

Rightly Dividing, Pt 6, NT Books

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[0 : 00] to this doctrine of rightly dividing the word of truth. And last Sunday morning we discussed, continued with discussing the messengers that God sends.

And we looked through some of the Old Testament, even into the time of Jesus Christ and his apostles. And then saw that God called and sent and commissioned the apostle Paul.

And what we did last week was kind of looked at the unique and special calling that Paul had, distinct from the other apostles that Jesus Christ kind of handpicked and taught.

Something very distinct from that. And we really only did a brief overview, but notice that the language Paul uses, the statements that he makes where he claims to be taught personally by the Lord Jesus Christ through revelation.

And it was aside from and apart from all those other men, Peter, James, John, and the others. Nobody else was privy to what the apostle Paul was taught from Jesus Christ.

[0 : 58] It was unique and special and intimate and just the two of them. And he also says things like, be ye followers of me. A very bold statement he says in Romans 2.16 is calling the gospel that he preached.

He said, it's my gospel when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel. Peter never says, this is my gospel, boys. James, John, nobody talks like that.

But the apostle Paul had something special. Or like I said last week, that guy was nuts to just go off saying all these things. Or he was commissioned and specially chosen by Jesus Christ.

And by the way, the whole topic and study of rightly dividing the word of truth comes from guess who? The apostle Paul. Amen. And if you don't hear Peter talking about it, you don't see Jesus Christ telling his disciples.

Remember, boys, we need to rightly divide. Like if you could imagine, and this is something we'll see and maybe it's a little too early to say this, but I'll try anyway. If you could imagine Peter, James, John, the Jewish apostles that were brought up under Jesus Christ and his ministry.

[2 : 03] And they wrote epistles and things. And if you could imagine them, they knew the Old Testament scriptures. And they were privy to what Jesus Christ taught them and what they then went out and preached to Israel and to none of the Gentiles.

And not to the city of Samaritans, but to Jews. And so everything's just going right along. Fine. But this thing that Paul gets is just, it's different.

It's different. And there's a reason why they don't talk about rightly dividing the word of truth.

Because as far as they're concerned, Christ is fulfilling the Old Testament. He is the Messiah. And he's going to take us into this kingdom and fulfill all of what God had promised to Abraham.

There's no need for them to make divisions about some other people and some other doctrine and some other teachings. And so when the apostle Paul, though, shows up and has things to teach and to say, he does teach us to rightly divide.

Because there's a great need for us to do that. Now today I want to look at something totally different, but it all connects. And today I want to look at the layout of the books of your Bible.

[3 : 05] Now we're going to mainly focus on the New Testament, but just for the introduction's sake, the layout in your King James Bible is not the same layout that the Jews had when they had their Old Testament scriptures or when that was all compiled into a book.

I don't even know if a book is the right word, but their order of books as they were compiled, they were a total of 22 Jewish books. And today we've parsed that down to 39 books.

And if you think, well, how does that work? Well, there's, I believe, a dozen minor prophets. They were just one book. And now since we've broken them down into individual minor prophets.

Included with, let me think here, Joshua and Judges were one book put together, as well as the

book of Ruth was included in the Judges because all that takes place during the time of the Judges. So that's one book. And now that's been broken down and separated into three. Same with the books of the Kings. Those two books were one. The Chronicles, those two books were one. And so there was 22 of them.

And now it's broken down to 39. And they're even ordered differently in our King James Bible. The last prophet we have is Malachi. The last book in their order was 2 Chronicles. Just a completely different setup.

[4 : 17] But the New Testament books, from Matthew to Revelation, 27 books of the New Testament, why are they ordered the way that they're ordered? I wonder, have you ever considered that?

Or you just take it for granted, like, yep, that's what it is. And you never think twice about it. And maybe you don't. That's fine. But, like, for instance, the book of Job is the oldest book in existence. And that thing is nowhere near the beginning.

That thing is, like, that predates an awful lot of your Old Testament. And yet that's kind of sandwiched in the middle in the writings. What about the New Testament books? They're not chronologically ordered by time.

And so does that ever strike you? If you've never noticed it, that's fine. It doesn't make really any difference. But have you ever wondered, why are the books in the order they are? I believe there's something we can discern about that, the layout of the books as we have them.

