

Christianity Clarified Volume 36

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[0 : 00] What is Christianity really all about? Here, in an ongoing effort to try and dispel some of the confusion, is Marv Wiseman, with another session of Christianity Clarified.

Rightly Dividing the Gospels, Part 1. Be reminded, please, of the key instruction Paul gave to Timothy in his second and last letter to him, in 2 Timothy 2.15.

The apostle admonished his young charge to avoid shame or embarrassment, and he needs to be diligent in his handling of the word of truth. And what was the word of truth that Paul was referring to?

The only word of truth that actually matters, the very word of God itself. And how was Paul to handle the word of truth? He was to do this by correctly or rightly dividing or separating it.

The Bible, the word of truth, contains content, information that needs to be applied to and designated for the party to which it is intended.

[1 : 12] While everything in the Bible is for everyone, not all of it is to or specifically intended to everyone.

There needs to be recognized distinctives, valid separations that must be maintained. If you do not rightly divide the word of truth, a veritable hodgepodge of confusion is certain to result.

Much of Christendom today is currently dealing with a hodgepodge. It is little wonder that so many preachers today are speaking about everything under the sun as opposed to expounding the scriptures.

Because if and when you do not rightly divide it, make the careful distinctions intended, noting the things that differ, a hodgepodge of confusion and apparent contradiction is all you can muster.

That being the case, I would avoid the Bible too. But when you see these items for what they are, and do rightly divide them, this blessed old book will make your heart and mind throb with a new life and understanding you never thought possible.

[2 : 29] Let's continue our examples of rightly dividing the word of truth by noting the differences between the gospels found in scripture. And we do not mean the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but the gospels that constitute a message to be delivered.

The word gospel, which means good news, is not a word that originated with the Bible. It was a word well used and understood long before the New Testament ever came into being.

It was picked out of the Greek language and inserted by the Holy Spirit into the New Testament because it was a term, the meaning of which was appropriate. It simply meant good news.

Well, good news about what? Good news as determined by the context in which the word was found. There were a lot of good news items that were delivered long before the Bible ever used the word gospel, and each of them constituted good news about whatever the context identified.

We shall see the importance of rightly dividing the items of good news or gospels in scripture, and the hopeless confusion resulting from not rightly dividing them.

[3 : 45] And it's next up. Rightly Dividing the Gospels, Part 2 It's easy for us to miss or overlook the first time the word gospel is used in the Bible because it isn't even translated from the Greek using the word gospel.

In our English King James versions, the word is found in Luke chapter 2 and verse 10, where the angel appeared to the shepherds and told them they were bringing good tidings.

Good tidings is an old English way of speaking in 1611 when the King James version was produced. But we moderns do not use the term good tidings. We update it to our current usage and call it good news instead of good tidings.

Nonetheless, in the original Greek of which Luke was written, the word eongeligzomai is what the angel used. Translated into English, it means evangel, e-b-a-n-g-e-l, from which our word

evangelist or evangelistic comes, which simply means good news or good message. But what is this good news about? That answer is all about the context in which the word is found. And what is the context? What was the occasion for this angel appearing and announcing this particular good news?

[5 : 12] It was good news regarding the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord. The gospel or good news is here limited to this event, the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

This is all the good news consisted of. This was not good news about his death and resurrection. That's later. Don't read that into this account.

We need to keep the gospels separated because the Bible separates them. This good news is limited to the arrival of the babe in Bethlehem. Other items of good news will come later in the life of Christ.

One of which will be called the gospel or good news regarding the kingdom of heaven. And yet a third gospel called the gospel of the grace of God.

These are all different items of good news or gospel information that must be rightly divided or kept separate one from another. The temptation and mistake many make is to lump all three gospels together as if they are all the same good news.

[6 : 22] But they are not the same. Simply because the word gospel is used, you cannot assume that everywhere the word gospel is used, it always means the same thing. While it is true, all three of the gospels, birth, kingdom, and grace of God, focus on the same person who constitutes the very core of each, the Lord Jesus, they are truly different one from the other.

One announces the good news or the gospel of the birth of Christ. Another announces the gospel concerning the kingdom of heaven. While the third good news is the gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ.

That will be designated as the gospel of the grace of God being made available because of the death, burial, and resurrection. It is mind-boggling how anyone can say, these are all the same. But sadly, some do. And in doing so, they create hopeless confusion. We will see how that works and doesn't work upcoming. Rightly Dividing the Gospels, Part 3 In our efforts to rightly divide the gospels in the Bible, we have already noted the gospel or good tidings, as they were called by the angel who announced to the shepherds in Luke 2, the birth of Christ the Lord.

