

Rise Up and Build 1997 Conference-38 Things That Differ

by William MacDonald

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding biblical distinctions, such as dispensations, two comings of Christ, phases of Christ's coming, and the distinction between law and grace, in order to deepen one's understanding of God's Word.

Duration: 53:21

Scripture: Isaiah 52:9, Micah 5:2, Romans 6:11, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Revelation 1:20, Revelation 10:7

Topics: "Differences"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the topic of the coming of Jesus Christ. He explains that there are four phases to His coming: the rapture, the judgment seat of Christ, the manifestation of His coming, and the conclusion of His coming. The preacher also emphasizes the distinction between law and grace, using the example of Abraham's faith in God being counted as righteousness. He encourages the listeners to study the Word of God diligently and to understand and apply these distinctions in their Bible study.

Transcript

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Father, we just thank you for the Word of God, the Word that lives and abides forever, and we pray that we might be diligent students of that Word, that we might esteem it more than the honey of the honeycomb, that it might be our daily delight. And as we turn to it this morning, we just pray that you'll open up new vistas for us, that we will understand better, interpret better, and be better servants of yours. We pray in the Savior's name.

Amen. This seminar is on things that differ. We're going to be thinking about distinctions that are very helpful in Bible study.

In fact, this seminar could be called Keys to Bible Study. And we'll be covering about 27. I'm sorry to say we won't be covering them in the same order that they're listed in your notes, but I hope we get through all of them.

I think if you get these, you're well on your way to being a good Bible student, if not a theologian. You probably understand more than the theologians do. So we're going to have to start right away and just move right on because we have a lot of material to cover.

Let me go first of all to the dispensations. I could not understand my Bible if I didn't understand dispensations. Augustine said, Distinguish the ages and the scriptures will harmonize.

That's good. Distinguish the ages and the scriptures will harmonize. What is a dispensation? I think the best synonym for the word dispensation is administration.

Here in the United States, we have different governmental administrations. And it refers to the policies that are followed in the rule of the country during that time. Technically speaking, a dispensation is not an age, but it's hard for us to distinguish because it's the policies that are followed during a certain age.

In a family, you have dispensations. When you're first married, certain rules and policies apply in the home. When a baby comes along, well, there's a big change, isn't there, when a baby comes into the home.

Then when that baby grows to be five years old. Different administrations in the home. When you're 18, another different administration is found.

The Bible itself is divided into two dispensations, isn't it? Old Testament and New Testament. Old Testament, largely law. New Testament, largely grace, which we'll be talking about more in that.

We don't argue for any specific listing of the dispensations. A. E. Schofield's is very good. A. E. Booth's chart of the course of time from eternity to eternity just differs in minor details.

Schofield, of course, begins with the age of innocence, goes on to conscience, human government, promise, law, church, and kingdom. Dispensationism is in disrepute today in many circles. They accuse us of believing that there's a different way of salvation in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

We do not believe that. Dispensationism teaches. True dispensationalism teaches that there's only one way of salvation.

That's faith in the Lord. And in the Old Testament, faith in the Lord, believing whatever promise he made, whatever revelation he made of himself at that time. Abraham believed God.

It was counted to him for righteousness. In the Old Testament, when a person believed whatever the Lord said, God put all the value of the work of Christ's still future to his account and saved him on that basis. Today, we look back to the cross.

We believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are saved. There is what is known as ultra-dispensationism. You can take any great truth and drive it into the ground, and that's what they do with dispensationalism.

Ultra-dispensationism, when they get through, the only parts of the New Testament that apply to us today are the prison epistles. And so some of them do away with baptism, because baptism isn't found in the prison epistles, and neither is the Lord's Supper. And so that shows you the extremes that they can bring it to.

We want to keep these truths wonderfully in balance. I hope that we time at the end of the meeting. If some of you have questions, come up afterwards.

And I should mention before I go further, there's a little book in the bookstore called Here's the Difference, and many of the things we're going to go over today are found in that book. In greater detail, it's \$4. Here's the difference, understanding important biblical distinctions.

So much for dispensations. Two comings of Christ. Two comings of Christ.

He came to Bethlehem. He's coming again. When we say now He's coming again, we're just looking to the future.

I think it's very helpful to notice this in the scriptures. Two comings of Christ. You find this often in the Old Testament.

Would you turn in your Bible, please, to Isaiah 9. We've just been through the Christmas season, and we've heard these verses quoted over and over again, and we've seen them on Christmas cards. Isaiah 9, verses 6 and 7. It says, For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end from the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment and justice.

