

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Prophecy14

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you very much Terry and welcome everyone to our nine o'clock edition for August 9, 2020. And we are continuing the basic distinctions between prophecy and mystery. I consider these to be among the most critical that we can that we can undertake, so I would appreciate very much any questions that you might have as a result. And we will just have a word of prayer and get started. By the way, I have a number of announcements to make regarding our opening for services next week, but I'm going to reserve all of those announcements for the 10-15 hours, so I won't have to repeat them. Besides, we have less time to deal with in this nine o'clock hour than we do then. So let's have a word of prayer. We're grateful Father once again for a new day and for your being at the very center of it. And we ask that as we engage this material, you will provide us with an enlightenment and the wisdom that we know we lack. And we look to you to make up for our lack and to give us the insight and understanding regarding these precious truths that only you can provide. Thank you so much for the gospel that you've made available to us and for the privilege that is ours to proclaim it. We ask your blessing upon this meeting together today in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. All right, let us, and I don't know who's making the noise, if there's somebody's got their mic that's not on or that's on and should be off, then we've got some collateral noise. So I would appreciate it if you can check your mics and make sure that they are muted. Otherwise we're getting some noise, some feedback. Let me say that prophecy involves Israel and the Jew.

Mystery involves the church as the body of Christ with the Jews. Prophecy involves all the Bible reveals and foretells about Israel and its strategic position in the overall plan and program of God for humanity. Mystery involves a concept never predicted or expected previous to its revelation. It was completely unanticipated, reserved in the mind of God until revealed through the least likely person to reveal it.

Saul of Tarsus, who of course became Paul the Apostle. Generally speaking, prophecy is made up of all of the Old Testament and the four Gospels in the New, plus several chapters of the Book of Acts that remain exclusively Jewish in content and in addressees. That does not change in the Book of Acts until Saul of Tarsus is converted in Acts chapter 9 and has revealed to him a totally new concept that will blend Jew and Gentile together in one body called the body of Christ or the Christian Church. Confusion arises because the twelve apostles previously chosen by Christ prior to his ascension were continuing to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and performing the miracles that accompanied it. But at the same time, Paul is commissioned to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God with the elements of the law of Moses that God gave to the Jews. That is, without the elements of the law of Moses that God gave to the Jews. And this is exactly why Paul says we're not under law, but we're under grace. Now this distinction and with both of these authority figures, that is Paul on the one hand and Peter and the twelve on the other, with both of them preaching their respective messages in the same time frame, that is what adds greatly to the confusion in the Book of

Acts. But you will find both of those, and we will look at them eventually, you will find both of those clearly revealed and referred to in Galatians chapter 2, where Paul concludes after having met with the twelve apostles there in Jerusalem, he discussed with them the gospel that he had been preaching to the Gentiles, they gave him the hand of fellowship, they put their blessing upon Paul and his message and his ministry, and they agreed that they would continue to minister to the circumcised, that is to the Jewish element, and that Paul the Apostle would take his message essentially to the Gentiles. Right there, right there in Acts chapter 2, we have a very clear, explanation of these two different messages going forth at the same time, and they of course both had the person of Christ as their focus. The gospel of the kingdom presented Christ as the King of Israel, and the long-awaited Messiah that God had promised long ago. The gospel of the grace of God presented Christ as the King of Israel, and the long-awaited Messiah that God had promised long ago.

The gospel of the gospel of the gospel of the gospel of the grace of God, presented Christ as the risen, glorified Lord of all, and the head of this entirely new entity called the church, the spiritual body of Christ. Both of these elements, and both of these truths, and both of these gospels, the gospel of the kingdom, and the gospel of the grace of God were being proclaimed simultaneously, kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God were being proclaimed simultaneously for a period of years in the book of Acts. And you've got to remember that the Acts of the Apostles covers a chronological period of about 30 years. For the nine o'clock hour, we are emphasizing the features of prophecy that involved Israel and the Jews exclusively. By that we mean it excluded Gentiles. This did not include Gentiles. This is a message from the Jews, for the Jews, about the Jews. And it isn't that God didn't care for anybody else but the Jews, but it is that God had intended to use the nation of Israel as the spearhead or penetrating the Gentile world and to provide light to the Gentiles. So it isn't that God didn't care about the Gentiles, he cared about them very much.

