

**DISCERNING GOD'S WILL**  
**Part I: Looking First To Scripture**  
**(2 Timothy 3:15-4:2; Mark 12:18-27)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Believers often wonder and ask how they can know for sure God's will on a given matter. After all, Romans 8:14 informs us that all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, so if a believer is uncertain about God's leading in his life, he can begin to wonder what is missing in his relationship with the Lord.
- B. Scripture is our ultimate authority for faith and practice, so we view a four-part series of lessons from Scripture on discerning the will of God for our insight, application and edification:

**II. Looking First To Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2; Mark 12:18-27.**

- A. To discern God's will, our *first* and *ultimate* resource is *written Scripture ITSELF*, 2 Timothy 3:15-17:
  - 1. All Scripture is God inspired and fully equips the believer to be competent for every good work until Christ's return when the believer gives an account to the Lord (2 Timothy 4:1-2 ESV; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
  - 2. Thus, to discern the will of God, the **first step** a believer *must* take is to *view written Scripture*.
- B. However, we need to *interpret* Scripture *correctly* to discern God's *true* will, and to do that, we follow Jesus' example in Mark 12:18-27 of the "normal" literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation:
  - 1. The Sadducees told Jesus of a man who had married a woman and then died, leaving no heir. Thus, his six brothers had successively married her to raise up seed for their dead brother but had each failed by dying and leaving no heir. The Sadducees then asked Jesus whose wife would this woman be in the resurrection.
  - 2. The Sadducees clearly intended to entrap Jesus, thinking that if He supported belief in the resurrection in this case, He would consent to the sin of adultery in the resurrected state (Mark 12:18-23)!
  - 3. We note that the Sadducees' denial of the resurrection was based on their belief that the soul ceased to exist at death, that there was nothing to resurrect, making belief in a resurrection illogical (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 163; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. Five, p. 214, citing Josephus, Antiquities, XVIII. 1. 4).
  - 4. Jesus answered the Sadducees, stating that resurrected humans will be asexual like the angels in heaven, that this case that the Sadducees mentioned would be irrelevant in the resurrection, Mark 12:24b-25.
  - 5. Second, Jesus said the Sadducees did not know the Scriptures, explaining it in Mark 12:26-27 by interpreting Exodus 3:6 with the "normal" or literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation:
    - a. Jesus referred the Sadducees to Exodus 3:6 where God had said "I *am* the God of" the Hebrew patriarchs.
    - b. Significantly, the word "*am*" in that phrase in the *present tense* is italicized in the KJV to indicate that "*am*" is not written in the Hebrew text but is *grammatically* understood to exist.
    - c. The *historical* context is also important, for God was speaking to Moses in Exodus 3:6 over **400 years after the last Hebrew patriarch Jacob had died** (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 2021-2023).
    - d. The *literal* interpretation of the *present tense* of the verb "*am*" then makes Christ's point that *though* the patriarchs were *long dead*, they *still existed*, refuting the Sadducean *basis* for *rejecting* the *resurrection!*
- C. Note: The "normal," or literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation, can use figures of speech, but those figures are *evident* in the "*normal*" context. For example, in Matthew 5:13, Jesus said His followers were the **salt** of the earth, a *metonymy* where salt is used in place of Jesus' followers, and a *metaphor* to show the preserving influence of His followers (E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Spch. Used In The Bible, 1968, p. 579).
- D. Added Note: **Use good study tools.** For example, Revelation 22:19 **KJV** reads: "And if any man shall take away the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his *part* out of the *book* of life . . ." That **KJV** statement teaches one will lose his salvation if he removes words from Revelation, but the Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Rev. 22:19 claims the better reading is "*share*" for "*part*" and "*tree*" for "*book*" like the NIV and ESV read. The warning is God's refusal to save unbelievers who oppose the truth of the book. [This verse did not come from any known Greek text, but from Erasmus' importing it from Jerome's Latin Vulgate into his Greek Textus Receptus (TR), meaning Erasmus at places had to translate some material into Greek as he collated material from various sources to form the TR! The TR was then translated into the KJV! In this verse, the TR differs from the Majority text, the Byzantine text type that the TR is said by King-James-only advocates to depict (James R. White, The King James Only Controversy, 1995, p. 58, 66)!]

**Lesson:** To discern God's will, we must first check Scripture with normal interpretation and good study tools.

**Application:** To discern God's will, may we first check Scripture with normal interpretation and good study tools.