

Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part XI, The Origin of Doctrinal Differences - Q & A.

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- [0 : 00] Thank you, Gary. If you were here last week, you will recall that instead of allowing you some time for questions and comments at the end of the message, I took all the time.
- And I promise to make it up to you today by opening with questions and comments, if you have some. And I will make a few preliminary remarks to kind of get the mental juices flowing.
- And then I will be glad to entertain any comments or questions you may have. And depending upon the quantity of them, we may just take the rest of the service for that.
- And that could be a very good thing. So, to prime the pump a little bit, let me remind you we are dealing with the issue why Christians differ doctrinally.
- And we have already devoted probably, I don't know, probably eight or ten sessions to this subject, laying a great deal of background information. And we want to remind you that the differences that exist between believers are, of course, varied and they are very sincere.
- [1 : 17] They are held by honest conviction of the people who hold these various positions, even though they are in complete disagreement sometimes one with another.
- You should know that these differences that are real and that do exist did not emerge quickly. Many of them developed over a period of centuries.
- It involved a building, if you will, and a process of morphing from doctrinal issues into other more elaborate doctrinal issues.
- We have pointed out to you that the basis for all doctrinal differences among Christians begins with a misinterpretation of Scripture.
- Everybody, of course, at least those of the Christian persuasion, those who appeal to the Bible as their authority, virtually virtually all of them say that they arrived at their doctrinal positions because this is what they believe the Scriptures are teaching.
- [2 : 27] However, it goes without saying that many of these interpretations are completely contradictory one to the other. So, God is not saying one thing to one group of people and another thing to another group of people so that everybody is right, even though they appear to be contradictory.
- Well, they don't appear to be contradictory. They are contradictory. And God has nothing to do with it because God does not dispatch erroneous information.
- He has given us His Word. And we pointed out to you that no counsel and no clergy, no priest, no rabbi, no preacher, certainly including myself, has the ability, the expertise, or the competence to interpret Scripture.
- We just don't. Many of us would like for people to think we do, but we don't. We do not have the ability to accurately interpret Scripture.
- And this is not a play on words. I feel very, very strongly about this. And what I base that on is the fact that the only valid interpreter of the Scriptures, the Scriptures themselves.

[3 : 52] This is why Bible study consists primarily of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Because the Bible is its own best commentary.

The best commentary you will find on the enigmatic last book of the Bible, the book of the Revelation, the best commentary you will find on it is in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament.

Scripture interprets Scripture. And as you allow the Bible to do that, a more clear picture emerges. Very often, however, men bring their understanding and their preferences of what they want the Scriptures to teach to the Scriptures, force their opinion or personal belief upon the passage and make the passage say what they want it to say.

All of us can be guilty of that. Nobody is exempt from it. The most logical thing in the world is to take a position and then come to the Bible and look for the Bible to support you in your position.

And what we are supposed to do is come to the Bible without a position and let the Bible determine what our position is to be. And when you do that, you are operating on the basis of Scripture rather than on the basis of human viewpoint, which, of course, will always lead you astray.

[5 : 24] So, most misinterpretation of Scripture is the result of man assuming the role of interpreter, making the interpretation, and then teaching his conclusions to those who will follow him.

The positions or interpretations set forth almost always involves persuasive and influential men, often gifted and charismatic in personality and leadership.

This is their appeal to people. It is a human kind of situation. Because they are greatly admired and respected, people greatly admire and respect what they say the Scriptures mean.

It would be a wonderful thing if you could just plug into some nice guy. And because he is a nice guy, everything that he teaches from the Bible is true.

But it doesn't work that way. He may be the most pleasant, charismatic, charming, interesting, well-studied individual, whoever came down the pike.

[6 : 40] But that is no guarantee that what he teaches is true. It always, always, always has to be compared with Scripture. You never will outgrow your need to be a Berean.

You search the Scriptures daily to see whether or not those things that are taught are so. And when you take this into consideration, the way these dynamics work, and we've been talking about this, this is all background material.

