

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Sabbath Mystery 16

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[0 : 00] position to each other than law and grace, and they simply will not mix. But that doesn't keep humanity from trying, and we are forever given to wanting to shackle grace with law. And I suspect that the principal reason for that is people just cannot believe that the grace of God is what it really is, free and unhindered. It is for freedom that Christ set us free, and it is something that is simply not much appreciated even by those who name the name of Christ. We know we are saved by grace, but to mean, to understand what it means to live by grace and enjoy grace is something entirely different. There are those who oppose the subject and the concept of grace and confuse it with licentiousness, and people can't be given too much grace because they get carried away, and then they develop sinful lifestyles, and they say, well, it doesn't matter because I'm under grace, and I'm not under law, and it doesn't make any difference how I live. It makes all the difference in the world.

Matter of fact, we will discover that a believer under grace, in many respects, has a greater area of responsibility than do those under law, because under law, everything is pretty much pointed out with the do's and the don'ts, and thou shalt and thou shalt not. Doesn't leave a whole lot of room for discussion, but grace contains enormous latitude where you have to enter the picture and decide for yourself where your boundaries are, and that entails a different level of responsibility than what you have under law. In effect, it's kind of like growing up as a child. You know, when you're an infant, and sitting in that high chair, and mommy is feeding you your pablum or whatever, you just do pretty much whatever is required of you, and you go along with it because you don't have a whole lot of choice, and everything is pretty much spelled out for you, and you are dressed, and you are fed, and you go to school, and then they're telling you there what the rules are, what to do, what you must accomplish, and so on and so forth, and you're in a stricture that is very specific, and you know pretty much what's expected of you, and when you get out of bounds, they'll let you know that, and the parameters are pretty well drawn, but when you graduate, when you leave home, when you become a bona fide adult, now you're on your own, and you know, most kids, and I can remember, yeah, I know it's a long ways back for me to remember, but I can remember, boy, when I grow up, when I grow up, when I get, when I get, nobody's going to tell me when to go to bed, and now, Marie, honey, I'm going to hit the sack, I'm bushed, nobody has to tell me because, well, everything is different, everything is different, and when someone refuses to grow out of the legal thou shalt's and thou shalt not, it's almost like a scary time because the parameters are gone, and they're on their own, and they're responsible for their own decisions, and it's a magic change of life, no question about it, so here in Romans chapter 14, let's begin reading, if we will, and I'd like to go down and follow along, if you would, and let's, well, let's just read, chapter 14 of Romans, now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions, now there's two reasons why one would be weak in faith, one is understandable and relatively legitimate, and the other is not, one can be legitimately weak in faith because as a new convert, a new babe in Christ, they haven't really got their spiritual footing stabilized, and they just don't understand what all has been made available to them, and what is expected from them as a new believer, and if they are coming from a background like many of these were in Romans, coming from a Jewish background, they come with a lot of baggage, a lot of baggage carried over from the law, the law of Moses, they've been under the dominion of that law, they've been told what they can eat, what they must not eat, on what day they must worship, what time the worship begins, what time it ends, all the rest of it, and they're used to that stricture, and now it's gone,

and as a new believer, particularly if they're coming out of Judaism, what is it that is now expected of them? They know what was expected under the law, but what's expected now? Consequently, when they come into the faith community of other believers, some of whom are very mature and have been in Christ maybe for years, and they know the ropes, they understand grace, they understand the law, and they've got a good firm grip on it, but here is this relatively new convert, and this is all new to him, so he's struggling, and he comes into this fellowship with this baggage, and the question is, how are those experienced seasoned saints going to relate to this newbie who doesn't know straight up spiritually, except that he is now in Christ and his sins are forgiven, and that's about all he knows. And then there is one other person who is weak in faith that I call unjustifiable, and that is someone who has been a Christian for a number of years, but has absented themselves from anything to do with a spiritual diet or intake of the Word of God, and they just don't mature. Oh, they're saved. They're going to heaven when they die, but they've never grown or developed spiritually to the extent that they could really enjoy their Christian life and understand what is involved in it. And even though they've been saved for years, they're still like baby brethren still in the wheelchair or the high chair or the playpen or whatever, and their lifestyle reflects it because they just have no spiritual stability about them.

