

5. There is a difference between the RAPTURE of the saints and the REVELATION or Return of Christ to earth.

The information about the **RAPTURE** of the Church was made known to Paul and subsequently to the Church (1Thessalonians 4:15-18; Philippians 3:20-21). The Rapture is the concluding event of the church age.

The **REVELATION or RETURN** of Christ to earth, as King of his Kingdom on earth was made known to the Old Testament prophets and the 12 Disciples by Jesus (Zechariah 12 –14; Matthew 24; cp. 19:28).

To make these two separate events, to be the same event, destroys the purposes of God.

6. There is a difference between CHANGED and UNCHANGED physical bodies at the RAPTURE and REVELATION of Christ.

To Paul was given the secret message concerning the **TRANSFORMATION** of the bodies of living saints, when Christ comes for his church (1Corinthians 15:51-53; Philippians 3:20-21).

However, the Old Testament prophets foretold that the bodies of the living saints when Christ returns to earth to reign over them for 1,000 years, will be **UNCHANGED**, (Isaiah 11:6; Matthew 25:34). The reason why the bodies of the living believers will be unchanged when Christ returns to earth, is so that they can produce children during the Millennium.

7. There is a difference between SIGN gifts and MINISTRY gifts.

God promised Holy Spirit signs, miracles and wonders as part of Christ's kingdom on earth (Joel 2:28-20; Acts 2; Matthew 10: 7-10; Isaiah 11:9; Hebrew 6: 5). They were given to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, their Messiah.

When Israel rejected the King and His Kingdom and the Church age began, then only '*ministry*' or '*service*' gifts remained (1Corinthians 12, 13:8; Romans 12; Ephesians 4).

There are many more '*things that differ*' in the Bible, which need to be examined Dispensationally in order to have a clear understanding of God's Word. May we follow in the spirit of the Bereans (Acts 17:11), '*who were more noble than the Thessalonians in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so*'.

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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- John 8:36
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Distinctions That Matter

2Timothy 2:15



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DISTINCTIONS THAT MATTER

Philippians 1:10 - 2 Timothy 2:15

When we come to study the Word of God it is good to have a key or keys that will help unlock its pages. One such key is found in Philippians 1:10 "*discern the things that differ*".

There are many truths in the Bible, which at first glance may seem to have the same meaning. But after further study we discover they have a different meaning in their immediate historical and Biblical context. It is our charge from God to 'rightly divide' the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15), to see these differences.

For example, the word *Gospel* means 'good news'. However, only the Biblical context or passage will determine 'which gospel' is in mind. The Bible contains many references to various 'Gospels'. There is the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:23), the Everlasting Gospel (Revelation 14:6) and Paul's gospel, called '*my gospel*' (Romans 16:25) or the Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24).

The serious Bible student by 'discerning things that differ' and distinctions that matter', will understand that these various 'Gospels' are given different names, because they are declaring a different message, to a different people, at a different time in history.

The failure to distinguish the *things that differ* in the Bible has brought much confusion among Christians. In this study we will point out and examine just a few of these differences and trust that they will

assist us in a better understanding of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

1. There is a difference between Biblical truths that are HORIZONTAL and those that are VERTICAL.

Some Bible truths apply to God's people in all ages or dispensations; such as love, righteousness, regeneration, obedience, faith, truth, peace, mercy, forgiveness, wisdom, kindness, joy and a host of practical virtues (Cp. Psalm 15 with Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 3-4).

These Biblical principles and instructions for Christian living are known as horizontal or '*trans-dispensational*' truths that apply in all dispensations and ages.

But when God makes a direct intervention into history or gives special revelation for a specific time period, it can bring a dispensational change.

For example, God gave the dispensation of Law with its sacrificial system to Moses and Israel. Much later in time, God gave the 'dispensation of Grace' to Paul for the Church, without the sacrificial system of the Law (Ephesians 3:2; Romans 3:21; 6:14).

These Divinely directed changes in the outworking of the eternal purposes of God, can be called '*Vertical truths*', as they are new instructions from God.

2. There is a difference between

- a) the JEW,
- b) the GENTILE,
- c) the CHURCH of God

(1Corinthians10:32).

The Bible speaks of these three classes of people and we must be careful to note which group God is addressing within the Biblical passage we are reading. Note..

- a) Matthew 10: 5-23 –The Jews only
- b) Romans 11:7-15, - The Gentile nations are addressed as part of God's plan
- c) Ephesians 1:15-23. The Church - the body of Christ is the subject

3. There is a difference between LAW and GRACE.

To Moses was given the Dispensation of the Law (Exodus 20) and to Paul was given the Dispensation of Grace (Ephesians. 3: 2; Colossians 1: 24 -29).

Christians in this dispensation live by Grace directives, and not the Mosaic ritualistic legal system. 2Corinthians 3.

4. There is a difference between PROPHECY and MYSTERY.

God's plan to send Christ as the King to establish a Kingdom on earth, is a promise that is contained in Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah 2, 9, 11; Acts 3:24) .

His plan to have a universal Christian Church in this age of Grace was NOT prophesied, but is called a 'mystery or *secret*', which God kept to himself until He saved Paul and told him to make it known to the world (Ephesians. 3: 1-10).