

The Basics of Grace
Part 3
Right Division I
Time Past, But Now, Ages to Come

Without a proper understanding of the Bible, it can seem like a hopeless tangle of ancient, unintelligible writings with no relevance to today. At best, we can hope to extract some random “good news” verses to guide our daily lives. However, with the proper key to the Bible, its wisdom comes alive. With that understanding, we can begin to appreciate the manifold wisdom of God. And with that understanding the Word of God transforms us.

- I. Overview of Right Division (II Timothy 2:15)
 - a. Essential to Understanding the Bible. By properly understanding the Bible, we can understand what God is and what He is not doing today and why. It also becomes apparent some of the reasons He dealt with mankind differently in the past and why He will deal differently again in the future.
 - b. Example of obvious differences in God’s dealing with mankind (Acts 10:10-16, Leviticus 11:2-7 (and the rest of the chapter), Genesis 2:15-17, 9:1-3, Romans 14:14, I Corinthians 10:25, I Timothy 4:3-5)

- II. “Time Past” (Ephesians 2:2, 11-12)
 - a. Gentiles given up and in an unfavored status (Romans 1:21-28—describes Genesis 1-12. See as an example Genesis 6:5, 11-13)
 - b. Primarily characterized by God’s dealings with Israel. Israel was God’s chosen people. To them God gave the promise that they would inherit (and rule) the earth. In this time period, all of God’s promises were to Israel.
 - i. Begins with calling of Abram and the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 17:1-8, 22:17-18)
 - ii. Israel under the Law (Exodus 19:3-6 and chapter 20, Joshua 24:19-27, Romans 3:1-2, I Peter 2:9)
 - iii. Jesus’ earthly ministry (Matthew 10:5-7, 15:22-24)
(In Matt 15, Jesus healed the woman’s daughter only after she acknowledged her place under Israel. See also Luke 7:1-10.)
 - iv. The Kingdom (Acts 1:6-7, 2:16-21, 3:19-21). The Kingdom is the culmination of God’s promises to Israel. The Kingdom was *offered* but not yet ushered in (we’ll cover this below).
 - v. Promises to Israel—there are many we did not cover, but important to note that the Gentiles were left out. They could only be blessed *through* Israel. The primary distinction was between circumcision and uncircumcision (Ephesians 2:11)
 - c. “Time Past” ends with the beginning of the ministry of Paul (Acts 9-13, I Corinthians 3:10, I Timothy 1:15-16)
 - i. Body of Christ is formed

- ii. Fall of Israel (Romans 11:25). (Temporarily set aside)
 - 1. Kingdom offered (see above)
 - 2. Israel rejects and is temporarily set aside (Acts 7 is symbolic of this rejection; see also Romans 10:1-3, 11:7-11. Acts 13:46 symbolizes Israel being set aside.)
- III. “But Now” (Ephesians 2:13. See also Romans 3:21, 16:26, Colossians 1:26)
 - a. The time period we are living in today
 - b. the Mystery
 - i. Never before revealed (Romans 16:25, Ephesians 3:1-11, Colossians 2:25-27)
 - ii. Jew and Gentile equality and Gentiles reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:14-19, 3:6, Romans 3:9, 19, Galatians 3:28, 5:6 Colossians 1:20-22, 3:11). No longer is Israel considered God’s special people; Gentiles have an equal standing before God.
 - iii. Salvation through faith only in Jesus Christ’s finished work on the cross (Romans 3:23-25, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 1:13, 2:8-9). Contrast these with Luke 18:31-34, Acts 2:37-38 (Christ’s death not seen as good news) as well as with Genesis 17:14, Luke 18:18-22, and James 2:24 (other things were required for salvation).
Additional rf: Acts 16:31, Romans 4:24, I Corinthians 15:1-3, Galatians 3:1-3, Titus 3:5-6
 - c. Characterized by God’s purpose with the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27, Ephesians 1:18-23, 5:25-32)
Additional rf: I Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 3:6, 4:4-6
 - d. Will end with the rapture (I Corinthians 15:51-58, I Thessalonians 4:14-18, Titus 2:13. See also I Thessalonians 5:1-9, II Thessalonians 2:1-7 (“let” means to hinder))
- IV. “Ages to Come” (Ephesians 2:7)
 - a. Tribulation (Day of the Lord, Jacob’s trouble, 70th week of Daniel) (Isaiah 13:6-11, Joel 2:28-32, Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 9:24-27, 12:1-3,)
 - i. After the rapture (II Thessalonians 2:1-7)
 - ii. Resumption of prophecy and God’s dealing with Israel
 - iii. Lasts 7 years
 - b. Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Zechariah 14:4,9, Matthew 24:29-31, Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11)
 - i. Subject of prophecy
 - ii. Not the rapture of the Body of Christ (Compare to I Corinthians 15:51-58 and I Thessalonians 4:14-18)
 - c. Millennial Kingdom (Isaiah 2:2-4, 11:1-10, Daniel 2:44, Matthew 25:34, Revelation 20:4-5)
Note: This Kingdom is part of the new covenant with Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-33, Romans 11:26-27)
 - d. Final Judgment (Daniel 12:1-3, Romans 2:16, II Thessalonians 1:9, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8)

- e. New Heaven and New Earth (Isaiah 65:17, II Peter 3:12-13, Revelation 21:1-3)
- f. Dispensation of the Fullness of Times (Ephesians 1:10). God completes his purpose on earth and in the heavenlies.
 - i. Purpose completed for the Body of Christ (heaven) (Ephesians 1:11-12, 2:19-22, I Thessalonians 4:17)
 - ii. Purpose completed for Israel (earth)
 - 1. Israel inherits the earth (as promised in Genesis 13:14-15)
 - 2. Final rest/peace (Psalm 132:13-14,)
 - iii. Christ all in all (I Corinthians 15: 24-28)
 - iv. We will cover this issue more in the next lesson

This week we dealt with the time periods of God's different dealings with mankind. Next we will discuss God's two-fold purpose—one revealed through prophecy (the prophetic program) and one revealed through the Apostle Paul (the mystery).