And we told you that virtually all spiritual positions, all doctrinal positions, begin with someone reading Scripture, making an interpretation, and then promulgating it to others.

And they grow a following. They grow a group who identify with that person and their interpretation of Scripture. And as the group grows and increases over time, there are groups that are spawned off from that.

And the next thing you know, you have several groups believing that same kind of thing. This is actually the way denominations begun. All of this stems from and came out of what was commonly recognized as the first officially or generally recognized ecclesiastical body, which we associate with the Roman Catholic Church.

[8 : 14] Now, this does not mean that there were no believers who were not part of the Roman Catholic Church back in the first and second century, because there were, and there were several.

But I'm talking about a church, an ecclesiastical body, being recognized and being organized and being considered as an ecclesiastical assembly.

That goes back to the Roman Catholic Church. And as time and centuries rolled on, it morphed into different things. Different popes came on the scene, made different decrees, took different doctrinal positions, added doctrine to it, some as late as the 1800s and 1900s.

And it just kind of rolled on through the centuries. And we all are aware of John Wycliffe's efforts in the late 1300s as the morning star of the Reformation and his Bible translation work, followed later by William Tyndale.

And then men like Martin Luther and John Huss came on the scene. And all of these names that I have just mentioned, all of them have their origins in the Roman Catholic Church.

[9 : 26] And they were all Roman Catholic clerics. Luther, for one, was terribly disturbed over the excesses that were taking place in the Roman Catholic Church.

And he took it upon himself to reform the church. Well, the church didn't want to be reformed. Because in the first place, when you have a head of the church who speaks ex cathedra, that is, from the chair, he speaks with an infallible voice.

And what he says is true. And what he says is right. So what's the need for a reformation? What do you reform when everything is right to begin with?

But, of course, Luther did not agree with that. And eventually he left the church or was excommunicated from the church. And eventually what we know today as Lutherism, which is, in many respects, a modified kind of Roman Catholicism, came into being.

And eventually, with King Henry VIII's marital problems and his split from the Roman Catholic Church. And again, we don't know if His Majesty, King Henry VIII, really did resign from the church or whether he was excommunicated or whether both was the case.

[10 : 46] But anyway, he had problems with the ladies and wanted an annulment. And the Pope would not grant him an annulment. So he split, started the Roman, or started the Anglican Church, of which he was the head, appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury as a kind of Pope-like figure.

And this is all in the 1500s, not too far removed from Martin Luther's time. And out of the Anglican Church, and I'm just skipping through a lot of history here, eventually the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield came along and started what was known as the Episcopal or the Anglican Societies, which later became the Methodist Church.

And out of the Methodist Church came the Church of God and the Nazarene Church and several other splits and splinters. So we've got doctrine being modified and changed all along the way.

And some of it harkens back to the original and the Roman Catholic Church with doctrines like the Trinity still remaining intact.

Doctrines like the deity of Christ and so on. So there's a lot of commonality, but a lot of differences as well. All of this contributes to an enormous amount of confusion in the Western world in general because people don't understand why it is that all of these people who claim to be Christians are all operating from the same book or the same Bible have all of these differences.

[12 : 26] Also bear in mind the fact that during this period of time called the Dark Ages, there were few who were able to read and write.

And this gave additional leverage and influence to those who were educated over the masses who were not. So men of letters were very powerful and intimidating to the average man.

We're talking about during the time of medieval Europe or what is commonly known as the Dark Ages. Few were as well educated as the clergy and those of the legal profession.

And when you stop and think about it, they are the logical ones to educate. Why? Because the clergy are concerned with eternal spiritual matters.

And the lawyer is concerned with temporal earthly matters, both of which are core to their respective areas. And it's only logical that these would be the individuals who were most adept educationally.

[13 : 37] And consequently, whether they wanted to or not, they were tremendously intimidating to the uneducated. And these people who could read and write were held head and shoulders above everyone else.

And whatever they tended to say was taken as gospel, especially if he was considered a man of God. You could just take it to the bank.

