

# RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

INTRODUCTION: The apostle Paul, in writing to a young Christian preacher Timothy, said, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The word of truth is the Bible, the word of God. (John 17:17). Handled aright, this word points the way from earth to heaven. Wrongly divided, however, the word of truth can be changed into the word of error. If we would be "workmen that need not be ashamed," let us approach the word of truth reverently so that we divide it aright.

- I. The bible is God's great library.
  - A Undivided, the Bible contains a total of 66 books.
  - B. The first major division of the Bible is the Old Testament.
    1. The Old Testament contains 39 separate books.
    2. The Old Testament covers two distinct dispensations or grand periods of religion.
      - A. From Genesis 1:1 up to Exodus 20, God dealt with the patriarchs by individuals and families.
      - B. From Exodus 20 through Malachi (in fact, on up to Acts 2) God dealt with the Jews as a nation.
    3. Approximately 32 writers, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, set down the words of the Old Testament.
      - A. Some Bible scholars think the book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible; others think the writings of Moses are the oldest.
      - B. In either case, the Old Testament required approximately 1,100 years to complete.
      - C. The last writings of the Old Testament were finished approximately 400 years before Christ.
  - C. The second major division of the Bible is the New Testament.
    1. The New Testament contains 27 separate books.
    2. The first four books of the New Testament, up to the 2nd chapter of Acts, are somewhat transitional, leading from the Jewish dispensation to the Christian dispensation.
      - a. In these books the basic principles of the Christian faith are clearly announced.
      - b. However, they did not come into force until the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

3. From Acts 2 forward the New Testament (i.e., Christian) dispensation was in force.
  4. In all, eight writers recorded the words chosen by the Holy Spirit as they wrote the books of the New Testament.
    - a. Roughly 40 to 60 years were consumed, in this endeavor.
- II. The Old Testament is properly divided into five sections:
- A. The first section of the Old Testament is primarily law.
    1. It comprises five books.
      - a. Genesis
      - b. Exodus
      - c. Leviticus
      - d. Numbers
      - e. Deuteronomy
    2. From Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 20, God revealed his will to individuals and families.
      - a. The male heads of families, known as patriarchs, served as sort of priests to their families.
      - b. God gave no general system of religion during this period, covering approximately 2,500 years.
    3. Beginning with Exodus 20, at Mount Sinai (in Arabia), the remainder of the Old Testament was to the children of Israel, i.e. the Jews.
  - B. The second section of the Old Testament is primarily history.
    1. It comprises 12 books.
      - a. Joshua
      - b. Judges
      - c. Ruth
      - d. 1 Samuel
      - e. 2 Samuel
      - f. 1 Kings
      - g. 2 Kings
      - h. 1 Chronicles
      - i. 2 Chronicles
      - j. Ezra
      - k. Nehemiah
      - l. Esther

2. This historical section is written and assembled in chronological order.
  3. It is a history of God's dealings with the Jewish nation from their entry into Canaan to approximately 400 B.C.
- C. The third section of the Old Testament is primarily literature.
1. It comprises five books.
    - a. Job
    - b. Psalms
    - c. Proverbs
    - d. Ecclesiastes
    - e. Song of Solomon
  2. As in the other sections, of course, a little law, a little history and even a little prophecy are scattered through these books here and there.
  3. However, for the most part, their nature is literary or poetical.
    - a. They are noted for their beauty and incisiveness of expression.
    - b. They contain truth that is eternal.
- D. The fourth section of the Old Testament contains the major prophets.
1. It comprises five books.
    - a. Isaiah
    - b. Jeremiah
    - c. Lamentations
    - d. Ezekiel
    - e. Daniel
  2. This section is usually referred to by Bible scholars as the major prophets
    - a. Not because these prophecies are any more important than the other prophecies;
    - b. Rather because these writings are more extensive than those of the other prophets.
- E. This fifth section of the Old Testament is called the minor prophets.
1. It comprises 12 books
    - a. Hosea
    - b. Joel
    - c. Amos
    - d. Obadiah
    - e. Jonah
    - f. Micah

- g. Nahum
  - h. Habakkuk
  - i. Zephaniah
  - j. Haggai
  - k. Zechariah
  - l. Malachi
2. These books are called minor prophets because they are limited in extent, not because they are less important.