[7:11] And this is why Christ died for the sins of the world, not just for the sins of the Jews. But the Jews were to be that key element that would take the gospel to the Gentiles. For the 1015 hour, we will be emphasizing the features of the mystery that makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, but blends both of those together. So can you not see confusion in transition realizing that this dynamic goes on from Acts chapter 9 to the end of Acts comprising about 30 years. So with the gospel of the kingdom, and let's talk about that now for this nine o'clock hour, with all of the differences that existed between these two entities that were the kingdom concepts for the Jews and the church concepts for both Jews and Gentiles, nothing was as pronounced as what was required for salvation and acceptance with

God. And here is where a problem surfaces. The New Testament and the salvation concept preached by Paul that is mystery related is quite simple. It is just this, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. That is the gospel or the good news of the grace of God. Now here is the fly in the ointment. What did the gospel consist of prior to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? What was the good news the Jew could believe and become acceptable to God? How could the gospel of the grace of God be made available by the death, burial, and resurrection before it was even known or proclaimed or before the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ even occurred? How would you tell anyone how to come into a right relationship with God before Jesus died to make that relationship available? Now that's the question. We're talking about Old Testament.

We're talking about that time period that existed before Jesus was even born in Bethlehem, much less before he was crucified for the sins of the world. In the Old Testament, I'm talking about Isaiah's time and Jeremiah's time and Ezekiel's time and Isaiah's time. I'm talking about those people. If you had lived back then and you were to encounter a Jewish or a Gentile or Jew, whoever, and you wanted to give them the information as to how they could be made acceptable to God, what would you tell them? What would your good news consist of? What message would you convey? Now there is something that is problematic to me and it has been problematic to me for a long, long time, almost for as long as I've been a believer, and that is I have never been able to get a satisfactory handle on salvation that might have been available in the Old Testament other than what is limited in its offer to Jewish people, beginning with actually it even predates Jewish people because it began it began with Adam and Eve. Well let me put it this way, from the standpoint of being acceptable to God.

From the standpoint of being acceptable to God, there had to be some message to be conveyed and the only thing I am able to focus on is that which was provided through the sacrifice of animals that God himself personally cared for in connection with Adam and Eve's sin and their resultant discovery of their nakedness and God providing the animal skins to cover their nakedness, obviously because he considered the efforts of humans completely inadequate and the best that Eve could come up with was those fig leaves. So we've got the principle of substitution of something that is innocent in the place of something that is guilty. And in the case of

Adam and Eve, it was an animal, whatever the animal was, we are not told. But the animal, obviously as a result of God slaying the animal and taking the skin of the animal to cover Adam and Eve's physical body, gives rise to the inevitable reality that is established all throughout Scripture, is that that of the sacrificial system. And of course Israel is going to pick up on that and Abraham does as well. So what we've got now is in Genesis 15 6 and I'm well let's let's go there just quickly if we may. Genesis chapter 15 and verse I'll begin reading with verse 2. Abram said, O Lord God, what will you give me?

[13 : 18] Since I'm childless, the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus. Abraham said, Since thou hast given me no offspring, and one born in my house is my heir. And the Lord says, No, this man will not be your heir. One who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.

Now this is remember, and I believe that this is a Christophany. This is a pre-incarnate revelation of Christ prior to his coming to Bethlehem. And we read in verse 5 that he took him outside and said, Now look, Abraham, look toward the heaven to count the stars if you're able to count them. And he said to him, God said to Abraham, so shall your descendants be. And we can only assume based on what the text tells us that he accepted and believed what God told him about his descendants, even though at the point in time he had no descendants at all, not even one. And he was already past the age of what you would consider normal productivity.

And Sarah certainly was as well. So the only conclusion that I am able to reach here in the Old Testament prior to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is that Abraham simply expressed confidence, trust, belief, reliance upon what God told him.

And the text says in verse 6 that Abraham believed in the Lord. And he, the Lord, counted it to Abraham as righteousness.

As righteousness. And I know of no other way to translate that by way of meaning other than the fact that God is as much as telling Abraham, he does not possess as a fallen human being and a child of Adam.

[15 : 18] He does not possess the quality, the kind of righteousness that would allow God to accept him. So what God is going to do in a very gracious and condescending way is he is going to take Abraham's faith in him, that is in God, and accept that as righteousness on the part of Abraham.