From that time forward, even forever, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Notice the two comings of Christ are here. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

That's definitely him. But the government will be upon his shoulder. That's his coming again, isn't it? That's his coming again in power and great glory.

And this often happens, that the two comings of the Lord Jesus are mixed in the Old Testament and in places in the New Testament, too, with nothing but a comma, a period, or here a semicolon separates them. It really adds fun to my study of the scriptures when I can use this little key and see that the Spirit of God just makes this rapid transition from one coming to the other. And, of course, this is what caused the difficulty for the prophets in the Old Testament.

They saw him coming to suffer. They saw him coming in glory. And they say, how could these things be? Well, two different comings.

It's clear to us today. It was not clear to them at that time. Micah, chapter 5, verse 2. Micah, chapter 5, another Christmas passage.

These were fresh in my mind. Micah, chapter 5, and verse 2. See if you can see the two comings of the Lord there. But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Well, it says that in a little town in Judah, known as Bethlehem, Ephrathah, the Messiah is going to come. That's his first advent. But it says the one who is to be ruler in Israel.

That's his second advent, isn't it? It's so good to see that. And then you have his eternity, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. And you get this all through the prophets, where you have a

suffering Savior, and then you have a glorified Savior.

And they're mingled together. Turn to Isaiah, chapter 52, first of all. I'm sure most of you are familiar with this, the rapid transition here, concerning the two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The end of Isaiah, chapter 52. And it switches back and forth. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently.

He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. First or second? Anybody? Second coming. Just as many were astonished at you, so his visage was marred more than any man in his form, more than the sons of men.

First or second? All right, you're doing well. So shall he sprinkle many or startle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at him, but what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

First or second? Second. To me, that adds fun to my Bible study, when I just get this little key and put it in the door, and it makes a distinction between the first and second comings of the Lord. Now, when we use the word second coming there, we use it just in a general sense.

He's coming again. We don't go into details. So that brings us to the third subject that we're going to take up today that you'll see on your outline, phases of Christ's coming.

Phases of Christ's return. And I think this is very helpful to see. When we look forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus, we should realize that it takes place in stages.

It takes place in stages, and the first stage is the rapture, the rapture of the church. That's next, when the Lord Jesus shall come in the clouds of glory and take his people home to be with himself. We believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus.

Imminent means it could happen at any time. The pre-tribulation rapture is the only view you can take of the rapture and believe that he could come before this conference is over. Any other view denies imminent.

That's why I am a pre-tribulationist. So the first phase of Christ's return is the rapture. Then the words are used in connection with the judgment seat of Christ.

I call this the course of his return. The course of his return, the judgment seat of Christ, which will take place in heaven, a time of review and reward, a time not when sins will be brought up again at all. The believer's sins were judged at the cross of Calvary when the Lord Jesus bore them in his body on the tree.

This is something entirely different. When I think of the course of Christ's return, I don't think of a criminal court. I think of a flower show or a county fair or even a horse show where grand prizes are given and first prizes and second prizes and honorable mentions.

Think of that when you think of the judgment seat of Christ, not of sins being dug up and judged. They've already been judged. They will not.

We shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Then you have the manifestation. This is third.

First the beginning, then the course, then the manifestation of Christ's return. That's his coming in power and great glory. That's when he comes to put down his foes and to set up his kingdom upon the earth.

And it's good when you're reading about the coming of the Lord in the New Testament to distinguish whether it's the rapture or the coming to reign. And then there's one passage in 2 Peter, which I call the conclusion. At the end of time here on earth and when the heavens and the earth are dissolved, the expression coming is used there.

2 Peter 3. 2 Peter 3. And this is the only passage that I think refers to the conclusion of Christ's return. 2 Peter 3. Let's see, 7 through 13, maybe it is. Yeah, beginning at 7. I mean, difficultly just.

And then here, 2 Peter 3, 7. The heavens and the earth, which now exist, are kept in store by the same word reserved for fire unto the day of judgment, prediction of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years. It goes on to describe really the end, the end of all things here on earth.

Now go back to verse 4. It says, where is the promise of his coming? This is scoffers in the last days who speak about the coming of the Lord. They say, where is the promise of his coming? Are they referring to the rapture? No. Are they referring to the course, the judgment feet of Christ? No.

Are they referring to his coming in power and great glory? No. They're saying, oh, you Christians, you believers, you've always been talking about the end of the world. The world is going to end.

Everything continues as it was since the Father slept. He uses the word coming there in verse 4 and goes on to describe the dissolution of the heavens and the earth. So I call that the conclusion of Christ's coming.

