

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Cutting it Straight

(Jerry Fite)

Paul exhorted Timothy to be an unashamed workman with the Word of God. A chief component of the unashamed workman is to give “*diligence*” in “*handling aright the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15). The truth of God’s word is not just to be admired, but it is to be applied in our lives. But how careful are we in that application?

The Greek word translated “*handling aright*” denotes to “*cut straight*”. The straight lines of corn stalks in the field do not appear by chance, but by the careful work of the farmer plowing a straight furrow at seed planting time. The carpenter, using a speed square to mark a straight 90-degree line, can make the exact cut by following the skill saw’s laser light along the line. The workman in the Word is diligent to apply the word exactly “*along the lines of its teaching*” (*Vine’s*; p.34).

Jesus said, “*...Scripture cannot be broken*” (John 10:35). The God breathed writings cannot be changed or nullified in any way. This is an important fact,

because Jesus was being charged with blasphemy for being a man and saying, “*I and the Father are one*” (John 10:30, 33). Jesus depends on a single word from Psalm 82:6 to refute the accusation: “*gods*”.

The Hebrew, “*Elohim*” denotes the majesty and sovereignty of God. In the Old Testament, God gave His divine judgment to men who served His people as “*judges*”. These men were called “*gods*” because they were representing God’s wisdom and judgment in the various cases among the people. In this sense they were “*gods*” and “*sons of the most high*” (Psalm 82:6).

Since Scripture cannot be broken (in this case, not even one word), and the Jews have no problem with the word “*gods*” (Greek- “*theoi*”) being used to identify men with God in some sense, why should they have a problem with Jesus using the word “*theou*”, identifying Himself as “*the Son of God*” in a unique sense? Jesus was a precise workman with Scripture.

If we are not precise, we may contradict revealed truth. For example, when Peter asked Jesus concerning John, Jesus said, “*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me*” (John 21:22). There were those who began saying John “*should not die*”. Is this what Jesus said concerning the disciple whom He loved? John reminds us, “*...yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*” (John 21:23).

Dropping the little word “*if*” from Jesus’ statement, people turned truth into error. Without the “*if*”, people were saying Jesus willed that his beloved disciple would tarry and not die till He come. Cutting the word straight demands we apply Scripture with precision. We must cut along the line of “*if*”, not cut it out.

We should rely on the verbal inspiration of Scripture and faithful translations as Jesus did. We should be just as precise as Jesus in applying the Word. Cut it straight – every revealed word!