Abraham. His believing God will become his righteousness. And that's the meaning of the phrase that God reckoned it. God reckoned Abraham's belief in him.

Abraham. To be righteous or to constitute righteousness, which personally, Abraham did not have. So here we've got a very early example of justification by faith.

Actually, I think we have the same kind of thing in Genesis three, except it isn't spelled out that way. but it still finds the principle of sacrifice being involved. So all we can say regarding this is that faith and what God has been pleased to reveal has been the coin of the realm both Old Testament and New. In the New of course under the dispensation of the grace of God, faith is going to become far more precise and recognizable and communicable than what it is in the Old Testament.

Now the question arises automatically I think, well that's all well and good for Abraham and for his progeny that are going to issue forth from him, but what about all the rest of the Gentiles in the world? After all, Abraham and the Jews just make up such a very tiny percentage of people. What about everybody else? And the only conclusion that I am able to reach regarding everybody else is that they were simply consigned to the paganism in which they had lived and functioned.

[17 : 34] They were completely idolatrous and they had no insight or connection with the true God at all. And we've got here a passage in Ephesians chapter 2 wherein the Apostle Paul describes these people who were Gentiles even back at that time when he says, I'm reading in Ephesians chapter 2 where Paul says in verse 11, therefore remember that formerly and remember he is writing specifically to a Gentile audience. These are people in Asia Minor in the city of Ephesus where Paul had been earlier and communicated the gospel and won a number of these people to Christ, most of whom were Gentiles.

They were not descendants of Abraham. They were Gentiles. And Paul is writing this letter back to them after having departed from them and having been gone for some time.

And he wants to remind them of what God has done for them and where they were when God came into their life. And we read in verse 11, therefore remember said Paul that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, and that's just another name for Gentiles, by the so-called circumcision, and that's just another name for the Jew, which is performed in the flesh, in the flesh, by human hands by human hands, carry out thearia to be in the flesh, the Creek of life, these cr Hisiastes there. And this is a películ of you who means a lot around us, welcome, yea." We read in verse eight. we read in verse 11, therefore remember said Paul that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, that's just another name for Gentiles, by the so-called circumcision, and that's just another name for the Jew, which is performed in the flesh by human hands, and that means when the Jewish baby is circumcised, it is done by a human being who circumcises that baby, and that's with human hands, and then in verse 12 he says, remember that you were at that time, separate from Christ, excluded from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, that was the condition and the plight of the Gentile in the

Old Testament, prior to the time that Christ came. Actually, it is the plight of the Gentile, even after Christ has come, because outside of Christ, of course, there would be no salvation, and then Paul makes this radical distinction in verse 13, when he moves from saying, having no hope without God in the world, but now, and the implication is with this conjunction of contrast, everything has changed, everything has changed, but now, in contrast to four, in Christ Jesus, you, you Gentiles, who formerly were far off, had been brought near by the blood of Christ, which is amazing, and what was their status before? It was without Christ, without God, without hope in this present world. Now, I do not know exactly how all of that worked, and

I have given a lot of thought to this over the years, but I have not been able to reach any really solid conclusions that I would feel comfortable preaching about, and we've got just a semblance of, just a hint, an expression that gives us a little bit of insight, not nearly what we would like, though. In Acts chapter 17, when Paul is preaching on Mars Hill, he makes a statement that is just, well, it's a provocative statement, it causes us to wonder, and to want to find out more about it, but I haven't been able to come up with more light, and I'm talking about verse 29 of Acts chapter 17, where Paul is on Mars Hill preaching to, preaching to the Athenian philosophers, and I think we can safely say virtually all of them were Gentiles, and of course, lost. They too were idolatrous, and pagans, and worshiped many gods, and so on.

[22 : 01] And Paul says, Paul says, in verse, beginning in verse 26, about the Gentiles, they made of every nation of mankind live on all the earth, having determined their appointed bounds, and so on, that they might grope for him and find him, though he is not far from each of us.

And then he continues by saying, in verse 30, therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance. Well, what did that overlook and consist of? What kind of a pass did God give to the Gentiles?

Remember, they were alienated from God, strangers from the covenants, without hope, without Christ, without God in this present world. But now Paul is saying in Acts 17, that God overlooked the times of ignorance.

God is now, and here's another conjunction of contrast, now as opposed to earlier. The now is contrasted with the times of ignorance.

