

The Dispensations of God

And let us turn to our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 10.

Ephesians 1, verse 10, part of the doxology of verses 3 to 14, wherein Paul gives many, many things and reasons why we should praise and glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, a Trinitarian doxology. And here in verse 10, he unpacks a little bit, but it's still dense to be sure.

Let us listen intensively to the Word of God. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, let us pray. Herein, God, you express through the words of Paul by the power of the Spirit, this truth, that you have an economy, an outworking of the covenant of grace for the people of God that changes over time.

We know the biggest changes being the Old Testament, New Testament, and this text here is specifically about the future of the new heavens and new earth. That too is a great and mighty change. And yet through all this, God, there is a commonality, a substance that does not change.

That is, we are saved by faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. May we therefore, I pray, learn anew, if we have not, to be encouraged for those who have learned this and know this truth, God, that there are dispensations of your grace from the Old Testament, New Testament, yet in all this outward variety, there is an inward similarity in substance. And thus, there is one people of God from the Old Testament to New Testament.

May this strengthen us as we move forward as believers so that we can read the Old Testament and see the saints as those who went before us. We ask this by the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen.

So you heard a little bit in the prayer the importance of this doctrine that yes, there is differences outward between the Old Testament and New Testament, yet the substance is the same, that they were the people of God. We are the people of God. They were the church of God.

We are the church of God. They are part of the kingdom of God, and so are we. And thus, we can go to the Old Testament and learn and grow thereby.

It explains why Jesus, Paul, and Peter, and the others would quote the Old Testament. I like this idea from A.W. Pink. It was about 100 years ago, and he made the reference to if you're a dispensationalist, quoting the Old Testament is like an American quoting the Russian Constitution.

The Soviet Union had a constitution. I took Russian in high school, and they had a constitution. It actually had freedom of religion or freedom of speech written down in the Constitution.

Of course, it meant nothing. In practice, it meant nothing. But you wouldn't quote it because it's not yours.

It's a completely different legal entity. And so under what, as you recall, last time I described dispensationalism, which is not what this is. Dispensationalism, the capital D, teaches there are two people of God, the Jews, a biological people, and then everyone else who's spiritually his people.

That's never been the case. They conflate and confuse the two categories, kind of like the Jews and the Pharisees, who are all about my father was Abraham. It's about biological connections.

Biological connection, of course, is part of it insofar as we baptize our children. But at the end of the day, it's fundamentally about the substance of the soul and how God saves his elect in the covenant of grace, both in the Old Testament and New Testament. There's only one people of God, is the point.

So after describing creation, providence, and the fall, in our confession, the Westminster Confession of Faith, they wrote chapter 7. And this chapter is on God's covenant with man. So the covenant comes after the creation of man, after the formation of the world. And it describes there in chapter 7 both the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.

And it is the covenant of grace that is given here in the stages over the history of the world. This is otherwise described as the dispensation of God or household economy. That's literally what the word here is, household economy.

But of course, it's not a physical house with the father, who's perhaps a carpenter like Jesus' father was, and he's administering the money and the funds and how he rules the household. But spiritually speaking, God rules over the world, specifically the church, in two fundamentally dispensations, the Old Testament and the New Testament, before Christ and after Christ. And it is the household economy or administration, the outworking of the covenant of grace before Christ and after Christ.

That's what it is. That's what it means. That's the reference to this word here.

Of course, it's with respect here, specifically in this text, to the future where the church is going to look different, right? We're going to have glorified bodies. That's a different administration of the covenant of grace, but it's the same covenant of grace. Like children, Paul says this in Galatians 4, like children who are given the inheritance of the family on paper, and in some sense, in action and practice because they are, of course, protected and given certain privileges in the household.

But they don't have, what, the full possession of it until they are adults. We don't sit there and say, well, it must be two or three different covenants when they're an infant, when they're a child, when they're an adult. It's the same covenant or testament or inheritance to them, but it's administered as they mature differently, isn't it? It's the same thing with us as a church and the covenant of grace.