Whatever he told you would be authoritative and would be true. So it's very intimidating. And they used that leverage. Some used it in a good way and some used it in a bad way.

And the problem of corruption was always, always present. Still is. Still is. The Roman Catholic Church, in its ecclesiastical official aspect, was subjected to and succumbed to moral and spiritual corruption on a huge scale.

And this was the basis for attempting to undertake the Reformation. It became an apostate group. And out of it and its apostasy came eventually the Lutheran Church and the Episcopal Church.

[15 : 04] And what happened to them? They became corrupt. And they became apostate. And their doctrine has been watered down. The authority of scripture has been lost a long time ago.

And then out of these groups came other Protestant groups such as we have today. And what have they done? They have become corrupt.

Why is this? Because of humanity. That's the way humanity works. The Jewish ecclesiastical system, before the Roman system ever came online, became corrupt.

But Christ addressed that corruption. So did John the Baptist. These were the official ecclesiastes. And they were corrupt morally and spiritually.

The Old Testament prophets under Judaism. What were they always addressing? Corruption. Corruption in government. Corruption in the monarchy. Corruption in the priesthood.

[16 : 06] It has always been that way because human nature's tendency is downward, not upward. You need to understand that.

There is only one thing that will keep Grace Bible Church from corruption and from doctrinal perversity. Only one thing. And that is staying close to the scriptures.

Thus saith the Lord. We are not exempt from this. We are not exempt from this. The natural tendency is to go astray. Not stay on course. Understand that.

The natural tendency is not to stay on course. The natural tendency is to go astray. That is a problem of humanity. It isn't a Catholic problem. It is a human problem.

It isn't a Protestant problem. It is a human problem. It is not a Jewish problem. It is a human problem. This is across the board. This is the way it works. The only remedy, the only way that you can keep from falling into that is to maintain your biblical integrity by sticking with the authority of scripture.

[17 : 16] Harvard University become corrupt and apostate. It didn't start out that way. It didn't start out that way. Same could be said for Yale. Same can be said for Princeton.

They are corrupt and apostate. Morally, spiritually, they are bankrupt. And yet, these are sterling institutions founded by men of high principles, devoted to God, committed to the authority of scripture.

And what happened? Air crept in and down it went. That's the natural way. The only safeguard against it is to stay with the scriptures.

I want to emphasize, Grace Bible Church and other churches like ours will follow in exactly the same way if safeguards are not maintained.

We are not smarter than they. We are not better than they. We are not more godly than they or more spiritual than they. We are just as human as they are. And we will go the same way if we do not take safeguards against it.

[18 : 18] Now, I have had enough of my say by way of review, etc. And we've got plenty of time left. So, have you questions or comments that you would like to address? Terry in the back and then Roger.

Terry, let's use the microphone, yeah, if you will, please. That would be helpful. Is there a pamphlet somewhere that summarizes the distinctions between the various religious bodies, the Nazarene, the Church of God, Lutherans, Catholics, etc., etc.?

Oh, yes. Yes, there are a number of publications. You can probably get them online. But there are a number of publications that are devoted to explaining the differences and the origins of the different denominations, etc.

And every few years, there's another one that comes out. So, I would suggest even your public library, go to the research library, the public library and the reference desk.

I'm sure they can plug you into a number of things like that. It'll give you dates, names, places, when these denominations started and how, and give you a little bit of the history of them. Yeah.

[19 : 31] Barb, you mentioned last week about the Spanish harassment of the Jews to take on their religion. What was it they were trying to impress upon the Jews?

Was it a true religion or another takeoff? Are you talking about in Spain? I guess the Inquisition. Is that what that was called? Yeah. Well, as a result of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple in 70 A.D., it was, I think, a very natural kind of conclusion for non-Jewish people to come to that this really proved that God had judged the Jewish nation for their unbelief and for their rejection of the Messiah that God sent.