Times of ignorance is when you didn't know any better. But now, God is now declaring to men that all, everywhere should repent, because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead.

[23 : 39] And what Paul is saying is, there was a time before Christ came and died for the sins of the world, that even though men were alienated from God, God, in some way, to some degree, that is not clarified, gave them some kind of a pass.

He overlooked something. To what extent? I don't know. It's not saying that he completely dismissed their sin. It's not saying that. It isn't saying that he disregarded their sin. It doesn't say that.

It just says that God winked at it. And I still haven't been able to put a handle on that. So there is a distinction there. For the Jew, the principle of sacrifice, indicating a substitution was required, was, as we said, instilled as early as Genesis 3, when God took skins of animals to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

Now, we have no indication that anything like that was done or provided for Gentiles. Although Gentiles, some of them did engage in animal sacrifice, some of them, in their paganism, even engaged in human sacrifice, which just shows how far off base they were.

But for the Jew, when once established as a national entity, the Jewish people comprised of the 12 tribes that originated with the 12 sons of Jacob, everything focused upon God's promise of a coming Redeemer who would somehow make everything right again.

[25 : 23] Messianic concerns and promise of one to come became the very heartbeat of the Jewish people.

And when Jesus came on the scene, the key issue for Israel was his identity. Was Jesus of Nazareth the one promised by Moses and the prophets?

And what was the Jewish concept of acceptance with God and entrance into the long-awaited kingdom that the Messiah would establish?

Now we've got Jesus on the scene. But keep in mind, this is still before death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which is, of course, going to change everything. But up until that time, you've got to keep in mind that Jesus was ministering under the Mosaic law to exclusively to the nation of Israel.

And he was presenting himself as Israel's Messiah. John the Baptist introduced him as such in John's Gospel, Chapter 1. And the question now that surfaces in connection with this prophecy thing is, what in the Gospels?

[26 : 51] Let's forget about Abraham now and before Israel even came into the picture as a nation. But in the Gospels, when Jesus was ministering publicly for those three to three and a half years, what was it then that constituted the message of salvation?

What was it that was preached to people and they were required to believe? It was the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

And if you embrace that message, then you were expected to be water baptized by John and identified with that message.

So if you will come, please, to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 19. We want to see if we can put a handle on exactly what this Gospel of the Kingdom consisted of and how it is radically contrasted with the Gospel of the Grace of God.

And this is where people really get confused. And I'm speaking from experience because I was frankly, I was profoundly confused by this as a relatively new Christian.

[28 : 10] I could not make these things jibe. And the reason I couldn't make them jibe was because they didn't. And they're not supposed to. There's an entirely different thing involved in the Gospel of the Kingdom as opposed to the Gospel of the Grace of God.

And I want to begin in Matthew Chapter 19. And what I think is one of the more outstanding examples of this, beginning with verse 16. Behold, one came to him, to Jesus, and said, The teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?

Now, right away, there ought to be a red flag go up. What's this young man asking? What do I need to do?

And you know people are still asking that question. And it isn't a question of what you need to do. The question is, what do you need to believe?

Because today, under the Gospel of the Grace of God, it isn't do anything. It is believe something.

[29 : 28] The doing has already been done. The doing has been done by the only one who could do it that matters.

And that is what Jesus Christ did on that cross. And this rich young ruler is not coming from a position of grace at all. Because the grace that's going to be extended in the Gospel of the Grace of God has not yet become available.

So, this rich young ruler comes up and says, What good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?

And that needs some clarification. Whenever we talk about eternal life today as Christians, and for that matter, probably even most people who are not Christians, we think in terms of going to a place.

It would be the same place that Jesus went to when he ascended before the apostles' very eyes in Acts chapter 1.

[30 : 35] They watched him ascend into heaven. And he went up right before their very eyes. Many times throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus referred to returning to his father.

And that he came from his father. And that he came from heaven. And that he was going back to heaven. So, we today, quite understandably, think in terms of dying in the flesh, dying in the body, and the body goes to the grave or the crematory or buried at sea or wherever it goes.

And the spirit goes to heaven to be with the Lord in heaven. That was not the Jewish concept at all. They never thought of that in terms at all.

All they could think of and all they concerned themselves about was the kingdom and the kingdom of heaven. And I tried to explain the last time we were together.

