



The ENJOY THE BIBLE

Quarterly

P.O. Box 1586, Matthews, NC 28106-1586
1.888.2TIM.215 email: info@EnjoyTheBible.org

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Questions and Answers

Our annual issue devoted to Questions and Answers. The following selections have been edited to either conserve space, ensure clarity, and/or remove any personal information.

Genesis 15:9–10ff

⁹ And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

¹⁰ And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. (Genesis 15:9–10)

Why did God tell Abram to take these particular animals; and why five of them? There must be some special significance to them, but what is it? And why did God go about making this covenant with Abram in the peculiar way described in verses 12–17?

There are a number of interesting and significant features belonging to this covenant for inheritance, as well as to the process of making it. However we will limit ourselves to the issues in your question.

First off we need to recognize a particular aspect about the question that Abram asked God, which prefaced the making of this covenant for the inheritance of the land. As Genesis 15:8 relates,...

⁸ And he (Abram) said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? (Genesis 15:8)

Notice that Abram said “WHEREBY shall I know that I shall inherit it?” This concern in Abram’s question was prompted by some particular things that had occurred and taken place with him since he came into the land, as related in chapters 12–14. They were things that had produced concern in Abram’s heart and mind regarding God’s promises about the land. In fact Abram’s concern had developed to the point where the word of God comes to him in a vision to address the issue with him. Hence verse one of chapter 15 says,...

¹ After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1)

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Abram’s concern was real. Wherefore the LORD said to him, “Fear not, Abram.” However God did not simply say “Fear not”; He also told Abram why he did not need to fear. And the reason why was because He was “the LORD.” That is, because of God’s “Jehovah-ness” and grace. Therefore God immediately declared His “Jehovah-ness” to Abram by saying, “I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.”¹

Now the issue of God’s “Jehovah-ness” and grace was not only the key to allaying Abram’s personal and immediate fear in view of his present circumstances, but it was also the issue that both Abram and his seed would need to understand and appreciate when it came to inheriting the land at all. For an awful lot more was going to happen to Abram himself, to his seed after him, and to the land itself, before he and his seed actually would end up inheriting it for an everlasting possession. And so it is with this in view that God not only made the covenant for the inheritance of the land, but also made it in the unique way that He did.

In essence, therefore, God makes this covenant on the basis of His “Jehovah-ness” and grace, and by so doing guarantees to Abram and his seed that they will inherit the land God has promised to them *no matter what*. Once again this *no matter what* guarantee is needed in view of what Abram is told is going to happen both to him and to his seed. He himself is going to die, as the LORD says, without actually possessing the land as per God’s plan and purpose with it. Moreover his seed is then going to go out of the land and into Satanic captivity.²

¹² And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

¹³ And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

¹⁴ And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

¹⁵ And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. (Genesis 15:12–15)

This, however, was only going to be the beginning of such things for Abram's seed. They would actually end up in Satanic captivity three times in their history. The first would be as described in verses 12–16. They would then go out of the land and experience Satanic captivity again at the beginning of the Law's Fifth Course of Punishment, which would constitute the first installment to it. Then they will yet experience such captivity one final time in the fifth and final installment to the Fifth Course of Punishment, which is still yet to come when God resumes and fulfills His program with Israel.

So this 'no matter what' covenant guarantee was not only designed to effectually work to produce assurance for Abram himself at the time God made it, but also for his seed throughout their future history of coming under Satanic captivity. All throughout Israel's history they would need to rest their hope of possessing their promised land solely upon the issue of God's "Jehovah-ness" and grace unto them.

Simply put, therefore, with this being what this covenant has in view, God makes it in the very particular manner described. He makes it in a manner that has His "Jehovah-ness" in view, and that would be able to be appreciated as such later on in Israel's history.