It's only found here in 2 Peter 3. So you have the phases of Christ. First of all, you have the two comings of Christ, coming to Bethlehem, his coming again. Then you have the four phases of his coming again, the rapture, the judgment seat of Christ, the manifestation of his coming, when every eye will see him, and then the conclusion of his coming again.

The fourth thing that distinguishes between law and grace. This is one of the fundamental distinctions in the New Testament, the distinction between law and grace. I think it's described very beautifully in Romans chapter 4, verses 3 and 5. Romans chapter 4, verses 3 and 5. These are marvelous scriptures.

I think it's one of the greatest passages on this subject. What does the scripture say? Abraham believed God was counted in him for righteousness. Notice, now to him who works, the rewards are not counted as grace but as debt.

That's law. To him who works, he's going to work for his salvation. He's going to gain his salvation by his works or by even his character, he thinks.

But to him who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. Law tells you what to do. It doesn't give you the power to do it, and it curses you if you don't do it.

Grace teaches you what to do, gives you the power to do it, and it blesses you when you do it. You can't beat that, can you? Let me say that again. Law tells you what to do, it doesn't give you the power to do it,

and it curses you if you don't do it.

Cursed is everyone that continueth not, and all things that are written in the book of the law to do it. Grace teaches you what to do it. The grace of God that brings salvation to all men teaches us.

It teaches us what to do, it gives us the power to do it, the Holy Spirit, and then it rewards us if we do it. Law says do, grace says done. Law says work, grace says believe.

Those two things are absolutely opposite to one another. So, this is very important, getting this whole idea of the distinction between law and grace. Go back to the Old Testament, and we can get a lot of honey out of the Old Testament.

A lot of it wasn't written for us at all. We don't offer animal sacrifices, do we? No, that was a different administration. That was under law that they were offered.

Yet, we can claim a lot of the promises for ourselves. God promised the land of Palestine to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. It's not for us.

It's not for us today. Three tenses of salvation. This is number five.

Three tenses of salvation, and I'm sure you're all familiar with that. But it's good. It's good in going through the New Testament to ask yourself which tense of salvation is referred to here.

Past. Past tense. I was saved.

I was saved from the penalty of sin when I repented and put my faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. Past. The past tense of salvation.

By grace you have been saved through faith. The past tense of salvation. The present tense is I'm being saved.

I'm being saved day by day. I'm saved by his life, by his present life at the right hand of God. I was saved from damnation in the past.

I'm saved from damage in the present. I'm saved from the damage that sin brings in at the present time. And future, I shall be saved.

When I see the Savior face to face, I'll be changed into his likeness. We shall be like him, but we shall see him as he is. And I don't think you'll have too much difficulty distinguishing these three tenses of salvation as you go through the New Testament, especially.

So I'll move on to judicial and parental forgiveness of sin. This is very, very important. And there's a lot of confusion in the evangelical world because they do not distinguish this.

There was a book came out a few years ago, and it said, A Christian never confesses his sin. He just thanks God he has been forgiven. But you see, whoever wrote that, and I know who wrote it, whoever wrote that failed to distinguish between judicial and parental forgiveness of sin.

Judicial forgiveness of sin is the forgiveness of a judge. Parental forgiveness of sin is the forgiveness of a father. And when we're saved, we receive judicial forgiveness of sin.

That means God will never bring up our sins again for which to punish them with eternal death. That has been settled once and for all. But as a child in the family of God, I sin.

I sin every day. I sin in thought. I sin in word.

I sin in deed. And I need forgiveness. I need parental forgiveness of sin.

1 John 1.9 is the key verse there, isn't it? If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's a marvelous verse of Scripture. I don't think I could continue as a Christian for a week if that verse of Scripture wasn't in the Bible.

But it's a wonderful thing to be able to get down on your knees, confess your sins, rise up, know that you've received parental forgiveness of those sins just by confessing. You don't have to ask God to forgive. You just confess them and he will forgive.

Faithful and just. He's faithful to his promise. He's just.

He has a righteous basis upon which to forgive your sins. That is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Remember that an unbeliever gets forgiveness by believing.

A believer gets forgiveness by confessing. And it's going to be helpful to you going through the New Testament if you're able to distinguish these types of forgiveness. If it's conditional, it's parental.

For instance, unless you forgive that other man, your Heavenly Father will not forgive you. Unless you forgive, your Heavenly Father will not forgive you. Well, there's a condition there, unless you forgive.

That's not the gospel. There's no gospel in that. And notice the word father there.

When you're studying the Scripture and you come to the subject of forgiveness, oftentimes when it's parental forgiveness, you'll find the word father right in the text. Your Heavenly Father. I think that's very, very helpful.