III. The New Testament, likewise, has five principal sections:

- A. The first section of the New Testament, the gospel, is biography.
- 1. It comprises four books
    - a. Matthew
    - b. Mark
    - c. Luke
    - d. John
  - 2. The purpose of these books is to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- B. The second section of the New Testament is primarily history.
- 1. It comprises one book, The Acts of the Apostles.
  - 2. This book does not pretend to set forth all the acts of all the apostles.
  - 3. Rather it tells some of the acts of some of the apostles.
    - a. From Acts 1 through 12, the history largely centers around the apostle Peter.
    - b. From Acts 13 through 28, the history is devoted mostly to the apostle Paul.
- C. The third section of the New Testament is made up of special letters.
- 1. It comprises 14 books.
    - a. Romans
    - b. 1 Corinthians
    - c. 2 Corinthians
    - d. Galatians
    - e. Ephesians
    - f. Philippians
    - g. Colossians
    - h. 1 Thessalonians

- i. 2 Thessalonians
  - j. 1 Timothy
  - k. 2 Timothy
  - l. Titus
  - m. Philemon
  - n. Hebrews
2. Paul, the apostle, almost certainly wrote all 14 of these books.
    - a. Some Bible scholars have tried to cast doubt as to his authorship of Hebrews.
    - b. However, most scholars agree that Hebrews, too, was written by Paul.
  3. The purpose of these 14 books is to instruct Christians as to how they should behave and proceed in the church.
- D. The fourth section of the New Testament comprises general letters.
1. It contains seven books.
    - a. James
    - b. 1 Peter
    - c. 2 Peter
    - d. 1 John
    - e. 2 John
    - f. 3 John
    - g. Jude
  2. The title of each of these books suggests who wrote it.
  3. These books are also for the general instruction of Christians in the church.
- E. The fifth (and last) section of the New Testament is prophecy.
1. It contains one book—Revelation.
  2. It was written by the apostle John on Patmos.
  3. The first three chapters of Revelation deal with matters past and then-present re: “the seven churches of Asia.”
    - a. “Asia” in Revelation refers to Asia Minor, i.e., Turkey.
    - b. The same cities mentioned as in Asia are antiquities in modern Turkey right today.

## Lesson 1

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4. The remaining 19 chapters of Revelation deal mostly with the future of the church from the year A.D. 96, when the book was written.
  - a. Probably much of the material, highly figurative in expression, was future in A.D. 96.
  - b. However, there is little doubt that at least part of Revelation, as prophecy, is yet to be fulfilled.

This completes Lesson 1.

Study carefully then answer the questions on lesson 1.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR LESSON ONE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Number \_\_\_\_\_

Graded by \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR LESSON ONE**

1. What writer instructed the young preacher Timothy to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth?" \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many books does the Bible contain? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many books are in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many books are in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many major divisions are in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name the major divisions of the Bible: (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Identify the religious dispensations in the Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Approximately how many writers wrote the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did those Old Testament writers prophesy (a) according to their own will? or (b) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit? (For your answer, please study 2 Pet. 1:21) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Approximately how many years did it take to complete the writing of the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Approximately how many writers wrote the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Approximately how many years elapsed between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Did the New Testament writers (a) choose their own words, or (b) were the words supplied them by the Holy Spirit? (Before answering, please study 1Cor. 2:13) \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Approximately how many years did it take to complete the writing of the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Rightly divided, how many sections of books are contained in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Name (in order) the divisions of the Old Testament, stating the number of books each division contains:

The Divisions	How Many Books?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

17. Rightly divided, how many sections of books are contained in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Name (in order) the divisions of the New Testament, stating the number of books each division contains:

The Divisions	How Many Books?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

19. On what day did Jesus Christ's principles become of force? \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson 1**

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20. What Bible reference was it? (Give book and chapters) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a question?

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