

Basic Bible Comprehension

A 12-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®
Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This 12-lesson series provides foundational education on proper Bible comprehension and the right division of scripture. The study emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between God’s program in past ages (“times past”), the current Dispensation of Grace (“but now”), and God’s future program with Israel (“to come”). Special focus is given to understanding the unique role of the Apostle Paul as the messenger to believers in the Body of Christ and the revelation of the mystery — God’s hidden plan for the present dispensation that was not revealed in Old Testament prophecy. This series equips believers with the essential framework for studying all of scripture accurately, making it an ideal starting point for anyone entering Keith Blades’ broader curriculum.



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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles
Lesson 2	Three Dispensational Divisions
Lesson 3	Mapping Scripture to Dispensations
Lesson 4	Understanding Israel’s Program in the Gospels
Lesson 5	Day of Pentecost and Continuation of Israel’s Program
Lesson 6	Purpose and Content of the Mystery Revealed to Paul
Lesson 7	Israel’s Prophetic Program Will Resume
Lesson 8	Comparing Dispensational Characteristics
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Lesson Summaries

L1

Moses and Paul: Two Major Revelators *Understanding Apostolic Authority*

- Moses and Paul are the two major revelators of God's word — Moses to Israel under the Law, Paul to the Body of Christ in the Dispensation of Grace.
- The Dispensation of Grace is new, unique, and unprecedented — a mystery not revealed in Old Testament prophecy.
- Paul's apostleship is distinct and specially commissioned by the risen Christ for the Gentile nations.
- Bible comprehension requires understanding God's complete plan from Genesis through Revelation and how it unfolds across dispensations.
- God's message is logically recorded in connection with His plan and purpose throughout all of scripture.
- Understanding our program today — the mystery — is critical; we must rightly divide Paul's doctrine from Israel's program.

L2

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth *Times Past, But Now, and To Come*

- Rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15) means understanding which portion of God's word applies specifically to us in the Dispensation of Grace.
- God's word records three distinct time divisions: times past, but now (the present), and to come (the future).
- Times past involved God's dealings with Israel under the Law — covering Genesis through the early chapters of Acts.
- "But now" refers to the current Dispensation of Grace where God deals with the Body of Christ through Paul's revelation.
- "To come" encompasses the resumption of Israel's program and the future kingdom administration.
- Failure to distinguish these divisions creates confusion and leads to the misapplication of scripture.

L3

Dispensational Overview: Books and Divisions *Mapping Scripture to Dispensations*

- Genesis through early Acts records times past — God's program with Israel under the Law.
- Romans through Philemon records God's revelation for the current Dispensation of Grace — doctrine for the Body of Christ.
- Hebrews through Revelation records what is yet to come — Israel's remnant, the Tribulation, and the future kingdom.
- This three-fold division corresponds directly to Paul's teaching of times past, but now, and to come.
- Understanding which books address which dispensation is essential for proper scriptural application.
- Christians today must build their doctrine from Romans through Philemon,

understanding all other scriptures from a dispensational perspective.

L4

Gospel Accounts and the Earthly Ministry *Not God's Program for Today*

- The Gospel accounts (Matthew–John) record the Lord's earthly ministry exclusively to Israel — not to the Body of Christ today.
- The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) was given to Israel's disciples for Israel's program, not for the Body of Christ.
- Matthew 10 records the Lord's instructions to the Twelve to go only to the lost sheep of Israel.
- The Dispensation of Gentile grace is not in effect during the gospel accounts — God's program with Israel is.
- Christians today must distinguish between Israel's program in the Gospels and our program under grace.
- Confusion arises when believers attempt to apply Israel's instructions directly to the Body of Christ today.

L5

Acts 1–7: Continuation of Israel's Program *Transition Period in God's Plan*

- Acts 1–7 continues Israel's program following the cross — this is not yet the Dispensation of Grace for the Gentiles.
- The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy for Israel's remnant, not for the Body of Christ.
- God's promise to Israel involved the restoration of what was spoken by the prophets — this was not the hidden mystery.
 - Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21 confirm this prophetic fulfillment in the context of Israel's program.
- Acts 1–7 shows the gradual advancement of Israel's program with signs, wonders, and a specific Jewish focus.
- The mystery (Romans 16:25) was revealed to Paul but remained hidden from others during the early Acts period.
- Pentecost and subsequent events represent Israel's program advancing — not the beginning of the Body of Christ age.