We could call that biblical gospel or good news number one. Now let's look at a completely different item of good news called the good news or gospel of the kingdom.

[7 : 58] And we can label this good news item number two. And where do we find this particular good news? Actually, we find it all throughout the four gospels and in the book of Acts as well.

In fact, this gospel of the kingdom dominates the whole Bible, being at the very center of the entire plan and program of God. Whether it is realized or not, it is this gospel or this good news number two that multitudes are referring to when praying what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6.

Included is the request for The Bible makes it very clear this prayer yet remains unanswered.

By no stretch of the imagination can it be said that God's will is being done on earth today, just as it is in heaven. In fact, this is precisely what is wrong with the world.

God's will is not being done, and we all suffer terrible consequences for that lack in so many ways, death being chiefest among them.

[9 : 17] What then will it take for this kingdom to come so that God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven? It will take the very presence and power of the king, who is the head of this kingdom which is to come.

In our previous volume 35, we explained how the kingdom had come, and yet had not come, by revealing Jesus as the personification of the kingdom.

This meant where he was, the kingdom was. We saw that revealed in his many miracles, which were miniature examples of the coming kingdom, and his transfiguration, that was another manifestation of the glory of the kingdom, that was yet to come.

It is called throughout the Bible, the gospel or good news of the kingdom. Much more needs to be said about the actual arrival of this kingdom of heaven, but that will not occur until Christ's second coming.

It does deserve a thorough and separate treatment and a consideration of eschatology, or the doctrine of future things addressed in prophecy. But for now, we must discipline ourselves to remain

in the field of hermeneutics, the art and science of interpreting the Bible.

[10 : 36] We will content ourselves by merely acknowledging this gospel of the kingdom as another illustration of things that must be rightly divided. The gospel of the kingdom contains its own good news, not to be confused with the gospel of the grace of God.

We will examine that next, and it will constitute gospel number three. Rightly Dividing the Gospels Part Four We do err greatly if we say there is only one gospel.

While it is abundantly clear, there is only one gospel that is appropriate or legitimate for proclamation today, and that is our gospel number three called the gospel of grace, or the gospel of the grace of God.

It is this good news declaring the substitutionary death of Christ for the sins of the world, his subsequent burial, and triumphant resurrection.

That alone provides us with the content of this particular good news. But please bear in mind, this gospel of the grace of God was not available to be preached or believed until the basis for it became a reality.

[11 : 51] That happened at Calvary, when Christ died for our sin. John the Baptist, it is true, referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world.

Yet, John never preached to those multitudes whom he baptized to believe on Christ as their substitute, and they would receive eternal life. What John did preach was the need for repentance, and then to follow their repentance with water baptism that symbolized a personal cleansing.

That was John's gospel regarding the kingdom of heaven, and the same that would be preached by Jesus himself and the twelve apostles he sent out, as well as the seventy later dispatched to preach the same message in Luke chapter 10.

Some insist that the twelve apostles look forward to the death of Christ, and believed on that basis. But this could not be, since the twelve were persuaded there would be no crucifixion of their Lord, even after he plainly told them, in Matthew 16, that such would be his lot.

Peter, in Matthew 16, completely rejected Jesus' prophecy regarding his own death, took him aside, and actually rebuked his Lord, saying that such would never, could never happen to Jesus.

[13 : 19] Peter certainly did not anticipate the crucifixion of Jesus, and no doubt the other disciples would have concurred. Clearly, they did not believe Jesus would die on a cross.

But he did. And after he did, they did not believe he had risen from the dead. But he did. In fact, as regards the resurrection of Christ, it was his own apostles who were the first ones not to believe it. We are told in Luke 24, when the excited women who had seen their risen Lord reported it to the apostles, they dismissed their words as idle tales. No, the gospel of the grace of God was not available for preaching or believing until sometime after the fact of the death, burial, and resurrection.

Certainly not before it. What was preached was the gospel of the kingdom, not the gospel of the grace of God. In addition, the gospel of the kingdom was targeted exclusively to the nation of Israel. This is made crystal clear when Jesus called the twelve and gave them instructions to limit their preaching to Israel alone. This, too, is something that needs further development.

[14 : 31] Upcoming. The gospel of John the Baptist. Part 1. John the Baptist was one of the most strategic and colorful individuals to appear in the Bible.

He and Jesus were second cousins due to their respective mothers, Elizabeth and Mary, being first cousins. Luke 1 provides this information. In addition, the angel Gabriel, who appeared to John's father, Zacharias, informed him that his son, whom he was to name John, would be the very one spoken of by Malachi the prophet in chapter 3.

