

Basic Bible Comprehension

A 13-Lesson **Radio Broadcast Series** Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®
Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

Basic Bible Comprehension is a 13-lesson radio broadcast series by Keith Blades in which he sets forth the most fundamental and important command God gives regarding the study of His Word: the command to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). Beginning with the confusion and apparent contradictions that perplex most Christians, Keith establishes that the Bible records two distinct and different programs of God — His program with Israel and His program with the Church, the Body of Christ — and that these two programs must be kept separate and not mixed together. The series traces the unique apostleship and mystery revelation of the Apostle Paul, examines the Lord’s earthly ministry as belonging to Israel’s program, distinguishes the gospel of the circumcision from the gospel of the uncircumcision, and works carefully through Acts 1–9 to show why the Day of Pentecost is not the beginning of this present dispensation of grace. This series is foundational to all of Keith’s teaching and is the starting point for understanding and enjoying the entire Bible.



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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	Why the Bible confuses most Christians — examples of apparent contradictions
Lesson 2	The solution: rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)
Lesson 3	Paul’s unique apostleship — distinct from and not one of the Twelve
Lesson 4	Paul’s message — new, different, and called “my gospel” and “the mystery”
Lesson 5	The mystery revealed to Paul — hid from ages, now made manifest (Ephesians 3)
Lesson 6	The Lord’s earthly ministry — minister of the circumcision (Romans 15:8)
Lesson 7	The four Gospels as continuation of the Old Testament — not a new dispensation
Lesson 8	Different gospels in the Bible — gospel of circumcision vs. uncircumcision
Lesson 9	The gospel of the uncircumcision — reconciliation to God freely offered today

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 10	Acts 1–8: Israel's program continuing — Pentecost is not the Church's birthday
Lesson 11	Acts 1–8: God giving repentance to Israel before the Day of Wrath
Lesson 12	Acts 7 crisis and Acts 9: the hinge point of this present dispensation of grace
Lesson 13	Series summary — the tentmaker illustration; every ism and schism traced to wrong division

Lesson Summaries

L1

Why the Bible Confuses Most Christians *The Problem Introduced*

- This series aims to learn what God Himself says about how to study His Word — so that Bible study is the blessing it really should be.
- The Bible will confuse any Christian who does not handle it the way God tells us to — sincerity alone is not enough.
- Christianity's confusion is evidenced by its many denominations: all claim to believe the Bible, yet all contradict each other in doctrine and practice.

Apparent Contradictions Illustrated

- Leviticus 11: God commands Moses to abstain from certain meats, declaring them unclean. 1 Timothy 4:3–5: Paul declares every creature of God is good, nothing to be refused — the exact opposite.
- Exodus 20:8: God commands Israel to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Colossians 2:16: Paul says let no man judge you with respect to any holy day or Sabbath days.
- These apparent contradictions are resolved only when the Bible is handled God's way — which this series will explain.

L2

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth *The Solution Established*

- God has two distinct and different programs: His program with Israel (the subject matter of most of the Bible) and His program with the Church, the Body of Christ (the subject matter of Paul's epistles).
- 2 Timothy 2:15 — “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” To rightly divide = to recognize and correctly make the division in the Bible because of the two programs.
- The law pertains to Israel's program. Romans 6:14 establishes that we are not under the law but under grace — God has an entirely different system of operation in effect today.
- 1 Timothy 1:3–7 — Paul warned Timothy about those teaching “other doctrine”: men taking things from Israel's program (desiring to be teachers of the law) and teaching them as if they pertained to the Body of Christ today.

- Failing to rightly divide does not produce neutral confusion — it actually dishonors and disobeys the Lord.

L3

Paul's Unique Apostleship — Part 1 *Paul Is Not One of the Twelve*

- Paul's apostleship is special and unique — different from that of the Twelve. Many assume Paul was simply another of the twelve or should have replaced Judas.
- 1 Corinthians 15:5–8 — Paul distinguishes himself from “the twelve.” He lists them as eyewitnesses before him, writing “last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”
- The Twelve were chosen and commissioned by the Lord in connection with God's program with Israel, entering its final climactic stages. They are Israel's apostles.
- Matthew 10:5–6 — The Lord commanded the Twelve: “Go not into the way of the Gentiles... But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” They were sent to Israel, not to the Gentiles.
- Paul was raised up separately as a brand new apostle, as recorded in Acts chapter 9, after the Twelve had been operating in Israel for some time.

