

So what is dispensationalism? It is built firmly upon 2 Timothy 2:15. The Apostle Paul tells us to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**” This is dispensationalism in a nut shell: it attempts to rightly divide the Scriptures into its proper place. God Almighty commands us to divide the Scriptures rightly. There is a right way to divide the Scriptures and there is a wrong way. Before any effort of your own, God has already made a division before you even pick up his word. We have the Old Testament and the New Testament. Every Christian must admit there is a great difference between the Old and New Testaments. No Christian is bringing a lamb without blemish to offer a sin offering to God today. No Christian is commanded to keep the Sabbath days, feasts, new moons, and circumcision today. We can eat whatever we want, for it is sanctified by the word of God in prayer. We can spend all day listing the differences between the Old Testament and New Testament. Suffice it to say there is a distinction between the testaments.

This is what dispensationalism does, it makes several important distinctions which are necessary in order to understand the word of truth. It divides the Scriptures. Well, how are we to divide the Scriptures? The Scriptures plainly declare the divisions. For instance, the dispensationalist makes a distinction between Israel and the Church. Why do we do this? Because the Scriptures maintains this distinction throughout the whole Bible. In 1 Corinthians 10:32, Paul lists the three different groups of people in the world: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God.

In the Old Testament, there were only two types of people in the world: the Jew (those that are Israelites after the flesh) and the Gentile (everybody else). In fact there were no distinctions between any people up until Abraham. In Genesis 12 following, God calls Abraham and promises to make a great nation out of him. Through his son Isaac and through his son Jacob, and through Jacob’s twelve sons we have the nation of Israel, God’s chosen people. There are numerous verses that plainly state that God chose Israel to be his peculiar people and treasure above all the people of the earth; and that through his chosen people, the promised seed would come and bless all the nations and families of the world.

In the New Testament we have three types of people in the world: the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. The Church did not exist in the Old Testament. When one considers what the church is in verity and truth, one cannot conclude the church started in the Old Testament, for the Scripture declares that the church is the body of Christ.¹ How could the body of Christ exist if he had not come into the world yet? Jesus said in Matthew that upon this rock I will build my church.² This is spoken of in a future tense. He would at some point build his church. There is no church or body of Christ in the Old Testament. Israel is one entity, the church (made up of Jews and Gentiles) another, and the Gentiles another.

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:27, Colossians 1:18.

² Matthew 16:18.

Dispensationalists believe that God has dealt with man differently through out the ages because he has! God has not always dealt the same way with man from the beginning to the end. Consider the world before Adam and Eve sinned then after they sinned. Boy what a difference! What about after the flood and under the law? There are many differences. What about the New Testament and the Mosaic Law? God has not changed as the Scriptures say, but his dealings with man have changed and can change and the whole Bible reveals this to be so.³

Dispensationalists, as mentioned in chapter one, take the Bible literally. Not only do we take the Bible literally we do it consistently. All other unbiblical hermeneutics mix allegorical and literal methods of interpretations, and of course, they pick whichever one best serves their interests at that particular time. For instance, in college I took a Contemporary Theological Thought class and we read many pluralistic books, one of them was by Jacques Dupuis, a professor of theology at the Gregorian University and of the Vidyajyoti College of Theology in Delhi, India. He wrote a book called *Christianity and the Other Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*. He says a lot of outrageous things that are flat out heretical. He says that Paul believed that the pagans and Gentiles could “attain saving faith, that is, without explicit faith in Jesus Christ.”⁴ Then why did Paul go around preaching that you need to believe explicitly on Jesus Christ in order to be saved?⁵ Why did Paul desire in his heart and pray to God that Israel *might* be saved if they were already saved?⁶ If anyone believed in the true God it was Israel. Even though they believed in the right God, and tried to keep his law, rejecting the Messiah Jesus doomed them and condemned them. As Paul said, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God (that is Jesus Christ).⁷ He goes on to say that you must confess that Jesus is Lord and believe God raised him from the dead in order to be saved. That’s pretty explicit isn’t it! Or what of the Gentile Cornelius, who feared God and was a just man? God sent an angel unto him and told him to send for Peter who “...shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”⁸ Peter understood this to mean that God wanted him to tell Cornelius words by which he and his house would be saved.⁹ Clearly Cornelius, even though he prayed to the right God and was a just man, was not saved. For those that believe in him (Jesus Christ) shall receive remission of sins.¹⁰

It is interesting to point out here what Peter said in Acts 10:34-35, “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Clearly Peter had Cornelius in mind when he said this statement. Brother and sister, is it not true that those who fear the Lord, and do that which is right in the sight of

³ Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8.