He is identified as the messenger who will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by going before him and announcing his coming. This John did, as recorded in all four of the gospels.

His message to Israel was, repent for, or because, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. To repent literally means to change your mind.

And why should they do that? Because they were wrong about what they were doing and believing. Repentance always implies a wrong position is held about something.

[15 : 48] New and accurate information provides the basis for changing your mind about your position. John came to provide people with a reason to change their mind, and minds that are changed results in actions that are changed.

It all begins with thinking. The new information being provided by John was promised 400 years earlier in Malachi's prophecy, and John is the fulfillment of that prophecy.

The nation of Israel was morally and spiritually corrupt from the elite priestly caste and Jewish establishment to most of the common people. John electrifies his audiences by telling them they need to change their mind and their ways and do it now because the kingdom of heaven is about to appear, and you, as the people of the chosen nation, are not ready for it.

What is more, the idea of the kingdom of heaven being near means the king is coming, and you are in no condition to meet him. It is significant that the religious establishment of Israel, the chief priests and rulers, rejected John and his message, and Luke tells us the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God not being baptized by John.

They would also later reject Christ himself. No doubt they were offended at John and his message that called them to repent. The context clearly reveals they were to repent of their sin and follow up their repentance with the ceremonial cleansing of baptism.

[17:48] Such revealed they were in agreement with John and his message. This was the key element of the gospel or the good news of the kingdom that John preached, that Jesus himself would preach and give to the twelve apostles to preach.

Now then, what exactly is this kingdom of heaven? Upcoming. The Gospel of John the Baptist, Part 2 We have earlier identified the first good news or gospel that was preached in the New Testament. It was the good news or gospel announced by the angels in Luke 2 to the shepherds in the field. Now we are considering gospel number 2 announced by John the Baptist in all four gospels. It was the good news or the gospel of the kingdom. What exactly was that? Herein lies great controversy and no small division in Christendom.

The best definition of the kingdom of heaven is that to which Jesus referred in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[19:04] There you have it. The prayer is for God's kingdom in heaven to come to earth so that when it does, God's will will be done on earth as it is being done in heaven.

Can anyone in their wildest imagination believe for one moment that God's will is being done on earth as it is being done in heaven? How could anyone possibly say that when the Bible declares Satan himself to be the God of this world in 2 Corinthians 4?

And in 1 Peter 5 he is characterized as a roaring lion going about on the earth to see who he can devour. In God's heaven, peace and tranquility dwell.

Is this what we have on earth? Planet earth is awash in evil, injustice, corruption, and every ungodly scene known to man.

Hardly by any stretch of the imagination can one say, this is the kingdom of heaven. But isn't that what John said? No, not at all.

[20:08] John did not say, this is the kingdom of heaven. He said, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, nearby, close. But that is a far cry from saying, this is the kingdom of heaven, folks, and we are all living in it.

There may be some who fantasize, spiritualize, and allegorize that this is the kingdom of heaven presently experienced, but the clear laws of language and grammar will simply not allow it.

And neither will the balance of the New Testament that follows the four gospels. So, when did this kingdom, John said, was at hand, actually arrive?

Well, in one way it did, and in another way it did not. Now, I am well aware that sounds like so much double talk. The kingdom did arrive, yet the kingdom did not arrive?

Really now? You can't have it both ways. Well, ordinarily, that is certainly true. But be reminded some things refuse to fit into the mold we have created for them.

[21:14] This is one of them. First, we will see how the kingdom of heaven has arrived from merely being near, and then we will see how it has not yet arrived at all.

In fact, far from it, and it is upcoming. This is tremendously important material. I hope you'll be able to connect these dots.

The Gospel of John the Baptist, Part 3 The previous segment probably came across as some kind of double talk.

The kingdom has arrived, yet has not at all arrived. How in the world can that be? Turn to Matthew 12, and verse 28. And Christ is confronted by the Pharisees that stated, Jesus was cast out

demons by the power of Satan himself.

And Jesus replied by saying, If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Did you get the implication there?

[22 : 29] What Christ is actually saying is He is the personification of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God or heaven is inseparable from the king.

He is the king, and where He is, the kingdom is, merely because of His person and presence. We need to consult Luke 17, and verses 20 and 21, in which Jesus said, The kingdom of God is in your midst.

How so? In His own person as the king, where Christ is, the kingdom is. The King James Version renders it, The kingdom of God is within you.