Preaching the kingdom of heaven is not the same as the heaven where God dwells, where believers go upon death. The kingdom of heaven is heaven's kingdom come to earth and to be established here on the earth.

[31 : 59] That was the only Jewish concept of heaven. They never thought in terms of going to the dwelling place of God when they die. They thought in terms of having a position here on earth in the kingdom, because it's going to be an earthly kingdom.

And when he says obtain eternal life, that is precisely what he has in mind. And Jesus said, why are you asking me about what is good?

There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments. Now, I dare say that it is a passage like this and a concept like this that has caused so much confusion among people throughout the world.

You would be amazed how many people think that you've come into a right relationship with God based on your keeping the commandments, the 10 commandments.

Actually, you should keep all 10 of them. But if you keep most of them, that would probably be good enough. And that's the way the world thinks today. And when Jesus answers this man, he says, well, you just keep the command.

[33 : 19] Now, theoretically, this is true. And I need to insert something here, too, because this is an important point. Anyone who wants a right relationship with God, all they have to do is muster up a status of perfection, moral and spiritual perfection.

And you've got it made. In other words, all you have to do, all you have to do is be as righteous and as morally upright as Jesus Christ is, and you don't have anything to worry about.

You are a shoe-in. Are there any takers? Well, I dare say there aren't any takers, because however righteous a self-righteous person believes himself to be, I don't think anybody would care to compare themselves alongside Jesus Christ.

As you've heard me say over the years, I've lived around this old globe for over 80 years, but nobody has ever mistaken me for Jesus yet. And all you have to do to have a right relationship with God is simply be as perfect morally and spiritually as Jesus is, and you've got nothing to worry about.

But because none of us are like that, we've all got a lot to worry about. Theoretically, Jesus was telling the man the truth. Well, you keep the commandments and you don't have anything to worry about.

[34 : 49] And the guy says, which ones? And Jesus said, well, honor your father and your mother. And the young man said, and he gave him a listen. And the young man said, all of these things, I've kept, I've done all of that. Now, this is obviously a young man that is coming from a position of unreality, because he, in our humanity, nobody does this and nobody does it perfectly.

And he, yet he went the bat for himself and says, well, I've done all those. I've done all those things. What else? What am I still lacking? And Jesus said, well, if you wish to be complete, if you wish to be whole, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor.

Now, actually, what he's saying is this. If you have, in truth, done all of those things that you say you have done, you won't have any problem at all selling your possessions and giving to the poor and come and follow me.

The truth of the matter is, all Jesus revealed was this young man's hypocrisy. He hadn't done all of those things. And he knew he hadn't done all of those things. Consequently, he was in no position to make the kind of sacrifice that he would obviously have been more than willing to make if he had done all of those commandments.

And he simply revealed the truth of his status when he said, he went away grieved for he was one who owned much property. This was a young man who was thoroughly self-deceived as to the degree of his own righteousness.

[36 : 24] And Jesus simply revealed that to him. But here is the issue. Is this what we're going to tell people today? Now, do you not see a clear cut distinction being made?

If anyone were to come to you as a believer, you are a believer in Christ. And if they come to you and ask you, what must I do to be saved?

Are you going to tell them? We'll keep the commandments. And if you have kept the commandments satisfactorily, you would be willing to sell all your possessions and you shall have treasure in heaven and just follow Jesus.

Of course not. That's not a message for us today, but it was a message then. And I really detest the view that some interpreters have placed upon this in saying, well, Jesus knew that this young man wouldn't be willing to do that.

And he just told him that because he wanted to set some kind of an example as to what is required. Now, this is stuff and nonsense, but people assign all kinds of things to our Lord that he certainly was not guilty of.

[37 : 40] And Jesus never gave anyone false impressions. He never led anyone astray. He never talked out of both sides of his mouth.

He certainly wasn't given to that. And this young man, when he heard that, he went away. All I'm saying is this. Do you not see a very intense legal requirement here?

Is there not something here that is for this young man to do? This is in keeping with the gospel of the kingdom.

And if you want to see it come out in bold relief, just read the Sermon on the Mount that our Lord gave earlier in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7.

And this, too, is a sterling example of why so many have gone astray and they think they come into a right relationship with God because I live by the Sermon on the Mount.

