

WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST #9

I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ Because...

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVES THE BIBLE IS TO BE "RIGHTLY DIVIDED." In 2 Timothy 2:15 we read: "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

The words "rightly dividing" mean to cut straight, to make straight or smooth. The Greeks often used the word for the work performed by a mason in cutting and squaring a stone so that it might be fitted in its proper place. The application of it in the Bible is for a diligent student to take every passage and use it in its proper place, i.e., handle it correctly.

We must not twist, wrangle or misuse a passage to make it fit what we desire, nor seek to make it occupy a place it will not fit. Some "wrest" (twist, torture, pervert) the Scriptures which leads to their own eternal destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Whenever we read a passage, there are a number of questions that must be answered to learn if this text has application to us today or to another people in another time (era):

1) **Who** is speaking (God through inspired teachers, or Satan through false teachers)?

2) To **whom** is this speaking (Jews, Christians, sinners, etc.)?

3) **When** (in what dispensation of time) is this passage speaking (Old or New Testament)?

4) **How** is this passage speaking (literally, figuratively)?

5) What is the **context** (surrounding verses) in which this is said? We are not to obey every statement or example in the Bible. For instance: Matthew 27:5 says Judas hanged himself and in Luke 10:37 Jesus said, "*go and do thou likewise.*" However, by "rightly dividing" these verses we know we are not to hang ourselves. In understanding the Bible we must be reasonable in handling the Word of Truth correctly.

Instead of approaching the Bible in a "hit and miss" fashion (here a scripture, there a scripture), we must use all the Scriptures as God has intended for them to be used. Therefore, we cannot go to the Law of Moses to learn how God desires to be worshiped today. That section of Scripture was for a different people (the Israelites), at a different time (before the church). Jesus died to take away the Old Testament and bring in the New Testament by which all men must live and worship today (Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:15-17).

Far too often, people do not rightly divide the word, which leads them to believe and practice things contrary to the Bible. We must "study" to shew ourselves approved unto God. This is done when we "handle aright" the word of God.

Search the Scriptures and make sure what you believe and practice is approved of God. Is it so with you?

— Garland M. Robinson