And that unfortunate translation has led some to mean the kingdom of God is within only in a non-literal but spiritual sense. Such would assign a godliness or spirituality to those with that kingdom in them.

But how can this be? Look at the context and see who Jesus is addressing. They were the Pharisees, His critics, and opponents. Jesus wasn't saying they had the kingdom of God within them spiritually.

[23 : 41] This appears to be the same crowd of whom He said, You are of your father the devil. And while in Luke we cite chapter 9 and verse 27 when Jesus said to His apostles, There are some of you standing here that shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

In context, the very next verse tells us that eight days after Jesus said that, He took Peter, James, and John with Him up to the mountain to pray and there was transfigured before them.

This was a virtual appearance of the kingdom of God manifested before them in the glorious person of Christ as they had never before seen Him. I might suggest that this is also how He will appear in glory when He returns to earth.

He says as much in Luke 21 and verse 27 when He describes His coming again in a cloud with power and great glory, reminiscent of the transfiguration description.

In addition to these clear statements from Christ about His person and the kingdom of God being inseparable, there is yet another positive proof of His personal identity being joined to the very concept and purpose of the kingdom of heaven.

[24 : 59] And when you stop to think about it, of course it makes perfect sense. How could it be otherwise? After all, what is the purpose, the very rationale, the divine rationale, if you will, regarding the kingdom, its promise, and its coming?

This is big, folks. Really, really big. And it's up next. The Kingdom Gospel to Israel Alone, Part 1 One of the most puzzling statements by Christ is found in the 10th chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Here, in commissioning the 12 apostles, He specifically told them to limit their preaching to the Jewish nation alone, that is, the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

That was His positive emphasis. And to make it even clearer, He also had a negative emphasis, in that He said, Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans. Admittedly, that does not at all sound like the Jesus we know and love, does it? Was Jesus discriminating? He most certainly was. But how can that be?

[26 : 14] Wasn't Jesus the one who loved the world, as John 3.16 and other passages make so clear? How can this be squared with other equally clear teaching about His loving and caring for all of humanity?

The answer, the only satisfactory answer, is found in rightly dividing the Gospels. This Gospel, here in Matthew 10, and elsewhere in the other three Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John, was the Gospel of the Kingdom.

And the fact that it, the Kingdom, was at hand, that is, is near, close by. This Gospel, to be preached by the Twelve Apostles and Christ Himself, was the same Gospel preached by John the Baptist.

It included the demand for repentance and the baptism of water. But, the Gospel of the Twelve, that they were commanded to preach, also included miraculous powers given to them by Christ, that John the Baptist did not possess.

These miracles were like those performed by Christ Himself, and included healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, casting out demons. These miracles constituted the calling card of the Messiah.

[27 : 25] The miracles Jesus and the Twelve performed authenticated their message. All these miracles are characteristic of the coming kingdom they were charged to preach. Jesus and they created kingdom of heaven conditions here on earth everywhere they went among the people of Israel.

And on a rare occasion recorded in Matthew 15 and Mark 7, a Syrophenician woman, obviously not Jewish, but a Canaanite, besought Jesus to work His miracle powers on her little girl, described as cruelly demon-possessed.

Initially, Jesus refused, saying, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What? And if that were not bad enough, He said, It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

What? Does this sound like our all-compassionate Christ? Who was Jesus saying were the children? The Israelites. Who is He calling dogs? Gentiles.

Non-Jews, of which the Canaanite woman and her daughter were apart. Doesn't make our Lord look very good, does it? Certainly does not. Not unless you rightly divide the gospel of the kingdom for Israel and keep it separate from our present day gospel of the grace of God intended for all people.

[28 : 43] And if you don't, you have no plausible answer to what Jesus said. Ah, but we do. And you guessed it. It's upcoming. The Kingdom Gospel to Israel Alone Part 2 Why did Jesus tell the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 and Mark 7 that He was sent only to the nation of Israel?

Why did He tell the twelve apostles to go to Israel alone with their message and avoid the Gentiles and the Samaritans? Does this kind of discrimination on the part of Christ trouble you?

At the same time, do we not have difficulty, great difficulty, reconciling this attitude of Jesus? Of course we do.

Unless you understand the necessity of rightly dividing the then present gospel of the kingdom from the later to come gospel of the grace of God which is in force today.

When Jesus was here, the gospel of the kingdom was in, and the gospel of grace was future. Now, the gospel of the grace of God is in, and the gospel of the kingdom is passé.

[30 : 01] Failure to divide these both legitimate gospels as to their intended recipients, their contents, and their time frame in the plan and program of God will surely result in abject confusion.