[38 : 44] Now, there's no question the Sermon on the Mount contains great moral qualities. Absolutely, it does. I wouldn't deny that for one moment.

But it also sets a standard that humans are simply incapable of making. And that, too, is the whole point. It's the same as the point here in Matthew 19.

No human being measures up to the righteous standards that a righteous God demands. We all fall short. That's the meaning of all have sinned and come short.

But don't measure up to the glory of God. This is the whole reason for the law and all of the commandments is to reveal to man not that he is going to become righteous before God by keeping them, but it is to bring him to despair with the reality that he can't keep them.

He can't perform. It is simply impossible for him to do that. And that's the whole point. So then the law and all of the legal requirements, etc., all it does is reveal the high standards of God and the inability of fallen man to meet them.

[40 : 01] And that's why Paul, in writing to the Galatians, said, The law is our schoolmaster.

The law is our teacher. The law is our revealer that we don't measure up. And the illustration I've used over the years, and I've never found a better one yet, is about the little boy who went into the bathroom and he got up on a stool and he looked at his face in the mirror.

And his face was dirty. And he needed to wash his face. The mirror revealed his true condition.

He had a dirty face. But what would be the point of reaching up and taking the mirror and start wiping your face with the mirror?

The mirror is a revealer. The mirror is an indicator. The mirror points to the problem. And the problem is, boy, you got a dirty face.

[41 : 12] And what you need to do is get down there in the sink and soap and water and wash your face. But you can't wash your face with the mirror.

The mirror just reveals the problem. You need cleansing to take care of the problem. That's the purpose of the law. The law, says Paul, is the knowledge of sin.

The law points out the problem, but it can't solve the problem. It can only lead you to one who can. So when someone comes to the issue of righteousness and how righteous do I have to be?

And I've pointed this out before, but I think it's a valid point that needs to be emphasized. We humans tend to think in terms of degrees of righteousness.

This person is more righteous than that person. And this person is a reprobate. And this person is a great sinner. And this person is really a holy Joe and pretty righteous.

[42 : 16] And we see righteousness on the basis of a scale of from good to bad to exceptional, etc. But God in his standard concludes all under sin.

That the gift of grace might be given to all. And he does not see our sin as a degree. He sees it not as a quantity, but as a quality.

And this, dear friends, makes all the difference in the world. It is not the quantity of righteousness that you have that makes you acceptable to God.

It is the quality of righteousness that you have. Quantity simply means some are a little better or worse than others.

But a quality has to do with a kind of righteousness. And what kind of righteousness does God require in order to accept us?

[43 : 19] And the answer is, he requires a perfect righteousness. Well, I can't produce that. Well, that's the whole point. God has provided someone who can.

And you may obtain that righteousness from him. And this is exactly what Paul meant when he said to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own, which is by the law, but the righteousness, which is of faith, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And the point that is made here in the huge contrast between the legal requirements and the kingdom of heaven and entering into the kingdom of heaven, as opposed to salvation here in the dispensation of the grace of God.

When you recognize your inability to produce the kind of righteousness that God will require, that causes us to look to Christ.

Jesus Christ gives us as a free gift his own righteousness that he imputes to us. And I love that word imputes because he doesn't impart it to us.

[44 : 31] He doesn't put it on us. He puts it in us. He imputes his righteousness to us so that we stand legally, forensically, judicially in the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And that is what makes us acceptable to God. That did not exist. That did not exist prior to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

That was not an Old Testament reality. And it was not even a reality in the Gospels. It did not become a reality until Christ died on that cross, a sacrificial death for the sins of the world.

And that changed everything. That gave us a gospel of the grace of God to preach. So today we are able to tell people, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

And we are not going to tell them, you want to become righteous before God? Well, keep the commandments. And yet, do you know, that's in the New Testament.

[45 : 34] And for some people, that makes it valid because they do not see the progress of doctrine, the development of doctrine, the changing that is taking place, the transition that is taking place within, within the New Testament.

Everybody agrees there's a change between the Old Testament. But what is often overlooked is there is a progression and a change within the New. The Gospels belong theologically and doctrinally.

The Gospels belong to the Old Testament, not the New, the Old. The difficulty is in the fact that they're separated by 400 years and virtually everyone, almost everyone considers the Old Testament complete and done.