And I don't want to discuss who's responsible for it, or when it was done, or some people put this on other things. And to me, all that's inconsequential. Even if I've read, I listened to a guy even very recently, attacking the Bible, saying, Oh, I love the Bible.

[5 : 22] It's the greatest book in my life. And then he goes off to say that it was put together and compiled by blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, all these Roman Catholics or this council of such and such, and it's all pagan.

So he tries to dispel some things. He lacks faith. I don't have a problem with who touched this or did anything with it, if there is outside, so to speak, outside of the body of Christ intervention, because God uses Cyrus, calls him his servant, and does what he wants him to do.

And same with Nebuchadnezzar. He does what he wants, what he does. So I don't have any trouble with who God uses or any instruments, if that is even an issue. It's not with me. I believe I have God's preserved words right here in his book.

And I believe it, all of it. So let's take a look at some things. I think you may find them interesting and perhaps even enlightening. So let's notice the order of the New Testament books. If you need to look through your index at the beginning, that might help you, or you can skip through the books themselves.

We're just going to take a quick overview of what these are. And so, for instance, the first four books, Matthew through John, we'll take them. They're just kind of a unit, right?

[6 : 29] They're all four accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Yes, they have different slants and angles. Yes, there's different themes in these Gospels. But overall, it's the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ plus nothing.

That's pretty much the Gospels. I think we can just keep them all as one unit in studying the Bible and let that be what it is. Nothing complicated to that. The next book is the book of Acts, a historical book that covers time.

It covers the accounts of the Acts of the Apostles. It covers years. It takes place in time. In other words, it's not a letter that was written to a person in a moment of time or to a local church in a moment of time, but rather it's historical and it's linear.

It covers events in time. And within time, that book reveals a shift. It reveals a shift where it begins with the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, predominantly Peter, as I showed you, preaching, preaching, preaching to Jews, ye men of Israel.

And then the shift takes place to where it closes the book where it's the Apostle Paul and it's predominantly the Apostle Paul. And he does end up back in Jerusalem because he resisted the words of God to him.

[7 : 50] But nevertheless, predominantly, it's his ministry going out to the Gentiles and preaching to them this gospel that he received of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so what we call Acts is a transitional book.

It shifts. It definitely, it's unmistakable in the book from start to finish, the change from Jerusalem to the uttermost, from the apostles of the Lord to the Apostle Paul.

There's an absolute change and transition. So then following the book of Acts begins a book addressed to Romans, to Gentiles.

This is not a Jewish prophet, Isaiah, Jeremiah. This is not about the Lord Jesus Christ and his life in Jerusalem or in Judea and where he traveled to Galilee. This is just strictly Gentile believers way out there in your Bible.

No wonder the Jews reject this because who would want to have anything to do with the Romans? Consider how they as a nation have been dealt with by the Romans. And yet here's a book in the Bible addressed and titled Romans.

[8 : 55] And the next 13 books from Romans to Philemon, we call these Pauline epistles. They're all written by the Apostle Paul, two Gentile believers, and they all fall underneath the umbrella of the Apostle Paul's ministry.

He says that he was ordained of God, a teacher and preacher of the Gentiles. And these 13 books encapsulate his ministry and his teaching and his doctrine to those Gentile believers, born-again Christians that make up the body of Christ.

These 13 books also can be considered as a unit. And one of the reasons why is because the very first word of every single one of those books is the exact same word.

It's the word Paul. He identifies himself from Romans to Philemon every single time. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul is on and on every time.

And so those books can be taken as a unit. Now the next book is the book of Hebrews. The author is anonymous. And in this is another obvious transition or shift.

[10 : 04] Because where Paul writes 13 epistles to born-again Christians, to Gentile believers, now he writes, or now a book is written. Can't prove that it's Paul, although many, I would lean that way.

But the author doesn't give himself up. This is addressed by obvious, by the title, it's addressed to Hebrews or to the Jews. So a shift has taken place again.

And it is not addressed to the church. Many speculate, well, this is Jewish believers. But once you take that angle, you're going to run into some problems when you study that book. So the book of Hebrews, another shift has taken place.

Now after that is seven epistles. James, two books of Peter, three books of John, and Jude. Seven epistles that were all written by Jewish apostles of the Lord.

I want you to hear that and just kind of note that in your mind. That these next and last seven epistles before the book of Revelation, these were all written by apostles of the Lord.