It's Paul's argument there in Galatians 4. That's all we mean by dispensation. That's it. So, you can tell from that parallel, it's the same thing.

It's one family. It's one promise or one inheritance or one covenant. This is an implied covenant, of course, with the children.

You're going to get things from us as you get older, especially as we die, or a testament, right? It's bequeathed to them. Hence, New Testament, Old Testament. Christ literally died.

That's what it is. It should not be confused with what you commonly hear as dispensationalism, which creates lots of confusion. It creates two different people of God and the like.

We have unity in the Bible. There is the same way to be saved by faith alone and Christ alone to the glory of God alone, but the application has changed over time. So, let's go to the first point.

Old Testament Dispensation

Old Testament dispensation. Now, you know what the word means, administration of the covenant of grace. Paragraph five of chapter seven, I mentioned there, our forefathers wrote chapter seven.

The covenant was differently administered in the time of the law and in the time of the gospel. And they mean that in a more technical sense of Old Testament, New Testament, not like the Old Testament didn't have the gospel, but rather the fullness of the gospel in Jesus Christ. Under the law, there's clearly, especially Moses, but they mean under the law, they mean everything before Christ, including Abraham, including Noah and Adam.

So, it's not just narrowly Moses. Often we use the phrase sometimes law to mean Moses, the Mosaic code, but it's even before the Mosaic code. They're all under this Old Testament administration because Christ had not come yet, and that makes all the difference in the church.

Under the law, it was administered, that is the covenant of grace, was administered or dispensed, dispensation, my promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people, the Jews, all for signifying or foreshowing or foreshadowing Christ to come. So, you can see a big difference already. They have to foreshadow.

It has to point out ahead to the future of this man and this, the God-man, Jesus Christ, coming to earth. We see it. It's already come to pass, and it makes a big difference.

So, before the time of Christ was a time of the promise of the coming of Messiah, Jesus Christ. He was known by various names as a seed, of course, in Genesis 3, as the son of David elsewhere, further on in the Old Testament. So, the contrast here, then, between the Old and New Testament is the Testament idea, the testimonial language used in Hebrews, where he explains the old way of doing things.

The Old Testament has passed away with this New Testament. The Testament is a specialized covenant. Now, when he dies, when one dies, the Testament is when one dies, you are bequeathed the promises.

The covenant is fulfilled when the person dies. The Old Testament is just a specialized covenant. Instead of being alive, you die before you get something.

Not so good on the person dying, but good on the rest of you who get this. So, it highlights, therefore, the wonderful blessings that Christ bequeathed us when he died, as we will see. First, let's see how the Old Testament differed.

They were certainly justified and sanctified the same way. It's the same gospel promise. Adam and Eve had to believe in the seed to come.

Abraham believed in the seed to come. And then they were taught about king and the priest, the imagery, and the offices there, that the coming Savior will be a king, will be a priest, and the like. They believed all that.

Hebrews 11, the great hall of faith, makes no sense unless they also believe in Jesus. He's telling us, look to their faith, look to what they did in their life, because they trusted the Messiah to come. We trust the Messiah who has already come.

I'll get to that in a bit here, but here, some of the differences. 2 Corinthians 3. 2 Corinthians 3, in this very stark and surprisingly strong language verses here, verses 6-9, 2 Corinthians 3, 6-9, we read this. Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, that is the apostle is describing to his audience, we are made by God in Christ, ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit.

For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily on the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of the condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. And you read this and you think, what's going on here? They didn't have righteousness in the Old Testament.

They didn't have the Spirit in the Old Testament. What's this interesting contrast, this strong language, the striking language of the letter kills, but the Spirit brings life, and thus Moses has this ministry of condemnation that will pass away, and we have a Spirit instead. And so this stark contrast here, we have a clue, not only from the rest of the Bible, what Paul means, but even the text here especially where he uses the language of glory.