L4

Paul's Unique Apostleship — Part 2 *A New and Different Message*

- The Twelve were given the gospel of the kingdom to preach to Israel. God's program with Israel was still in effect and entering its final climactic stages when they were commissioned.
- Paul's message is entirely different — so different he calls it “my gospel” and “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25–26).
- Luke 1:31–33 — The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that her son will sit on the throne of David and reign over Israel. This is Israel's program.
- Luke 1:16–17 — John the Baptist's commission: to prepare Israel for the coming of their Messiah and the fulfillment of God's covenanted promises to them.
- “Every promise in the book is mine” is not true. All of God's Word is for us to know, but not everything in the Bible is an instruction, command, promise, or injunction for us to follow or claim today.

L5

The Mystery Revealed to Paul *God's Secret Purpose Made Manifest*

- Ephesians 3:1–6 — Paul describes “the dispensation of the grace of God” as something given to him for us Gentiles. He calls it a mystery: “in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed.”
- The mystery content: “that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6). This had never been said by God before.
- Colossians 1:26 — “the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” The OT prophets were not told about it; the Lord Himself did not say anything about it; therefore the

Twelve did not have it.

- God revealed to Paul that He was temporarily suspending His program with Israel and bringing in a new creation — one new man, the Church, the Body of Christ — to fulfill another purpose besides what He will yet fulfill with Israel.
- God does not want us thinking and acting as if Israel's program is in effect today. He wants us rightly dividing and living in the light of this dispensation of His grace.

L6

The Lord's Earthly Ministry *Minister of the Circumcision*

- Romans 15:8 — “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Paul uses the past tense — in this dispensation of grace, Christ is not now functioning as a minister of the circumcision.
- Christ's earthly ministry was to Israel (the circumcision), confirming the promises made to the fathers and recorded in the OT prophets. He was not dealing with the mystery, which God had kept hidden.
- Matthew 15:24 — The Lord declared: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” He was not functioning as a minister of the Gentiles.
- Christians commonly assume the Gospels pertain to God's program with us today — but this is not what the Bible says. The four Gospel accounts describe the Lord functioning in connection with Israel's program.
- Homogenizing Israel's program with the Body of Christ program by not rightly dividing actually dishonors the Lord.

L7

The Four Gospels as Continuation of the Old Testament *Not the Beginning of a New Dispensation*

- The four Gospels pick up where the Old Testament left off — God's program with Israel is in view in both. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John do not record the start of God's program with the Body of Christ.
- The Lord lived His earthly ministry under the Law and taught the Law in the Gospels. The New Testament (covenant) was not even made by God until Christ died on the cross. Therefore the Gospels are in truth part of the Old Testament period.
- The Gospels record the arrival of the final climactic stages of God's program with Israel foretold by the prophets: their Messiah among them and their long-awaited kingdom of heaven proclaimed as at hand.
- Amos 8:11–12 — God prophesied a “famine of the hearing of the word of the Lord” coming upon Israel — a period of God's silence. This is the approximately 400-year gap between Malachi and Matthew, represented by the blank page in our Bibles.
- God's silence ended when John the Baptist arrived and then the Lord Himself — Matthew picks up Israel's program exactly where Malachi left off.

L8

Different Gospels in the Bible *At Least Ten — Not All the Same*

- There are many different gospels (messages of good news) in the Bible — at least ten. They are not all the same and do not all pertain to what God is doing today.
- Two gospels of peace: Isaiah 52 (Israel's peace in the land when God establishes His kingdom) and Ephesians 6 (peace between Jew and Gentile through Christ breaking down the middle wall of the law). Same label; two entirely different messages.
- Galatians 2:7–8 — Paul recounts that leaders in Jerusalem recognized he and Peter had been given different gospels: “the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”
- Gospel of the circumcision (Peter and the Twelve): the kingdom of heaven is at hand, for Israel. Gospel of the uncircumcision (Paul): the dispensation of God's grace for us Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- Christians must know which gospel God is proclaiming today and must proclaim the right one.