This is also why many preachers shy away from these texts. They are terribly uncomfortable unless you divide them, and when you do, they both fit like a hand in a glove.

The discomfort and confusion vanish, and Christ comes out as being just as right as we always knew him to be. This entire business of the kingdom of heaven being addressed exclusively to Israel is because it was exclusively to Israel that God's promise of an earthly kingdom was given. It all started with Abraham in Genesis 12, was repeated to son Isaac and grandson Jacob, and then to Jacob's twelve sons as the progenitors of the nation of Israel.

Please, hear carefully the statement I am about to make regarding this entire issue. It is, oh, so critical, and here it is. Christ did not come to the world, but he came exclusively to Israel.

[31 : 19] But, in his coming to Israel, he came for the world. This is the meaning of John 1.11 that says, he came unto his own, and his own received him not.

And his own meant his own people, Israel, the Jews. The text goes on to say, and his own received him not. Jesus was rejected by the nation of Israel as their Messiah, but, as many as received him, he gave the right to become the children of God.

This includes the Jews who did receive him, in addition to his twelve apostles, and then later, the Gentiles also who would receive him following his national rejection by Israel.

Repeating, Jesus came to Israel exclusively, but for the entire world inclusively. Christ's willingness to heal the Canaanite woman's daughter was a gracious exception.

Jesus stepped outside the program in force at that time in response to the faith and confidence exercised by this non-Jewish woman. And he did so on the basis of his love and compassion.

[32 : 25] Now, stay with us. More coming. Why the kingdom is critically important. Simply put, when the kingdom of heaven comes to earth, then and only then will God's will be done on the earth as it is in heaven.

It will be the answer to the prayer so many millions have prayed so many millions of times, and will then be answered. As of now, it has not been. The world is in a mess all over the globe, and has been ever since Genesis 3 when the fall of humanity and our first parents brought everything

crashing down, morally and spiritually.

Human sin brought an ugliness and brutality demonstrated in the first person ever born of a woman murdering his own brother. The fallen world got off to a rip-roaring start and has been and remains terribly broken.

When Jesus brings his kingdom to the world as recorded by his second coming, this broken world will undergo a healing. It will be fixed as only God can fix it.

Because when Christ died on that cross, he balanced the moral scales of the universe and reconciled the world unto himself. This is the essence of the gospel of grace spelled out in 2 Corinthians 5.

[33 : 48] The universal redemption wrought in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for humanity made all humans savable and able to come to God through Christ by personally believing on Jesus as their Savior.

Through the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, men may receive Christ as their Savior from sin. Those who do not will experience Christ not as their Savior they rejected, but as the judge before whom they will stand under condemnation.

This is why priority is given to the preaching of the gospel. There are two important things that must occur on earth before this renovation and repair of our broken world can take place.

First, there must be the satisfaction of God's justice toward humanity's sin and rebellion. And it was in the payment Jesus made on that cross that allowed him to say it is finished that did satisfy the righteous indignation of an utterly holy God toward sinful man.

That payment has been made in full by the only person in the universe capable of making it. The second important thing that must occur on earth before the promised kingdom can come is that Israel to whom Jesus came accepts him as their rightful Messiah and embraces him as such.

[35 : 07] And from the first century when Christ was here in person to this present day Israel has had no interest or willingness to do that. And this is because today as two thousand years ago they do not believe Jesus of Nazareth to be the one promised in their Bible by Moses and the prophets.

However the time will come when they shall. It will be as Israel is on the brink of annihilation at the hands of the Antichrist in Revelation 19. Then they shall see the Son of Man Jesus come to earth and Zechariah 12 tells us that they the Jews will look upon him whom they pierced and they shall mourn for him.

This will be the national acceptance by the Jewish people for their long rejected Messiah. and he will then establish that long awaited kingdom for a badly broken world.

One more thing upcoming. The origin of Israel's kingdom Seeing the issue of the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven being as controversial as it is it behooves us to be as clear as we can possibly be regarding what we believe the Bible teaches about it.

After all this is the most definitive goal of Christianity Clarified and it is precisely the reason we have given it this name. Where and how did the whole idea about the kingdom and its coming originate?

[36 : 38] Answer that question alone and you are well on the way to sorting out so much of what is involved. So we must begin where the biblical kingdom begins and that is in the Old Testament and therein of course lies all manner of kingdoms that surface.

There is the kingdoms of Egypt of Babylon of Persia of Syria of Tyre and on and on and on but there can be no question as to the kingdom that is by far predominant in the Old Testament and then comes to an earthly end as the Old Testament closes.