He says there's a glory in the old administration under Moses because the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory, of course, was passing away. Nevertheless, it was glorious. How could it be glorious if it's about death? And he argues the New Testament has much more greater glory, right, from the lesser to the greater.

The ministry of righteousness today exceeds much more in glory, and that's because the Jews insisted that the law could be obeyed, and because of that, it's only going to condemn.

If you think you can save yourself by the law, all it's going to do is condemn, and this is part of the reason why God had such striking miracles, why God had thunders and lightnings at the giving of the Ten Commandments to instill the fear of God in them because they were quick to turn around and think they can obey enough, and God's like, you cannot obey enough. Pay attention to what the law is doing here.

It should terrify you if this is all you have is the law in me. You got to have the Messiah. You got to have what? The priest, the sacrifice, the temple, all that to show this is where you find assuaging of your guilty conscience, where you find mercy and compassion through the promised Messiah.

So Paul's playing up on that weakness of the Old Testament and their lies of the Pharisees and the like and saying, look, if that's all you have, you've got nothing. Jesus is better than that. But of course, Jesus was there in the Old Testament.

They misunderstood it, and we'll see about that in a little bit. The outward types, of course, as paragraph 5 says in chapter 7, outward types foreshadowing or foreshadowing, the older word there, Christ and his work right there, outward pictures displaying the work of Jesus to come. Christ, our high priest, in particular, Hebrews 8, chapter 8 through chapter 10.

I'm not going to read all that. You can go home and read this afternoon. Chapter 8 to chapter 10 of Hebrews.

Now this is the main point, 8.1, of the things we are saying. We have such a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man, et cetera, et cetera, through those three chapters. We're pounding over and over again to his Jewish audience, you missed the point.

It was never about a physical temple. Those temple, the sacrifices, the animals themselves, the holy days, all of that, the candle, everything was signifying something about the work and the person of the Messiah to come. And he has come.

Why do you want to go back to the old childish teaching tools? That's what they were. Children love picture books. They were given a big picture book.

That's what it is. Circumcision itself was but a picture of the work of Christ Jesus who would circumcise our heart by the power of the Spirit, which itself was prophesied in the Old Testament a couple of times, wasn't it? Indeed it was, Deuteronomy and elsewhere in the prophets. Romans 4.11 we read, and he received the sign of circumcision, that is Abraham, a seal of the righteousness of faith, not the righteousness of works.

This is Abraham in the Old Testament. Paul is arguing in Romans 4 that Abraham and David are evidence that it was always about being saved by faith alone and Christ alone, His perfection, His righteousness and not your own. It was never about obeying the Ten Commandments.

You missed the point. Circumcision therefore was not of the law in the sense of look at me, I'm good and holy, but rather it's supposed to be, they turned it the wrong way, it's supposed to be of faith. It was Abraham who believed in God, which he had, Abraham had, while still uncircumcised.

He had the seal of righteousness of faith, which he had while still uncircumcised. So it hadn't even happened yet. And he was saved.

That he might be the father of all who believe. Do you believe? Therefore Abraham is what? Your father. Simple syllogism.

Though they are uncircumcised, that is we, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, that is Gentiles. Christ our Passover, you know this passage, 1 Corinthians 5, 7, therefore purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened, for indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Again and again, all these things of the Old Testament pointed to Christ.

Christ has come, we don't need them anymore, is the whole point of the book of Hebrews. The confession continues here, which were, that is these outward ceremonial forms, which were for that time, Old Testament time, Adam to Christ, sufficient and efficacious, it was good enough and it did what it's supposed to do for the believers, through the operation of the Spirit to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah. Same thing, we too have the Spirit to build us up in the faith of the promised Messiah who has already come, but also promising us that he'll come back a second time.

So we're kind of like what they were as well. They're looking forward, we also are looking forward, as much as we also look back to what Christ has done for us. So don't think we are somehow better in some kind of different situation.

I want us to understand that yes, there's a different administration, but in some ways it's kind of like us. They were looking forward, we're looking forward to Jesus coming back, aren't we? A new heaven and a new earth. By whom they had full remission of sins and eternal salvation and is called the Old Testament.