Watch out for the word father in a passage dealing with forgiveness. I often use the illustration of the judge down the criminal court. He has his robes, black robes there.

And the criminals come before him and he judges them. And that same man goes home at night and goes in the front door and his wife meets him and her hair is flying in all directions of the compass. And he said, what's the matter, dear? And she said, it's that son of yours.

And he's been acting up all day. And what do they say? He doesn't say, now I find you guilty and condemn you to death. Does he say that to his son? No, he doesn't.

It's not a judge dealing with a criminal. It's a father dealing with a son. He says, now I want you to go upstairs.

No supper for you. You go upstairs to your bedroom and don't come down here until you're ready to tell your mother you're sorry. And the father and the mother sit down to their supper.

And it tastes like sawdust, Creole sawdust. And pretty soon they hear the pitter patter of little feet coming down the stairs. And he comes down and he throws his arms around his mother's neck and he tells her he's sorry.

What happened? He's forgiven. He's forgiven. He proceeds with his supper.

Be sure to distinguish in your study of the Scripture between judicial and parental forgiveness of sins. Sanctification. Another place where you want to distinguish.

One definition of sanctification which fits every use in the Bible is set apart. When you think of sanctification, think of those words set apart. It doesn't mean to make holy.

It means to set apart. For instance, parts of the temple were sanctified in the Old Testament. They were sanctified.

There are various kinds of sanctification. There's pre-conversion sanctification. There's positional sanctification.

There's practical sanctification. And there's perfect sanctification. And as you study your Bible you want to distinguish.

There's pre-conversion sanctification. Were you conscious of the Lord working, the Holy Spirit working in your life before you were saved? I was. Convicting me of sin? Trying to woo me to the Lord Jesus? Pre-conversion sanctification.

It's possible to be sanctified and not be saved and not ever be saved. For instance, the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife. Imagine an unbelieving husband.

He's set apart. You say, how is he set apart? He's set apart in a position of external privilege before God. It's a wonderful thing for him to have a wife who abounds in praise for him and for his salvation.

He's set apart by God. And yet, there's no guarantee that he'll ever be saved. Although, praise God, in many cases people like that are saved.

Pre-conversion sanctification. 2 Thessalonians 2.13 2 Thessalonians 2.13 It says, but we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning shows you for salvation, notice, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. First of all, you're sanctified by the Spirit of God, and then you believe the truth of the gospel.

I call that pre-conversion sanctification. Then you have positional sanctification. That's very strong in 1 Corinthians 1. The Corinthians were sanctified.

They weren't very saintly at times. If you read the book, you find that they were very unsanctified in some ways. It says, verse 2, To the church of God, 1 Corinthians 1.2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, call to be saints with all who in every place call in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours.

Every true believer is sanctified positionally. He's set apart to God from the world. That's his standing before God.

That's how God looks upon him. But then there's practical sanctification, where the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17.17 Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth.

That's the outworking of that sanctification in their lives. And then, of course, you have perfect sanctification. That's when we go home to be with the Lord.

Then we shall be what we should be. Then we shall be what we would be. Things that are not now nor could be soon shall be our own.

Colossians 1.22 Let's turn to that, please. Colossians 1.22 It says, And you who were once alienated and enemies, verse 21, in your mind by wicked works, yet now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy, that's the word, holy, and blameless and irreproachable in his sight. Holiness and sanctification are the same thing.

And here the word holy is used, could just as well say present you sanctified and blameless, irreproachable in his sight. That's the future tense of sanctification. Now you have somewhat the same thing with regard to justification.

This is number eight, justification. There are different aspects of justification. First of all, definition.

Definitions are very important. A man named Bengel, a commentator years ago, made a list of 20 different words, and he said if you understand the meaning of those 20 different words, you're well on your way to becoming a theologian. Well, I never got the list from him, but certainly justification would be one of them.

Justification means to reckon righteous. It doesn't mean to make righteous. It means to reckon righteous.

That's what God does when an unbeliever comes and confesses his sin or repents of his sin and believes on the Savior. Different aspects of justification. We're justified by grace.

We're justified, therefore being justified by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We're justified by faith, therefore being justified by faith. We're justified with peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We're justified by blood. Romans chapter 5, verse 9. Justified by his blood. We're justified by power.

Romans 4.25. It doesn't use the word power there, but that's definitely the idea. Perhaps we should look to that. Romans 4.25. It says right at the end of the chapter there, Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us.