A kingdom any kingdom is merely a realm a geographical area of land that is ruled over by a king the head of that particular realm. And we are told in 1 Samuel chapter 8 Samuel is the last of a long line of judges God had raised up to lead the nation of Israel.

Israel was a nation consisting of 12 tribes but it was not referred to as a kingdom largely because they had no king who ruled over them. They had had judges such as Gideon and Jephthah and Deborah Samson and the last judge Samuel but no person designated as king.

That all changes in 1 Samuel chapter 8 when the people of Israel after hearing Samuel recite all of the negative fallout they would experience if they had a king stubbornly still insisted in verses 19 and 20 no but there shall be a king over us that we also may be like all the nations that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

[38 : 21] Can't you just hear them now? All the whiners are carping and complaining. All the other nations have a king. Why can't we have a king?

Sounds like a case of national peer pressure. A demand to be like everybody else. Never mind the fact that God had called them precisely to be unlike the other nations and a peculiar special different people unto him.

But they would not be dissuaded. Samuel took their demands to the Lord as to what to do and he was told to give them a king and don't feel Samuel that the people have rejected you.

I am the one they have rejected. I the Lord am the one they do not want to rule over them. Samuel was instructed to anoint or publicly identify the man Saul, son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin to be the first king of Israel.

The nation is now a kingdom with their very own king and nothing will ever be the same. This is critical content for those who wish to gain a firm handle of understanding and issues that involve prophecy.

[39 : 31] This is a quantum leap in the program of God with more quantum leaps upcoming. Plug into this. The Kingdom of Israel Remains Prominent Part 1 The first book of Samuel closes with the death of Israel's first king, Saul.

His reign was a disaster throughout. Early on, a spirit of jealousy toward young David would eat away at Saul and complicate all his decisions. When David ascends to the throne as the new king of Israel, he is the beginning of what will begin the Davidic dynasty.

This dynasty began with David the king and ends with Jesus of Nazareth, born about a thousand years after David. In between David and Jesus, there will be many different kings sit on the throne David established.

Some will be godly and some ungodly. But every one of them will have been a direct bloodline descendant from David. In 586, nearly 600 years before the birth of Jesus, the kingdom of Israel would end.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Israel, destroyed Jerusalem, and led the last king to sit on the throne of David into Babylonian captivity.

[40 : 58] His name was Zedekiah. He was forced to witness the execution of his sons, then had his eyes gouged out and spent the remainder of his life in prison.

Israel has since not had anyone occupy the royal throne established by David ever since that time. The prophet Hosea foretells the future of Israel in chapter 3 with stunning detail and accuracy. Here is what Hosea prophesied. The sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols.

Afterward, the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and they will come trembling to the Lord and to his goodness in the last days.

All these items are descriptive of where Israel has been and remains for the past twenty-five hundred years. No throne, no king, and no temple for sacrifice.

[42 : 15] Israel today, and since 1948, has been a democracy with a ruling Knesset or Congress and a prime minister, but not a monarchy.

In other words, the Jewish throne and a king to sit upon it has still not been a reality for over twenty-five hundred years. The Jews were persuaded that when their Messiah came, he would occupy the long-vacant throne of David, and Jesus was believed to be that Messiah, at least in the view of many who lined the streets on Palm Sunday crying out, Hosanna to the son of David.

His own apostles expected Jesus to establish the kingdom and rout the occupying Romans. After all, the throne had been vacant for hundreds of years and Jesus was the rightful heir to it as a direct descendant of David the king who began that dynasty and house of David so long ago.

This is very critical, deserves follow-up, up next. The Kingdom of Israel Remains Prominent, Part 2 A very telling incident tying in to all we are revealing about the Kingdom of Israel is put in the form of a question asked by the apostles of Christ immediately before he ascended back to heaven.

It is found in the first chapter of Acts and it is apparent how much this issue of the Kingdom must have been on their mind. Earlier, as recorded in Luke 19 as Jesus was nearing Jerusalem just before his crucifixion, we are told the apostles supposed the Kingdom of Heaven was going to appear immediately, that is, just as soon as Jesus entered the city.

[44 : 03] But instead of his sitting on a throne, he was hung on a cross. Confusion, frustration, probably some denial accompanied all of that.

But now, here in Acts chapter 1, not only is the crucifixion history, but so is his resurrection. In fact, as of Acts 1, Jesus had been among men for the past six weeks after his resurrection.