Wherefore God instructed Abram to provide 5 particular animals. Each one of them was for the purpose of matching up with one of the later on

declared 5 mandates of the Davidic Covenant, in which God describes the implementation of His "Jehovah-ness" and grace for Israel so that they can be what His plan and purpose calls for them to be.³

Simply put, the first 3 animals are representative of the 3 categories of sacrifice that Adonai Jehovah would make for Abram and his seed when He functioned as their Redeemer (First mandate); which would not only secure their redemption, but also secure His ability to be their Deliverer (Second mandate) and Avenger (Third mandate). Hence these 3 animals were to be "divided" as per a sacrifice, and each of these 3 animals were to be "three years old"; which is in accordance with Adonai Jehovah's three years of manifested presence in Israel before sacrificing Himself for them and commencing the implementation of the mandates of His "Jehovah-ness" for them.

The remaining 2 animals were specific birds representing the remaining 2 mandates of God's "Jehovah-ness" and grace set forth in the Davidic Covenant, which are King (Fourth mandate) and Blessor (Fifth mandate). The birds were not divided like the other 3 animals because they were not strictly representative of sacrifices, but of the peace and blessings to result from them. Hence they were also not just any birds, but rather a "turtledove" followed by a "young pigeon."

Now in addition to using these five animals, God established and confirmed the covenant to Abram and his seed in the highly significant manner described in Genesis 15:17. This He did in view of having informed Abram of the coming horror of his seed's Satanic captivity.

¹⁷ And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. (Genesis 15:17)

With the first 3 animals divided and laid out as per verse 10, followed by the undivided birds; and with the sun down and it being dark as per verse 17a; the rest of verse 17 describes how God confirmed the covenant by passing between the divided pieces of the first 3 animals in a very special manner. When God manifested Himself in the darkness to be passing between the pieces as "a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp," He did so representative of exactly how it will be that He will be seen by the remnant of Israel when He comes to them at the end of His day. For following Israel's final Satanic captivity, the LORD caps off fulfilling the first 3 mandates of His "Jehovah-ness" by coming to them out of the darkness of that time in the very manner that passages like Psalm 18:7–12ff describe.

⁷ Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

⁸ There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

⁹ He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.

¹⁰ And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

¹¹ He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

¹² At the brightness *that* was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. (Psalm 18:7–12)⁴

So then this covenant for inheritance that God made with Abram is both a fundamental and preparatory component in the overall matter of God educating Israel in His "Jehovah-ness" and grace. When, therefore, God actually began to educate them, the saved in Israel could readily look back upon the covenant, knowing the surety of their inheritance because of God's "Jehovah-ness" and grace to them. More-

over, in view of the manner in which God made the covenant, they can also look forward to the time when in their final darkness and horror of Satanic captivity He will come to them as the “smoking furnace” and “burning lamp.”

1. For more general information on the issue of God’s “Jehovah-ness” and grace, see the video series *A Short History of God’s Program with Israel*.

2. For some further information on this matter, see the Second Quarter 1997 edition of *The Enjoy The Bible Quarterly*.

3. For further information about the Davidic Covenant and its five mandates, see the video series *A Short History of God’s Program with Israel*, and *A Psalms Primer*.

4. For more information about the time of Israel’s final deliverance, see the video series *Israel’s Blessed Hope*.

I Kings 7:26 compared with II Chronicles 4:5

²⁶ And it (the molten sea) was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths. (I Kings 7:26)

⁵ And the thickness of it (the molten sea) was an hand-breadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths. (II Chronicles 4:5)

Why is it that I Kings 7:26 and II Chronicles 4:5 do not agree? It is obvious that the two verses are dealing with the exact same thing. Yet they differ by 1000 baths. Is this really an example of a scribal error, as some say, which would mean that the Bible does have errors in it? Or is there another reason why the accounts would differ? Also, this is not the only example of such a difference. Why are there a number of other differences between what I and II Kings say and what I and II Chronicles say?