And both of those cases, they are weak brethren, so they are being addressed, except one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

Now that simply means right off the bat that there needs to be an element of not only compassion, but patience and understanding, and you've got to baby these people to help them along.

[8 : 00] The idea of their being together in a group of believers is for their mutual encouragement and growth. Because after all, what the body of Christ is all about, and what we are all about, is that we are supposed to learn things and relate to each other in such a way, in growth and maturity, that over time, we will become more and more like Jesus Christ, and less and less like people of the flesh.

That is growing and maturing in Christ, and it is a process. It doesn't happen overnight. Spiritual life occurs instantaneously. You are either in Christ or you are not in Christ.

It is a crisis act. When it took place, it took place immediately. When you were outside, outside the body of Christ and came to faith, and you were placed inside the body, that took a very short period of time.

And as someone has said, well, it is true that salvation is the end of the gospel. It's the front end. And there is where the growth and development starts, because everybody knows how critical it is for a newborn baby to take nourishment and grow and develop.

And it gets us the exercise, and it's moving those little arms and legs, and it's growing and maturing. And now and then, I've been told by some nurses who've had the joy and the sadness of working in maternity wards.

[9 : 48] And there are some children, it's a rare condition, doesn't happen very often, thank God. But there is a rare condition that some babies are born, and they are labeled failure to thrive.

They just either cannot or will not take nourishment, and they just die on the vine.

They just do not develop, they do not mature, and their life is very short and abrupt. And the official cause of death is failure to thrive.

It's a rare condition, but it happens. I suspect that spiritually it happens in the body of Christ a lot more often. And it all has to do with not having the diet that you need.

You know, nutritionists have pointed out, and I think there's a lot of truth to this. Physically speaking, you are what you eat. You really are.

[10 : 51] If you have nothing but a diet of junk food and soda pop, it's going to tell in your body one way or another. You need good nutrition, and you need exercise.

You need both of those. And if you fail to get them, it will take a toll on your body. And the diet, the food that we take in spiritually is, as Peter said, that we are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby.

And Paul talks about strong, about meat not being able to be enjoyed by anybody but the strong.

You wouldn't give a two-year-old a T-bone steak because they're not able to handle that. You give them baby food. But the time comes when you grow up to the place of where you're supposed to be able to take in the kind of spiritual food that will nourish your spiritual person that will result in your growth and development and your maturity as a believer.

And the exercise, the exercise is found in what Paul said about working out your own salvation, which literally means give your salvation a workout.

[12 : 10] And how do you do that? You do that by service. Who do you serve? You serve one another. You serve each other.

Go through the Bible sometimes in the Pauline epistles, and every time you come to the phrase, one another. You ought to underline it and see how often it occurs.

We are all in this thing together, and we are all called upon to minister to each other, one another. That's our spiritual exercise. And when you give the gospel to someone, when you share Christ with someone, that's spiritual exercise.

When you go out of your way to help a brother or sister financially, medically, whatever, however, that's spiritual growth. That's ministry. That's service. And that's giving your salvation a workout.

That's doing something with it. So he's talking about don't receive them for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. That means we are not called upon to straighten out people.

[13 : 13] That's not our job. Our job is to be helpful, compassionate, instructive, patient, diplomatic, sensitive.

That's our job. That's, you know, there isn't anything that should describe a Christian in their demeanor and attitude more than the word gracious.

A Christian needs, must have a gracious disposition and spirit about them.

Firm, solid, but not judgmental, not condemning, but compassionate, patient, long-suffering.

All of these things are characteristic of a gracious spirit. We ought to be people of grace.

[14 : 18] Grace people need to be gracious. That's not that hard to figure out, is it? That's the way it ought to be. So people sometimes feel that it's their responsibility to tell somebody else what they're doing wrong and straighten them out.

Give them the scoop. I remember the story about this old boy lived in a small town out west. And he had a reputation of being hard drinking and hard playing and hard this and hard that.

