

- thou shalt teach them
- ordinances and laws
- wherein they must walk
- the work that they must do

Deuteronomy 6:1-2 Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: 2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

Deuteronomy 4:8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so

Converted Non-Covenanted Gentiles

Ephesians 2:12 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:

- being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
- strangers from the covenants of promise
- having no hope, and without God in the world

Colossians 2:14-16 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

- Blotting out
- the handwriting of ordinances
- that was against us
- which was contrary to us
- took it out of the way
- nailing it to his cross
- Let no man therefore judge you
- in meat
- or in drink
- or in respect of an holyday
- or of the new moon

righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

Deuteronomy 6:24-25 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

- commandments... the statutes... judgments
- so righteous as all this law
- it shall be our righteousness
- if we observe to do all these commandments

- or of the sabbath days

Colossians 2:20-22 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

- why... are ye subject to ordinances
- after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Righteousness of the Covenanted

The topic of 'righteousness' is a serious subject dealt within the Theme Study in explanation of distinction between justification 'by faith' and 'through faith', in God's dealings with covenanted Israel and non-covenanted Gentiles. In laying a foundation for that contrast, for now consider this. Psalms is a favorite reading for most Christians, including me. A hundred times over, the Psalmist expresses his love and dedication to the law. Here is one example; notice reference to 'righteousness' and its relationship to obedience to the law.

Psalms 119:166-172 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. 167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. 168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee. 169 TAU. Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word. 170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word. 171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. 172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.

- done thy commandments
- kept thy testimonies
- kept thy precepts and they testimonies
- taught me thy statutes
- for all thy commandments are righteousness

...for all thy commandments are righteousness

There is absolutely no argument, that can't be expressed enough, that certain commandments, in the moral arena, crosses all dispensations regardless of Jew or Gentile. What is pointed out in the Theme Study, is the end result of breaking many of the commandments in which the converted non-covenanted Gentile, being addressed by Paul, exhorts to abstain from.

Again, a means of Israel's righteousness, obtained in ordinances, was nailed to the cross! Obviously, being the case, then another means of righteousness was provided for these Gentiles!

Gentile Versus Gentile

For the real studious student of the word of God, consider this while under the topic of 'rightly dividing the word of truth'. Paul had exactly the opposite view regarding himself and a more 'compromising' set of instructions for Gentiles during the Acts period!

Most preachers, teachers and commentaries fail to recognize that Paul deals with two distinct groups of Gentiles. These two groups are distinguished between under the chapter titled "Gentiles", of the Theme Study and touched upon in other chapters.

Without getting into too much detail here, consider the following passages written to one particular group of Gentiles during Paul's pre-prison Acts period.

Romans 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

- One man esteemeth one day above another
- another esteemeth every day alike
- Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind

Romans 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

- Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died

Romans 14:20-21 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

- It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- he that doubteth is damned if he eat

1 Corinthians 8:10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

- shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened

1 Corinthians 8:13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

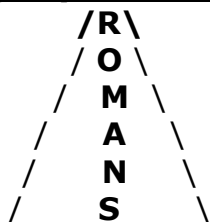
- if meat make my brother to offend
- I will eat no flesh while the world standeth
- lest I make my brother to offend

Let no man therefore judge you in meat... (Col 2:16). Why the change in attitude? I understand how the above passages are often applied or spiritualized today, but there's a remarkable difference in instruction! The difference is the audience.

Gentiles fall under two different classifications. These two groups have a different relationship to the Jew before, during and then after the Acts period. In other words, even Paul's epistles have to be 'rightly divided'. In not doing so results in confusion leading to wrong deductions relating to various doctrines adopted by denominations.

The Fulcrum

The Fulcrum for Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth



The fulcrum of this website, The Gospel According To A King James Bible, is the book of Romans. Perhaps no other book in the Bible has more commentary on it, but still remains as one of the most misunderstood books in the Bible, as well as one of the most miss-taught.

I personally view the book of Romans as an argument. It is an argument based on distinctions and contrasts. These distinctions and contrasts are Paul proving his gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery. The major distraction and hindrance, to both teaching and understanding Romans, is not recognizing this as a book of distinctions and contrasts, as well as not recognizing Paul's unique apostleship and gospel.

When these contrasts are understood, as laid out in a KJB, it is easy to pick out their influence on the rest of Paul's epistles. In reality, these contrasts are a genuine thread throughout Paul's teachings. When Paul gave instruction to Timothy to '*rightly divide the word of truth*', Paul was simply instructing Timothy to recognize certain of these distinctions.

Unfortunately, most commentaries and much of today's preaching and teaching forces things that differ, into things similar, resulting in wrapping up much doctrine with ribbons of confusion. Refusal to accept words as they stand in a KJB, along with the multitude of modern translations, makes it nearly impossible to compare words with words and scripture with scripture to determine an end. This has resulted in the distortion and destruction of some essential biblical truth, justification being at the forefront of the list!

JUSTIFICATION – The Contrast of all Distinctions

Romans is a book of contrasts. Not only is the doctrine of justification one of the contrasts, all of the other distinctions revolve directly or indirectly around it.

The book of Romans is the foundational book for rightly dividing and understanding the scriptures. The contrasts that Paul deliberates on in Romans, actually centers on the argument that Paul makes in showing distinction as to how God chose to justify the circumcision (Jew) from that of the uncircumcision (Gentile).

The outline format, chosen for this study, is treating each distinction and contrast, which Paul makes, as a separate chapter or subject allowing the reader to pick and choose as desired. Each chapter is designed as such to be a self-contained study of the subject.

Off on the wrong foot...

...the formation of many denominations, writing of commentaries, church doctrine, sermons and general viewpoints or interpretations of scripture were and are based on a false premise. This false premise is regarding the means in which God has chosen to justify man down through the ages. Correcting that step changes all!

There are several essential *keys* to this Theme Study in understanding Romans:

1. Don't alter a word in a KJB.
2. Understand that Romans is a book of distinctions and contrasts.
3. Note that these distinctions and contrasts are from the viewpoint of Paul's gospel.
4. Recognize that Paul's gospel was God's switch from justifying 'by faith' to 'through faith'.

The Pivotal Point in Paul's Argument

The pivotal point, in Paul's argument, isn't Jesus per say, because Israel was already called upon to respond to the arrival of her Messiah, prior to the cross. Nor is the pivotal point, in Paul's argument, the cross though the cross was the mysterious bases for the change. The pivotal point is the alteration in the method in which God would start justifying man through Paul's gospel, which now included both Jew and Gentile, the Gentile being Paul's focus in Romans. The means or the foundation, remains the same regardless of being either the kingdom gospel or Paul's gospel; the Lord Jesus Christ! Its the method that's changed... the circumcision 'by' faith and the uncircumcision 'through' faith!

Once the student gets a general grasp of the distinctions being made, from Paul's viewpoint, in discerning between justification 'by faith' and 'through faith', great appreciation will be sensed in regards to how the KJB reflects Paul's ability to convey how God dealt with mankind before, during and after the Mosaic Covenant.

It will also be discovered how many verses have been misapplied or taken out of context once it is understood that the pivotal point is Paul's gospel. Paul's gospel must be rightly divided from the kingdom gospel proclaimed by John the Baptist and the Apostles; God justifying the circumcision 'by' faith, and uncircumcision 'through' faith.

Because Romans is a book of contrasts and distinctions, many subjects have to be 'rightly divided'.

The Theme Study isn't so much a commentary on the book of Romans, as it is in defending doctrine intended by Paul, as can only be presented in a King James Bible.