L9

The Gospel of the Uncircumcision *Reconciliation Freely Offered Today*

- Gospel of the circumcision: kingdom of heaven at hand for Israel; water baptism (a law ordinance) required; signs of the kingdom manifested. This is the gospel of the four Gospels and the opening chapters of Acts.
- Gospel of the uncircumcision (our gospel today): God's dispensation of grace for Gentiles; the unsearchable riches of Christ freely offered because of Christ's redemptive work on the cross and resurrection.
- 2 Corinthians 5:18–21 — The foremost issue in the gospel for today: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Perfect and complete personal reconciliation to God offered as an absolutely free gift to anyone who trusts in Christ.
- This reconciliation also includes promised deliverance from the Lord's coming Day of Wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10).
- Jew and Gentile alike are offered this reconciliation without any difference whatsoever — a new creation, one new man, the Body of Christ.

L10

Acts 1–8: Israel's Program Still in Effect — Part 1 *Pentecost Is Not the Church's Birthday*

- The opening chapters of Acts are one of the most misunderstood portions of the Bible. Acts 2 (Pentecost) is commonly called the birthday of the Church and the beginning of this dispensation of grace — this is a misunderstanding.
- God's program with Israel was still in effect on the Day of Pentecost. The events of Acts 1–8 all pertain to Israel's program, not to the Body of Christ.
- Luke 24 — After His resurrection, the Lord made plain to His disciples that Israel's program would continue following the cross. Israel's rejection of Christ was not a devastating blow — it was a necessary step toward fulfillment.
- It was not until Acts chapter 9 — when the Lord Jesus Christ came back from heaven and raised up Saul of Tarsus as a brand new apostle — that God

suspended His program with Israel and brought in this present dispensation of grace.

- Before Acts 9, everything pertained to God's program and dealings with Israel — including the Day of Pentecost.

L11

Acts 1–8: Israel's Program Still in Effect — Part 2 *God Giving Repentance to Israel*

- Peter on the Day of Pentecost declared that the events of Acts 2 were the beginning fulfillment of Joel's prophecy about the "last days" of Israel's program — which included the coming Day of the Lord's wrath and great tribulation.
- Acts 5:31 — Peter states plainly what God is doing in Acts 1–8: "for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." God is still dealing with Israel, giving them opportunity to change their mind about the Lord Jesus Christ before the Day of Wrath.
- God gave Israel's leadership three honest opportunities to repent and lead the nation to do the same. The opening chapters of Acts record these three opportunities.
- These events are not the norm for how the Body of Christ is to function today. Christians who call themselves "Pentecostals" or "Acts 2 dispensationalists" are identifying with the wrong program.
- The activities and miraculous signs of Acts 1–8 belong to the final stage of God's program with Israel — they have nothing to do with what God is doing today.

L12

Acts 7 and Acts 9: The Hinge Point of This Dispensation *The Crisis and the Grace That Followed*

- Acts 7 records the third and final opportunity God gave Israel's leadership to change their minds about Jesus. Stephen's sermon is this final offer.
- Israel's leadership rejected it: Acts 7:54 — "they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth." They stoned Stephen.
- Acts 7:55–56 — Stephen sees "the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." The Lord standing (not seated) signifies He is ready to execute His Day of Wrath. The extension of mercy to Israel is concluded.
- Instead of the expected Day of Wrath, Acts 9 records the unexpected: the Lord comes back from heaven and raises up Paul as a brand new apostle — with the message that God is suspending His program with Israel and bringing in the dispensation of His grace for us Gentiles.
- The world stood at the brink of deserved judgment. God gave grace instead. This present dispensation began at the very moment the crisis point had been reached.

L13

Series Summary and Conclusion *The Tentmaker Illustration*

- Paul was a tentmaker by trade. He had to rightly divide the goat's hair and cloth into two different kinds for two different parts of the tent. Mixing them together would ruin the tent. The same principle applies to the Word of Truth.
- Ephesians 3:1–2 — The dispensation of the grace of God, given to Paul for us Gentiles, began when God raised him up as His brand new apostle in Acts 9. Before that, everything pertained to Israel's program.
- Ephesians 2:11–12 — In time past, Gentiles were “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”
- Nearly every “ism and schism” that exists among Christians today is directly traceable to the failure to rightly divide the Word of Truth — Christians following Israel's program and not even aware of the dispensation of grace in which they live.
- The command of 2 Timothy 2:15 is the most fundamental and important command God gives regarding Bible study. Heeding it is what makes the Bible the blessing it should be.