That was all one sentence, I broke it up. That's all what the Puritans would do, they write like Paul. But the point here at the end is by whom they had full remission of sins.

They too were saved. There's only one way to heaven. Dismissationalism, explicitly or implicitly, depending on who you ask and who you read, because they're very confused, offer many ways to heaven.

At least two, if not more. In other words, these teaching tools are no longer used. They were sufficient for the time, but now are done away with.

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that our fathers were under the cloud and all passed to the sea and all were baptized into Moses. In the cloud and in the sea, 1 Corinthians 10. All ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink.

For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. And the feeding of them in the wilderness, it was given to them and they were supposed to eat in faith, even if it wasn't a miracle. We don't have miracles when we have our meals, but what? Whatever you eat or do, due to the glory of God, the implication being by faith in Jesus, you do it because you believe in God.

And they too were supposed to do that. In other words, it was sufficient for them if they believed, but many of them did not, and they perished in the wilderness. As Hebrews 4 argues, it wasn't mixed with faith.

It should have been. Just like today, it should be mixed with faith, the administration of the sacraments, and even the preaching of the word, especially here. Do you believe what you hear or not? And if you do, and then it is sufficient and efficacious as it was of them of old to grow and become more like Jesus.

It's this kind of verse here, 1 Corinthians 10 and other ones, where it says, they ate the same spiritual food. What do you mean the same? And drank the same spiritual drink. What was he talking about? For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them.

That rock was Christ. So, the eat and drink of Christ is what? John tells us in John 6, it's metaphorical for believing, trusting, and relying upon Jesus. They believed in Jesus or they were supposed to.

We know many of them didn't. They died in the wilderness. I remember reading that going, wow, I missed that one in all my growing up as a Christian.

So many key verses. Hebrews 11, 13, these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Again, the great hall of faith in which it makes no sense if they are not also of the same faith, the same Messiah, the same body of Christ.

And John 8, 56 was another one I never saw before as a kid. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad.

Abraham really didn't care about the land as such, but he looked for what? A heavenly city, as Hebrews 11 tells us. He saw Jesus and wanted him to come even quicker. As we pray, come quickly, Lord Jesus, they prayed, come quickly, great Messiah.

They didn't know him as much as we knew him that way, but they knew him to be their Savior. And so they had full salvation of all. Galatians 3, 7 through 9, therefore, know that only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham.

And the scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, and you all the nations shall be blessed. The gospel was preached to Abraham. I had a Bible study down at the campus many years ago, and a couple of attendees were there.

And I went over some of this. I was trying to go over some basic stuff because I knew I was dealing with dismissalists often. And they denied that the gospel was given to Abraham.

I quoted this text. You can't get away from it. Yeah, Galatians 3, 8, scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles and his Gentiles will also be saved by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham.

And the man looked at me straight face and said, that was a different gospel preached to Abraham than the one we have in the New Testament. That's the kind of confusion going on in these churches, brothers and sisters. If it's a different gospel, what am I missing here? Can you imagine those words coming out of your mouth? It was a different gospel.

What did Paul say? If anyone else preached other than Christ, let him be anathema. There's only one gospel. The man was speaking heresy and didn't know it.

Serious error is what I mean by that word. It's a very serious error that there's other ways to heaven, other good news. What is the human condition if you think Abraham can get to heaven without Christ? What in the world? This is crazy.

So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham because it's the same gospel. It's the same faith. That verse 9 right after it makes no sense otherwise.

It's our father. It's the same. It's the same belief, the same covenant.

Verse 14, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles and Christ Jesus that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith. So all this is fulfilled and all this nevertheless shows as well that they too were saved and these outward forms were just used for them because their knowledge was lesser than ours. Look at Adam and Eve.

They hear about the seed. What does that mean? To them it means a kid who grows up probably to a man and does something for them. They don't know what exactly.

