

Rightly Dividing Pt. 5

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[0 : 00] So last couple of weeks we've been doing a little study here with rightly dividing the word of truth. And kind of coming at it from some different angles. I want to call them just little building blocks to help you get this, the entirety of the concept.

And one thing we did was laid out a timeline on the screen and showed you some divisions based upon events in time. Another thing we did then the last week was started to come at it through the eyes of different messengers that God sent to his people or to the world or whatever the case would be.

And we're not really going to get into the messages and start to really parse them down yet. But the point is just to start to allow you to see that God sends a man with a message. Or multiple men with the same message.

And then he sends another one at a different time with a different message. And so we have to be careful to divide between these messages. But to help you, before you even get to that, let's just note the messengers themselves.

And I think that will help you in understanding this entirety. So we looked at the Old Testament a little bit. Mentioned that last week with Moses. Saying that he was kind of the primary messenger of what is called the Old Testament.

[1 : 11] And Moses wasn't the only voice there. But everything kind of gets put on him. As you remember the Jews in Jesus' day said, we are Moses' disciples. And the point there was, there was a new messenger sent from God.

With a message for the people of God in that generation. And they rejected that and said, no, we're going to stick with this other one. And that's a mistake. And we can look at this in scripture and make a division there.

And say God had a new message and a new plan for his people. Through John the Baptist, through the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles. And they rejected it and said, we're going to stick with what we're familiar with.

So now back in the Old Testament, there was also prophets. And the prophets, when it came to the behavior of God's people, they were always pointing back to Moses. And saying God's going to judge you because he told you in his covenant with Moses that he was going to do this if you disobey.

He always pointed him back to the law. But they also, as prophets, as seers, as visionaries, they could see visions of God. And they could see out into the future of a new day.

[2 : 15] And they prophesied and wrote of something new that God was going to bring upon this earth. And so while they were in their day, the prophets are pointing back to Moses' testament. This is what you follow.

This is what you're to be obeying. But understand, there's coming a new day. So now when John the Baptist shows up, 400 years after the last prophet Malachi, John the Baptist shows up and he has a message.

And the message was essentially, as we'll study this out later, it was an offer. An offer was on the table for Israel to receive. It was a new thing. It was what the prophets had foretold of a kingdom and of the king, the son of God, coming to rule over this earth.

Now flip over, let's find Matthew chapter 11. I'm going to take a peek there to start. Remember how John the Baptist was to prepare the way for the Christ. And he admitted, I'm not him.

I'm not that light that should come. I'm just a voice. And John the Baptist was sent from God. And then Jesus Christ followed him. And then Jesus Christ commissioned apostles that he trained.

[3 : 21] And they all carried the same message. And they confirmed that message with signs and wonders and miracles to prove that this was from God. And it was a fulfillment or could have been a fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets foretold would come.

So Matthew 11, this verse we looked at in verse 13 last week showing you this division. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

And so that's not, in John's day, the Old Testament is not taken out of the way. But the offer is on the table. At least understand that much.

The offer for something else is on the table. But let's look a little bit further. Look at the next verse. Verse 14. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

That's proving to you that John brought an offer to God's people. If they'll receive it, then this is Elias. Now, just keep your place, or I don't know if you need to keep it, but flip back a few pages to the very last prophet, Malachi.

[4 : 28] It's only about a dozen pages to your left, maybe. 400 years before this, give or take, the last thing in the Jews' Old Testament, chronologically speaking, is a promise that God is going to send them Elijah the prophet.

Verse number 5. Malachi 4, verse 5. The very end of the book. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, the heart of the children of the fathers, lest I come to smite the earth with a curse. There's a promise. The Jews had that promise that God is going to send Elijah the prophet back, and he's going to do a work on us, and he's going to preach. And it's going to be a revival of God's people. And what Jesus tells them in Matthew 11 was, the law and the prophets prophesied until John. When John showed up, he was a man sent from God.

John chapter 1, verse 7. He had a message. And John was preparing the way for the king of Israel, for the Lord Jesus Christ to come, and for the Jews to receive him.