And he had this old beat-up pickup truck that he would hot rod around town in and give the law fits. And it was hard to handle. And he'd go into this bar every night and tie on one and come out and get picked up with a DUI and whatnot.

And he developed quite a reputation. It had gone on for quite some time. But would you know, this hellraiser, this local hellraiser, came to faith in Jesus Christ and completely changed his life.

And he decided that he just wasn't able to go to the place that he used to go to all the time and drink with his buddies. And he stopped showing up.

[15 : 33] And one day, he ran into a couple of them. And they said, hey, we missed you. It's such and such. You know, what's wrong? Where have you been? And he said, well, he said, I just kind of lost interest in being there and doing that anymore.

And he didn't know how to put it. And he said, what are you talking about? And he says, well, you know, I've been thinking about some things. And I said, hey, you didn't get religion, did you?

I heard, you know, there's a rumor going around town that you got religion. What's going on with you anyway? Well, you know, I've just come to realize that I've been really wrong about a lot of things.

And there's a lot of stuff I need to straighten out. And I'm working on it. And I don't have all the answers. But I and he was very awkward for him. And he got to thinking about it later. And maybe maybe he ought to go back to his old haunts.

Not for the reason that he was there before. But those are people. Those were his buddies. Those were guys that he cared about. And and maybe I ought to go back and and see if he could have an opportunity to talk to them about the Lord.

[16 : 49] Because after all, they don't know it, but they need what I've got. And they don't know that. So if I really care about him, maybe that's what I ought to be doing. And so sure enough, he parked his truck right in front of that bar where everybody had been used to seeing it.

And he went in. And when they ordered up, he said, well, he said, I appreciate you thinking of me, but bring me a Coke. And some of them stickered and laughed and said, boy, this thing really did get into you, didn't it?

He says, well, you know, he tried to laugh it off and everything and have a good time with him. And he drank his Coke and they would razz him and pick at him a little bit, you know. And when are you going to start preaching? You know, you're going to get all this stuff.

Are you going to be the next Billy Graham and all this, you know, razzing him with whatnot. But he was good natured and he just put up with it. And that went on week after week. And finally, when he showed up in church one morning, because the man who led him to the Lord invited him to the church.

And he says, you need to be there because you'll get your spiritual footing there and you'll grow and start developing. He said, yeah, that's probably what I need. So he started going to church. And after three or four Sundays, a little lady came up to him, a little spinster lady, and said, I just want you to know that I saw your truck out in front of that saloon.

[18 : 15] And more than once. And I don't know what you're doing in there or why you're going in there. But it's not a good reflection on the church or on the Lord. And you shouldn't be there and you shouldn't be doing that.

And he was, you know, he just said, well, thank you, goodbye. And the next Sunday, she led into him again.

And this went on for about three or four weeks. And this woman was decided that she was going to straighten this man out and save his testimony and the reputation of the church and everything else.

And he didn't know what to do about it. And he didn't know how to get this lady off his back. And he didn't want to stop going to the church. And every time he went into the bar and talked to his buddies, while he would refrain from drinking, inevitably there would be some serious questions come up about eternal life.

And he'd be able to talk to them. And he didn't want to give that up either. But he didn't know what to do. And one more time, she led into him on Sunday morning and right in front of other people.

[19 : 20] And it was embarrassing. And he was red faced. And he didn't know how he was going to handle this. People just shake their head and walk on by, you know. And finally, he decided that he was going to deal with this issue the only way he knew how.

So the next Saturday night, when he left the bar, he took his pickup truck and he parked it in front of her house. And he left it there all night. And he left it there all night.

And he left it there all night. And he left it there all night. And he left it there all night. And he left it there all night. What goes around comes around. Okay. Let's get back to Romans 14, shall we? Verse 2.

Now the important thing that needs to be noticed, and this is an important thing.

Both of these positions are coming from good faith. Both of them are doing what they're doing because they believe that's what God requires of them.

[20 : 27] Their heart is in it. They are doing it for the right reason. Maybe what they're doing isn't necessary. But they're doing it with the right attitude because they believe it's necessary.