Probably death because they were given animal skins implying in the text that God sacrificed and slayed an animal. And we know they were already doing ola offerings. That's the Hebrew word for whole burnt offering, which means you, it signifies you give up all that you are to God.

Or of course on the other side, it signifies Christ gives up all that he is for us and our justification. Early on it's the first kind of sacrifice and you can't figure that out from nature. That had been told to them by God.

The only way you would know about that by supernatural revelation. So their knowledge was less and so God gave them a lot of tools to help them get a better picture of these things. The Old Testament divisions.

I want to point out that there are further subdivisions of the Old Testament dispensation or administration of the covenant of grace. You're going to recognize these of course. It's wherever the covenant of grace is given anew in the Old Testament.

You of course have the pre-fall Adam who was in the covenant of works. He broke it and we fell through Adam and after him we have what's known as the Adamic covenant. It's known as the Adamic covenant because right after the fall God explained in Genesis 3 you're not going to die.

You're going to suffer right by the sweat of your brow. You're going to be working for the rest of your life and fighting against weeds and everything else and difficulties in this world. Nevertheless the seed will rise from the woman and will crush the head of the serpent.

That's good news. It's a promise. It's a promise which is a key indication of a covenant.

I promise to you that you will bring forth and we know what happens in the book of Luke and Matthew. We have the genealogies from Adam the son of God and Luke all the way to Christ fulfilled literally there the prophecy of the seed or the child to come. So that's the Adamic one promise redemption through the seed.

They have the same creational ordinances right. They're still supposed to be fruitful multiply subdue the earth but in the name of the promised messiah to come is the difference of course. And we're given sacrifices as I pointed out the old sacrifice.

Genesis 4:26 describes the beginning of worship of God. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord. If you recall that passage showing that early on they were already worshiping God.

Then you have the Noahic covenant the Adamic covenant which is to say the covenant of grace expressed to Adam in very simplified form in words. Not a whole lot of going on in that text in Genesis 3:15 and 16 is there. Very simple and the sacrifice that went with it.

So God is administering or handing out like to children pieces and parts of the promises of what's bequeathed to them. In this case knowledge and of course you need some kind of knowledge minimally if you're going to be a believer. You can't be saved in ignorance.

You got to know who Jesus is whether Jesus from afar or Jesus up close it's still Jesus. Noah's next a visible reminder of God's long suffering and it's for and to the church through Noah. Noah gave a sacrifice in the text that we read and the sweet smelling aroma satisfied God.

So it's clearly tied to the covenant of grace although it's not to be confused with the covenant of grace the way the Adamic is because it says nothing about the messiah. It just says God's going to maintain the sun and the moon and the seasons until the end of the covenant of grace until all the elect are brought in. That's what it's there for.

So it's to and for the church although unto and acted upon all of creation humanity that they would be sustained until the church is brought in fullness. And so he's giving assurance

that the church primarily would be preserved in spite of what they saw through the flood how wicked men may be. Next we have Abraham.

That's clearly part of the administration of the covenant of grace the same theme of seed of a promised child to come is reiterated to Adam except now it's expanded saying you're going to multiply as the sands of the sea of the stars of the of the sky across the world how many people will be part of your family. And of course we know that means the Gentiles. That's part of the argument of Galatians that I read earlier that the promise was prophesied to or given the gospel was given to Abraham.

It was preached. Where is the gospel preached to Abraham? Where does it say the Messiah will come and the Gentiles shall be saved? It doesn't say it in those words. What it says is in you all the nations shall be blessed.

And so a dispensationalist or Jew reads blessing there as merely and only and ultimately material. I did great wonderful things you get rich because you bless the promised land and God will bless you somehow. No, it was ultimately spiritual because circumcision pointed to spiritual truths of Jesus Christ and of righteousness.

Hence Romans 4 in the argument Romans 4 by Paul that I read that it was a sign and seal of righteousness of faith that Abraham had. So it was always spiritual. God not really concerned when it comes to the two soul and body the body comes second doesn't it? We're not given a new body yet.

