

An open Bible is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat. A sword with a silver blade and a gold hilt is positioned vertically, resting on the center fold of the Bible. The background is a dramatic, fiery scene with orange and yellow flames rising from the bottom, transitioning into a dark blue sky at the top. The text "Rightly Dividing" is written in a large, bold, yellow font with a black outline, centered across the upper half of the image.

Rightly Dividing

The Word of Truth

⁶ And [king Asa] built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest.

2 Chronicles 14:6

Rightly Dividing

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

Wholesome Words

- 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
- 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,
- 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:42

- It was an ongoing steadfast determination.
- The Greek word used here ('en') indicates a state of being.
- A way of life

Christianity 101

- This was the foundation of the early Church,
- These are the majors of the Christian faith.
- We may choose other electives as part of our own discipleship program, but these are mandatory.

Our Manifesto

- Apostles doctrine
 - Fellowship
 - Breaking of Bread
 - Prayer
- Note: much of what we major on in the church today is omitted from this list!

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:42

- Lit: the apostle's teaching
- *“One evidence of conversion is a desire to be instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion, and a willingness to attend on the preaching of the gospel” - Barns*

Apostle's Doctrine

- What is doctrine?
- *“a creed or body of teachings of a religious, political, or philosophical group presented for acceptance or belief; dogma”*
- The foundations and non-negotiable fundamentals of what we believe.
- It is what defines us as Christians.
- Who decides?

Apostle's Doctrine

- *“If it is taught in the book of Acts, and expounded on in the epistles, it becomes church doctrine”* – Joe Focht
- Example: washing each others feet
- Not taught in the book of Acts...
- Nor expounded on in the epistles...
- *“For I have given you an example”* (John 13:15).

Apostle's Doctrine

- It is not a consensus of popular opinion,
- Nor that which seemed best at that particular time and in that culture,
- It was that which was taught by the apostles,
- ...who in turn had received it directly from Jesus.
- Thus, this was not man's opinion about how things should be done, and what should be adhered to, it was the fundamentals of the faith as given by Jesus for His Church.
 - These include...

Apostle's Doctrine

- *The way of Salvation being in Christ alone, through faith alone, by grace alone.*
- *The infallibility of the Word of God*
- *The incarnation of the 2nd Person of the Trinity in the Person of Jesus Christ*
- *That Jesus willingly surrendered Himself to the will of the Father, and was offered as a 'spotless Lamb' to make atonement for the sins of the world*

Apostle's Doctrine

- *The imminent return of Jesus to establish His kingdom and subdue His enemies*
- *That this kingdom will be a literal, political kingdom on Earth, and a continuation of the throne of David*

Apostle's Doctrine

- *That God is preeminent in all things, and by His foreknowledge He has chosen and appointed those who are the heirs of Salvation...*
- *...Yet at the same time every individual has free-will to accept or reject salvation through Jesus Christ.*
- *That God is the Creator of all things.*
- *That we should love and serve one another, not placing ourselves above another.*

Apostle's Doctrine

- In the 21st Century church 'doctrine' (i.e. teaching regarding the fundamentals) has become almost a taboo, and is seen as something that is divisive.
- Many churches and ministers are content to lay aside areas of doctrine for the sake of (so called) unity.

Apostle's Doctrine

- Those who undermine the doctrine of the apostle's are seen as being 'open minded', 'tolerant', and even 'forward thinking',
- Those who stand for the truth, are seen as being dogmatic, trouble makers, intolerant, divisive and living in the past.
- This should not really come as a surprise...
- ... Paul forewarned us this would happen:

Apostle's Doctrine

- 1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
- 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

1 Tim 4:1-2

Apostle's Doctrine

- 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
- 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

2 Tim 4:3-4

Our Foundation

- Our foundation (authority) is the Bible.
- Despite countless attempts by detractors and theologians alike to do away with the Bible and undermine its authority, it is, and will always be, the basis of what Christians believe.

Our Foundation

- If you reject the Bible (which you are completely at liberty to do), and teach values and ideas not consistent with that which the Bible teaches, you cannot call your belief 'Christianity',
- ...for Christianity is the literal adherence to the basic principles and doctrine of the Bible – the doctrine the believers on the day of Pentecost continued steadfastly in!

Our Foundation

- All that we know of God, Jesus, the Devil, man's plight, salvation and eternity, we know from the Bible.
- The simple question we must ask ourselves is:
- Do we trust the Bible? Is the Bible true?
- If we do, and if it is, it becomes the non-negotiable authority and foundation for our lives – regardless of how we may feel about that.

Apostle's Doctrine

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Romans 16:17

Apostle's Doctrine

- 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
- 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Ephesians 4:14-15

Apostle's Doctrine

³ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

1 Timothy 1:3

Apostle's Doctrine

- 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,
- 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

1 Timothy 1:9-10

Apostle's Doctrine

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

1 Timothy 4:6

Apostle's Doctrine

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

1 Timothy 4:13,16

Apostle's Doctrine

¹⁷ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

1 Timothy 5:17

Apostle's Doctrine

- 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
- 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

1 Timothy 6:3-4

Apostle's Doctrine

- 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Titus 1:9

Apostle's Doctrine

¹ But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

Titus 2:1

Apostle's Doctrine

- 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.
- 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

2 John 9-10

Let a man question the inspiration of the Scriptures and a curious, even monstrous, inversion takes place: thereafter he judges the Word instead of letting the Word judge him; he determines what the Word should teach instead of permitting it to determine what he should believe; he edits, amends, strikes out, adds at his pleasure; but always he sits above the Word and makes it amenable to him instead of kneeling before God and becoming amenable to the Word.

(Tozer, "The Wrath of God, What is it?", "Man the Dwelling Place of God," chapter 26,)

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Rightly Dividing

The Word of Truth

Rules of Interpretation

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29 He that flourisheth in his house shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch, and the fool shall inherit the wind: wise of heart.

He that is despised and brings no permanent gain, is contempt to the righteous, who will earn his reward.

The wicked are thrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

9 He that is despised, hath a servant, is better than that honoureth himself, lacketh bread.

10 A righteous man soweth the life of his heart.

The Golden Rule

When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise

The Law of Double Reference

This law observes the fact that often a passage or a block of Scripture is speaking of two different persons or two different events that are separated by a long period of time.

The Law of Recurrence

This law describes the fact that in some passages of scripture there exists the recording of an event followed by the second recording of the event giving more detail to the first.

The Law of the Context

This states that a text apart from its context is a pretext – i.e. will probably not reveal the real meaning of truth of the text in question.

The Law of First Mention

This law states that the first time a word or idea is used in Scripture is usually indicative of its meaning in subsequent usages.

The Law of Expositional Constancy

This law states that the Bible is consistent with its use of ideas or figures throughout the Bible (eg 'fowls of the air' as seen in Matt 13 are 'workers of iniquity' and whenever fowls are seen in Scripture they are usually seen in this light.

Scripture is self interpreting

Any passage of scripture that on the surface may seem to be difficult to understand will be explained elsewhere in scripture, thus eliminating guesswork and human opinion as to its meaning.



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