⁴ Jacques Dupuis. *Christianity and the Other Religions*. (New York: Orbis Books). 34.

⁵ Acts 16:31.

⁶ Romans 10:1-13.

⁷ Romans 10:3-4 and Romans 3:21-22.

⁸ Acts 10:6

⁹ Acts 11:14.

¹⁰ Acts 10:43.

the Lord please him? Peter says that that man is accepted with God. Nevertheless, that man is still not saved if he does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. For salvation is not of works but by grace through faith.¹¹ This truth is made known in Acts 10 with the story of Cornelius. You have a man that is doing right in the sight of the Lord, and praying to God always, giving alms, yet he is lacking belief in the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is absolutely necessary for your sins to be blotted out and to be saved from God's wrath: you *must* believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This story tells you that a man can keep God's word and fear him, and do good, but if he does not believe in Jesus Christ he is not saved. And what about the Gentile that believes and trusts in that which are no gods, the idols of the nations? Clearly if a Jew or Gentile that believes in the right God and is doing good, is not saved because he does not believe in Jesus Christ, how much more is the Gentile not saved?

Consider what Dupuis does to Acts 4:12. The Holy Bible says this: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." This verse is so clear: it teaches that salvation is *only* in the Lord Jesus Christ and that no other name under heaven can save you. Not Mohamed, not Buddha, not Gandhi; no pope, priest, bishop, pastor, deacon, rabbi, can save you; only by Jesus Christ can one receive salvation as a free gift of God's grace and love! Then if that wasn't enough he says that we *must* be saved by that name, Jesus Christ. If that doesn't teach that salvation is only in Jesus Christ, I don't know what else will. Then Dupuis might say where does it teach that we must explicitly have faith in Jesus Christ? It says in John 3:18 that if you do not believe on the name of the Son of God you are condemned already. But if you do believe on his name you are not condemned. You see you *must* believe on the name of Jesus Christ or you are condemned. It's clear and simple, plain and obvious. This is the literal approach. Here is what Dupuis says concerning Acts 4:12. This man says that this proclamation by Peter is "taken out of context" and it is *not* to be understood as "a timeless truth detached from its historic context. In fact, however, the text is abused if it is used as a springboard for a negative judgment on the religions."¹² He goes on to say that that this text is not an absolute and exclusivist text and should not be taken that way. Well that's fine you can believe that but that is not what the Bible actually says. You see these people *must* allegorize and spiritualize and tell you there is a "deeper meaning" beyond the literal sense and that is where the truth of the Bible is. From that point they can create what God says and doesn't say in order to fit in with whatever they want for whatever reason: it doesn't matter.

He then says even more absurdities. "...such a theology, often understood by the Christian churches in an exclusive and absolute sense, does not do justice to Jesus' ministry of the Reign of God, which recognized the positive value in God's eyes of the religious experience of others and of the religious traditions in which they lived their faith in the God of the Reign and of Life."¹³ He is saying God says there is positive value in other religions! Is he serious! Listen, if you have ever read a Bible he clearly says in the

¹¹ Ephesians 2:8-9

¹² Jacques Dupuis. *Christianity and the Other Religions*. (New York: Orbis Books). 39.

¹³ *Ibid.* 41.

first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me and commands his chosen people not to make any images and bow down to them or serve them.” This is exactly what the pagans did. God said don’t do it. He said to break down the altars and groves of the other nations and destroy them utterly!¹⁴ In reality the nations did not worship the one true God but devils!¹⁵

Again, if you adopt an allegorical interpretive approach to the Scriptures you can create anything you want and make God say and not say anything you desire, like Dupuis does. But that is not the Creator and Maker of heaven and earth, the one and true living God: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is no god. Again this point cannot be overemphasized enough: the prophets, the apostles, and the Lord himself took the Bible literally: we have absolutely no reason to take it any other way.