Verse 24. Shall be imputed to us who believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again because of our justification. That's the power of God that raised the Lord Jesus for our justification.

So we're justified by power. We're justified by works. James brings that out very beautifully.

He doesn't mean that we're justified by faith plus works, or that we're justified by works alone. We're justified by the kind of faith that produces good works. This is the manifestation of our faith.

And then finally, Romans 8.33. We're justified by God. You say, well, how can we be justified in all these different words? Easy. We're justified by grace.

That means we don't deserve it. We're justified by faith. That means we have to receive it.

We have to put out our empty hand and receive it. We're justified by blood. That's the price that had to be paid for our justification.

We're justified by power. The power that raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead. We're justified by works.

Faith is invisible. Nobody ever saw faith, but you can see the outworking of faith. And that's what James is talking about.

He says, show me your faith without your works. You can't do it. You can't do it.

He was from Missouri. He wanted to see it. And then we're justified by God.

It is God that justifies. Romans 8.33. Oh, it's good. Usually those passages are, they distinguish themselves.

They tell you right in the passage which aspect of justification is being spoken about. Number nine, position and practice. Position and practice.

Brother Burnett was speaking about this last night. I don't know any one of the things that I'm going to talk about this morning that has been more helpful to me in the study of the New Testament than this distinction between position and practice. My position is what I am in Christ.

My practice is what I am or should be in myself. Now, you see, that doesn't sound very profound. It isn't very profound, but I tell you, it opens up great passages of Scripture to you.

For instance, Romans 6. Shall we continue in sin that graced me above God forbid? How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Dead to sin. I'm going to ask you this morning, are you dead to sin? Just, you fellows, open up your shirt and look inside and see if you're dead to sin. Well, as if that isn't difficult enough, you go down to verse 11 of Romans chapter 6 and it says, likewise, reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin.

Once you see position and practice, no problem. The first use of the words in Romans 6, you are dead to sin. That's your position.

That's the way God sees you. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, He died to the whole subject of sin. You're in Christ, you're dead to the whole subject of sin.

Does that mean you don't sin? No. Likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That was helpful to me when I saw that.

One of the keys to find position, if you see the words in Christ, in Him, in whom, referring to Christ, position. Good key, good key. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, position.

This was a great help to me. There was a verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 that really used to bother me, really used to bother me. Verse 17 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. I wonder if I'm really saved.

I wish I could say that all old things have passed away. I wish I could say that I didn't have any more dirty thoughts or bad motivations in life. But I can't say that.

So I guess I'm not saved. And then one day I noticed two words in there, in Christ, in Christ, position. Therefore, if any man is in Christ, old things have passed away.

This is true, it's absolutely true, positionally. And it should be true practically. It should be more and more true practically.

You see, God sets our position up here, absolutely perfect. Here I am down here, and the movement of my life should be up toward, now I never will reach that on this earth. I never will reach that perfection here on earth.

But there should be that movement, that practice moving upward toward what my position is. Okay, turn to Colossians chapter 3 just briefly. And this is the test, whether you've really got it or not.

Colossians chapter 3. Look carefully now. If then you were raised with Christ, position or practice? Louder. Right.

Keep those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, position or practice? Practice. Set your minds on things above, not on things of the earth. Practice.

For you died and your life is hid with Christ and God. You're doing very well. Now doesn't that open up the passage to you? It does to me.

It makes it very meaningful to me to be able to go to Colossians 3, those opening verses, and see how it swings back and forth between position and practice. In fact, some epistles of the New Testament are based upon this. If you go to Ephesians, you'll find 1 through 3, chapters 1 through 3, they're position.

Chapters 4 through 6, they're practice. Notice the way Ephesians 4 begins. I think this is telltale.

Ephesians 4, he's just been talking about a wonderful position in Christ, and he says, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you have a walk worthy of the calling with which you've been called. Chapters 1 through 3, your calling, the calling with which you've been called. Now, verses, chapters 4 through 6, walk worthy of that wonderful calling with which you have been called.

Number 10, relationship and fellowship. Another good distinction. I don't think most of you would have too much trouble with that.

Relationship and fellowship. Relationship is formed when you're born again. You become a child of God.

You become a son of God, and that son refers to whether you're male or female. It doesn't make a bit of difference. It's used in a generic sense there.

And incidentally, once a relationship is formed, it can never be broken. You can't undo a birth. I think this is a very strong argument for the eternal security of the believer.

When you're saved, a relationship with God is obtained, and that can never be broken. That's why somebody said relationship is an unbreakable chain, and it is. Now, fellowship is something quite different.