So one man has faith or confidence that he may eat all things. Who would that possibly be? Well, I'll tell you what. It isn't likely that it would be a Jew.

Because a Jew has all kinds of food that is off limits to him. He's not allowed to eat. But Gentiles, they can eat most anything. And it may also be an issue of being a meat eater as opposed to being a vegetarian.

You know, there are lots of people today who are quite convinced that meat of any kind should not be eaten. And these are people that even feel sorry for chickens, you know, that they have to give up their life for some of these nasty meat eaters who, and, you know, they put a bullseye on Colonel Sanders.

And they just don't want to eat meat at all. And they don't want anybody else to eat meat. And you're supposed to eat vegetables. I guess they call them vegans or vegans or whatever.

[21 : 40] But anyway, that too is coming out of conviction. He who is weak eats vegetables only. That's not talking about physical weakness. It's talking about spiritual weakness.

Let not him who eats regard with contempt. Him who does not eat.

And let not him who does not eat judge him who eats. For God has accepted him. This dietary thing becomes a real controversial issue in the first century because everybody is familiar with the diet restrictions that Jews had, that Gentiles didn't have.

So that's going to create a conflict. And this is tied also to the same issue of Jews having the law of Moses and the Ten Commandments in place by which they've lived for all their life, as opposed to these Christians who have the strangest idea of saying they have no obligation to the law of Moses.

Can you believe that? These people who claim to be Christians are saying they have no obligation to observe the law of Moses.

[23 : 08] And how long had the law of Moses been around? Well, about, what, by this time? Seven, 800 years, 900 years, something like that, since Moses gave the law in Sinai.

And it had been embedded into these people generation after generation, all of the dietary restrictions, all of the commandments, all of the thou shalt and thou shalt nots, and all the rest of it. And here are these people who are Christians, and some of them are even former Jews, who say they have no obligation under the law.

Wow. And here the issue is about food. Who are you to judge the servant of another?

Verse 4. To his own master he stands or falls, and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man regards one day above another. Another regards every day alike.

Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. And what's that all about? This is all about what is a big word. It's called Sabbatarianism. And it means it is related to the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

[24 : 25] If you were a Jew, you really fully understood the Sabbath. And you knew that it began at sundown Friday, and it ended sundown Saturday.

And during that time, you were not allowed to do any work. In fact, there was a man back in the Old Testament who defied that law and went out and gathered sticks, obviously sticks to just build a fire on the Sabbath.

And he was spitting dead. Can you believe that? Doesn't that sound really harsh? I mean, just to go out and stoop down and pick up some sticks to build a fire?

And you're spitting dead for that? God struck him dead? Where is the love and the grace in something like that? Well, we don't know the full story.

But I can promise you this. God knows the heart. And he responds. And if the heart of that man was picking up sticks in defiance, that's one thing.

[25 : 48] And if he was picking up sticks out of ignorance and didn't know any better, that's another thing. Because God reads the heart, and he knows what the intent is. And sometimes intent will be more condemning than actually the act that is done.

I mean, what kind of harm can there be in picking up sticks? But if it is done as an act of defiance, like, not going to tell me I can't pick up sticks when I want to, God does not appreciate that.

That is a slap in the face of the Almighty, and he does not take kindly to that. So if that's what this man was doing out of defiance, well, I can understand the Lord striking him dead.

But this man observes the day, and he observes it for the Lord. And he who eats does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God. And he who eats not for the Lord, he does not eat and gives thanks to God.

So both of these are coming from diverse positions, but both are coming with the right attitude and the right condition of heart and the right motivation and the right intent. And we are not to wade into somebody simply because they disagree with us regarding these issues with the idea I'm going to straighten him out.

[27 : 12] We are not called upon to be one another's Holy Spirit. We are called upon to pray for one another, and as they grow and mature and develop, they'll come to these conclusions on their own.

We don't have to put in our two cents worth. And the text says, and this is quite interesting because I think it's at least in part a translation problem here. In verse 5, he says, One man regards one day above another.

Another regards every day alike. I don't know if you've got a new American standard or not, but if you do, would you look at that word alike?