[11 : 06] Even the book of Revelation, I could add into that saying it was written by John. But they're all the apostles of Christ that were trained by him. They walked with him. They received power to cleanse the lepers and heal the sick and raise the dead.

They preached about the coming kingdom. They taught this offer of a kingdom to Israel. It's no coincidence to me that all of these books are lumped together at the back of your Bible.

And then the book of Revelation, end time, future events are revealed. The great tribulation, the second coming of Christ moves all the way out into eternity future when time shall be no more.

So about the layout, about the order. After the last epistle that Paul writes to believers, after his quote-unquote unit finishes, the shift takes place to where the audience is again Jewish.

Hebrews, James, and it goes forward. That hasn't happened since Acts chapter 7, to where the message, the aim, the focus was at Jews.

[12 : 14] With Stephen preaching his sermon to those Jewish brethren, they murdered him. And after Acts 7, you have an Ethiopian eunuch that Philip is led by the Holy Ghost to go minister to and preach, and preach Jesus to him.

In Acts chapter, that's Acts 8. Then in Acts 9, you have the apostle Paul named Saul at the time, a Jewish man who is zealous for his religion, and the Lord converts him.

And then in Acts 10, you have a Gentile, Cornelius, that is a Roman, I believe, and he himself is converted by the apostle Peter getting some light that he can go preach to Gentiles.

And so, interestingly, there is, as the breakdown goes, Ham, Shem, then Japheth, from after Acts 7, where the audience is all Jewish, from 1 to 7.

Then you've got this Ham, Shem, Japheth conversion. Very interesting. It's those three individuals. And from there on out, for the most part, it picks up with the apostle Paul. A little bit of stuff going

on, kind of trying to figure some things out, some who's who and what the message is in the middle of the book.

[13:22] But it lands on the apostle Paul and then just goes out to the Gentiles. So, after the apostle Paul's writings, the audience is once again Jewish.

The book of Hebrews bears the title of the audience. Now, come with me to the book of James, the one that follows Hebrews. Hebrews. So, find James chapter 1.

And verse number 1. And let's note the audience as it is in the text. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad, greeting.

There's no question who James' audience is. It's the twelve tribes. We'll get back to that. Look at 1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter 1.

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

[14:54] The strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia. Now, hold your place here and flip back to Galatians chapter 1. Because Peter mentions Galatia.

And he's writing to strangers that are scattered throughout these regions, one of them being Galatia. Now, find Galatians chapter 1, where the apostle Paul writes to the same region.

And he doesn't say to the strangers that are scattered at all. He writes specifically to the churches. Verse number 2. I'll start in 1.

Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead. And I've got to mention this. Paul is so emphatically just declaring his position and his authority.

He has to do it because, no doubt, he was looked down upon by some as you're not one of the apostles of the Lord or you were the one that was murdering. And so he has to really let everybody know who he is and why he's doing what he's doing.

[16:04] And in verse 2, And all the brethren which are with me unto the churches of Galatia, grace be to you. But Peter says he's writing to the strangers scattered throughout these regions, including Galatia.

So Peter, he's writing to Jewish believers or converts perhaps, but he is not writing to them as the churches. Now, come back to Acts chapter 8 and I'll show you why both James and Peter talk about them, these scattered.

James says to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad. Peter says to the strangers scattered throughout. Look at Acts chapter 8. The scattering took place when a man named Saul and company went on a rampage trying to exterminate anybody who preached or taught in the name of Jesus.

And so chapter 8 and verse 1, and Saul was consenting unto his death, that being Stephen from the previous chapter. And at that time, there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea, that's immediate, and Samaria to the north, except the apostles.

Those guys stayed put. In verse 4, Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Now flip over to chapter 11, Acts chapter 11.

[17:40] The scattering took place first in Jerusalem with Jewish believers that took off, running for their lives, but the Lord's working.

And in chapter 11 and verse 19, Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenix and Cyprus and Antioch.

Well, that's getting up farther north, much farther north into Syria. Preaching the word, look at this, to none but unto the Jews only. These are Jews preaching Jesus to Jews.

That's something to consider because that's what the program was for them. That's all they understood. So Jews only. Jewish apostles, Jewish converts, still very segregated in their preaching.

Now look at Galatians chapter 2. Come back there. Galatians 2.

