

The

GOLDEN KEY

BEN M. BOGARD



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BOGARD PRESS

4605 State Line

Texarkana, AR-TX 75503

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Bogard Press
Texarkana, TX

1101005

ISBN 0-89211-211-5

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the



BEN M. BOGARD

1868 – 1951

A Founder, Instructor, and First President

of

Missionary Baptist Institute and Seminary

of

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church

Little Rock, Arkansas

Preface

This book is the fruit of over fifty years of teaching and preaching. The principles of Bible interpretation set forth were taught to students of the Missionary Baptist Institute and Seminary before being printed in a book. That the Golden Key has had a wide circulation is evidenced by this 9th printing. It is in popular demand by pastors, teachers, and lay students of the Word of God.

The author, though dead, continues to instruct his readers in “the way of God more perfectly.”

It is my prayer that this book will bless you as it has blessed me and thousands of others who have read it.

Paul Goodwin
President, Missionary
Baptist Institute
and Seminary

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Introduction

A CERTAIN METHOD THAT MAKES EVERY PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE PLAIN

This book is a series of Bible lectures explaining the chart which you will find in the back of the book. The history of the chart is of interest. It is the creation of Ben M. Bogard. He was nearly forty years completing it as he taught the Bible. He at first wrote the main features of the chart on a blackboard. He invited criticism, insisting that questions be asked concerning it, so that all errors might be omitted. These criticisms and questions resulted in the chart. The author thinks this chart is a certain method of understanding the Scriptures. It has been used since the beginning of the life of the Missionary Baptist Seminary and was acknowledged by Dr. J. Louis Guthrie as being "foolproof." With some suggestions from Dr. Paul Goodwin, it has been reduced to its present form, which is almost as it was written by the author, since only minor changes were made because of the criticisms and suggestions.

The student is urged to really study the chart. When he thinks he has mastered it, it will be best for him to go over it again, and he is almost certain to see something that escaped him at the first reading. As he continues to study it, he will find it grows on him, for he will find new ideas each time he reviews it. In fact, it is intended to be a lifetime study.

The chart is the basis of everything taught in the Missionary Baptist Seminary. Learning the chart is compulsory with all who would win a diploma from the Missionary Baptist Seminary. It is a general analysis of the Bible. The method found in it will enable the student to analyze any passage in the Bible because the same method that applies to the Bible as a whole will apply to any book in the Bible and also to any passage in the Bible.

The student may be startled to learn that much of what we know as the Bible does not apply to us in this age. For instance, when God told Adam and Eve to dress the Garden of Eden and keep it, certainly, that does not apply to us, but only to Adam and Eve. When God told Noah to build the Ark, and told him how to build it, certainly, that applies only to Noah. This is so with numerous other passages of Scripture. We may learn some valuable historical lessons from such passages but we are not expected to do what the passages say do.

A good question to ask each time we read the Bible is: Does the passage apply to me? Is the Lord speaking to me in this passage? Possibly, the most misleading idea people have is to think that when they open the Bible, no matter what passage they read, it applies to them, for they think all the Bible applies to them. This is not true. For instance, when God told Abraham to offer up Isaac, his son, as a sacrifice, certainly that does not apply to any of us. It applies to Abraham only. Once the student gets this idea firmly fixed in his mind, he will automatically stop and think and ask himself the question: "Does this passage apply to me?" This is the first step with the student to a right understanding of the Bible. The chart is intended to show him how he may know to whom the passage is directed—to know to whom the Lord is talking.

When reading the Bible, many times the words of wicked men are recorded. We note that even the words of the devil are recorded, so we must learn who is speaking. Sometimes the passage is addressed to the Jews (Israelites), the Hebrew race, and no one else is meant. Sometimes a passage is addressed to a church and no one else is meant. Sometimes, a passage is addressed to sinners—unsaved people—and no one else is meant. The time element sometimes limits the passage to the time specified and does not apply to all ages or periods.

This brings us to the passage on which the whole chart is based. To understand the Bible, we must do what the passage commands. Paul told Timothy:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

To teach the right division of the Bible is the purpose of the chart, and this must be observed if one ever correctly understands the teachings of the Bible. A careful study of the chart will enable the student to rightly divide the Bible.

The student is not learning the chart for its own sake, but is learning the chart in order that he may know how to use the *key* to unlock the Scriptures. I call it the *Golden Key* because it is very precious and will open up the Scriptures, so that passages which have been dark and confusing will be perfectly clear.

The following lectures have been delivered many times before the classes in the Missionary Baptist Seminary. They are reproduced here for your study.