And the New Testament that opens up and that's all about the grace of God. No, it isn't. It is a continuation of the old. Jesus functioned as a Jew and he lived and practiced and recommended and respected and referred to the law of Moses repeatedly.

And it didn't change. Until Jesus said from the cross, it is finished. And the veil in the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

[46 : 53] Nothing has been the same since. It's provided us with a wonderful gospel to preach. Now, was there a question or comment? We've got just a couple of minutes left. Anybody? I think, Terry, didn't you say somebody had a question?

Joe, go ahead and unmute. Ask your question and then mute again, will you please? Yeah, can you hear me? Yeah, I can hear you. Okay.

First of all, Marv, a comment before my question. You really, really answered it. The one common denominator from the time after the fall through Abraham, through Moses right up today is to believe.

Believe, believe, believe. That's a common denominator. And you pointed out so crisply. Thank you so much. Here's my question. This comes from Ezekiel chapter 33, verses 7 through 9.

And my question is, how applicable is the principle of this scripture from the times of prophecy to us in this age of grace?

[48 : 04] Is this principle still applicable? And here I'm going to read the scripture. Ezekiel. Watchman's duty. Yeah. Okay. Chapter 33, 7 through 9. Here we go.

Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

And is there a principle for us today? I think that there is a principle. Well, I just don't think it is applicable across the board for the specific reason that this was a time and an age when the nation of Israel occupied a special place in the heart and mind of God as a covenant nation, as the chosen people.

And they had access to information from the prophets and directly from God, where he often spoke face to face as he did with Moses and other.

[49 : 35] And there is a degree of culpability that exists in their situation as opposed to ours. And I think that it may sound like that I am hedging here or fudging my bet, but I can only say that the principle.

Of telling and of warning people is valid, and we are certainly under commission to do that, but not at the expense that they were under for refusing or for declining to reveal that to them.

In other words, let me put it this way. How difficult would you find it to be if God spoke directly to you, I mean directly to you, and you knew it was him, and he was ordering you to reveal the information that he was giving you to someone else?

To what degree would that impact you? Tremendously. I guess. I guess. Yes. I mean, in a way, well.

Isn't he doing that now? Isn't he doing that to us now? We have his word. That's true. We do. But at the same time, they had a revelation that was even more direct than what we are.

[51 : 03] In some cases, it was face to face. And we do not have the same degree. I'm not saying we don't have a responsibility.

I think we do. I don't have any doubt that we do. And I don't think that this responsibility is limited to preachers. I think it is incumbent upon everyone who knows the name of Christ to make him known to others.

And to the extent that we ignore that or violate that is sad. It's one of the many flaws of the church.

It actually isn't more for the individuals, for us to do that rather than you, the preacher. You are to embellish us, to teach us and bring us the message so that we can take it to others.

Exactly. Exactly. And if I had it here, I would share it with you. But it was just within the last few days. Marie and I were reading in our devotions.

[52 : 13] And we were reading for two minutes from the Bible by Mr. Stamm. And he talked about sharing the gospel and how that it was not to be limited to preachers and evangelists to do so.

And it was an excellent, excellent two minutes with the Bible. Matter of fact, I think, Marie, if you'll make a note of that, I'll read it. I'll read it next week and give them an illustration of it.

Okay. So I see an application here in principle. And we certainly have a responsibility. But we do not have the same level and the same degree of information and responsibility that they did.

And you've got to remember this, too. This whole situation with Ezekiel, in fact, the whole Old Testament, was really confined to a very special, isolated group of people.

And that is Israel. And I cannot emphasize that too much. I think it is often lost on the Christian public as a whole, where they're willing to adopt many things in the Old Testament and make them directly applicable.

[53 : 23] And they are sometimes applicable by way of principle. But that's the extent of it. And here, I cannot say that it's applicable in the full measure of the principle that it was to them, given their circumstances, the receiving of the message and the responsibility incumbent upon them as the chosen people of God.

Marv? Yes. We need to end this so we can move on to the next meeting. Okay. Well, thank you all for being with us today. And we will not be having a 9 o'clock session next week.

We plan to return to the church, but it will be for a 10-15 service only. And we will be resuming. So we will not have a video hookup like we have today.

But we will not have a 9 o'clock service next week. It will be 10-15 only. And I'll make some other announcements pertinent to that at the late service. So thank you so much for joining us for the 9 o'clock hour.

The Lord bless. Thank you. Thank you.