[5 : 40] And he said, if ye will receive it, this is Elias. And so things could have taken place and gone a different direction than they did. God, in his wisdom, is always ten steps ahead of everything man does.

And what he has laid out is going to work no matter what way man decides or chooses or reacts to it. So in the moment, there was an offer on the table. Now, we got through, we'll get to that later in a little more detail, I believe.

But for now, we notice a division at John when John shows up. John and Jesus and the twelve apostles, they have a message saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And that message, we'll get to more, but just to kind of seal this up, that message was specifically to the Jews. We saw that in Matthew chapter 10 very clearly.

It's specifically to Israel only. And it's something that's an offer, like we just showed you there. And it's also something that is, it's crucial to understand it is not a repackaged law of Moses.

[6 : 44] And this is what people try to do, is try to make the Bible one just one big seamless line, and everything works together perfectly fine. And, but they're not, there's divisions. We have to make divisions. What Jesus Christ taught and was putting to the people was not a repackaged law, or just aiming at their hearts and the same thing.

No, a better word for what Jesus was offering and teaching them early in Matthew is what we call the constitution of the kingdom. The kingdom that was on the table as an offer, and this is how it's going to go.

And they rejected that. And so this is just a side note, and right division, we don't get all over Jesus' words early in Matthew and try to preach that and apply that to everybody today, because we understand that that was a message that accompanied a offer of a kingdom that came from those Jewish men, John, Jesus, and his apostles.

It was to the Jews only, and go not into the way of the Gentiles, nor any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not. But when they were preaching that message and making that offer specifically, it was to the Jews.

It was their potential fulfillment of what their prophets had said would come. Okay, so now we're just trying to move into where we ended last week. Early in the book of Acts, find Acts chapter 9 now.

[8 : 03] Early in the book of Acts, we saw last week that the apostle Peter was now God's spokesman or messenger. He was one of the apostles, but he was absolutely and just very clearly the dominant one that God chose and that God used.

In Galatians 2, it says that the gospel that was committed to Paul, to the circumcision, was the same power, the same might that was in Peter, to the uncircumcision. I got that backwards, the circumcision through Peter.

So Peter is the dominant spokesman early in the book of Acts, after John is gone and he's beheaded and dead, and Jesus has died, rose again, and has ascended back to heaven.

There's just 11 of these apostles. They pick up Matthias. They've got 12 now. But Peter is without a doubt the leader of the pack. And I showed you that in chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 through there, where he is the guy that's always the one taking the lead.

And then, and then, God just flips the script and does something nobody in the world, in history, in the past, present, or future saw coming.

[9 : 12] Nobody. He takes a man out of nowhere named Saul, a man that is just hell-bent on destroying the church of God.

And he is in his zeal. He is persecuting them. He's causing them to, compelling them to blaspheme. He's putting his voice against them. They can be slain and murdered. And he's consenting to the death of some of these early strong men in the church in Israel.

And this guy is just wreaking havoc on the church. And the Lord shows up to him in Acts chapter 9 from heaven and blinds his eyes and knocks him to the ground and says, I got a plan for you, bud. And I want to do something with you. And what is that? It has nothing to do with Peter, James, John, Matthew, any of these guys.

It has nothing to do with what's taking place there in that church that's been growing and building in Jerusalem. And so look at Acts chapter 9. This is where Saul is converted. And Ananias, the man that is kind of the medium through some of this God's using, he's not so sure this is a good idea.

[10 : 25] And the Lord answers Ananias in verse 15. The Lord said unto him, Go thy way. Just like run along, Ananias. He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

And I'll show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And so the apostle Paul, as we know him now, was Saul. He's called Brother Saul in verse 17 from Ananias.

He considers him a brother. And Saul, later on, his name, we don't see him as Saul too much longer, but he takes a Gentile name, Paul, and kind of disassociates himself from that Jewish upbringing in the sense of trying to minister to Gentiles.

Now look at verse 18 and 19 here in Acts 9. Immediately there fell from his eyes that has been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.