Ben M. Bogard

Suggestions

The questions following each lecture will help you apply the principles taught and will help you evaluate how well you have mastered them. Space has been provided for you to write the answers. Scripture references should be noted, and in some instances, the verses used should be written out.

Memorize each Scripture used, and find others pertaining to the subject and learn them, being careful to choose Scriptures that *apply* to it.

When Scriptures are called for in answering the questions, it is hoped that you will have them memorized and not need to look them up. You should keep on studying until you can give them by memory when answering your questions.

Memorizing of the chart is not learning the subject. You must master the book, then use what you have learned as a *key* to the Bible. This book does not cover the whole Bible, but is a key to unlock its mysteries so you may study the Bible.

The right division of the Bible is necessary in order to learn it. The verse of Scripture upon which the chart is based tells us to rightly divide the Word, and if it can be rightly divided, of a necessity, it can be wrongly divided. It is the duty of each student of the Word to *rightly divide it*.

It is necessary to thoroughly learn the rule of interpretation and then use it diligently in all your Bible study. This is the KEY to knowing the Scriptures.

Lecture I

Rightly Dividing The Bible

A DIVINE LIBRARY

Sixty-six Books
Perfect Revelation

DIVISIONS

Old Testament Divisions Stated by Jesus
New Testament Divisions

INSPIRATION

Verbal Inspiration
Proof of Inspiration

Rightly Dividing The Bible

A DIVINE LIBRARY

Sixty-six Books

The Bible is not a book. It is a divine library of SIXTY-SIX books. The books are small pamphlets. Some are little leaflets, and they were written through a period of about fifteen hundred years. They were written by about forty different men. God revealed to these men what He wanted the world to know. They wrote as they were inspired to write. When God pleased, He inspired one man to write what we know as a book in the Bible, and then after a long period, He inspired another man to write another book. Sometimes the periods between the writing of these books were very long. For instance, there was a period of about four hundred years between the time the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament was written. The New Testament was written a little at a time, and Paul tells us how.

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:9,10).

Perfect Revelation

Thus, we learn that God gave His Word to us by installments, and, as He inspired men to write, they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. This was kept up until “that which is perfect” had come – the complete Bible, the *perfect revelation* from God, and then the installments stopped. There was no further need of inspired writers for the “*perfect will of God*” was complete when the last book in the Bible was written. James calls it the “perfect law of liberty.”

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

The Bible is a perfect revelation of God to the world, and we need nothing else for instruction.

DIVISIONS

In rightly dividing the Bible, we discover at once that there are *two grand divisions*, the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is surprising how many people do not know even this primary fact. But there it stands out very plainly before any student of the Bible.

There are subdivisions in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Lord Himself tells us what the divisions of the Old Testament are, and we should be careful to learn just exactly what these divisions are, for if we fail at this point, we shall be hopelessly confused in our understanding of the Scriptures.

Old Testament Divisions Stated by Jesus

Read Luke 24:44: "*And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the LAW of Moses, and in the PROPHETS, and in the PSALMS, concerning me.*" Thus, the Lord very clearly divides the Old Testament into the *Law of Moses*, and the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*, just *three* divisions. There are not four or five, nor six or seven divisions, as many writers on the subject teach, but there are only three, the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

When we read the books that have been written on this subject, we find all of them, without exception, ignore this statement of the Lord and they tell us that the Old Testament is divided into the Historical Books, the Moral Law, the Ceremonial Law, the Poetical Books, the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets, and the Psalms, completely ignoring what the Master Teacher says. We should not insult the Lord by ignoring His teaching on the subject. There are three divisions, the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*, if our Lord, the Master Teacher, knew what He was talking about. The chart recognizes these three divisions, and for the best reasons refuses to recognize any other divisions.

New Testament Divisions

The New Testament falls naturally into three divisions, but we have no inspired statement that says so as we have for the Old Testament. The New Testament divisions are HISTORY, DOCTRINE, and PROPHECY. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Acts are History. The epistles are Doctrine, and the book of Revelation is Prophecy. In the history division is some prophecy, but in the main, it is history. In the doctrine division there is some history and prophecy, but in the main, it is doctrine. In the Revelation is some history and doctrine, but in the main, it is prophecy. I will not insist that these divisions must be observed because there is no inspired statement that forces us to it, but we will suggest that the New Testament naturally falls into three divisions. This observation is made because we should, above all things, be scriptural in our methods of Bible study.