Fellowship is the happy family spirit. When Johnny had to go up to his bedroom without supper, fellowship in the family was broken. The happy family spirit.

Two can't walk together unless to be agreed. And I can't have fellowship with God if I'm going on in unconfessed sin. That's fellowship broken.

Fellowship is broken by sin, and it remains broken until that sin is confessed and forsaken. A relationship established by the new birth, unchangeable. Fellowship determined by our daily walk is broken by sin and restored by confession.

1 John 1, 9. Again, there it is. Again. I think you'd all have that pretty well down.

The day of the Lord, the day of Christ, and the day of God. The day of the Lord, the day of Christ. You know, it's wonderful to get these things straight in our mind.

It's so helpful when you're studying the New Testament. The day of the Lord generally refers to a time when God judges. It generally does.

In the Old Testament, the day of the Lord was any time when God marched forth against his enemies, or even when he judged his people. Even when he judged his people. I always associate the thought of judgment with the day of the Lord.

In the future, the day of the Lord will include the tribulation period, the second coming of Christ to reign, the millennium. You say millennium? Judgment? He's going to rule with a rod of iron. And the judgment of the great white throne? That's all the day of the Lord.

The day of Christ is the day of blessing, not a day of judgment. The day of Christ is the day of blessing, and it includes the rapture. Primarily, it refers to the rapture.

And then the day of God used once in the Bible, 2 Peter 3.12. It's the eternal state. The day of God is the eternal state. 2 Peter 3.12. Another very important distinction that you want to make is the distinction between Israel and the Church.

What you believe about this is going to determine your whole prophetic outlook, your whole outlook on the prophecies of the New Testament. The difference between Israel and the Church. Paul divided all humanity into Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God, 1 Corinthians 10.32. And they're very, very different.

Israel was never a mystery. The Church was a mystery. It was a truth hidden in God from the foundation of the earth.

Israel began with Abraham. The Church began on the day of Pentecost. Abraham was the head of Israel.

Christ is the head of the Church. And your membership in Israel was by natural birth. Your membership in the Church is by spiritual birth.

Israel is God's chosen earthly people. The Church is God's chosen heavenly people. There was a separate caste of priests in the Old Testament.

You had to be of the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron to be a priest. In the New Testament Church, all true believers are priests. It's great to distinguish that.

This is a big problem. At the present time, there's a great return to Reformation theology, and that includes the amillennial view of Scripture. In other words, God is through with Israel nationally.

It has nothing more to do with Israel. It's just going to pass off the scene, and we are the Israel of God. We're not the Israel of God.

We are the Church, and we're quite distinct. The Church is not the same as the kingdom. The kingdom existed in various phases, too.

I'm really sorry I have to go so fast on this. First of all, you have the kingdom prophesied. Then you have the kingdom present in the person of the king.

The Lord Jesus came, and he said, The kingdom of God is among you. He was right there, the kingdom present. Then you have the kingdom in mystery form.

Matthew 13, the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. That's, in the broad sense, Christendom. It really is Christendom in the broad sense.

But inside, there's a little circle of the true kingdom. Except a man be born again, he cannot see or enter the kingdom of God. That's explained in greater detail in this little book, Here's the Difference.

So I'm not going to go into it in greater detail now. Then you have the mysteries of Scripture. And once again, definitions are important.

Mystery. When we speak of mystery in the New Testament sense, it doesn't mean some story with an unlikely ending. It doesn't mean some murder mystery or something like that.

A mystery in Scripture is a truth that was never known before, but has now been revealed to the sons of men by God's holy apostles and prophets. That's what a mystery is. A truth that human intellect could never have worked out at all.

So you have the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 13 again. In other words, the Lord Jesus was telling there something he had never known before, that the kingdom was going to exist in an interim form, where the king would be absent, but his kingship would be acknowledged by true believers.

Then you have the mystery of Israel's blindness. The judicial blindness that had come upon the nation of Israel because of its rejection of the Messiah. You have the mystery of the rapture.

Until that truth came out in the New Testament, nobody ever knew that before. Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep.

We shall all be chained. In other words, up until that time, people thought, well, everybody's going to die eventually. Paul says, no, it's not so.

The mystery of the church. How this dispensation God would gather out of the nations of people for his name. And the great truths of the church were never known in the Old Testament.

Believing Jew and believing Gentile would be made one new man in Christ. They never knew that in the Old Testament. They would have been aghast if you tried to tell them.

The mystery of iniquity already worked. And once again, the extent of that is unknown. The mystery of the faith.

I think that's the Christian faith. The great revelation of truth that has come with the Christian faith. The mystery of godliness that God was manifest in the flesh.