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

All Scripture Is for Us, But Not All Scripture Is to Us

All of the Bible has been given to us to understand — but not all of it is expressly addressed to or about the members of the Body of Christ today. God has two distinct programs recorded in His Word, each with different instructions, promises, and provisions. Treating the entire Bible as equally applicable to us today results not just in confusion, but in actually dishonoring and disobeying the Lord by following instructions that have nothing to do with what He is doing today.

The Gospel of the Circumcision vs. the Gospel of the Uncircumcision

Peter was given the gospel of the circumcision — the good news that the kingdom of heaven was at hand for Israel, requiring belief in Jesus as the Christ along with the baptism of repentance, accompanied by signs and wonders. Paul was given the gospel of the uncircumcision — the good news that God is freely offering complete and perfect reconciliation to Himself through Christ's redemptive work, to Jew and Gentile alike, without law ordinances. These are two different gospels. The gospel of the uncircumcision is God's message for today.

The Lord's Earthly Ministry Belongs to Israel's Program

The four Gospel accounts do not record the beginning of God's program with the Body of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ functioned during His earthly ministry as a minister of the circumcision, confirming the promises made to the fathers (Romans 15:8). He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). He taught the Law. Therefore the Gospels are, in truth, the concluding portion of Israel's Old Testament program — describing the arrival of the final climactic stages the prophets had foretold.

Pentecost Is Not the Birthday of the Church

Acts 2 (the Day of Pentecost) is commonly called the birthday of the Church and the beginning of the present dispensation of grace. This is a misunderstanding. Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost that the events of Acts 2 were the beginning fulfillment of Joel's prophecy about the last days of Israel's program. God was still dealing with Israel throughout Acts 1–8. The present dispensation of grace did not begin until Acts 9, when God raised up Paul as His brand new apostle and sent him out with the mystery of Christ.

Key Scripture References

2 Timothy 2:15	The command to rightly divide the word of truth — the foundational command of the series
Leviticus 11:1–4	God's dietary commands to Moses — certain meats declared unclean (Israel's program)
1 Timothy 4:3–5	Every creature of God is good, nothing to be refused — Body of Christ today
Exodus 20:8–11	Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy — given to Israel under the Law
Colossians 2:16	Let no man judge you in respect to Sabbath days — Body of Christ today
Romans 6:14	We are not under the law but under grace — the system for the Body of Christ
1 Corinthians 15:5–8	Paul distinguishes himself from “the twelve” as one born out of due time
Matthew 10:5–6	The Twelve sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not to the Gentiles
Romans 16:25–26	Paul's gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery
Ephesians 3:1–6	The dispensation of the grace of God given to Paul; the mystery hid from ages, now revealed
Colossians 1:26	The mystery hid from ages and from generations, but now made manifest to His saints
Romans 15:8	Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision to confirm promises made to the fathers
Matthew 15:24	The Lord: I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel
Amos 8:11–12	Prophecy of a famine of the hearing of the word — the 400-year silence between Malachi and Matthew
Galatians 2:7–8	Gospel of the circumcision committed to Peter; gospel of the uncircumcision to Paul
2 Corinthians 5:18–21	God reconciling the world to Himself through Christ, not imputing

	trespasses — our gospel today
Acts 5:31	Peter: God raised up Christ to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins
Acts 7:54–56	Stephen sees the Son of Man standing — God ready to execute His Day of Wrath
Ephesians 2:11–12	In time past, Gentiles without Christ, aliens from Israel, without hope and without God

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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”

THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD
(Ephesians 3:1-12)
 “Mystery of Christ” is Revealed
“BOTH ONE”
(Ephesians 2:11-14)

THE LORD’S DAY OF WRATH

 The “Kingdom of Heaven” is Set Up
Israel’s Program is Resumed and Fulfilled

GENESIS thru MALACHI - The GOSPELS and The Book of Acts

ROMANS to PHILEMON

HEBREWS to REVELATION

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II Timothy 2:15

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