

Introduction:

Last week I spoke about choices and consequences. This week we want to talk about differences which make a difference. I generally ascribe to the statement by Mr. Spock on Star Trek "A difference that makes no difference, is no difference." Meaning the results of those differences are the same. But there are times when people say, it makes no difference and they are wrong. The Bible gives us numerous instances where a difference made a big difference.

I) Difference Between Giving and Taking

A) God promised to give the land of Canaan.

1. Abram left his homeland to go to ***"a land that I will show you"***
Genesis 12.1c
2. Next God tells Abram, He will give the land of Canaan to him.
"Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him." (Genesis 12:6-7)
3. Repeated in ***Genesis 15.8;17.8*** - in fact it is a constant reframe in Genesis and later books.
4. To Jacob the promise was restated. In a different way.
Genesis 28:15 "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."
5. During the days of Moses, God spoke of giving the land to the Israelites.
Exodus 13:5 "And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore

to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month.

6. But at Kadesh Barnea the children of Israel refused God's gift. See **Numbers 13 & 14.**

Numbers 14:4 *So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

7. We can see a number of things by God's promise to "give them the land"
 - a. Abraham had to have faith in God and obey Him.
 - b. Israel had to be willing to actually enter the land in order to receive the gift.
 - c. God's gift was refused.

B) Israel taking the land

1. After refusing to enter the land the nation of Israel then decided to take the land.

Numbers 14:40 *And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!"*

2. They left God out when He was going to give them the land and when they were going up to the land.

3.

4. Man cannot "take" or earn what only God can give.

- a. Apply this is Jesus coming and dying for our sins.
- b. Man cannot reject God's gift and earn his salvation.

"that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," (Ephesians 2:7-8)

II) Difference In What God Says and When He Says It

A) Moses and the rock

1. First time instructions to Moses in the Wilderness of Sin.

Exodus 17:5 *And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

2. Second time in the Wilderness of Zin after the death of Miriam.

Numbers 20.1.

Numbers 20:7 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.*

3. Two different occasions and the instructions were similar. But notice the differences.

- a. Strike the rock/speak to the rock.
- b. Moses did not take credit/Moses taking credit.
- c. Moses honoring God/Moses not honoring God.

Numbers 20:12 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall*

not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

B) When and what God says makes a difference.

1. Instrumental music can be found in the Old Testament.
2. Does this authorize us to use it today?
3. What we find in the New Testament is the word "sing".

Ephesians 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

4. Same goes for Sabbath Day observance, dietary laws of Moses, etc.
5. Don't try to add to or subtract from God's word as both will pervert it.
 - a. Many today have added to God's word with their creeds and practices.
 - b. Many have subtracted from it by not doing it.
 - c. Still others have substituted things in place of His word.

III) Singular or Plural Makes A Difference.

A) Seed or Seeds

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

Genesis 22:18 {NKJV} 18 *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

2 Samuel 7:12 *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your*

fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

Galatians 3:16 {NKJV} 16 *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.*

1. The Seed is Jesus and He is fulfillment of what God promised to Eve in **Genesis 3**.
2. He is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in **Genesis 22**.
3. He is the fulfillment of what God promised to David, **2 Samuel 7**.
4. He is the one in whom all of mankind is saved.

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

B) Today people want there to be a plurality.

1. Difference in one Savior v. multiple saviors.
2. Difference in one way to heaven v. numerous ways to heaven.
3. Difference in one Gospel v. a plurality of Gospels. (The Seed is the Word of God).

IV) Difference Between For and Because

A) For – – in order to receive or obtain v. that which has already happened.

1. Jesus death was in order to save mankind.
Matthew 26:28 *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*
2. As the Hebrew writer says -- *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission," Hebrews 9.22.*

B) Baptism - for the remission of sins

1. Many want to say baptism is because one is saved, a sign of salvation, icing on the cake.
2. Whereas the Bible says baptism washed away their sins and

place them in Christ.

Acts 22:16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Conclusion:

We need to pay attention to the differences which make a difference.