

THE DISCRIMINATION PRINCIPLE IN THE STUDY OF YOUR BIBLE:

DEFINITION: To discriminate means "to be able to identify subtle differences and appreciate good quality or taste." Encarta World English Dictionary

The command to "rightly divide the word of truth" simply means to make a distinction where God makes a difference. Failure to do so leads to confusion.

DIVISIONS:

NOTE: God is no respecter of persons, but He does make a distinction among classes of people, e.g., the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God. 1 Cor. 10:32

QUOTE: "In the beginning...we have the united race, one people, one language. From Gen. 11:10 through the Gospels we have the **Jews** primarily, with the **Gentiles** mentioned. In the N.T. we find the book of Acts, the book of transition, with both **Jews** and the **Church** in view. In the Epistles, the **Church** is in view, and the **Jews** are temporarily set aside. In Revelation the **Jew** is in view, with the **Gentiles** mentioned." - Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics, J. Edwin Hartill

NOTE: Beyond the above distinctions, there are many other differences in the Word of God which need to be recognized to avoid confusion.

1. The difference between the creatures of God and the children of God:

- a. Failure to distinguish between the two leads to the preaching of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. All men are not brothers, and God is not the Father of all men. Jn. 8:39-44
- b. All men are creatures of God, but all men are not children of God. Jn. 1:12
- c. Men become children of God through the new birth; the first birth is fleshly.
- d. A creature of God is under sin and therefore under a curse and is ruled by the power of death.
- e. A child of God is the offspring of God and a partaker of His nature.
- f. Adam is the head of all creation; Christ is the head of the new creation. 2 Cor. 5:17
- h. When a creature becomes a child of God, he becomes a member of a brotherhood of faith. Gal. 6:10 This is a spiritual brotherhood.

2. The difference between being accepted and being acceptable:

- a. All believers are accepted by God, but not all believers are acceptable to God: Eph. 1:6; 2 Cor. 5:9
- b. The difference is between position and condition.

3. The difference between faith and works:

- a. Without faith one is not a believer. Without works there is no evidence of faith. Both are found in a true believer.
- b. The difference between man-made religion (works) and faith in Jesus' finished work is the difference between hell and heaven.
- c. James says that "faith without works is dead, being alone." Saving faith and living faith are two distinct things. You must have both to be pleasing and acceptable to God. Heb. 11:6

4. The difference between salvation and rewards:

1. Where we will be (heaven) is free (to us), what we will have there must be earned.
2. Salvation means freedom from the power of sin and the wrath of God.
3. Rewards are compensation for faithfulness, labor and suffering.
4. Salvation is a gift of God and wholly of the Lord; rewards are up to us and must be earned. 1 Cor. 3: 11-15

5. The difference between the believer's position and his walk:

- a. The believer's position or standing in the sight of God is one of absolute perfection in Christ. We are accepted in the Beloved and nothing can be added to or taken away from our position. It is unchangeable, irreversible, permanent, continuous and eternal.
- b. It is not our perfection, but the perfection of Christ which is imputed to us. (Imputation means "to reckon over onto one's account." Philemon 18)
 - 1) The doctrine of imputation is a prominent doctrine in Scripture.
 - 2) First there is the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race.
 - 3) Then there is the imputation of sin to Christ.
 - 4) Finally there is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer.
- c. To walk implies progress so we differ in the progress we have made.
- d. The walk of a Christian is the result of his position. If he is controlled by the flesh, he will be carnal and walk in the flesh. A carnal believer is positionally safe, but can never enjoy the full fellowship and communion with the Savior. Walk must follow faith.
- e. An enlightening Bible study would be to go through the N.T. and trace how the word "walk" is used.

6. The difference between a possessor and a mere professor:

- a. A possessor is one who knows Christ and has the knowledge of sins forgiven and the joy of serving Him.
- b. A mere professor is one who may have the right language, but has never experienced the new birth, so he is unsettled, unsure of his eternal safety, and robbed of joy and spiritual growth. (You must be birthed before you can grow!)

7. The difference between Law and grace:

- a. Law and grace are in opposition to each other, except in our Savior Who alone kept and fulfilled the Law.
- b. Law is a system of works instituted by God on Mt. Sinai and introduced to Israel through Moses, the mediator; a legal system.
- c. Grace is an expression of God's kindness and favor, under the New Covenant (Testament), sealed with His blood through Jesus, the Mediator.
- d. The Law was holy, just and good. Rom. 7:12; Ps. 19:7,8
- e. The Law was designed as a teacher or "schoolmaster" to show us our inadequacies and sin and bring us to Christ.
- f. The Law was added because of man's transgressions. Gal. 3:19
- g. The Law reveals that man is a sinner by nature and that civilization and culture cannot change that.
- h. Law reveals the heart of man; grace reveals the heart of God.
- i. Law says "be perfect" but doesn't have the capacity to make anyone perfect.
- j. The believer is not under Law, but is not to live lawless.
- k. God wants the righteousness of the Law fulfilled in us.
- l. Grace is almost indefinable, because it originates with an infinite God. Humanly speaking it is getting what we do not deserve from God.

8. The difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God:

- 1. The word "kingdom" as used in the Bible means sovereign rule rather than territory.
- 2. The Kingdom of heaven has earth as its sphere and has a 1000 year duration [the Millennium] (God's rule on earth – Matt. 6:10); the Kingdom of God is spiritual. Jn. 3:3-6
- 3. The Kingdom of heaven is political and Jewish; promised to Israel.
- 4. The Kingdom of God is internal and entered by the new birth to Jew and Gentile alike.

NOTE: Although the Kingdom of Heaven during the Millennium is primarily Jewish, believers will assist the Savior in its administration. We are "kings & priests" through the new birth and will "rule and reign with Him" for 1000 years.