

KEYS TO BIBLE STUDY

S.L.H.
Soli Deo Gloria!

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." (**Proverbs 25:2**)

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." (**Deuteronomy 29:29**)

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (**Acts 17:11**)

OUTLINE

- 1) Literal-Grammatical-Historical Interpretation
- 2) Right Division
- 3) Paul Is Our Apostle
- 4) Cross References

1) LITERAL-GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION. (**Neh8:8**)

"The Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense." (William Tyndale)

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. In other words, take every word of Scripture at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental Biblical truths, indicate otherwise." (David L. Cooper)

A. Scripture teaches its own literal interpretation (**Exod20:11; Dan9:2; 2Pet1:16**). See CHART: APPROACHES TO INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE.

"Every theologian and faithful interpreter of the heavenly doctrine must necessarily be first a grammarian..." (Philip Melancthon)

B. Grammar is critical to proper interpretation (**Matt16:18; 22:32; Act13:48; Rom9:22**).

Interpretation of Acts 13:48. First, "ordained" does not mean foreordained (Cp., 1Pet1:20), so nothing indicates, much less necessitates, that this ordination relates to an eternal decree of God. Second, God is not the subject of this clause (i.e., the one who "ordained"). Rather, the Greek participle "ordained" occurs here in the middle voice, and is preceded by the Greek verb "believed" which occurs in the active voice; thus, those who "believed" **ordained themselves** (by believing) to "eternal life" (at the moment they exercised faith). The contrast to this is seen in Romans 9:22, where the verb "fitted" is in the middle voice (i.e., "fitted themselves").

C. Historical context is critical to proper interpretation (see Right Division).

2) **RIGHT DIVISION.** (2Tim2:15)

"Again, it shall greatly help thee to understand scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and unto whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after." (Miles Coverdale)

"As Christians, therefore, we must be dispensational as well as scriptural. We must rightly divide the word of truth." (Keith Blades)

A. Dispensational vs. Scriptural:

Acceptable Foods (Cp., Gen1:29; 9:3; Lev11:2-12; 1Tim4:3-4)

Sabbath Observance (Cp., Exod20:9-10; Rom14:5)

Tithing (Cp., Mal3:7-11; Matt23:23; 2Cor9:6-7)

"Every heresy in this age is a misplaced truth of God." (Peter Ruckman)

B. The most important divisions among peoples are between Jews (i.e., Israel), Gentiles, and the Church (**1Cor10:32**; cf. 2Cor5:17; Gal3:27-28). See CHART: CATAGORIES OF HUMANITY ON EARTH to illustrate 3 divisions of peoples.

C. The most important divisions in time are "time past" (Eph2:11; i.e., before the Church Age), "but now" (Eph2:13; i.e., the Church Age), and "the ages to come" (Eph2:7; i.e., after the Church Age). See CHART: HISTORICAL PANORAMA OF SCRIPTURE to illustrate 3 divisions of time.

3) **PAUL IS OUR APOSTLE.** (1Cor11:1-2; 1Tim1:16; 2:7; cf. Rom11:13; 15:16; Gal2:7-9; Eph3:1,8)

Doctrine for the Church during the Dispensation of Grace (Eph3:2) is found in the epistles of Paul (i.e., **Romans-Philemon**; see CHART: HISTORICAL PANORAMA OF SCRIPTURE). Note that the Gospels record history during a period of time that preceded the beginning of the New Testament (cf. Heb9:16-17), and the epistles of Hebrews, James, and 1&2 Peter were explicitly written to Jews (cf. Jas1:1; 1Pet1:1-2; 2Pet3:1).

A. All Scripture is for us, but not all Scripture is to us (cf. Rom15:4). Christians err when they assume all of the N.T. is to us.

B. Gospels: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt19:16-17; Cp., Eph2:8-9; Tit3:5)

C. Jewish Epistles: "holy nation"? (1Pet2:9-10; Cp., Exod19:5-6; Hos1:9-10); "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"? (Jas2:21-24; cf. 1Jn2:3-4; Rev12:17; 14:12; Cp., Eph2:8-9).

4) **CROSS-REFERENCES.** (1Cor2:13; Isa28:9-10; cf. 2Tim3:16-17)

The most important aid in understanding any particular verse of Scripture, apart from its immediate context, is to let Scripture be its own interpreter by making use of cross-references. All that Scripture has to say on any subject is never found in a single place, but it is consistently distributed throughout Scripture¹.

¹ This is a divine design feature of Scripture, and there are very technical reasons for it from the field of information science, often highlighted in the teachings of

Let Scripture define its own terms. For example:

- A. Adoption (Cp., Gal4:5; Eph1:5; Rom8:23)
- B. Predestination (Cp., Eph1:11; Rom8:29)
- C. Elect/Election (Cp., Matt24:31; Isa45:4)
- D. Atonement & remission of sins (O.T.; cf. Lev16:34; Mk1:4) vs.
Propitiation & forgiveness of sins (N.T.; cf. Jer31:31,34; Act13:38-39;
1Jn2:2; 4:10)

the late Chuck Missler. In a scenario in which message transmission is subject to hostile jamming (cf. 2Cor2:17; Cp., Deut4:2; 12:32; Prov30:5; Rev22:18-19), the most effective countermeasure is to distribute the signal across the entire available bandwidth.