The reason why people hate the literal approach to the Bible is that they do not like what it says because it reveals the thoughts and intents of the heart and condemns the sinner and exalts the Saviour. They despise a literal interpretation of the Bible because they don’t agree with what the Scripture says! They know better than God and would do things differently and would have done things differently. “Well if I was God, I would...” but your not; “If I was God, I would have not let...” but you’re not as wise as God. Listen, this goes back to the garden of Eden when they were deceived into thinking that God was holding out on them. They started to question God! But wasn’t God right? We surely do die and we live in sick, sinful, wicked, evil world that has been corrupted by man’s rebellion against God. The devil was wrong and God was right. What it comes down to is they want to be as gods! But they are not, we are not. God’s word the Bible tells man he is not God and that he does not run it all and the world does not revolve around his will; it tells them it is only God’s way or no way: its all about God and his glory! It speaks the truth! Even Jesus said, “Blessed is he, whosoever is not offended in me.”¹⁶ You see Jesus Christ offends people, he does! The God of the Bible offends many people. They hate him without a cause.¹⁷ They don’t like the God of judgment and justice that will by no means clear the guilty, that commands us to keep his ways and walk in them and live accordingly to godliness.¹⁸ That tells us we are all sinners and come short of the glory of God.¹⁹ That tells us our righteousness are as filthy rags.²⁰ The world doesn’t like hearing that! They don’t like the fact that God is going to judge them according to their works, for no flesh shall be justified in his sight, nor glory in his presence.²¹ But praise God he has made a way out for us through Jesus Christ. God condemned his Son that he might not have to condemn us. What a God! What a Saviour! Those that believe on him have no fear of condemnation, for they have

¹⁴ 2 Chronicles 14:2-5. On example is enough. For there is a multitude of scriptures that illustrate this truth!

¹⁵ Psalm 106:34-40.

¹⁶ Matthew 11:6.

¹⁷ John 15:25.

¹⁸ Exodus 34:7, John 14:15, Titus 2:11-14.

¹⁹ Romans 3:10-23.

²⁰ Isaiah 64:6.

²¹ Romans 3:20, Galatians 2:16, 1 Corinthians 1:29.

already passed from death to life, from the power of darkness to light, and have been translated into the kingdom of his dear son! They have the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them and not their own sins. And because he lives, we shall live also. We shall live for ever knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent!

Dispensationalists take the Bible literally because the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ did. So why would anyone opt for a different approach to the Scriptures? It is mainly due to the belief that there are contradictions and conflicting doctrines in the Holy Bible. By the first half of the third century, some expositors spoke of the books as a single book because God was the author of them all. "That in turn led to the assumption that diversity was embarrassing, that different standpoints within the biblical books should be harmonized, lest the authority of the sacred writings be diminished... the obscurity of parts of the scripture was also a source of embarrassment if one took the books collectively to be the essential medium of divine revelation; but that could be mitigated by allegory..."²² "At times this took the sophisticated form of explaining contradictions between biblical texts at the literal, historical level as being deliberately placed there by the divine author to teach the point that a deeper meaning lies beyond the literal sense."²³ Now the fact is there *are* conflicting and contradictory passages and doctrines in the Bible. However, this issue is easily resolved by the command of God to "rightly divide the word of truth." When you rightly divide the Bible, all contradictions disappear.

For instance compare these passages: Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20 with Matthew 5:33-36. In the two passages in Deuteronomy the Scripture says we are to swear by the name of the LORD. This is what these texts say literally. Then we read in Matthew Jesus goes against the teaching of the Old Testament and he says "swear not at all." Well which one is it? The answer to this apparent contradiction is found in rightly dividing the word of truth. Under the Old Testament they were to swear by the name of Jehovah. Under the New Testament we are not to swear by the name of the LORD. There is no problem when you divide the word of truth. There are differences between the Old and New Testament.²⁴

What about Psalm 51:9-11 and John 14:16, 26? David is praying to the LORD after he sinned by going into Bathsheba and asks the LORD not to take the holy spirit away from him. Then we read in John 14 the Holy Ghost will abide with us for ever. David is afraid of losing him and prays to God that he does not depart from David and Jesus says he will never leave you and abide with you for ever. Why did David pray this? Because he saw that the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul because of his sin (1 Samuel 15:24-26, 16:14) and he did not want that to happen to him. So is there a contradiction between Psalm 51 and John 14? Not if you rightly divide the word of truth. Under the Old Testament the Spirit of God came upon man and left (except David which

²² John McManners. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*. (New York: Oxford University Press).

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²³ Ibid. 33.

²⁴ Jeremiah 31:31-34.

is a great type of how the Spirit of God will not leave the born again believer today).²⁵ Under the New Testament and under the dispensation of the grace of God a man is born again of the Spirit and he will never leave nor forsake the saint. He shall abide with you for ever.