You see anything different about it? It's in italics, isn't it? Do you know what that means? That means it's not in the original text.

It isn't in the Greek at all. The word alike isn't there. Well, why is it here then in the English? Well, because the translators put it in because they thought it would make better sense to have the word alike in than it would be to leave it out.

[28 : 16] So they took the liberty of putting it in. But if you read it the way it reads in the original, it reads like this. One man regards one day above another.

Another regards every day. Oh, what does that mean? It means that this one man takes the Sabbath and he puts it on a pedestal.

And that is rock solid. He cannot do anything. He cannot even... Do you realize if you are an observant Jew, and I'm talking about today, I'm talking about 2020.

I'm not talking about a thousand years ago. I'm talking about 2020. If you are an observant Jew, an observant, I mean one who meticulously sticks to the kosher diet and the Sabbath and everything about it, you are not even permitted to flip the switch on your light in the kitchen on.

because that is the equivalent of kindling a fire and causing a light.

[29 : 35] You are required to get your next door neighbor, who may be a Gentile, to come over to your house and flip on the lights so you do not violate the Sabbath.

When we were in Israel years ago, 1990, we were scheduled to go to... This is another sightseeing thing that we were enjoying there in Israel, and it was the Sabbath.

But in Israel, there are a lot of things going on on the Sabbath because Israel, you must understand, Israel is really a secular state.

We tend to think that it is a Jewish state, and it is inhabited primarily by Jewish people. But you must understand, most of the Jews who live in Israel, and they are bona fide Jews, direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I don't know how many I met over there who would...

One of the first things they would tell me when they found out that I was a pastor, I was a minister and a tourist there in Israel, they almost would not fail to let me know, well, I'm not a religious Jew.

[30 : 54] And what they mean by that is they are not observant. They don't give a hang about the Sabbath. They'd just as soon work on the Sabbath or do anything on the Sabbath.

They don't care. They will go. They, well, they had a big row over McDonald's serving cheeseburgers because of the Jewish diet.

But anyway, they, and I don't know if you know it or not, but in Israel, it's the only place in the world where McDonald's is that you cannot go and get a cheeseburger.

You can get a hamburger, but you can't get a cheeseburger, not in Israel, because of the law. And the observant that comprises only about 10% of the Jews there make themselves very, what shall I say, very strategic because whoever the government is that comes in like Ben Gurion, like it was Ben Gurion that started, but now Netanyahu, when he's elected, the first thing he has to do is form a cabinet and form a party.

He has to be in a majority, and they've never been able to get a majority without this 10% of the observance. And they come in with a bunch of demands.

[32 : 15] And if you don't give in to their demands, they will not go along with it, and you can't form a government. So they kind of hold everything hostage. And one of them is they make so many people in so many places Sabbath observant who don't want to be, and they resent it.

And there are a lot of Jews that are angry at these observant ones for their fastidiousness and their religiosity, and they make fun of them and everything, but they still have quite a bit of control. Anyway, we were going to go to this particular site, and it was the Sabbath, and we were told that everything would be open and operating, and there would be some Arabs there working as well.

And just as we were ready to get into the vans, one of these dear ladies says, oh, she said, I forgot my purse, my purse, and then my pills are in it, and all this, and you know.

And Arnold, who was our tour director, says, well, that's okay. She says, run up to your room, get it. We'll wait for you. And here we are, 30 people waiting on this one lady because we had a deadline.

We had time to play, there's a certain schedule to be there. And she was just going to run up, and it was in the King David Hotel, and lots of stories, you know, and I don't know, 10, 12 stories, something like that.

[33 : 26] And she said, I'll be right back. I'll be right. Just run up, get my purse. And everybody says, okay, it's okay. Go. And we waited. And we waited. And we waited.

You guys started looking at their watch, and what in the world was taking so long? She was just going up to get her purse. And one of the other ladies says, gee, I hope something didn't happen to her. I hope she's okay.

And finally, after about 15 minutes, 20 minutes, she came down, red-faced as she could be, apologizing all over the place.