INSPIRATION

Verbal Inspiration

The sixty-six books and all of the divisions – all parts of the Bible – were given by inspiration. II Timothy 3:16-17

claims inspiration for all the sacred writings and the Missionary Baptist Seminary teaches the full inspiration of the Bible. Every word in the Bible is what God wanted in, and that means verbal inspiration.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Verbal inspiration does not mean that the writers of the Bible were mere machines like typewriters. The words were not *dictated* word for word, as some think, but the writers were so controlled, so *superintended* as they wrote, that no error is found in the Bible. The writers used their own words, but they were superintended by the Spirit in such a manner that they wrote no error. This can be plainly seen by noticing how Matthew and Luke use different words as they give what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer (see Matthew 6th chapter and Luke 11th chapter). They were allowed by the Spirit to report what the Lord said in their own words, for certainly the Lord did not use two different sets of words, but while using their own words they gave exactly the same ideas. In their own words, both of the writers reported what the Lord said correctly. One did not in the slightest degree contradict the other.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were *witnesses* and a witness must express himself in his own words, else he would not be a witness. When four witness of what they heard and saw and yet not a contradiction can be discovered in their reports, it shows that they were not dictated to; yet, every word they wrote is just the word that the Holy Spirit wished written.

To *dictate* to a witness what he shall say destroys the value of the witness. If an earthly court should discover that the very words which the witness used while on the witness stand had been dictated by some interested party, his testimony would be thrown out as false. A witness must be free to tell his story in

his own words. This is evident in the witnessing of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. When we discover that there is not the slightest contradiction in what they say, it confirms the truthfulness of their testimony.

The superintendence of the Holy Spirit was such, that while the writers used their own words, if one should not have been strictly true, the Holy Spirit would have stayed his hand until he selected the word that would convey the exact truth. Thus, the result was that every word in the Bible is exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted to be in the Bible. The result is *verbal inspiration*, and yet it was *not mechanical dictation*. The variety of expression, the use of different words by the writers, gives beauty to the style and adds charm to the Bible, yet leaves us the *fully inspired Word of God*.

Proof of Inspiration

The inspiration of the Bible is proved by several methods. One is the fact that the forty writers who lived in different countries, and who wrote in different languages, did not contradict each other, but *the writers were in perfect harmony*. This would have been impossible if a Master Mind had not directed them as they wrote.

Another proof of inspiration is the fact that *prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter*. Things predicted thousands of years ago are being fulfilled, or have been fulfilled, right before our eyes.

Another proof of inspiration is that the Bible was written many hundreds of years before what we know as *science*, and the Bible writers had never seen a book on science. They had never studied under any science teachers, yet the *Bible is in perfect harmony with every known fact discovered by science*. The *facts of science* were known in the Bible long before the scientists discovered them. This cannot be explained except on the ground of the inspiration of the Bible. This does not mean

that the guesses and working hypotheses of modern scientists are in harmony with the Bible, but it does mean that every *established fact* of science was *in the Bible first*.

The student of the chart should get books on fulfilled prophecy and books on the harmony of the Bible and science and carefully study them. *Teachers of the chart should be familiar with such books and amplify the teaching of the chart by instruction on these lines.*

IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT DIVISION

It does not follow that a book in the Bible or a passage of Scripture *applies to us in this age* just because it is inspired, because it was inspired by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of those for whom it was intended. It does not mean that the words of the *devil* and the words of wicked men, as for instance, King Pharoah and King Herod, and the words of ungodly Pharisees and Sadducees, are true. *It is true that they said what the Bible says they said*, but the Bible only *reports* what they said. The Holy Spirit wanted us to know what they said but does not tell us to do what they said. Hence, the importance of knowing how to *rightly divide the Word* – being able to see what is spoken by the Spirit and what is spoken by others. The study of the chart will enable you to see who is speaking and to whom he is speaking, and thus, enable you to know what applies to us in this age.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of the chart? _____

2. Write out the verse of Scripture on which the whole chart is based. _____

3. How may one correctly understand the teaching of the Bible? _____

4. About how long did it take to write the Bible? _____

5. How many books are in it? _____ How many men wrote it? _____
6. About what is the Scripture I Corinthians 13:9-10 speaking? _____

7. What is referred to in the phrase, "that which is perfect?" _____

8. What is the "perfect law of liberty," James 1:25? _____

9. What are the two grand divisions of the Bible? _____

10. Give the divisions of the Old Testament. _____

11. Who divided them thus? Scripture Reference: _____

12. What are the divisions of the New Testament? _____

- Why are these divisions made? _____

13. What books fall in the history category?

In the doctrine category? _____

In the prophecy category? _____

14. What verse claims inspiration for the Bible? _____

15. What is meant by verbal inspiration? _____

16. Does everything in the Bible apply to us? _____

Explain. _____

17. Are science and the Bible in agreement? _____

18. Name two others proofs of inspiration. _____