So that's Saul's reaction. It's all brand new. Just took place a few days ago, this conversation with Christ. And in verse 19, And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

[11 : 31] Period. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples, which are at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Now we're going to come back to this place here, but there's something that, there's a gap, and I believe the gap is right here. Others try to place it elsewhere, but look, let's go, okay, verse 21 says, But all that heard him were amazed and said, Is not this he that destroyed them, which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither, that is to Damascus.

He came to this place for that intent. And in verse 22, He increased them more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus. So that's where Saul is, in Damascus.

But in verse 26, When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he is said to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him. And so Barnabas smooths things over. Now let's flip over to a place in Galatians for a minute.

I just want to nail down a little timeline of this man, and what's happening with him. Galatians chapter 1. And what you're going to see in the big picture, is that this guy is special.

[12 : 43] He is not to be associated, or equivocated with the apostles of the Lord, that had been with Christ, for all those three and a half years, and that ministry, and with the healings and the signs in Jerusalem, he's got something far different.

And it's something that nobody saw coming, and they didn't even understand it, when it was showing up. So who hath known the mind of the Lord? Again. So Galatians chapter 1, and here's Paul telling these churches of Galatia, a little bit about his past.

I'll start in verse 13. For ye have heard in my conversation in time past, in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it, and profited in the Jews'

religion, above many my equals, in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before me. But I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

[14 : 00] Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem. So there's three years, a three-year gap, that takes place back in Acts chapter 9, that is not clearly expounded or detailed in Acts.

It's just an overview of this guy, this is how it started, and then he went on to do these things. But Paul, by his own pen, testifies that immediately he goes to Arabia, after he's converted, after he gets his eyesight, and receives meat, and receives strength, he takes off.

And then he comes back to Damascus. And it was three full years, before he ever shows up in Jerusalem. Now slip back into Acts chapter 9, and it's verse 26 that he goes to Jerusalem.

And so if we backed up, we could possibly say that in verse 23, after that many days were fulfilled, that could be those three years.

Or it backs up even further into the middle of verse 19, at the period. And then we saw certain days with the disciples, which were at Damascus.

[15 : 11] He could have taken off to Arabia right there, and then come back. Or he stayed in Damascus, but somewhere he takes off and comes back. When he comes back, he's got some zeal.

He's preaching Jesus Christ in the synagogues, and he is confounding the Jews, Acts 9, 22, proving that this is very Christ, and now they want to kill him.

And so whatever's taking place here, this kind of a little mystery, just blank in his timeline, in his life, maybe it's a three-year detox of his Jews' religion and traditions and what he was trained to be.

And just, you know, if you grow up in a religion, sometimes it takes time to get all that out of you. I don't know. That's just a thought. He had to maybe get his scripture right. He had to learn some things.

Come back to Galatians chapter 1 again. And so in this and all of this, there's revelation of God that is given directly to the Apostle Paul from Jesus Christ, and it has nothing to do with flesh and blood, with Peter, James, John, any of those guys at all.

[16 : 23] So this is a complete side note, a complete, this is all being done in a different room from what God has done previously with Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, with that whole gospel time, with the ministry of Jesus Christ.

What he does with Paul is just, it's over here on the side. So just looking at verse 11 and 12 now, he says, I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And then he goes in to say, look, you know who I was and how I was brought up and how I was trained, and then God chose me, and he spent some time with me, and he taught me some things, and he revealed some things to me.

So we've got on our hands a new messenger, and it's got a new message as well, and that's something we'll look at in our next section of this, is the messages.

But for the moment, we have to recognize the Apostle Paul is a new messenger. He's not in addition to the apostles. He's not just the 13th apostle, one of those guys, and they're all on the same team.

[17 : 35] What God does with him is so peculiar that he has to stand by himself because he's got a new message. Now, I want to take a few minutes this morning and just look at some scripture, just only a handful of them, but I'll just run you one after the other and just kind of drop some little crumbs as to this man, what he says.

Look at Romans 15. Just kind of allow you to see how he stands alone as a new messenger with a new message from God.

Romans 15. We already saw that he was a chosen vessel. I think there's another verse I want to point out too.

Okay, so Romans 15 and verse 16. I'll start in 15. He says, Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you and some sort is putting you in mind because the grace that is given to me

of God that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

Ministering the gospel of God that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. So there's the Apostle Paul saying, This is my calling and this is my duty of the Lord to minister the gospel to the Gentiles.