It comes later. What we're given first and foremost because it's primary is our new soul purified and redeemed by Jesus Christ in our regeneration. And it was always that way.

So this is a great step here in Revelation of course of the covenant of grace. He continued also with the sacrifices of praise before God and worshipped him with natural worship. We're given more details of course that Abraham would be a blessing to the world.

Fundamentally a spiritual blessing to the world. Galatians 3.8 the Messiah would die in the place of his people. He learned that when he almost lost his son.

There has to be a sacrifice, a substitute. That's what that taught. The land promise of course was given to him.

That was a picture of heaven. He never got it but it was to encourage and strengthen him that he would keep looking forward. God gave him something physical and tangible for his weak faith.

And to express in the circumcision of course he was given that to express regeneration. A born again heart is why he was given that sign of circumcision which wasn't there for Adam. God added these things to teach them to help them grow.

And of course it showed in circumcision as well as the sacrifice to Olah the need for the shedding of blood. It was a bloody activity. Almost everything was administered through blood in the Old Testament wasn't it? And of course Moses to Christ.

The great high watermark of Old Testament revelation. The greatest expression and unpacking and explanation of the covenant of grace administration was the Mosaic economy. It was a great difference.

It added much more truth that Abraham didn't fully understand. That Adam didn't understand. They were given greater revelation and of course greater accountability.

Miracles attesting to these truths left and right. So many more miracles under Moses than before that time. More prophets and teachers and priests who were supposed to be teachers as well.

More outward forms of worship. All the additional sacrifices beyond the Olah or Holborn offering. And of course the Bible written down by Moses.

Apparently before that time it was oral tradition. And since they lived a very long time that oral tradition stayed pretty pure for a very long time. They had greater teaching, greater details of Christ the Messiah to come and His redemption for them.

Isaiah, the great chapters therein yielding much truth, much revelation of what kind of Messiah this will be. And yet all of it was still dark compared to the noonday sun of the New Testament era when Christ came and fulfilled it all. Because when Christ came, remember the disciples are still confused.

Christ is quoting Old Testament prophets. He quotes the Psalms. They're like, but we thought you were going to do this and I want to be the greatest in your kingdom.

And what are you going to take down the Roman empire? They were still listening to the Old Testament prophecies that you and I understand and know and see spiritually as merely outward and physical. That was the weakness of the Jewish state. They relied too much on the outward and the physical.

It'd be somewhat like today where some people are like, well, I grew up in the church. I was baptized. Isn't that good enough? Relying on the outward forms of the church.

They just had more of them. So the truth of Christ from the promised seed theme in Genesis 3 to the addition to that theme of the kings and the priests as pictures of the work of Jesus Christ and the truth of salvation slowly unfolded and expanded in the Old Testament until Christ comes.

New Testament Dispensation

And the second point, New Testament dispensation, that is the administration of the covenant of grace and a greater fullness, but not the ultimate fullness because we ain't in heaven yet.

I know Paul says they're like children under a pedagogy there in Galatians 4, right? Instructor, a teacher. And I like to say we're teenagers before we get to heaven. We're more mature than a six-year-old, but we're not quite fully matured yet in heaven without sin.

We still have sin, right? So we're in a similar place. I'm making that parallel again, right? We're very much like them in so many ways. We have so many more blessings by God's grace.

The difference is there. One, one great difference between the Testaments. Again, not in substance.

They were saved the same way. I heard you saw those verses. I'll have more verses to come.

A reduction in outward forms. A reduction in outward forms. We don't need all this physical stuff and smells and animal bleeding and all this stuff to get the point across of what Christ did.

It's all been reduced now to preaching. Again, that's an outward form. You don't think about it.

I'm using my mouth to bounce upon your ear and to your brain. And of course, the sacraments, water and the bread and the wine. That's it.

We don't need anything more. Anything more we think we need, and then we are going beyond God's will. There's also on the flip side, a greater visible expansion of the kingdom of God.