L6

The Mystery Revealed to Paul *The Gentile Grace Dispensation*

- The mystery committed to Paul (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:9) was hidden for ages and suddenly revealed — never before prophesied.
- The mystery concerns Gentiles becoming fellowheirs and joint-body members with Christ (Ephesians 3:6).
- God kept the mystery hidden as part of His sovereign purpose for the Dispensation of Grace.
- The Great Commission given to Israel (Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8) was Israel's program — not our mystery program.
- The reason for hiding the mystery was to accomplish God's specific purpose

in this grace dispensation.

- Understanding the mystery is foundational to grasping our position, blessings, and responsibilities under grace.

L7

Israel's Program Will Resume *When the Grace Dispensation Concludes*

- God's program with Israel will definitely resume when the Dispensation of Grace concludes.
- Romans 11 provides detailed doctrine about Israel's future — partial blindness until the fulness of the Gentiles comes in.
- Hebrews through Revelation describes what pertains to Israel's resumed program, not to the Body of Christ.
- The future involves Israel's remnant, the Tribulation period, and kingdom restoration — all part of Israel's prophetic program.
- While Israel's program is suspended, we live in the "now" of grace administration.
- Understanding Israel's future prevents misapplying prophetic scriptures to the Body of Christ today.

L8

Dispensational Distinctions: Part 1 *Comparing Program Characteristics*

- Dispensational distinctions reveal fundamental differences in how God administers His program in each era.
- Methods of revelation differ: Israel received the Law at Sinai; grace truth was revealed through Paul's mystery.
- Audience differs: Israel was God's focus in past ages; today the Body of Christ receives His attention.
- Spiritual focus differs: Israel's program emphasized earthly blessings and national restoration; grace emphasizes heavenly position.
- Administration differs: Law administration versus grace administration create distinct responsibilities and benefits.
- These distinctions are not contradictions — they show God's varied administration adapted to each dispensational purpose.

L9

Dispensational Distinctions: Part 2 *Practical Application and Understanding*

- Acts provides crucial examples of dispensational transition, showing the shift from Israel's program to the grace program.
- Peter, James, and John were Jesus' apostles to Israel; Paul was Christ's apostle to the Gentiles in the Body of Christ.
- The same Holy Spirit operated differently in Acts (upon Israel's remnant) than in the current grace dispensation (indwelling the Body of Christ).
- Speaking in tongues as a sign to Israel (Acts 2) differs from the gifts in grace administration (1 Corinthians 12–14).
- Understanding these distinctions prevents the blending of Israel's and the

Body's programs and the confusion that results.

- Recognizing dispensational markers helps rightly divide what applied then, what applies now, and what applies to come.

L10

Satan's Policy of Evil Today *Opposition to Grace Revelation*

- Satan's policy of evil actively opposes the revelation of grace truth and the mystery committed to Paul.
- Confusion in the church today stems partly from Satan's policy working against proper understanding of dispensations.
- False signs and wonders appear when believers attempt to operate under Israel's program (signs following) rather than under grace.
- Satan's opposition explains why many Christians revert to Old Testament practices or follow Israel's patterns.
- This policy works directly against right division — Satan promotes confusion about which program applies today.
- Understanding Satan's opposition is critical to maintaining doctrinal clarity and resisting deception.

L11

The Body of Christ Application *Living in Grace Administration*

- The Body of Christ operates under the Dispensation of Gentile Grace with unique administration and privileges.
- Our membership in the Body of Christ provides position, blessings, and responsibilities distinct from Israel's program.
- Grace doctrine from Paul emphasizes faith, not works — justification is through Christ's work alone.
- The Holy Spirit indwells believers in this dispensation of grace, providing power and guidance for body life.
- Church assembly in grace differs from Israel's temple worship — organic body function rather than institutional protocol.
- Living under grace requires understanding both our position (what we have in Christ) and our practice (how we walk).