You know, it's the first time when the Lord Jesus came to earth. It's the first time that anybody ever saw godliness in a human body. Great is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifest in the flesh. Mystery of the seven stars. Revelation was explained right in the text.

Right in the text. The mystery of God. This is a toughie.

The mystery of God. I think it means the silence of God. You know, we hear that all the time.

But why does God allow all this to suffer? All this suffering to take place. Well, there's a day coming when all of the difficulties are going to be answered. And then the mystery of Babylon.

Okay. And you read about that in Revelation chapter 17 and 18. Fifteen.

The distinction between salvation and service. The distinction. This is where a lot of the people who believe in the falling away doctrine.

They don't distinguish passages that are dealing with salvation and those that are dealing with service. And I only have time to turn to one passage. First Corinthians chapter nine verses 24 to 27.

First Corinthians chapter nine, 24 to 27. Do not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize. Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

Everyone who competes for the prize is tempered in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore, I run thus, not with uncertainty.

Thus I fight, not as one who beats the air, but I discipline my body and bring it into subjection. But when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. Disqualified is really what it means.

And it's speaking about service. It's speaking about service for the Lord. It's not a question.

Salvation is not in view here. It's Paul running the race of the Christian life. And so you want to be very careful to make those distinctions.

Fundamentals and non-essentials. It seems to me that in the word of God you have some things that are absolutely fundamental. We call them the fundamentals of the faith.

The inspiration of the scriptures. The Trinity. The deity of the Lord Jesus.

His sinless humanity. His death, burial, and resurrection. The gospel.

Salvation by grace through faith plus nothing. The eternal bliss of the saved. The eternal judgment of the lost.

I think those are fundamentals of the faith. There are other things in the Bible that are very, very important because the Bible does teach about them, but they've never been considered fundamentals of the faith. I think the whole prophetic thing, the whole prophetic picture is very important.

A great deal of the Bible is devoted to prophecy, but it's never... In other words, fellowship isn't necessarily based upon that. It's not a fundamental of the faith. Baptism.

You could name a lot of stuff. They're important. I don't discount them for a minute, but they just haven't been made the basis of fellowship.

And then there are some things that are really secondary. They're really not important. You say, what? Well, what time you meet, you know.

Whether you use wine or grape juice. It's the symbols. It's the person that counts, not the symbols.

Things like that. There are things that are secondary. God doesn't really care what you do.

He's allowed a certain amount of latitude in those subjects. Paul speaks in Romans chapter 14 about matters of moral indifference. Some people thought it was wrong to eat certain foods.

Others could eat everything and give thanks to God for it. But in either case, God got thanks for what the people were eating. And Paul just says, don't stumble anybody else.

You do what faith enables you to do, but don't stumble somebody else in the process. Double fulfillment. Number 17.

Double fulfillment. This is good. The prophecies of Scripture oftentimes have an early and partial fulfillment and a later and complete fulfillment.

You say, what do you mean by that? Well, remember the virgin passage, I think, in Isaiah chapter 7. Behold, a virgin shall conceive. Well, that prophecy had an early and partial meaning for King Ahaz. Where the word could have meant a young maiden.

That word virgin in the Old Testament could have meant a young maiden. It had an early and partial fulfillment for King Ahaz. It has a complete fulfillment in the birth of the Lord Jesus.

And the word used in the New Testament can only mean a virgin. I think that's beautiful. I really do.

And then, of course, in Joel you have the prophecy of Pentecost. Where God says, I'm going to pour out my spirit upon all flesh. Well, it had an early and partial fulfillment at Pentecost, didn't it? But it wasn't a complete fulfillment because at Pentecost he only poured out his spirit on a handful of Jews.

But when he comes again in power and great glory, he's going to pour out his spirit upon all flesh. That will be the complete fulfillment of that. So just remember that in prophecy there may be an early and partial fulfillment and a later and a complete fulfillment.

Aspects of eternal life. You'll find those words eternal life used in different ways in the Scripture. First of all, what does it mean? It doesn't mean just living eternally.

Because even unsaved people are going to live eternally, aren't they? It doesn't mean that. Everybody's going to live eternally. But eternal life is a quality of life.

It's the life of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And he gives you that life when you're saved. And it's spoken of in Scripture as a present possession.

We believe we have eternal life as a result of believing. But it's also spoken of as a future hope. A future hope.

You say, well, how come? If you have it now, why is it a future hope? Well, eternal life in its fullness, you know. Eternal life in its fullness. We didn't get all the blessings of salvation the moment we were saved.