[19 : 14] Let's flip back to chapter 11. Romans 11. And Paul stands alone in this.

Look at chapter 11, verse 13. For I speak to you Gentiles inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles.

I magnify mine office. Now we believe the scripture here and we believe and given the benefit of the doubt that he knows what he's talking about and that he's not overselling it or speaking out a term. He is doing this for a reason magnifying in the very first epistle, Romans, mind you. He is setting himself up for all Gentiles and all to see that God has called me and given me a message and given me an office and I'm going to magnify it.

I'm not going to like play it down in any way. He needs to magnify it. It needs to be proclaimed and understood. All right, let's look to the next book, 1 Corinthians and chapter 4.

[20 : 23] We read these verses on Wednesday night when we were talking about 10,000 instructors and the digital age. Here we are in 1 Corinthians 4 and let these very same words help to set and solidify the apostle Paul's place and position and role.

Verse 14, I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you, for though ye have 10,000 instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus, that's an important phrase, I, I alone, I have begotten you through the gospel. Why doesn't he say built upon the apostles or the Lord Jesus?

No, he just, it's just me. And Paul is always funneling their attention and their devotion and their following to him alone. He doesn't say me and the other guys too.

It's always him. It's just, he keeps them out of the picture. I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

[21 : 36] For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

So this is him commanding us to be followers of him. It shows up again in chapter 11. Look at that one. Chapter 11, verse 1.

Let me back up just a few verses because this helps. Into chapter 10 and verse 32. He's dealing with some of these questionable topics of eating and drinking and sacrificing and just, is it right or wrong in my conscience and things.

And he says this in verse 32, give none offense, which means causing them, giving them an opportunity to sin or mess their conscience up. Give none offense neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles nor to the church of God.

Those three peoples, three divisions of the world. You're one or the other or the other. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved.

[22 : 52] Next verse, be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ. He's going to talk about some ordinances and some rules. But you better follow me if you're going to live this Christian life and not give offense to the Jews and confuse them and not to the Gentiles that are lost and confuse them about your liberty as the church of God, then you better follow me.

He is the leader of the church of God. All right, look at chapter 15. Same book, same church.

And this time, he's going to declare in very clear terms what he calls the gospel. Elsewhere we saw he calls it the gospel of God.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you unless ye believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, and that he was seen of, and it goes on with, there's so many people that witness that he is actually and in fact alive.

[24 : 19] And then verse 8 says, and last of all, he was seen of me also as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles that I'm not mean to be called an apostle because I

persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. The grace of God was with Paul, and he declares unto them the gospel.

He expounds those gospel elements of what that is and what they are believing and wherein they stand, by which they're saved. Who declares unto us of you the gospel?

What gospel have you believed and received? The apostle Paul. And where did he receive it?

Galatians 1, by revelation of Jesus Christ. He was seen of me as one born out of due time.

[25 : 25] Now, these are important things. Paul declares that this is his calling and duty of God. He has received revelation of God. He has received the gospel that he preached, and he tells us we're supposed to follow him.

Now, not just to obey and believe the gospel, but keep on looking to Philippians, a little bit further down the road. Philippians 4. It's more than just believing his message about Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and forgiveness of your sins, but it's a manner of life and how to walk and to please God.

Philippians chapter 4, and it's just verse 9 that I want to point out. Let me catch one more.

We'll go to 3. Look at 3.17. This is similar to what we've already studied. 3.17 says, Brethren, be followers together of me and mark them which walk so as ye have us for and in sample.

Anybody else that's going to be living according to my ways, then mark them and you've got them, but then he tells about others who are the enemies of the cross of Christ. All right, now chapter 4, verse 9, those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me do.

[26 : 47] And the God of peace shall be with you. Do you realize that he is not at all telling them to follow Moses' commands? He never says that it was said of them of old time or the Lord Jesus Christ commanded when he was with us to love this and do that and he doesn't even play with that.

Every time he points to himself, to himself, to himself and his manner of life, he's an example for us to follow. Look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. There's another one.

