

Many Christians trust their church to tell them all they need to know about the Bible. They let the church tell them because many churches demand their congregations only believe what they tell them and threaten them with eternal punishment should they even think of considering alternative points of view. Questions are not encouraged in such churches.

The Bible is very clear; we are to study the Bible on a regular basis to be approved of God and to be unashamed in the day God judges us. God's approval is not based upon our regular attendance at any church and blindly obeying its dogmas.

For those who want to understand God's Word, help is at hand. The good news is that this help is not from some denominational school of interpretation or world class theological college but from the Bible itself. Unknown to most Christians is the fact that the Bible contains study rules to be used when examining it. The Bible comes with a complete set of operating instructions. Once we know these operating instructions we can read and study with confidence and avoid the trap of being locked into any denominational system.

Why is it important to study the Word of God? Because our God wants us to; "be followers of God as dear children and walk in love", Eph.5:1-2; "walk as children of light", Eph.5:8; "walk circumspectly", Eph.5:15, and above all these things, to walk in an appropriate manner, that is, according to the instructions and set of conditions God has given us today;

[I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling with which you are called.](#) Eph 4:1

While most Christians love the Lord and have great zeal to serve Him they are engaging in such things of service and worship which are not of any value. Many observe days and months and Feasts and other Sabbaths, they water baptise and recite prayers and sing hymns which are centred on promises and hopes given to other members of God's family. If we are to obey and walk worthy of our calling it is obvious we must know our calling and for this reason personal Bible study using the study principles and rules is essential.

First essential rule or principle underlying all our study is the fact that God's Words are pure.

[The Words of Jehovah are pure Words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.](#)

[You shall keep them, O Jehovah, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.](#) Psa 12:6-7

There are no mistakes in God' Word; He gave His words through inspiration, men did not copy down myths or fairy stories, they were moved or born along by the Holy Spirit

[First of all, you must understand this: No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever originated through a human decision. Instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.](#) 2Pe 1:20-21 ISV.

And again;

[All Scripture is God-breathed.](#) 2Ti 3:16

Another important underlying essential is that the Bible declares itself complete. There are neither missing parts nor any extra books as claimed to be recently discovered or lost treasures found. The apostle Paul received the administration of God for today which completes the Bible:

[Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil \(complete 2:10\) the word of God.](#) Col 1:25

In light of all these wonderful and secure claims about the Bible we should honour God's Word as much as He honours His Word:

[I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. Psa 138:2](#)

The Word of God we hold in our hands today is pure and complete and we praise God that He preserved His Word for us. The Word of God was written by men who were inspired, moved by the Holy Spirit and another study rule is that these Words of the Spirit must be compared carefully

[But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God.](#)

[These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Co 2:12-13](#)

The wisdom of men is to be avoided; we are to compare the teaching Words which the Holy Spirit has given us. This thought of comparing comes out in another passage found later in Paul's writings. When he wrote to the Philippians he prayed for them like this:

[And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and in all perception; that you may distinguish between things that differ, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Jesus Christ. Phils.1:9-10](#)

Paul wants our love to abound in full knowledge and in all perception in order that we can "distinguish between (those) things that differ". We must analyse, discern, prove and try the different things within God's Word. The widespread policy of spiritualising different things to mean the same is the open doorway to confusion. When God makes a promise to one part of His family we have no right to claim it as our own or teach that different statements mean the same thing.

The fruit bowl might be full of fruit but not all fruits are the same. In the Bible some promises were made to Israel and some promises were made to The Church which is His Body. We need to know what promises are made to us today. Likewise, certain rules and regulations were given to Israel which do not carry over into today's administration or dispensation. Israel was under Law, we are under grace.

We are responsible for our understanding of God's Words and Word. We will stand before Christ on judgment day and the claim of belonging to this religion or that denomination will be inadmissible. None of us would miss the weight of the word "yourself" in the following passage which presents a powerful Bible study rule;

[Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. 2Ti 2:15](#)

It is clear to us that if we fail to distinguish between things that differ we will be insincere and offensive until the day of Christ (Phils.1:9-10) and if we fail to rightly divide the Word of Truth we shall be unapproved and ashamed. These are not things to be disregarded. Bible study rules are important.

Right division simply means to straight cut the Word of Truth. This does not mean we cut and divide to throw away; no, for all of God's Word is profitable for us. No part of God's Word is to be rejected, BUT, not all the Bible is about us. The entire Bible is for us, but not all the Bible is about us. Too many believers think that just because there are blank pages between Malachi and Matthew that the Old Testament is for the Israelites and the New Testament is for "the church", but not all the New Testament is about us.

