

# RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

Introduction: The apostle Paul, in writing to a young Christian preacher, Timothy, said, “*Study to show 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, the word points the way from earth to heaven. Wrongly “*divided*,” however, the “*word of truth*” can be changed into the word of ERROR. Let us approach the word of truth reverently and 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 over 1,000 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 onward the New Testament (i.e., Christian) dispensation was in force.
  4. Eight writers recorded the words chosen by the Holy Spirit as they wrote the books of the New Testament, during a span of approximately 50 years.

## **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 a sort of priest 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 twelve 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. The 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.
  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 generally referred to by Bible scholars as “*major prophets*.”
    - a. Not because these prophecies are any more important than other prophecies.
    - b. Rather because these writings are more extensive than those of other prophets.

E. The fifth section of the Old Testament is called the **MINOR PROPHETS**.

1. It comprises twelve 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 records*,” 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 actions 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 fourteen 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





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

**The Division:**

**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 in each division:

**The Division:**

**How Many Books?**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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

\_\_\_\_\_

20. What Bible reference proves this (give book and chapter)? \_\_\_\_\_



## Basic Bible Course

by Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Lesson

#1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reference # \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_