1 Thessalonians 4, verse 1. The apostle Paul is our example to follow. The life that he lived, the words that he penned are our instructions from God, from our messenger where we discern our doctrine and truth.

Verse 1. Furthermore, then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. And then he gives a few other things and holiness is the culmination of it in verse 7. Look back at chapter 2 and verse 13.

[28 : 11] I'll start in verse 12. 2, 12, and 13. That ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men but as it is in truth the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

The word of God through the apostle Paul to these Gentiles to these believers to what we say now to the body of Christ or the church. A couple more. Keep moving to your right.

Just try to do these in order with that being the only stipulation. Moving left to right. 2 Timothy 2. 2 Timothy 2 and look at verse number 7.

It's a very important and key thought. Consider what I say and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

I think, I don't ever like to just take a verse out and say this from chapter 2 that it's in or the book that it's in but I understand how important that thing is in rightly dividing the word of truth.

[29 : 35] And if you start by considering what Jesus says and then try to add to it what the apostle Paul says and Peter and John and James and Hebrews and getting through all of that and you start with Jesus you're going to find yourself tangled up.

If you start with the apostle Paul if you get the concept that he's a messenger sent from God and if you start to build on his doctrine and understand it consider what he says and put the bookends on the apostle Paul then the Lord can open your eyes to why the words of Jesus when they don't match or they don't fit why they don't belong with the same message.

Some of the words of Jesus and John and others they'll match perfectly like when God when Christ came to fulfill the law one of the laws said thou shalt not kill. Well that didn't get taken out of the way

when he nailed it to his cross thou shalt not kill that's still you know that carries over of course. Certain elements and ordinances of the law have been taken out of the way but so some things that Jesus Christ said and his apostles they're just the word of God they're truth but when it intersects or crosses something that the apostle Paul says we need to consider what Paul says first.

We need to build ourselves up on the apostle Paul's doctrine because this is we are the audience that he sent his message to that God's word came to and we don't receive it as if it's the word of man it's the word of God.

[31 : 01] Look one more chapter 4 and verse 17 verse 17 notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me why?

That by me by me Paul said the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear. You have to acknowledge that either the apostle Paul is a narcissist and thinks the world revolves around him or he is somebody special show me where John says me me me me me me show me where Peter says it Jesus said to those disciples follow me follow me he told it to them didn't he and yet now Paul is saying it to other people follow me there's something there and we have to acknowledge this the apostle Paul has been handpicked and God overlooked he chose to go a different direction than those men that spent time with Jesus he went to somebody that was completely on the outside look back where is that at is it second it's first Timothy one yeah look at first Timothy chapter one and we'll shut this down pretty soon here first Timothy one I'll start in verse 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust oh my who is he to talk like that the glorious gospel was committed to him personally his trust wow and I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me it's all the working of God for that he counted me faithful putting me into the ministry who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious but I obtained mercy because I did it in unbelief I did it ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and Paul's making this a personal thing of whom

I am chief how be it for this cause I obtain mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting if you try to study your Bible without the apostle Paul you are going to be lost and frustrated if you start with the apostle Paul God can give you understanding in where the rest of the things fall the other divisions to be made now there's more messengers to look at going into the future I believe there's some insight as to in the future day where some other messengers will from God and they will have a different message to preach in a different time and in Revelation chapter 11 there's two witnesses that show up and I don't have the intention on going down that road and starting to cover all that material there's also 144 thousand that show up in the

[34 : 41] Bible and there's some things going on late in the book that are completely different than what the apostle Paul establishes and sets up for himself as a messenger of God as a minister with a ministry and that ministry 1 Corinthians 9 is to preach the gospel of the grace of God and to open some eyes to turn some Gentiles from darkness to light from the power of Satan unto God and I think he did a pretty good job of it so thank God for the apostle Paul's teachings and doctrine and writing but today I'm just trying to solidify him as the next messenger up sent from God in the near future we'll start to look at the messages and see there's differences and when we can just assign them to their messenger and to the audience that the messenger was sent to deliver that message then it can help us greatly in making our divisions and dividing the words of truth so let's stop there give you 15 minutes and spend some time with one another and then we'll come back at the top of the hour