And God allowed the Romans, the Roman army, to come against them and just devastate them and scatter the Jews into the whole world, just scatter them throughout in tremendous persecution.

And many people were convinced that this was proof positive that God was finished with the Jew. The common opinion was the Jew used to be God's chosen people.

But because of their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, God has cut them off permanently. And he has nothing more to do with Israel. And he has replaced Israel with the church.

[21 : 16] And we are now the new Israel. That became the common opinion. I think it is terribly in error, but it is still the common opinion today.

Most people believe that the church has become the new Israel. We take the position that we have not replaced Israel. Israel is still God's chosen people.

But the church, which is the body of Christ, is an entirely separate entity, not to be confused with the church. We have a different mission, a different purpose, and a different methodology.

And the Jew is coming back. Now, many of the Jews don't even believe this. But the Jew is coming back. And he will come back big time.

And Israel will be restored and dwell in peace and safety. But this is all future. And it's just a remarkable subject.

[22 : 15] This is biblical prophecy we're talking about now. So the Jew became ostracized, criticized, persecuted throughout much of the world, looked upon as the Christ killers, called that, if you will.

And they endured a tremendous amount of persecution. And what the Roman church did that was behind the Inquisition, and this was in the 1400s, and we talked in particular about 1492 and Catholic Spain at the time.

And what they, of course, wanted the Jew to do was to embrace Christianity. And they tried to force it upon them by making them submit to water baptism into the Catholic Church.

And some of the Jews went along with it. Some of them did that because they just thought, well, I'll play your silly game. You require me to be baptized and become a member, as it were, of the Roman Catholic Church, if that's what it takes for me to stay in this country and not be deported and not leave all my wealth and everything behind.

Okay, I'll play your silly game. And they got baptized. But it was not an inward change of heart at all. It was just an outward expediency thing. They did it because if you didn't, and we're talking about 1492 in Spain, if you were a Jew and you did not submit to Christian baptism and become an official member of the Roman Catholic Church, you were forced to leave the country.

[23 : 52] You could not take your wealth or your possessions with you. You took the clothes on your back, and that was it. And many of them chose to leave under those circumstances.

And they did. And this was just Spain. There were other places where this was going on. You know, Islam did the same thing. Islam did the same thing big time and threatened people with conversion to Islam at the point of a sword.

And you, you, you pronounce the Shahada, or you die right now.

So, if you didn't utter the words, there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet, it doesn't matter if you don't believe that.

If you say it publicly, that makes you a Muslim. They will accept that. But you have to say it. And if you don't say it, it will cost you your life.

[24 : 56] And they literally murdered a lot of people. So much for Islam being a religion of peace. There's nothing peaceful about it. But that's off the subject.

So, other comments or questions? Harleen has a question up here. Are you saying that the Jews, even if they don't believe in Jesus Christ, are still going to be saved?

No. Well, yes and no. There is a sense in which the Jews, who do not now believe, are going to be saved, at least some of them, according to Romans chapter 11.

By the way, we never did get to that passage. So, turn to Romans 11. And while you're turning there, let me clarify a couple of things. The singular divine prescription for salvation for Jews or non-Jews remains the necessity to believe on Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior, substitute from sin.

There is no salvation apart from that. Now, I realize this is very politically incorrect, and it is contrary to religious pluralism, because we would like to believe that everybody goes to heaven.

[26 : 28] Well, maybe not everybody, but all nice people go to heaven. And this is the common opinion. But the scriptures make it so very clear that if it were possible, if it were possible for anyone to stand before God, accepted and approved, apart from the finished work of Jesus Christ, then his whole purpose for coming into the world is for nothing.

You need to understand that. Christ came not to condemn the world, but to save the world.

The reason he did not come to condemn the world was because the world was already under condemnation. John 3.18. He came to remove us from condemnation and to save us.

And if it were possible for anyone to go to heaven, by being a nice guy, by giving you the shirt off his back, by always helping people, by never kicking the dog, and paying your taxes, and all the rest of it, if we could get to heaven any other way, within any combination, other than through the finished work of Christ, then you have just told God he needn't have bothered to send his son at all.