And we said, it's okay. One of the ladies says to her, what happened? What happened? She said, it was the elevator. It was the elevator. I couldn't do anything about it. She said, what do you mean?

Well, I got on the elevator, and I pushed the button for my floor, which was like the 11th floor. And it went to the first floor and stopped.

[34 : 23] And the doors opened. And nobody got off, because I was the only one in the elevator, and nobody got on. And I didn't know why it stopped there.

And it went to the second floor and stopped. And nobody got off, and nobody got on. And I didn't push that. I don't know why. And it went to the third, all the way up, seven, eight, nine, all the way up, opened the door, stopped at every level.

And she ran into the room and got her purse and came out. And thank heavens, the elevator was still there on her floor. And she got on the elevator, and she pushed one for the main floor.

And it went down to the 10th floor and stopped. And the doors opened. And all this was going on. Clear back down to the first floor. And she was gone probably 15, 20 minutes anyway.

And she said, I couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't control the elevator. And Arnold, who is our tour guide and Jewish, he walked over and he said, that's okay. He says, don't worry about it. He says, I completely forgot.

[35 : 30] This is the Sabbath. And no elevator operator is allowed to work on the Sabbath. So they pre-programmed the thing to stop at every floor going up and going down because there's no operator.

And you know, it's that kind of thing that just really ticks off the average Jew there because they're not observant and they have to put up with that. And we got to our destination and the ladies wanted to buy some souvenirs.

And they wanted some things to take back to the kids and whatnot, you know. And Arnold says, okay. He said, I know a real neat place. And he said, it's Arab controlled and Arab owned and operated, but it's right next to a Jewish establishment too.

And they'll have a nice selection there and you can get there. So we says, well, he took us there and we were waiting and waiting. And he said, they'll be open shortly.

And the Arab place was thriving and people were coming, buying all kinds of stuff and everything. But the shop that the ladies was really interested in was still closed. And yet across the street, there was another Israeli shop and it was opening up.

[36 : 46] And the shop that these ladies wanted to go to was right where we were. The owner came out and stood outside his shop and he started yelling, screaming at the guy across the street who was opening his shop.

And he kept calling him something in Hebrew. And we didn't understand what he was saying, but we knew it wasn't nice. And he said it in a very boisterous voice and yelling and screaming at this guy.

And we all stood there and we thought, dude, what is this? Are these guys enemies? What's going on? And I called Arnold over and I said, what's this all about?

What is he yelling to him? What's he saying? And he says, he's saying, transgressor, transgressor, transgressor, transgressor.

Why was he calling them that? And he said, because he is opening his shop. He wants to get a head start on you, the tourist business that he sees you here and he's opening his store, but it's only five minutes till six.

[37 : 54] And the other guy who still got his shop closed is condemning him for violating the Sabbath because it isn't over until six o'clock.

And this guy's trying to get the jump on the business by opening five minutes early and they're making a big scene out of it. This is what we would call nitpicking, piddling stuff.

But listen, when you have it born and bred into your soul, that your relationship and acceptance with God is dependent upon how fastidious and how serious you are about keeping the law.

Otherwise, God is going to frown on you or who knows what. That is bred into you from the very earliest age. It becomes part of their DNA and their psyche.

And that's how the law cripples people. Do you know the main thing that Jesus was accused of doing more than anything else? Anybody know?

[38 : 57] Hmm? It was healing on the Sabbath. Are you kidding me? Someone is given their sight who's been blind for years and everybody knows it and someone's been deaf and someone's been lame and couldn't walk and they've been carried by people and now they're walking.

And the only thing they can say in response to it is not, Wow! How did you do that? Who must this be? Who can do that? No, those aren't the questions they're asking.

Their judgment is, It's not lawful for you to practice medicine on the Sabbath. Are you kidding me? Instead of being overwhelmed with gratitude and wonder and awe that these people are made whole, it's, Well, these things should be done on a regular day and not on the Sabbath.

Now, you may remember what I said about God reading the heart. Can you see where these people are coming from who offer criticism for something like that? And one statement that Jesus made was absolutely stunning.