Now, as he is about to return to heaven, the twelve ask a very logical question. Is it at this time that you are going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?

they asked Jesus? In other words, they thought he was going to set up his Kingdom when they arrived in Jerusalem in Luke 19. But since he did not, but rather died on a cross instead, but then three days later was raised from the dead, it was now a logical question to ask him, not knowing he would soon rise out of sight right before their very eyes in his ascension.

Jesus' answer to the Apostles is stunning. He did not say there would be no Kingdom, neither did he deny he was the King of Israel. Instead, he informed them that it was not for the Apostles to know when he would restore the Kingdom, and that its establishment and the time of it was to be determined by his Father.

[45 : 29] In the meantime, your assignment, said Jesus, consists of your receiving power from the Holy Spirit, who will come upon you and equip you with his power. This will enable you to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even the remoter parts of the earth.

Then, right before their very eyes, Jesus simply began ascending upward, and a cloud enveloped him as he disappeared from their sight.

As they stood there watching him disappear, dumbfounded by it all, they gazed skyward, two angels suddenly appeared and assured them that Jesus they had just seen disappear would one day come to earth again in the same way they had seen him leave.

But wait, what about the kingdom? What about its restoration? What about Israel having a throne and a king again? And what about the oppressive Romans who continued to occupy our land? That, they would learn, is all to be put on hold until, as Jesus said, the Father was willing to bring it to pass. It is still on hold. Israel still has no king, no kingdom, no sacrifice, no temple.

[46 : 42] Why not? Why no kingdom? Logical questions with logical answers just ahead. Daniel's prominence in prophecy.

We have made the frequent observation on Christianity clarified that everything in the Bible is connected to everything in the Bible. We find this dramatically played out in the field of biblical prophecy.

It has been repeatedly verified in multiple prophecies already fulfilled in precise detail, giving us complete confidence in the detailed fulfillment of things that are yet future.

There is far too much evidence to cast these matters in the lap of coincidence. Among the most dramatic and detailed are those found in the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel.

In chapter 2, when interpreting the dream of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel is informed by God as to the mysterious meaning of the dream he had. Details surrounding the entire affair are simply stunning.

[47 : 51] Our present purpose does not allow us to see them in detail, and we do heartily recommend your reading them, however, and you may begin with Daniel chapter 2. Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream reveals his reign that existed at the very time Daniel stood before him.

Nebuchadnezzar himself was the head of gold he saw on that statue in his dream. He and his was the first king and kingdom. He would be followed by two kingdoms represented by the chest and arms of the statue.

They would be the Medes and the Persians, comprised of silver in the statue. Next would be the kingdom of Greece, made of bronze in its belly and thighs, followed by legs of iron in reference to Rome, which at the time of Daniel was hundreds of years yet future.

All of these kingdoms would rise to power, dominate the world as it was at the time, and then give way to the next power that would displace it, all precisely as today's historians recount them.

Babylon the first, then the Medes and Persians, then Greece, and then Rome. The history is indisputable. All these kingdoms came and went the way of each before it, but then something different arises, completely unlike those that preceded it.

[49 : 24] Fifth kingdom does not rise as the others. This kingdom is of a different source, cut out of a mountain, in verse 44, and it will be the final kingdom that will triumph over all those that preceded it, but it itself, unlike all the others, will not become another for the scrap heap of history.

This kingdom will endure forever, as verse 45 states it. This kingdom will itself endure forever. This will be the kingdom of heaven preached by John the Baptist and by Jesus and the twelve apostles.

This will be the kingdom prayed for, as in thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This is big. Nothing gets bigger than this.

This is the restitution of all things, restoration of everything. This is where this old broken world is going, and it will be utterly amazing.

Upcoming. Upcoming. Where Earth is Headed. Among all the content the Bible gives us regarding the subject of prophecy, that is, things that are going to transpire on earth in God's predetermined time, there are three that appear to be elevated in importance above all others.

[50 : 45] And here they are, as each is very clearly set forth in Scripture in both Testaments.

Number one. The earth and humanity are going to undergo a time of judgment, cleansing, and restoration.

Number two. The principal and key element of humanity through which God will accomplish that is the nation of Israel, referred to as God's chosen people.

And number three. The individual person produced by the nation of Israel to actually accomplish Earth's judgment, cleansing, and restoration is Jesus the Messiah, Son of God, and Son of Man. All three of these components are indispensable and inseparable. And all are as certain of fulfillment as surely as God is God. This time is referred to by the Apostle Peter in his follow-up sermon delivered earlier in Acts chapter 2 on the historic day of Pentecost.

And his follow-up message to that is found in chapter 3, where he tells his exclusively Jewish audience that it was due to their ignorance that the ruling establishment of Israel had Jesus crucified, and that yet the suffering and death of Jesus was a key part of God's plan all along.