You say, we didn't? No, we didn't get the glorified body, did we? We didn't get the glorified body. And so eternal life in its fullness is spoken of as a hope. And let me just say a word about that word hope.

The word hope in the New Testament doesn't mean what it means in our parlance today. The Christian hope is based upon the Word of God, and there's no element of doubt in it at all. Remember that.

When you come to the Christian's hope in the New Testament, it's sure. There's no element of uncertainty to it at all. Absolutely sure, because it's based upon the Word of God, and there's nothing more sure in all the universe than the Word of God.

Two natures. I don't have time to go into the two natures, but I know it's taught a great deal. And if you don't know it from the Scripture, you know it from personal experience, if you're anything like me.

Okay. The difference between the indwelling of the Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit, and the filling of the Spirit. The indwelling of the Spirit teaches that when you're saved, the Holy Spirit of God dwells in that body of yours.

The baptism of the Spirit is that ministry of the Holy Spirit which places you in the body of Christ. The filling of the Spirit is different. Those first two you got immediately, automatically when you were saved.

The filling is up to you. Be filled with the Spirit. Be continually filled with the Spirit.

There are conditions you have to meet. You have to put yourself in the way of the blessing. Personal greatness and positional greatness.

Boy, I wish we had more time. And the Scripture distinguishes between positional greatness and personal greatness. For instance, it says John the Baptist was the greatest.

No prophet like John the Baptist ever. That doesn't mean that the prophets in the Old Testament didn't have as great a character as he did, but it means that they never had the privilege of being the forerunner of the Lord Jesus. That's a positional greatness.

And you find that in other places. Jesus said, My Father is greater than I. Greater? I thought the Father and the Son were equal. Well, they are equal.

But when Jesus was on earth, he was suffering the abuse of men. And God was in heaven and nobody ever spat in his face. You know? In that sense, he was greater, positionally.

But not personally. Not personally. And Mary was, you know, honored greatly.

It doesn't mean she had a better character than all the women. It means she had that positional greatness of being the mother of our Lord. Now, I only have time to read some of the major covenants of Scripture.

And I don't think you'll have too much difficulty with that. Most of the covenants were made with Israel. And that's why you don't hear too much about them in the teaching among the assembly.

You have seven judgments, at least seven different judgments, in the New Testament to be distinguished. Human sin was judged at the cross. The self-judgment of the believer before we break bread.

The judgment seat of Christ. The judgment of Israel. The judgment of the nations.

The judgment of angels. The judgment of the great white throne. Make a distinction between Hades and hell.

The rich man lifted up his eyes, being in Hades. Some of the translations are not clear on this. It was in Hades.

Hades is kind of a holding tank. When a person, an unsaved person, dies today, it goes to Hades. And hell is the eternal abode of the wicked dead.

There are seven aspects of the glories of Christ. You have his original glory as God the Son. His positional glory in heaven.

His life on earth as the Son of Man. His acquired glory. His resurrection and ascension.

His second coming and kingdom. His present glory. I wish I had time to talk to you about the differences in the Gospels.

They are wonderful. You know, I don't think that God ever intended the Gospels to be harmonized. It's the differences in the Gospels that are important.

And when you see that, it just opens up a whole new world for you. You read Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount. And you read Luke, and you say, well, the Sermon on the Mount.

And the harmony of the Gospel, Luke chapter 6. Harmony in the Gospel would put them together. They're quite different. Matthew, in that section, gives the ideal citizen of the kingdom.

Luke gives the lifestyle of the disciples that Jesus was sending out. I could spend an hour on that. Atonement, then and now.

This is the 27th. Atonement, then and now. In the Old Testament, atonement had to do with a covering of sins.

A covering of sins. It's not a New Testament word. You won't find the word atonement in the New Testament.

The Lord Jesus, by His work on the cross, didn't cover sins. He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. That's quite a distinction.

Actually, the temple, articles of the temple, they were atoned for. It was kind of a ceremonial, a ritual cleanliness, a cleanness, making it fit for the service of God. But there's a big difference between atonement.

You say, well, I find atonement in my Bible, in Romans chapter 5. Yeah, well, the real, the right translation there is reconciliation. That's the right translation there. I'm awfully sorry we had to go so fast.

Much of what we've been over is in this book. And here's the difference. And you can get it in the bookstore if you want greater detail.

And hopefully someday there'll be another book that will take all the subjects that we have given out. Shall we pray? Father, we just pray that you will, that the Holy Spirit might be our teacher and that we might always desire to be learning more at the feet of the Lord Jesus. If we do pray in his worthy name, amen.

Thank you.

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