



When we were real young, we couldn't color *within* the lines very well, cut out paper dolls very well, hit the mark with the ax very well (at least not twice!), throw a ball very well, etc. etc. etc. precisely because we lacked the motor skills, strength, or agility required to do so.

But as we became older, these things became easier- partly because of practice, and partly because we simply grew and developed in mind and body.

Therefore, some things we couldn't do *before*, we found we could do later...



# How to Understand the Bible

## Part 4

There are a few N.T. passages that link *understanding and abilities with time and maturity*:



*“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.” John 16:12*

Jesus knew His disciples had to “grow” some before they were going to really “get” why He had to die.

But after they saw Him die, and when they saw Him resurrected, the picture became clearer, cf. Luke 24:25-35 → 36-49; Acts 1:1-5, 6-8 (see also John 14:26; 16:13).

Now here’s the point: What if they had decided “**We just can’t understand all of this!**” and **quit trying**? Would they have ever learned how to “**handle accurately**” the Word of Truth???

One of the most important assets to understanding the Bible is *persistent dedication*.



Understanding of the text can be achieved, and it is not really difficult, IF you stick with it!

- A *light bulb moment* is not going to occur where you wake up and say, “Now I get it” all at once.
- It didn’t even happen that way for the 12 disciples who were with Jesus every day for 3+ years, Acts 1:6!
- But because they didn’t throw their hands up in the air and say, “I quit- this is *too hard*,” they did get it- despite being “*uneducated and untrained*,” Acts 4:8-13.

And so can you, if you *want to* and *won’t quit*.

# Keys to Understanding the Bible previously covered:



**#1- “Big” Picture**

**#2- Written 4 us not 2 us**

**#3- Context is critical**

**#4- There are some figures**

**#5- Many writers- one Author**

**And...**

# Keys to Understanding the Bible



## #6- Cut Straight

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” 2Tim.2:15.*

- Some other versions render this as *“rightly dividing”* (KJV), or *“rightly handling”* (ESV).
- By literal definition, the Greek word (orthotomeo) means *“to cut straight.”* Enhanced Strong’s Lex.
- The idea is that to be a good workman with the Bible, one must *follow the lines* it draws and the distinctions it makes- just like the paper dolls and hitting the mark in the introduction!

# Keys to Understanding the Bible



## #6- Cut Straight- What *lines* must we “cut straight”? “Old” vs. “New”

- The Old Testament (Pentateuch, History, Kings, Earlier and Later Prophets) was about and for the *physical* descendants of Abraham, Gen.12:1-3 and Ex.19:1-3.
- So, it never was *about* or *for* us Gentiles (non-descendants of Abraham), though we do need to know about these things, Rom.15:4 and 1Cor.10:11.
- But even for Abraham’s family (the Jews), this Law had a specified and limited duration, Luke 16:16; 2Cor.3:7-11; Col.2:14.

# Keys to Understanding the Bible



**#6- Cut Straight-** What *lines* must we “cut straight”?

**“Old” vs. “New”- What does this mean?**

- Everyone, since the Cross, is under the *New Covenant* of Christ (the N.T.), Heb.8:13; 9:9-10,16-17.
- Therefore, to be pleasing to God, our *faith, doctrine, worship, and practice* must be found and founded in the New Testament, not the Old one!
- We can certainly learn from the Old Testament, but cannot use it as the basis of our faith and practice because Christ made it obsolete, Gal.3:23-25 → 26-29.



# Keys to Understanding the Bible



## #6- Cut Straight- What else does this mean?

### *Then & There vs. Here & Now*

- Even within the New Testament, we still have to “cut straight” between *then & there* and *here & now*.
- Don’t get ahead of or misunderstand me: the N.T. is the Law that we are under now, and will be until the end of all things.
- But to understand it, we must realize that some things which happened in the early stages of Christ’s earthly kingdom (the church) no longer occur *now* as they did *then*.....

# Keys to Understanding the Bible



## #6- Cut Straight- What else does this mean?

### *Then & There vs. Here & Now*

- For example, the Apostles were given the ability to impart miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit by the “*laying on*” of their hands, Acts 8:18-19.
- But, this ability to *pass on* the gifts of the Spirit was only given to the Apostles, cf. Acts 6:3-5 → 8:5-6,12-13 → 14-17.
- Thus, with the death of the last Apostle (John, about 98 or 99 A.D.), so also died the ability to pass on miraculous gifts of the Spirit! So....

# Keys to Understanding the Bible



## #6- Cut Straight- What else does this mean?

### *Then & There vs. Here & Now*

- A line must be “**cut straight,**” or “**handled accurately**” between *then & there* vs. *here & now!*
- This is just one example that emphasizes that there are some differences that must be taken into account between *then & there* and *here & now*.
- Others could be given, but time and space will just not allow for it.
- Suffice it to say that if we are to understand the Bible (and we must!), then seeing and “**cutting straight**” such lines of distinction in text is vital.

# Keys to Understanding the Bible



## Conclusion: What are our Keys?

1. **Get the Big Picture**
2. **4 us not 2 us**
3. **Get the Context**
4. **Is not all, but does contain, *figurative language***
5. ***Many writers-* one *Author*, and**
6. **Cut Straight**