And I tell you, it needs to be taken into consideration. He said of himself, For the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath.

[40 : 34] Are you kidding me? Jesus was claiming to be the Lord of the Sabbath? Who would you have to be in order to be the Lord of the Sabbath?

You're right. You would have to be deity. You would have to be God himself. And that's precisely what Jesus was claiming to be.

Wow. All of this ties in with the concept between grace and law. And when Paul says, in Romans chapter 6, We are not under law, but under grace.

What does that mean? Does that mean we just throw out the Ten Commandments? That they have no bearing upon us? Do you realize, do you realize that all of the commandments except one?

All of the commandments that are mentioned in the law, and I'm just talking now about the Ten Commandments, all of them except one, is referenced by the Apostle Paul and requiring obedience for believers to those laws, whether not having idols, not worshiping any other god, not lying one to another, not taking another person's wife, not robbing, not stealing, all of those.

[42 : 14] The only one that is missing in all of Paul's writings is the fourth, and that's the Sabbath.

Why isn't that included? Because that's Judaism, and Judaism is defunct in the age of grace.

Judaism is a defunct religion. It has no status before God at all. It is kaput, and it has been since the veil in the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.

God is finished with that. It's a whole new order today. This does not mean, when Paul says, we are not under law but under grace, this does not mean that Christians are lawless.

We'll look at this next week, but this is the law of liberty in Christ Jesus that has set us free from the law of sin and death. That's the law that we're under. It's the law of liberty, and it is for liberty that Christ set us free.

[43 : 23] We are not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage, he is saying to the Jews in his audience, but we are in a sphere of freedom that was absolutely unimagined by the Jews, and it created tremendous confusion.

And let me just insert this before I quit. This is why the issue of circumcision was such a controversial topic. It was really, definitely, completely, totally part of the law, and everybody knew that.

Now, Paul is saying under the age of grace, circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing. Neither one is any big deal. It's not required because everything has changed.

Now, there is a whole new administration in place. Get with it. And 2,000 years later, we're still saying the same thing.

It is amazing how many people are still not with the program of grace because because they just cannot understand how it is that the law has been set aside.

[44 : 41] We are not under law. We are under grace. There are ramifications to this that we have time to go into now, but I will entertain a few moments for questions. If you've got some that you'd like to ask, feel free.

And Ethan is on the job, so if you've got a question or comment, please insert it. we'll do our best to treat it. Anyone?

Okay. Marvis? I'm wondering, it's not necessary to know, I'm just curious.

Come the tribulation time and, you know, the Jewish order is back in place, will the Sabbath be necessary then? Because it says, it talks about woe to you if this happens on the Sabbath.

Mm-hmm. Yeah. Well, you find that in the Gospels, which, of course, is the kingdom orientation. And when the age of grace comes to a completion with the removal of the church and the time of Jacob's trouble, the 70th week of Daniel begins, the tribulation period, the administration of grace is concluded.

[46 : 05] It's over. And scholars argue and they differ as to when it actually began. And I hate to tell you this, but I don't know exactly when it began.

I really don't know. There are good arguments for the mid-grace and for the, I mean, mid-acts and the beginning of acts and the conversion of Paul. I just don't know exactly when it began.

But I do know when it's going to end. And that is when the church, the body of Christ is withdrawn from this earth. Then there is a reversion back to that time of law that Israel will be under.

And that's going to pick up right where it left off. So that's a fascinating thing to consider too. Anything else? Yes, Scott? Yeah, you read a lot about the, excuse me, the Jewish kosher diet in the Old Testament.

Was wine an issue back then? I don't recall reading too much about whether to drink wine or not. It just appeared to be a common practice. Oh, yes, it was.

[47 : 19] But then with Paul, you know, now it becomes an issue. Well, when Paul writes to Timothy, he tells him to imbibe, drink no longer water, but take a little wine for your stomach's sake and you're off in infirmities.

There is nothing wrong, and I realize that this would be a very controversial thing to say that there are some pulpits in which if I said this, I would never be invited back.

And that is, God does not prohibit alcohol. What God prohibits is drunkenness, intoxication.