We can do it ourself. We can make it on our own. We can try harder. We can be better. We can measure up. Jesus really didn't need to bother. But he did.

[28 : 04] And he came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. And in him, we have the righteousness of God imputed to us. That is our salvation.

And that is what must be believed if you are a Jew or a Gentile or whatever. That's the way it is across the board. Christ died for the sins of the world.

That's the only way we can come. Here in Romans 11, we read the first several verses. I think Gary read them in our scripture portion last week.

And I'd just like you to turn to that and we will read. This is an amazing commentary on what we've been saying.

And let's begin with verse 11. That's where he left off last week. Romans 11, 11. The apostle says, Now, I am interpreting this on the basis of what the rest of the scripture says about this.

[29 : 14] And the rest of the scripture very emphatically gives us the position that Israel did fall. They did stumble. But their fall is not final.

Their fall is not the end of Israel permanently. There are those who believe that. And they are the ones who engage in what we call replacement theology.

They believe that the fall of the nation of Israel was complete and final. And they are out of the picture permanently. We believe that the fall of Israel was that they were down but not out.

And they are coming back. Israel is likened to a tree that has been cut off. But the root remains alive.

And the root is where the life is and it's coming back. Remember in Ezekiel 38, 39 the vision of the valley of dry bones.

[30 : 31] Son of man, what do you see? Can these bones live? Ezekiel says, I looked out and I saw this huge expanse of bones. Bones. Skeletons.

Human skeletons. Scattered all over the landscape. And he says, they were not only bones, they were dry bones. Not just dry bones, they were very dry bones.

And the voice came to Ezekiel, Son of man, can these bones live? And Ezekiel says, thou knowest, which in a modern translation would be, search me.

I haven't a clue. I don't know. And as he watched, the skeletons started standing erect.

And the head bones connected to the neck bones, connected to the, you know, all the way down to the toe bone, as the song goes. And what that's saying is, Son of man, these bones represent the whole house of Israel.

[31 : 47] Dead, dry, forsaken, abandoned, but lo and behold, they're coming back.

And the bones start to reassemble, and stand up right before his very, what is all of that a picture of? It's all a picture of the resurrection, the revitalization, of the nation of Israel.

Don't ever let anyone tell you, the Jew used to be, God's chosen people. They still are. God has a hot heart, for his people Israel.

And, the time is coming, when Israel, as a nation, will be saved. Because, as individual Jews, they will believe.

You tell this to a Jew now, and he'll scoff. He'll say, that's ridiculous. You don't know what you're talking about. But, Isaiah, or Romans chapter 11, does, I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they?

[32 : 54] May it never be. But by their transgression, and who is the there? This is Israel, the nation. By their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

Now, if their, Israel's, transgression, be riches for the world, and their failure, failure what? Their failure to embrace the Messiah.

Their failure is riches for the Gentiles. How much more will their fulfillment be? What he's saying is, look, if you can just picture this, how much the rejection of Israel to their Messiah, how much that has turned out to be in the favor of all of the non-Jews, how all of the world has been blessed because of their rejection.

Think of how the world is going to be blessed when Israel accepts their Messiah. Why? It's going to be greater. It's going to be more wonderful. How much more will their fulfillment be?

But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles, inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry. If somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

[34 : 12] And he's talking about the Jew, his fellow countrymen, Israelites. Verse 15, For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also. And if the root be holy, the branches are too. And now he's giving an illustration of an olive tree, something with which every Mid-Easterner was familiar with.

They all knew what olive trees were and how olive trees grew and how olive trees had shoots grafted into them. They were all familiar with that. And he's using a common analogy. And he's talking about a nation, comparing it to a tree.

And he says in verse 17, But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, who's he talking about?

He's talking about pagans, heathen, wild olives, Gentiles, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree.

[35 : 30] Do not be arrogant toward the branches, but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. And who is the root?