[18:54] And we read this a few weeks ago discussing the Apostle Paul. We were in chapter 1 showing those three years of kind of a void time and then he comes down to Jerusalem.

And he goes up to speak with these big apostles, Peter, James, and John. I'll start in verse 7.

But contrary wise, he says, they didn't teach me anything, but contrary wise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, Paul's saying this, as the gospel of the

circumcision was unto Peter.

For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. And there's those two key figures in Acts and the shift from Peter to Paul.

Verse 9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, note that those are the three guys, apart from the book of Jude, those are the three guys that penned all those books toward the back.

[19 : 58] James, Peter, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me. They gave to me in Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

This is after Peter's taught by God that what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common, and that he went into Cornelius' house. Like Jews don't go into the homes of Gentiles, but he went into his house and he taught them the words of this life and he showed them what he was told to show up.

But still, he retracted back to this ministry, to the circumcision, saying, Paul, God called you, God gifted you, this is your ministry, you go, we're going to stick with Israel like we've been taught.

And so Peter, James, and John decide this is how we're going to continue. All right, now, look at, let's see here. The book of Jude, just to give you a clarification on that, look at John 14.

Since it's pretty clear, Peter, James, and John, it's that one last author back there. Who is that? Jude. There's a couple of verses to look at.

[21 : 15] Really, if you want to get Jude, the epistle, find that so you can see what he says about himself. And then, oh, maybe John 14 is not the one.

How many fingers do you got? We can do a couple of these. I think we can just get Luke. I want to say Luke 6 will be the one.

Yeah, yeah, Luke 6. I'll read the one from John later if we get to that. So, first of all, the general epistle of Jude. Flip back to that one, get all the way back there, and notice this man and his identification.

Verse 1 says, Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. The brother of James. Now, it's not the James you may think of with Peter, James, and John.

James and John are brothers, the sons of Zebedee. But this is a different James. And come back to Luke 6. He's one of the 12. And so is Jude, or a.k.a.

[22 : 26] Judas. Not the Judas you're thinking of. Look at Luke 6. Here's a list of the apostles.

Verse 14. Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James, the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

So there's a disciple of the Lord that we're not very familiar with named Judas. He's the brother of James. I think their father was Alphaeus, if I'm correct. And you'll see him show up.

His name is a little bit, a little bit hidden because in some of the other Gospels, his name is Thaddeus. In Matthew, he's called Labaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus.

And he goes out, sent out two by two, he's sent out with his brother James. So in John chapter 14, here's just a reference to the man. In verse 22, Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself?

And so there's a mention of him by name of Judas. So, okay, so that he's one of the twelve. The point I'm making and making that clearly with the Bible that you have in the back of your Bible these men, Peter, James, John, and Judas, the brother of another James, they're all Jewish apostles of the Lord.

[23 : 53] Their program is to stay with Israel and to preach to Israel and to minister to the Jews. And the apostle Paul is the one that goes out from there. Now, come to Acts chapter 28.

We've only got a few more references to look at and we'll tie this together. Acts chapter 28.

Historically speaking, the preaching to Jerusalem and to the Jews and to even the ones that were scattered abroad, historically speaking, that dried up.

Those apostles were martyred in some terrible ways, some of them. The Jews as a nation ultimately rejected not only their Messiah, but even then the preaching that followed it.

As a nation, they had nothing to do with this gospel and this opportunity and this offer. Initially, in the book of Acts, it grew, but it certainly phased out.

But you know what didn't phase out? It was the ministry of the apostle Paul to the Gentiles. That's still alive in Silmar. But the thing to the Jews, that fizzled out.

[25 : 05] And I'll show you some reasons why and then make the sense of all of this. So Acts 28, this is the close of the Acts of the Apostles. This is in time here and ending to a work that God had done with the Jews and moved to Paul.

And Paul's making one last ditch effort to get to the Jews here. In verse 17, it came to pass that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together.

And when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered prisoner from the Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. And he goes on to give the history of it.

And in verse 20, he says, For this cause, therefore, have I called for you to see you and to speak with you because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. The hope of Israel, the nation.

I want to talk to you, chief men, about what God has in store for you. And so they want to hear him about it. And they said in verse 22, We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest.

[26 : 08] And so in verse 23, When they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, many, these are the chief men of the Jews, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets from morning till evening.

And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed. After that, Paul had spoken one word.