Back then it was restricted, the church, to the Jewish state. If you wanted to be saved, and we know some of those stories, the people who were saved, they had to become what? Jews. That is, they had to become Jews nationally in the sense of culturally and follow all the Jewish and Mosaic laws, but they were supposed to also believe in the Messiah to come.

It was in there, taught in all the ceremonial stuff. So we have a greater visible expansion, not a sliver of land anymore, but the entirety of the world. And you have those prophecies there again in Isaiah, especially at the end.

And thirdly, a greater inward growth, reduction in outward expression in terms of outward forms of ceremonial worship, but greater visible expansion more. The Gentiles are brought in, one of the greatest blessings now until we get to heaven, and then a greater inward growth. That's what you especially see the difference between the two testaments, why they keep getting pounded left and right in a way we are not pounded today.

Nobody believes. I can't find any of it. I've read a lot of stuff on the law of God, as you know from my research and my committee.

Did they go to the passage there where God punishes them for picking up sticks in the Lord's day? They all recognized God was being especially strong in His discipline because they were

especially weak in their sanctification. You don't typically spank adults. It gets that bad, you execute them.

But you'll spank a child. So from that perspective, you can see with respect to maturity, people who are very immature don't get the message because they're not processing in their brain very well, but they will process pain. And they were processing pain back then when God was especially harsh in some of the disciplines at the time, the public discipline He did of the Old Testament church.

That's part of that different growth. I often express it this way, we don't have multiple wives today and we won't put up with it. They did and they put up with it.

That's a big difference, isn't it? Inward growth, sanctification has changed both individually and collectively between the testaments, but it's the same spirit. It's the same justification. It's the same covenant of grace.

They're just more immature. That's it. We shouldn't make it more complicated.

Unfortunately, people make it more complicated between the testaments. Again, same in substance, different in outward form. It says at the end of that chapter seven, there are not therefore two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one of the same under various dispensations.

So the word is used by the Puritans, but they mean what I mean, an administration or a household economy where God works out the same one covenant of grace over time. I already read Galatians 3, 8, 14 through 16. We read in the blessings of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, his blessings in Christ Jesus, because that's the blessing is himself, Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men, though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one knows or adds to it. Now to Abraham and to see where the promise is made, he does not say it to seeds as of many, but as of one and to your seed, who is Christ. Abraham was given the promise of the seed singular, who is Christ.

It's the same Christ, same salvation, Acts 15, 11. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they, Jew and Gentile are saved the same way. Romans 3, 21 to 23, but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, the law and the prophets witness that there's a righteousness of God apart or without the law of God that is without obeying it and trying to be perfect before God.

He's saying the Old Testament teaches this, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and all on all who believe. That's it in a nutshell. They had the same requirements for the gospel, which is repent and believe.

They and a Messiah to come who they did not have the fullness of the picture thereof as though he were a man far away. We see him up close, but even then we don't see him face to face as we read in New Testament until the second coming. It's a matter of distance.

It's the same savior, same salvation. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, Hebrews 13, 8. To believe in different ways of being saved is to believe Jesus Christ has differed in his redemption of his people. Brethren and sisters, God's administration of the one covenant of grace differs outwardly to be sure.

Yet from Adam till today, it's the same way of being saved. Faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone, the same promises of Christ and offering of deliverance from sin. And thus we can and should see the Old Testament saints as our forefathers and foremothers and learn from them while thanking the Spirit for more grace given in our day that we no longer need temples and priests and the smell of death in the air on the Lord's day.

Praise the Lord for his infinite wisdom and the application of the covenant of grace. Let us pray. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is a glory to see and behold that it's the same in substance, although different in outward form.

May we therefore be encouraged and thankful, God, that we live in this day and age, but even if we lived of old, we can and could have been still saved the same as Abraham and David who look forward to Jesus Christ. And we look forward to your return as well, Father God, for the return of your Son. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

Meanwhile, continue to strengthen us and give us more of your Spirit. In the name alone we pray. Amen.