The root is Israel, the nation, underground. And the root is sending up the tree and the trunk, and there are branches out from it.

But lo and behold, what are these branches? These branches are not common to this tree. No. They are wild olive branches that have been grafted in to the good tree.

That is Gentiles grafted in to Israel. And this is what makes some think that we have replaced Israel.

We haven't replaced Israel. We are an add-on different from Israel. It's a beautiful, and the whole tree, of course, is a picture of salvation or of a connection to God.

[36 : 32] And he says, verse 19, you will say then, branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Now, that's real arrogance. In other words, God rejected Israel just so he could have me.

Well, only humanity is capable. Someone said that out of all the creatures that God created, man is the only one with the ability to blush or the need to.

That's us. That's our arrogance here. They were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Well, Paul says, quite right. They were broken off for their unbelief.

But you stand by your faith, your confidence, your trust in Christ. Do not be conceited. Don't you dare go and get puffed up and say, oh, I'm really somebody.

I've been grafted in. Everybody, look at me. Don't you get conceited, but fear. If God did not spare the natural branches neither will he spare you.

[37 : 43] Behold then the kindness and severity of God to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness. You continue in his kindness, otherwise, you also will be cut off.

And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, that is Israel, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again.

Branches of the natural tree broken off. That represents Israel. Branches broken off. The root's intact. The root's still alive.

Wild olive branches are grafted in. And now, Paul is saying, and you know what? The time is going to come when natural branches that were broken off for unbeating are going to be grafted back in again.

And you know what you're going to have? You're going to have wild olive branches and natural olive branches growing in the same tree. I think eventually that's where we're going.

[38 : 49] That's not where we are right now, but that's going to be, I think, in the final state. And he says, for you, verse 24, for if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, two different kind of trees here, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

That's the Jew coming home. I do not want you to be uninformed of this mystery lest you be wise in your own estimation that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And thus, all Israel will be saved. Just as it is written, the deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.

Who's Jacob? That's just another name for Israel. He's not talking about Jacob the man. He's been dead for thousands of years. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

From the standpoint of the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But from the standpoint of God's choice, from the standpoint of God's choice, they, Israel, are beloved gift for the sake of the fathers.

[40 : 20] What's that mean? Jesus Christ came to fulfill the promises that God made to the fathers. What fathers? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God, who's that? Gentiles, pagan, unbelievers.

Ephesians 2. But now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience. Because of Israel's disobedience and rejection, we get in the game.

We are involved. We are recipients of God's grace. So these also now have been disobedient in order that because of the mercy shown to you, they also may be now shown mercy.

For God has shut up all in disobedience that he might show mercy to all. Wow! What a plan. What a scheme.

[41 : 29] What a blueprint. And Paul speaks as if he is just overwhelmed by it all. And I'm sure he is because he breaks into a paean of praise and he puts it all together and he says, Oh!

Do you get this? Listen! The depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways.

Wow! What a God. What a plan. What a program. Abraham. Think of what he's put together. It just boggles my mind.

And he concludes in verse 36, For from him and through him and to him are all things to whom be the glory forever. Amen. And in our next session, what I would like to do is give you the biblical rationale for God's covenant with Abraham that I think absolutely, concretely, without equivocation, demonstrates and proves the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance and why the covenant is unconditional.

It's just my estimation it's an ironclad case. We still have a few minutes left. Have I generated any more questions or comments? Feel free to ask them if you have. Anybody?

[42 : 55] Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Marie has a question up here. Come on, Scott.

We're going to have to get you some rollerblades. You can just skate around here. Right here. Marie. Thank you. I just wondered in verse 25, until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, is that at the rapture?

And then in verse 27, when I shall take away their sins, is that the millennium? I would think so. That would be my estimation. And I think the fullness of the Gentiles, it literally means when the non-Jewish constituency in the world, the Gentile world, when the time comes that the last Gentile believes on Jesus Christ and is added to the body of Christ, then the body is complete.