It's the same word that Jesus Christ repeatedly spoke to the same Jews that rejected him. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Zaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive.

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and should be converted and I should heal them.

So here's Paul's parting cry. Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear it.

[27 : 23] End. Jews, you're done. Now flip to Romans chapter 11. The apostle Paul is going to declare this. It's over for you.

The preaching of Peter, James, John, and those apostles, they ministered to the Jews, they stuck with the Jews, and it started strong, and then it just died.

It took some time, but it died. But the thing that God did with the apostle Paul has yet to die. It's carrying on. Now there's reason. God temporarily, temporarily turned from Israel to offer salvation to the Gentiles, the salvation of God.

So Romans chapter 11, verse 11, I say then, have they, the nation of Israel, have they stumbled that they should fall?

God forbid. But rather, through their fall, salvation is common to the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, that's me and you getting in on this, and the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness, how much more when they get back with God is what he's saying.

[28 : 50] Look at verse 13, For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them, for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, Gentiles get in, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

In plainer words, God is not through with Israel. Their fullness is yet to be understood and take place. God is going to receive them, he said in verse 15.

And it's going to be a resurrection of that nation and that relationship with God. But for the time being, in the moment, that is not the case.

Therefore, we are still in this time period or this ministry that falls under the umbrella of the apostle Paul. Now, getting back to this Jewish apostles and their preaching and their messages, why are their epistles placed after the writings of Paul?

That's the question that I want to answer with you today. If all of that ministry was early in the book of Acts and preaching to the circumcision was alive and growing and things, but then it shifted and it

changed and it paused or it diminished, then why aren't there epistles like earlier on in the Bible because that's kind of the old message, the old days and then the shift went the apostle Paul.
[30 : 33] Why did those men that are martyred and went down before Paul, why is their epistles moved to the other side of Paul's writings?

And I believe that the order of the books of our New Testament show us that in God's eternal book, that while God temporarily is through with dealing with Israel as a nation and a people, he has shifted his attention to the Gentiles and to the church, but when he's through with the church, when Paul's ministry is through and stops, the next word is God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son. and the message is to Hebrews and to the 12 tribes and to those strangers and the message shifts when God is finished with his body and his bride, his church, the message is going to shift back to the nation of Israel and he's going to finish and he's going to fulfill what he had intended from way back, which there's much to be fulfilled.

So the teaching for you this morning to chew on and mull over in your heart and mind is the order of our New Testament books reveal that God sent his son to Israel, he came unto his own and his own received him not, but he turned his attention to anybody that will hear and receive, but he absolutely will return his attention back to those Hebrews the ones, the people he foreknew and that he covenanted with and that he loved with an everlasting love and what follows is what Jeremiah calls the time of Jacob's trouble, Jacob's trouble, not the body of Christ's trouble, not the believer's trouble, but Jacob's going to go through some trouble and Daniel chapter 12 tells us that it's a time of trouble like it's never been on that nation before and when they go through that trouble, the deliverer's going to show up and that shows up here in Romans 11 and verse 26 when the deliverer shows up and puts a new heart in them and makes them his people again and they're back on top and the Lord Jesus

Christ establishes the throne of his glory on the earth, but I believe their books are the way they are for a reason, you don't see Paul and Peter's books mixed, you know, 1 Peter here and then Galatians in Romans 2, you don't see that stuff at all, they're purposely divided and separated, segregated even, because there's something going on there, there's an overview, a bigger picture and I think it's pretty plain once you get it, it doesn't mean that it's not this hyper dispensational thought of well if only the Pauline epistles can we read and study and believe because Peter's writing to people that have been bought with the precious blood of Christ and so have we, he writes to a people that have been begotten again unto a lively hope and so have we and we can take the truth Peter gives to believers just like we can, they could take what Paul gives to believers but we just have to understand if something, because there gets to be some really hairy language back in Hebrews and James and 1 John and so you can really trip and fall and I'd say that when that gets to be countering the

[34 : 14] Apostle Paul's message to the church then you realize oh wait, God's going to shift back to the Jews, he's going to have a message for them after the church is gone and that's why I believe those things are all sandwiched back toward the back so that's the thought today of the order of the books in your King James Bible not chronological not historically laid out in that way at all but there's a purpose and it reveals a truth if you study it out so let's take a break there and something for you to think on alright take a break