

# Kingdom thoughts

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

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## Rightly Dividing

I often think and ponder the way things are. One subject that interests me is to understand why there is such diversity in the church.

Many will know that I have often spoken of how I suspect God joys over our diversity — for that is the way He created us! That diversity applies individually and corporately; so that families are different, churches are different, nations are different, and dare I suggest, men and women are different!

The diversity I have been pondering recently, however, is an unhealthy diversity in ideas that give rise to teachings in the church. Teachings that at first seem to many to be wonderful new revelations, but which in the longer term cause many unforeseen problems.

There are certain beliefs (doctrines) that determine whether or not we are Christian. Here are three examples that I think are essential:

1. the incarnation (the coming of God in Christ to earth), where he lived as truly man and truly God at the same time
2. the crucifixion, when Jesus died on the cross to be able to redeem man to Himself
3. the resurrection, when Jesus was raised from the dead in newness of eternal life for fallen man.

I believe these and many other truths, because — the Bible tells me so! The Bible tells me I can cast myself upon the veracity of these truths.

I trust we all believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, but beyond that, the important question arises: how do we 'rightly divide the word of truth' (2 Tim 2:15)?

There are three options:

1. I interpret the Bible myself (the Holy Spirit lives in me and I will thus discern accurately)
2. the church interprets the Bible for me
3. I submit my understanding of the Bible to the church, because it is God's chosen vehicle to communicate truth — which it has done for 2000 years.

From these three options I suggest many take the first option, which makes private individuals the determiners of truth. Many, particularly Roman Catholics, take the second option; but I suggest it may be wiser to take the third option. I say this for the following reasons:

1. No man is an island, i.e. no Christian is meant to function alone. He is part of the church.
2. God's people over all the years of church history have faithfully walked with God and come to understand the Bible. A careful review, with the Holy Spirit, will lead me to a good understanding;
3. We have seen that private individuals cannot be the determiners of biblical truth. This seems to indicate that an individual will not come to true understanding of scripture unless he is in relationship with other Christians.

Proverbs tells us 'there is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors'. It is this same principle I am suggesting here for us in growing to understand God's revelation to man through the Bible.

I trust all of us in BMI want to pursue the truth of God. Therefore it will be helpful for us to ponder these thoughts that we might be confident of truly understanding God's revelation to us.

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