So supposed contradictions in the Bible are from not rightly dividing the word of truth. Do not lump together what God hath sundered. You cannot lump all of the word of God together and apply it all to everybody since the fall of man. God has taught man progressively.

Look at what God said in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. **But the word of the LORD was unto them** precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; **here a little, and there a little**; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.²⁶

God has revealed himself progressively throughout time. God did not teach and show all things under the Old Testament but revealed things to man as it pleased him.²⁷ For the Scripture says, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."²⁸ God has revealed things progressively. The Lord said by Isaiah, "... my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed."²⁹ He said this referring to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God (Romans 3:21-22, 10:3-4). Do you see that? At the time of Isaiah, hundreds of years after the law was given by God to Moses, God still had not revealed his righteousness and his salvation: it was still to come in the future. God chose to reveal his word and himself progressively by showing Israel here a little and there a little over time. It would be foolish to apply all of the Scriptures to yourself since (1) it is not all addressing you³⁰, (2) and God operated differently throughout the ages³¹. If these two things are true, then obviously there is going to be "contradictions" and differences concerning doctrine in the Bible as a *whole* but there are certainly not contradictions when it's rightly divided.

²⁵ 1 Samuel 16:13.

²⁶ Isaiah 28:9-13.

²⁷ Read Ephesians 3. The Gentiles being partakers of the same body of his promise in Christ by the gospel was kept hidden in God and not made known unto the sons of men in Old Testament times.

²⁸ Deuteronomy 29:29.

²⁹ Isaiah 56:1.

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 10:32.

³¹ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

The man that championed the allegorical approach to the Scriptures was Origen. With Origen “originated” the allegorical hermeneutic. Origen is believed to have lived during 184-254 AD. Now this man was a heretic. He was a universalist and a pluralist. He believed “if God is pure goodness, so that divine punishments are always therapeutic, not merely retributive, and if freedom is alienable in all created rational beings, then ultimately even the most wicked will be purified by divine love and fit for salvation. Then Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God will be all in all. This all includes even Satan himself, for he felt that to concede that any rational creature is irredeemable would be to surrender to Gnostic dualism.”³² He believed that all would be saved in the end, even the devil. This flat out goes against the teachings of the Scriptures.³³

Origen saw three levels of meaning: (1) a literal historical sense, (2) a moral meaning, (3) and a spiritual interpretation. The existence of the latter two he thought proved by the presence of some biblical texts where the literal sense seemed absurd or contradictory; such texts must have been placed there as signposts to a spiritual allegorical exegesis.³⁴ He believed the literal sense is the first rung on the ladder to the eternal spiritual meaning. In other words, the spiritual meaning is where the real truth lies and not in the literal sense. Notice how he said some things when taken literally in the Bible seemed absurd and contradictory to him. What saith the LORD of hosts? “For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”³⁵ You better check your heart when you think God is in error or is immoral: for we know that all that the Great God does is in righteousness and in truth. Do we know better than God? I think not. As the Scripture says, let God be true and every man a liar.³⁶

Now Origen is right concerning the different senses of the Scriptures: the literal, moral, and spiritual interpretation. However we believe that all of the Scripture contains the truth “as it is written”, and also that all spiritual applications of the Scriptures are *only valid if they can be found elsewhere in the Sacred Scriptures in a literal sense*. What do I mean by this? As Christians when we look at the Exodus of the children of Israel out Egypt we spiritualize that story and apply it to ourselves. We see the Israelites as slaves groaning and mourning, wanting to be delivered from their bondage. Christians spiritualize the passage as follows: We are like Israel, we were the servants of sin and were in bondage (like Israel was to the Egyptians) and could do nothing about it; we needed someone to set us free. Moses (as Christ) comes and sets us free from serving sin in Egypt (type of the world, the flesh, and devil) and now enabled us to serve the true and living God. And people can preach that off of this story in the book of Exodus because it is found elsewhere in the Scriptures. We did serve sins all our life and the

³² John McManners. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*. (New York: Oxford University Press). 52-53.

³³ Revelation 20:10.

³⁴ John McManners. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*. (New York: Oxford University Press). 53.

³⁵ Isaiah 55:8-9.

³⁶ Romans 3:4.