A very safe way to rightly divide the Word is to ask ourselves the following questions when examining any Bible verse or passage. When was it written? To whom was it written? What comes before? What comes after? Is it talking about me? Am I included?

These simple questions are very helpful, and because the Bible uses the words "us" or "we" this does not mean it includes us, today.

Let us apply the Bible study principles and rules to the passages below. Most are from the New Testament because too many believers think that all the Old Testament is for the Israelites and all New Testament is about us today, this concept is false. Much of the New Testament is about Israel and not about the Church which is His Body. We acknowledge that all the passages below are inspired, pure and true, yet we must compare them, distinguish between the things differing and correctly cut the Word of Truth.

Jehovah spoke to Moses and gave the following command to Israel. Israel was commanded to observe the weekly Sabbath and the reasons are clearly detailed; [Six days may work be done, but on the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to Jehovah. Whoever does any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the sons of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever. For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed. Ex. 31:15-17](#)

Here is a passage completely different where Sabbaths are contrasted with the reality of the Body; [Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths. For these are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Col 2:16-17](#)

Notice the weekly Sabbath was a covenant, a sign between God and Israel. It is not a sign or covenant to the members of the Body of Christ. All Sabbaths are a shadow of good things to come, but not good things to come for us today. The Sabbaths speak of promises for Israel on the earth not promises to us who are to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places. (Eph.2:6).

The Lord Christ Jesus taught his disciples to pray and then explained why they were praying thus; [and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mat 6:12, 14-15](#)

Now let us distinguish the differences in the inspired, Christ given words of the Apostle Paul; [In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Eph 1:7 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Eph 4:32 forbearing one another and forgiving yourselves, if anyone has a complaint against any. As Christ forgave you, so also you do. Col 3:13](#)

While we are all disciples of Christ what truth regarding the forgiveness of sins is current? To whom did Christ speak? To whom does Paul speak? Which truth enables me to walk worthy of my calling? Do I forgive to be forgiven or have I forgiveness of sins unconditionally by the grace of God?

The Lord Christ said this; [Blessed are the meek! For they shall inherit the earth. Mat 5:5](#)

The Apostle for us Gentiles said these things:

in whom also we have been chosen to an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, Eph 1:11

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; Eph 1:3

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us, (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus Eph 2:4-6

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Be mindful of things above, not on things on the earth. Col 3:1-2

The Lord Christ spoke to the Israelites and told them that the meek would inherit the earth, but we are not Israelites. Paul tells us that we are not to set our minds on things of the earth; we have a completely different inheritance. This is comparing, trying, or distinguishing between things that differ; this is rightly dividing the Word of Truth and by these rules we find our hope and inheritance.

The Lord made the promise; the meek will inherit the EARTH. The earth is not heaven and we must not spiritualize Earth to mean Heaven. Remember those questions above? When was this passage of God's Word written? To whom was it written? What comes before? What comes after?

Finally, here are two statements about two very important people.

The Bible says this about the Lord Christ Jesus;

But He answered and said (to the woman of Canaan), I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 15:24

And I say, Jesus Christ has become a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, Rom 15:8

Therefore, holy brothers, called to be partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Heb 3:1

The Bible says this about the Apostle Paul;

But, brothers, I wrote to you boldly, as reminding you in part, because of the grace that is given to me by God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the nations, Rom.15:15-16

For I speak to you, the nations; since I am the apostle of the nations, I glorify my ministry; Rom 11:13

For this cause, I, Paul, am the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you nations. Eph 3:1

The apostle Paul tells us very plainly that he was not crucified for anyone (1Cor.1:13) and Peter says;

And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Act 4:12

The Lord Christ Jesus is the Saviour of the World but the Lord Christ Jesus had a ministry to Israel and we are not Israel. He came to confirm the promises made to the Fathers not transfer them to anyone else, including those who think they are "spiritual Israel", a term that does not occur in Holy Writ. Those words of our Lord which apply to salvation and are appropriate for all times are to be taken about us, but there are many of our Lord's words in the gospels which have nothing to do with us today. Our Lord Christ gave the Paul the Words for us today as Paul clearly says;

And, brothers, I make known to you the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not according to man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it except by a revelation of Jesus Christ. Gal 1:11-12

We are not promoting Paul over Christ, an impossible situation and a wicked and false insinuation made by those without understanding and perhaps with less than Christ honoring motives.

Our Lord Christ gave Paul the Words for us today, if we wish to ignore Paul, the very one who gave us the Bible study rules, then we shall indeed tread perilously close to insincerity, offensiveness, shame and disapproval. However, we rejoice in our wonderful Lord who supplied these Bible study rules so that we will know the things freely given to us today.

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