L12

Series Summary and Integration *Consolidating Core Principles*

- Right division of scripture fulfills the command of 2 Timothy 2:15 — to show yourself approved unto God as a workman who rightly handles the word of truth.
- The three-fold division (times past, but now, to come) provides the comprehensive framework for all Bible study and application.
- Proper Bible handling requires distinguishing Moses's program (Law) from Paul's revelation (Grace).
- Understanding the mystery enables believers to appreciate God's sovereign purpose for the current dispensation.
- Recognizing Israel's future program prevents the misapplication of prophetic portions to the Body of Christ.

- This series provides the foundation for continued doctrinal growth and accurate handling of God's word across all of Keith's curriculum.

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Mystery vs. Prophecy

The mystery was hidden for ages and suddenly revealed to Paul (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:9), whereas prophecy was foretold throughout the Old Testament. The mystery doctrine pertains to God's plan for the Body of Christ in the Dispensation of Grace — a program never anticipated before Paul's unique revelation. Confusing these two tracks leads to doctrinal error and misapplication of scripture.

Israel vs. The Body of Christ

God's program with Israel operates under the Law with earthly promises and a national focus (Matthew through Acts 7), while the Body of Christ operates under grace with a heavenly position and spiritual focus (Romans through Philemon). These represent two entirely distinct programs that do not overlap. Applying Israel's instructions to the Body of Christ today is a fundamental error of Bible interpretation.

Paul's Unique Apostleship

Paul was raised up as the unique apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Ephesians 3:1–6), distinct from the Twelve who were sent to Israel. This apostleship carried with it the revelation of the mystery and specific instructions for the current dispensation of grace. Paul's letters — Romans through Philemon — constitute the direct curriculum for believers today.

Dispensational Transitions

God's dealings with humanity change from era to era: times past with Israel under Law, now with the Body of Christ under Grace, and future with Israel again under kingdom conditions. These transitions are marked by changes in administration, revelation, and God's method of dealing. Recognizing these transitions is essential to understanding how all parts of the Bible relate to one another.

The Right Division Principle

Second Timothy 2:15 commands believers to rightly divide the word of truth — to properly understand which portions of scripture apply to which dispensation and audience. Misapplication of Israel's program to the Body of Christ creates doctrinal confusion and robs believers of the specific blessings and responsibilities God intends for them today. Right division is not optional; it is the foundational method for all accurate Bible comprehension.

Key Scripture References

2 Timothy 2:15	Commands rightly dividing the word of truth — the foundational principle of the series
Romans 16:25	Paul's gospel and the mystery kept secret since the world began
Ephesians 3:1–6	Paul's revelation of the mystery: Gentiles as fellowheirs and body members
Ephesians 3:9	The mystery hid in God from ages — never previously prophesied
Romans 11:13	Paul as apostle to the Gentiles, magnifying his office
Romans 11:25	Israel's program to resume; blindness is partial until the Gentile fulness comes in
Acts 2:2–4	Day of Pentecost: outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel's remnant per prophecy
Matthew 28:19–20	The Great Commission given to Israel's disciples for Israel's prophetic program
Matthew 10:5–6	The Lord's instructions to the Twelve: go only to the lost sheep of Israel
Romans 1:2	Paul's gospel promised beforehand through the prophets in the holy scriptures

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“TIME PAST”
(Ephesians 2:11-12)

“BUT NOW”
(Ephesians 2:13)

“TO COME”
(Ephesians 2:7)



ISRAEL “The Circumcision” and “nigh unto God”

THE LAW serves as a “middle wall of partition” (Ephesians 2:14-15)

GENTILES “far off” and “without God in the world”

GENESIS thru MALACHI - The GOSPELS and The Book of Acts

THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD
(Ephesians 3:1-12)

“Mystery of Christ” is Revealed

“BOTH ONE”
(Ephesians 2:11-14)

ROMANS to PHILEMON

THE LORD’S DAY OF WRATH



The “Kingdom of Heaven” is Set Up

Israel’s Program is Resumed and Fulfilled

HEBREWS to REVELATION

II Timothy 2:15

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