Son has made us free that we might serve God.³⁷ Now we do not deny the historical account of the book of Exodus at all, we believe it to be literally and historically true. Yet at the same time there is spiritual truth in that story that we can apply to ourselves.

Again all spiritual interpretations and applications of the Scriptures is *only valid if they can be found elsewhere in the Sacred Scriptures in a literal sense*. Here is an example of spiritualizing a passage of Scripture which has no basis at all literally in the Bible. The Romanists say that Mary is the second Eve just as Christ is the Second or Last Adam. Now we know that Jesus Christ is the Last Adam because that is what it literally says in 1 Corinthians 15:45. However *no where* does it say that Mary is the second Eve. The Bible does not say that there is a second Eve at all, let alone it being Mary. If there is a second Eve it would be the church, since it is referred to as the bride of Christ. They take those texts in Genesis and see that as a type of Mary and spiritually apply that passage making Mary the second Eve, but that doctrine is found nowhere in the whole Bible. They say, well you have Adam and Eve, and Jesus is the last Adam, therefore there *must* be a second or last Eve and that last Eve is Mary. According to whom, you? You see with this approach you can take a verse and then make some sort of spiritual application with it and create doctrines off of it that are not found literally written in the Bible. The amount of man made doctrines you can create with an allegorical approach to the Bible is virtually endless and that is why it is so appealing for many today who heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts.³⁸

Do you see the problems the allegorical approach causes? It enables the expositor to make God say and not say anything he wants for whatever reason. Notice one of Origen's problems was reconciling the goodness of God with the eternal judgment of God. He could not *accept* that many would be tormented for ever and ever in a lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. What did our Lord say? "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."³⁹ The reason why men like the allegorical approach is because they don't like what God has literally said in his word. Therefore they wrest the Scriptures for their own purposes (and in reality to their own destruction) that they might create a god in man's own image, and after his likeness.⁴⁰

The fact of the matter is that we are to take the Scriptures literally. The prophet Daniel did. Look at Daniel 9:1-2, "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Notice how Daniel understood by reading the prophet Jeremiah that God would accomplish 70 years of desolation in Jerusalem.

³⁷ John 8:34-36, Romans 6:17-22.

³⁸ 2 Timothy 4:3.

³⁹ Matthew 7:13-14.

⁴⁰ 2 Peter 3:16.

Where did he read that in Jeremiah? That's simple, Jeremiah 25:11 and Jeremiah 29:10. You know what it says in those two verses? Jerusalem shall be a desolation for 70 years and after 70 years God would cause the children of Israel to return to this place. Daniel took the word of the LORD that he read in the book of Jeremiah literally! I'll say it again, the prophet Daniel who was greatly beloved of God, that received the greatest revelation of the coming and death of Messiah and the end of all things, took the Scriptures, the writings of Jeremiah, which he called the word of the LORD, literally. If the prophet Daniel took that literally, and God did not correct him for it, yea, rather blessed him the more with the revelation that Messiah would be cut off but not for himself, the only explicit statement in the whole Old Testament that said this, because he believed God's word as it was written, how much more are we to take God's word as it is written? One the wickedest things you can do is not take the Bible literally. The spiritual and allegorical approach to the Bible is an unbiblical one. Daniel believed what he read, and God blessed him and answered his prayer. He didn't have a higher education (thank God), he was not scholar (that is why he was wise), he didn't question or doubt what he read, he simply was a sinner that believed what he read in God's book!

When it comes to interpreting the Bible, you must believe what you are reading. Why wouldn't you? The Bible is God's word. You automatically should assume it is true, why wouldn't you? Did you not come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through the word of the Lord? It was true when it said, if you call upon the name of the Lord you would be saved, wasn't it? Yea it was. Praise the Lord. You want to understand the Scriptures? Believe every word of that Book. That is the advice I was given the very night I was saved and it was the best advice I have ever received. You can't go wrong if you believe that Book. Believe the Bible and take it "as it is written", take it literally. Make sure your heart is right in the sight of the Lord and that you are not using the Bible to promote your agenda. Ask the Lord in prayer to teach you and guide you into all truth. Make sure you remember that the wisdom of the Holy Ghost comes by comparing Scripture with Scripture, so when you are reading and a verse or passage comes to remembrance, go check it out. Compare and Contrast the things in the Scriptures. You will start to see parallel passages and get a clearer picture about that topic or issue. Also, always remember to rightly divide the word of truth. Don't confound the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God, maintain those distinctions.