God prohibits that, and the scriptures make it quite clear. They drink, one of the main drinks, and when Jesus turned, listen, I don't want to belabor this point, but when Jesus turned the water into wine, he didn't, honey, he didn't turn it into grape juice.

He turned it into wine, and not only that, but those who tasted it said, man, this is the best wine I've ever drunk. This is really good stuff.

[48 : 34] Most people serve this at the beginning, but you serve it at the end, and I've never had wine this good. There's nothing wrong with alcohol, but there is plenty wrong with consumption of alcohol to the place where you lose your faculties, you become intoxicated.

And when Paul writes, he says that we are to be intoxicated with the spirit, and not with wine, so that we follow after the things of the Lord and not drunkenness.

Another common question here. This will be our last. We'll have to dismiss. Joe, here comes the mic. This is just a comment about alcohol. When you take that first drink, of course, you don't show drunkenness signs, but alcohol is a depressant, and as soon as you do that, you lessen your ability of your mind to think and do what it should do.

That's true. And therefore, you don't have good judgment, and you drink more and more and more, so when you drink that first drink, you are in trouble already. Yeah. The book of Proverbs talks about strong drink and how deceptive it is and how we are discouraged from it.

It is devastating, and just let me, for the record, just let me say this. I do not think there is any single thing that has been more destructive to human lives and families and relationships and more detrimental to humanity than the excess of alcohol.

[50 : 10] And now you can add to that drugs of whatever kind because there are people who have a proclivity to alcohol.

It's genetic. It is part and parcel of their frame. They can't help it. It is a predisposition that they have, and it doesn't come to light until they take that first drink, and when they do, they're hooked.

And that's a special kind of situation. They have a special proclivity to alcoholism, and they are destined to be an alcoholic. And yet, I've known people over the years who drink a six-pack two or three nights a week, and they never become an alcoholic.

The difference is an alcoholic has to have it, has to have it. Somebody who is just a drinker doesn't have to have it.

They can forego it, but an alcoholic can't. And if you want to talk to somebody who knows all about this, you've got to talk to P.A., P.A.

[51 : 31] Rummel. Helen lived with him and his alcoholism for years and years and years, and she put up with a lot, and she refused to leave him.

This is their story, their testimony, and he's still in AA, and he'll be glad to tell you how many years it's been since he has been sober and on the wagon.

His life was just ruinous for years, and alcohol did that, and it does that to people. It wrecks and ruins lives, destroys families. It's a devastating, devastating thing, and so do the drugs that go with it.

But in moderation, which was supposed to be moderation in all things, and someone said one of the reasons that alcohol, that wine was as frequent in the Mideast as it was, was because the water was lousy, and a lot of the drinking water was purified with the alcohol in the wine, and it made it more palatable, and it even made it healthier.

So wine is found throughout the Bible, and in moderation, there's nothing wrong with it, but I know the typical Baptist position, because I preached it for years and years, and I was all wet when I was doing it and didn't know it.

[52 : 50] So, hey, thank you for your kind attention, and if you will stand, could we sing a hymn before we leave? I'd like to sing, let's, we'll just do this a cappella, number, open your hymnal if you would, please, and let's sing number 719.

If you'll stand, we'll let that be our benediction, and we'll dismiss with that, hymn number 719. Last week, we sang a couple of Jewish hymns, and this is another, and it's Children of the Heavenly Father, so you sing along with me if you would, please.

You all know this, do you? If you don't, you'll learn it quick, because if you don't learn it quick, you'll have to listen to my solo, and you don't want to do that. Let's sing. Children of the Heavenly Father, safely in his bosom gather, nestling bird nor star in heaven, such a refuge air was given.

God, his own, doth tend and nourish, in his holy courts they flourish, from all evil things he spares them, in his mighty arms he bears them.

Neither death nor death can ever from the Lord his children sever, unto them his grace he showeth, and their sorrows all he knoweth.

[54 : 49] Though he giveth or he taketh, God his children ne'er forsaketh, is the loving purpose holy to preserve them pure and holy.

Thank you for being here today. God bless you. You are dismissed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.