This is not an example of a ‘scribal error’ at all. Instead what is said in each

verse is a precise statement of what is true in view of what is being set forth or described in each verse. Hence paying attention to exactly what each verse says is what is needed. For though the two verses are dealing with the exact same subject — the molten sea — their purpose is not exactly the same when it comes to describing it. This is evident by taking note of the exact wording in each verse.

Notice carefully in I Kings 7:26 that the text says, “...: it CONTAINED two thousand baths.” However in II Chronicles 4:5 the text says, “...; and it RECEIVED AND HELD three thousand baths.” “Contained” and “received and held” do not mean the exact same thing. The words are two different expressions in English and they are saying two different things in English. Though we might have a tendency to use words such as “contain” and “hold” in a synonymous way when talking about the volume of some substance in a vessel or container, the concepts are not synonymous by nature and they do differ in meaning.

“Hold,” when referring to the volume capacity of a vessel, refers to its maximum capacity. Hence when we talk about the fact that a vessel has been filled to its maximum, we say, ‘It can’t hold anymore.’ Or when we want to know what the maximum capacity is of some vessel we commonly ask, ‘How much does that hold?’

“Contain,” on the other hand, does not by nature designate the maximum volume capacity of a vessel. Instead, it refers to the amount of actual or useable contents in the vessel, whether or not the vessel is filled to its maximum holding capacity. And with this discrimination of terms there is no ‘problem’ with the two verses.

In I Kings 7:26 the text is stating the useable and functional volume of baths “contained” in the molten sea as it fulfilled its purpose and the priests made use of it. And as such it “contained two thousand baths.” In II Chronicles 4:5, however, the text is

stating what the molten sea “received and held,” which is the issue of what it was totally capable of holding. And this, as the verse states, was “three thousand baths.” Hence its total holding capacity was 1000 baths more than its proper functional capacity.

So then there is no ‘scribal error’ here at all, but rather two precise and accurate statements about the molten sea, in view of the fact that the molten sea is being looked at and described in two different ways.

Now this issue of something being looked at and described from two different perspectives, or in two different ways, is what needs to be recognized and taken into account when it comes to dealing with the other differences you mention. For example, the difference in what II Kings 24:8 says about Jehoiachin’s reign when compared with what II Chronicles 36:9 says about it. Moreover there is also the need to pay close attention to exactly what is recorded in the immediate, near, and remote contexts of each statement. For their respective contexts supply pertinent information that has a direct bearing upon why one account will say one thing and the other something else, even when they are dealing with the same subject.

Therefore, (and to put it very simply), what needs to be understood first and foremost is that the Samuel/Kings account and the Chronicles account are deliberately separate and different accounts; and God has designed them to be so. The Samuel/Kings account comes first, with it being more or less purely historical in its rendering and reckoning, as it follows the arrival of, and development of, the contracted Courses of Punishment of the Law in Israel’s history. However the Chronicles account views the history and its events from the Divine viewpoint, and as such provides a particular type of commentary to the history that is significant in a number of ways. In view of this it makes sense for the Chronicles account to differ in some

of its recorded details, seeing that God can reckon time, generations, royal lines, and the like, differently than man does; especially if man is either ignoring or unable to reckon things as God does, and is therefore handicapped when it comes to perceiving things properly from God's perspective.

Furthermore the amount of information and the kind of information that is contained within the context of one account also has a direct bearing upon the kind of statement that the account will make. This is particularly true, for example, when dealing with a king and how long he reigned, or when it was that he began to reign; like Jehoiachin.

Needless to say, therefore, it can require a patient and careful detailed examination of all of the recorded details in each account to begin to come to grips with all that was going on at a particular time in Israel's history and to realize the effects of it all. Add to this the reasons that God has for having two separate and distinct accounts of the 'kingdom-time' in His nation's history, and it should be clear that differences in the accounts are going to exist. But they are not going to exist because of careless record-keeping, scribal errors, or anything like that. Instead differences are going to exist because the two distinct accounts serve two distinct purposes in God's testimony, which requires at times differing (not contradictory at all, but actually complimentary) information to be presented, and differing systems of reckoning being used.