The body is finished. We don't know when that's going to be. But I want you to think in terms of the analogy that Paul is using here. Only this is the spiritual body of Christ, and it's hard to get your brain around that.

But just think in terms of a human body, if you will. A human body that is not all complete. Maybe there's, maybe everything is there but an arm. Maybe that's the only thing that's missing is an arm.

[44 : 27] Maybe, maybe the only thing that's missing is a pinky. Just a little finger. Now, we don't have any idea of how many people, how many people proportionately go to make up a body part.

We're talking about a spiritual body anyway, but I'm trying to use an analogy for an illustration. And it is as though you're building a human body and it is almost complete. And when the very last element is added, whether it's a pinky or a little toe that went to market or whatever, whatever that last element is, when it's done, we're gone.

When we're gone, the trumpet sounds. And the dead in Christ shall be raised and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them.

And this completed body is, spiritual body, is ascending to be present with the Lord. I have no idea when that might be. It might be before I finish the next sentence.

It might be a hundred years from now. But my safe answer is always, we are closer than anybody has ever been. Other comments?

[45 : 42] Anyone? Yes. Ron? I understood the fullness of the Gentiles was when the last body was placed in the body of Christ. However, it would not necessarily have to be a Gentile.

It could be a Jewish person and then they go into the body of Christ as I understand it, the same as Gentiles. Yeah, you're right. I appreciate the elaboration, the correction.

That is very true. When a Jew, when a Jew places his faith in the person of Jesus Christ, he is, in every respect, just as much a member of that body as is a non-Jew.

Who is, the Apostle Paul was a member of the body of Christ. And you couldn't get much more Jewish than Paul was. Tribe of Benjamin, mother was a Hebrew, Hebrew.

His daddy was a Hebrew. And he was circumcised on the eighth day and all the rest of it. But he was a member of the body of Christ. What places you into the spiritual body of Christ?

[46 : 47] A personal placing of your faith, your confidence, your trust in Jesus Christ, in who he was, why he came, what he did, and why it matters.

When you see Christ dying in your place to make you eligible to have a standing before God because Christ puts his righteousness in you, when you understand that, then you become identified with him.

You become baptized into the body of Christ by one spirit, whether you're Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female. And there's no water involved in that.

There is no ritual. There is no membership. It is justification by faith. You put your trust in Christ. What, what, if you are planning on going to heaven, there is something you are counting on to get you there.

What is it? If it is anything but Jesus Christ and what he did for you, you need to scrap it.

[48 : 01] You need to forget it. It will never work. Not ever. So you transfer your confidence in whatever you have.

If it's yourself, your membership, your good deeds, your good intentions, your being a nice guy and all the rest. You need to abandon all of that and transfer your confidence to the one who died for you.

And that will make you accepted in the beloved. Because it isn't your righteousness. It's Christ's righteousness imputed to you just on the basis of your believing it.

Someone says, that's too easy. Let me tell you something. It isn't easy to abandon your confidence in yourself or in your church or in your good intentions.

Nothing easy about that. That is so hard to give up. But that's what's required. God has done the most that he could do for you through sending his son so that he could require the very least from you.

[49 : 19] Just put your faith in him. There are no hoops to jump through. There's nothing to join. It is justification by faith.

That's why it's called good news. There's no good news to having to jump through a whole bunch of hoops and meet a lot of qualifications.

No good news there. Just confusion. The good news is Jesus Christ died for your sin. Put your trust in him. May we stand please.

Father, we never tire of this glorious old gospel and every time we hear it, it touches a responsive chord in the very soul and the very depth of our being.

And we have a song placed within us of praise and salvation unto you. We have nothing whereof we can boast. We have everything for which we can be so profoundly grateful.

[50 : 23] we just thank you for this glorious gospel for the simplicity of it and for the sufficiency of it. And Father, if there is anyone here that is trusting in anything other than the fact that Christ died for them, we pray they will never know any peace or any rest until they have placed it all in the person of your wonderful son.

Thank you for it in Christ's name. Amen.