The 'problems' only exist if (1) someone assumes that the two accounts are supposed to be identical; (2) that the situations in Samaria and Judah at the times in view could not produce reasons for needing to talk about a certain king's reigning with respect to two different ages or periods of duration; and (3) that God does not have a significant reason for having two distinct accounts of the 'kingdom-time' in Israel's program and history that might make it so that He wants certain rulers

to have their periods of reigning looked at from two different perspectives. When these kinds of assumptions are not made, then the very idea of there being contradictions or problems in the two accounts can begin to vanish away. And then real understanding and edification about this time in Israel's history and program can start taking place.

Exodus 34:7

⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the

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fourth generation. (Exodus 34:7)

What is the difference between the terms "iniquity," "transgression," and "sin"? There must be a difference for all three words to be used.

That there is a difference in meaning is obvious, just as you point out. And though the words are synonymous in the sense that they each can be used to generally denote or describe that which is contrary to God's will, they differ especially in where they lay the emphasis.

"Sin" is the most fundamental of the three terms, denoting as it does the plain and simple fundamental issue of something being contrary to, or a violation of, God's will. Hence when something is declared to be a "sin" that's what it is: an act or deed that is contrary to God's will; a violation of

His will. We speak of men being 'sinners' by nature because by nature men do things that go contrary to God's will; that violate His will. When, for example, Paul certifies the reality of both Jew and Gentile being "under sin" in Romans 3:9ff, he sets forth a specific listing of indictments from the Scripture that detail specific acts of contrariness to God's will and violations of it. This, once again, is what the term "sin" conveys.

"Transgression" is usually used in contexts where God has set forth particular commandments that He wants kept, or particular prohibitions that He wants enforced. For this reason the term is commonly used in connection with the Law and we commonly speak of 'transgressions of the law.' As such the term denotes doing something that directly goes against conformity to what God said to do or not to do. And since "transgression" denotes the issue of going directly against what God said, it is the word that by its meaning is designed to make the transgressor aware of the fact that he has sinned. In other words the word "transgression" makes sin personal, so to speak. It makes someone realize that they have 'gone out of the way' that conforms to God's Righteousness and Holiness, and they have done that because by nature they "sin."

"Iniquity" is the term that denotes the offensiveness and repulsive nature that belongs to sin and all of its expressions. It is the term that describes the offensiveness of sin to God, specifically to His perfect Righteousness and Holiness. Hence "sin" is not only the violation of God's will, it also is an offense to Him. He reacts to it. His perfect Righteousness and His pure Holiness abhors it. There is a revulsion to it, and "iniquity" is the term that stresses this aspect of things.

The contexts in which God uses each of the words governs the reason for why He uses one word instead of another, or why He uses them in combination.

For example in Exodus 34:7 all three words are used because all three issues are issues God wants Israel to be confronted with in view of entering into the Law covenant with Him. Simply put, they entered into that Law covenant because of their high-mindedness about themselves. They did not look upon themselves in truth. They thought themselves to be different by nature from Gentiles and that as such they were naturally fit to be utilized by God in His plan and purpose. They thought that they naturally were pleasant to God, pleased Him, being different from others. Moreover just previous to entering into the Law covenant they responded negatively to the issue of God educating them in their need for His “Jehovah-ness” and grace in view of the fact that they are not different by nature.

Hence when they entered into the Law covenant they entered into a relationship with God whereby they would end up ‘learning the hard way’ the truth about themselves. By means of the ministration of the Law they would learn the truth that they were *sinners* by nature, who *transgress* what God says to them, and who in doing so produce *iniquity* in God’s sight. Moreover they would also learn that if it was not for God being “full of mercy” and the like, and if it was not for His “Jehovah-ness” by which He would be able to forgive their “iniquity and transgression and sin,” they would never be able to be made fit to be utilized by Him in His plan and purpose.

Matthew 24:34

³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Matthew 24:34)

How can this statement be true when it is evident that the generation of men which lived at the time the Lord was on the earth is long gone, and numerous other generations of men have occurred since then?

The “generation” that the Lord speaks about is not the issue of a ‘generation of time.’ In other words it is not a span of time that the Lord is talking about. It is not the issue of a span of time of about 30 to 40 years, which is what is usually given for a ‘generation of time.’ Often people think of it this way because it is the first meaning of “generation” that seems to come to their mind. But it is not the only meaning belonging to the term, and it is not the meaning in what the Lord is saying.

Instead the Lord is using “generation” in a more fundamental sense, and in the way that it has primarily been used by God since the commencement

...This ‘generation of apostasy’ was closing in on its ultimate state of apostasy during the Lord’s presence and ministry in Israel.

of the climactic stage in Israel’s program when the “gospel of the kingdom” began to be preached to Israel. The Lord is using “generation” in the sense of ‘something that has been produced, formed, or generated’; (like when we speak of a stereo system and its ‘generation of sound,’ or a car engine and its ‘generation of power.’) Wherefore the “generation” the Lord is particularly speaking about is the ‘generation of apostasy’ that has been produced, or generated, in Israel since the beginning of Israel’s rebelliousness and contrariness to God, but especially from the time of the beginning of the Fifth Course of Punishment.

When the climactic stage in Israel’s program began with the ministry of John the Baptist and the preaching of the “gospel of the kingdom” God pointedly began to indict Israel for the

climactic level of apostasy that had developed or generated in them through their vain religious leadership and its system. He called them a “generation of vipers” and the like, declaring not only what they had generated from, but what they had generated into in His sight. In connection with this He also declared the issue of dedicating this ‘generation of apostasy’ to destruction in the day of His wrath, which would come to pass in the fifth and final installment to the Fifth Course of Punishment.

This ‘generation of apostasy’ was closing in on its ultimate state of apostasy during the Lord’s presence and ministry in Israel. Its next to last act of climactic apostasy, so to speak, occurred when they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and killed Him. Its last act of apostasy, (and the one that will make it the generation of God’s wrath and that will bring the Lord’s day of wrath upon it), will take place during the opening section to the fifth and final installment to the Fifth Course of Punishment. During that time Israel’s apostasy will accept the Adversary’s christ for the real Christ. When that takes place God will declare Israel’s ‘generation of apostasy’ to be “the generation of my wrath,” as foretold in the prophets. God will then have His day of wrath against it in the remainder of the fifth installment to the Fifth Course of Punishment, destroying it for good.

The destruction of, and passing out of existence of, Israel’s ‘generation of apostasy’ is what the Lord is talking about in Matthew 24. There He outlines for His apostles the major events and occurrences in the fifth and final installment to the Fifth Course of Punishment. And as He says, it will take the fulfillment of all of the things He sets forth in that outline in order for “this generation” of Israel’s apostasy to pass, or to pass out of existence and be no more.

Now when God suspended His program with Israel and brought in this present dispensation of Gentile grace

in accordance with “the mystery of Christ,” Israel’s ‘generation of apostasy’ was also mercifully prevented from culminating its apostasy. And it continues to be prevented from doing so for as long as this dispensation remains in effect. Nevertheless Israel’s ‘generation of apostasy’ continues to exist and the people of Israel continue to operate in accordance with it, and will do so throughout this present dispensation.

Howbeit when this present dispensation is concluded and God resumes His program with Israel, and the Adversary is then allowed to present them with his christ, the ‘generation of apostasy’ will then culminate its apostasy by accepting the antichrist. This will constitute it to be the generation of God’s wrath, which is doomed to pass away by the fulfilling of all the things the Lord sets forth in outline form in Matthew 24.

Exodus 19:7–8

⁷ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

⁸ And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. (Exodus 19:7–8)

When the children of Israel chose to enter into the Law covenant with God, was this a fully informed decision about what the Law would be like based solely upon what Exodus 19:4–6 records that God said to them? Or did they make their decision on more information than that?

First off my understanding is that when verse 7 states that Moses “laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him,” that this refers specifically to the words that the LORD commanded Moses in verses 3–6 to say to them. When the LORD ended His charge to Moses in verse 6 by saying, “These are the

words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel,” this underscores that Moses was to speak these specific words to them; nothing more, nothing less. Wherefore I take verse 7 to be saying that when Moses called “the elders of the people” and “laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him,” that he gave the elders the LORD’s specific words of verses 4–6 precisely and in such a way in order to ensure that they would in turn give those exact same specific words to “all the people.” Hence I am persuaded from what it says that the specific words of verses 4–6 are the issue.

However there is something to what you say about them having ‘more information.’ But it occurs a bit later after the people responded to the LORD’s words of 19:4–6 by saying, “All that the LORD hath spoken we will do”; and after “Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.”

As the rest of chapter 19 and following goes on to relate, God did not immediately confirm the Law covenant on the people. Though they had rejected being dealt with solely by God’s “Jehovah-ness” and grace, and had made that decision knowingly and with their ‘eyes open,’ God did something significant before actually confirming the covenant upon them and ‘locking them in,’ so to speak, to the foolishness of their hearts. He mercifully gave them the opportunity to see the foolishness of what they had decided, and to reconsider it, before the covenant became binding upon them. God did this purely on the basis of His “Jehovah-ness” and grace. For, (just as His “Jehovah-ness” declares about Him), He is “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious,…” And being “merciful and gracious” He gave them this opportunity. This is what the rest of chapter 19 through the end of chapter 23 sets forth.

Wherefore as the rest of chapter 19 through the end of chapter 23 relate, God not only showed Israel what deal-

ing with Him on the basis of their foolish decision would be like, He also gave them the “tenor” of the Law covenant in the ten commandments, along with a specific and telling condensation of the “judgments” the covenant contains. Moreover God also warned them about dealing with His “Angel,” whom they had better not “provoke.” All of this God mercifully set before Israel before the actual confirming of the covenant took place.

Once this was done, as chapter 24 relates, God prepared them for the actual confirming of the covenant. And in accordance with the mercy of His “Jehovah-ness” God gave them two more opportunities to ‘back out,’ so to speak, before the covenant became binding on them. However they remained steadfast in their original decision. They refused to ‘circumcise the foreskin of their heart.’ Hence ‘in the mouth of the two or three witnesses’ of their own testimony, the word was confirmed. The covenant therefore was confirmed upon them, and they were bound to it and its consequences.

So even though their original decision of Exodus 19:8 in response to the specific words of 19:4–6 was made knowingly, and was enough to bind the covenant upon them in view of the education that God had given to them during the previous three months, the LORD mercifully gave them the opportunity to reconsider and repent of that decision. It is during the time of Exodus 19:10–23:33 that God gave them ‘more information’ about the foolishness of their decision, and mercifully tried to ‘lead them to repentance.’ But they were impenitent.

So then the details of Exodus 19:10–23:33 are what need to be studied when it comes to understanding and appreciating the ‘fully informed’ decision that Israel made when they rejected the issue of God dealing with them on the basis of His “Jehovah-ness” and grace, choosing the Law covenant instead. — K. R. Blades

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This series of studies builds upon the general issues regarding the effectual working of God's word examined in Part 1. In particular it examines the effectual working of some specific doctrines given to us in I Corinthians designed by God to materially change the way we think about, and respond to, four of the hallmark features to this world's value system.

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“rightly dividing the word of truth” II Timothy 2:15

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