[52 : 01] And God's part has been fulfilled. Now Israel, says Peter, it's your turn to fulfill your part. What now is to be your national response to the death of your Messiah?

It is that you repent, you change your minds about Jesus of Nazareth, who he was, why he came, and who sent him. Repent and return to your God, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus the Messiah appointed for you back again.

Jesus has been received in heaven until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets since ancient time. Peter continued by saying, All the prophets from Samuel and those who followed him also announced these days.

Peter tells his Jewish audience that God's plan for Israel and the restoration of a broken world is a two-part plan. God has done his part in providing his Son for redemption of humanity.

Now, it's Israel's turn to lead the way for the world by your repentance and acceptance of the Messiah you earlier rejected. Israel, it's up to you.

[53 : 25] What will you do? Sadly, their answer follows in the very next chapter. The ruling establishment doubles down, they intensify their rejection of Jesus, arresting the apostles and the persecution of Jews by Jews begins to get underway.

Israel will remain in national unbelief as regards the true identity of Jesus, not believing him to be their Messiah. Prophecy, however, assures us they will repent.

Zechariah chapter 12. Look it up. It's glorious. More clarifying of the Gospels, part 1.

Untold confusion has been produced by those who insist there is but one gospel in the Bible. While it is abundantly clear there is but one gospel for the present day and age in which we live, that is, the gospel of the grace of God, extended to all who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins.

It is also called the gospel of God in Romans 1.1, the gospel of his dear son in Colossians 1.13, the gospel of Christ in numerous places, and on three occasions Paul even calls it my gospel.

[54 : 43] In every case, the gospel, which literally means good news or glad tidings, referenced in the context the person of Jesus Christ and the good news concerning him. Every Christian fully knows that it is this gospel, this good news, that is the best good news ever delivered to the human race.

There can be no disputing about this being the one and only true gospel for this present day of grace. But, this day of grace is not the only day or age in which the Bible has a gospel.

It is called the gospel of the kingdom, and these gospels must be distinguished and understood, each in its own context. Incalculable confusion has resulted by insisting there is but one gospel in the Bible.

There are two, and they must be rightly divided, or they are surely wrongly mixed. Do these two gospels have anything in common?

Well, of course they do. And that even compounds the confusion because there is a commonality, and it is this. Whether the gospel of the kingdom or the gospel of the grace of God both find the person of Christ at their very center.

[56 : 01] Both gospels focus on him as the only principal player. But the role he plays in each is radically different. In the gospel of the grace of God, Christ is the Lamb of God sacrificed for the world.

This gospel is all about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The gospel of the kingdom is not about Jesus as the Lamb of God, but about Jesus as the conquering lion of the tribe of Judah. But say you, aren't those one and the same? No, no, no, no. They are about the same person, but there the similarity ends.

Salvation from sin is the result of believing the gospel of the grace of God. But the gospel or good news of the kingdom is just that. It's the good news regarding the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God, and that good news does not result in providing salvation from sin.

The gospel of which the apostle Paul spoke when he said, I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[57 : 11] That was not true of the gospel of the kingdom, nor was it supposed to be. But it certainly was true of the gospel of the grace of God. And when one sees the clear distinction, the division required of these two gospels, both of them will be clearer and clearer to you than they ever were before, but only when they are rightly divided.

More clarifying of the gospels, part two. Most are familiar with the meaning of the word gospel, but for any who are not, the word simply means good news.

In actuality, it may mean good news about anything. There are many different items of information that constitute good news. The confusion arises over the insistence of making the good news or the gospel to mean one and only one thing, that of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Worldwide, that has come to be the meaning of the word gospel. And to be sure, that is the good news. And the best good news ever heard by anyone. And to be sure, it is the only appropriate good news or gospel message for us today in this dispensation or administration of the grace of God.

But what must be kept in mind is that this good news did not become available for preaching until after the events occurred. And even after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, it was not immediately understood regarding the substitutionary death of Christ for the sins of the whole world.

[58 : 51] This was the very core of the good news or the gospel that was not available before Christ's death. Well, was there no good news before Jesus died?

Yes, there was. There were two different gospels that were preached before the death and resurrection of Christ. The gospel or good news number one was delivered by angels to the shepherds watching their flocks by night in Luke 2.10.

In the King James Version, the term used by the shepherds who announced the birth of Christ was glad tidings. That's an old English term in style when the King James was translated in 1611.

We don't say today, I bring you glad tidings. We say, I bring you good news. The good news announced by the angels had nothing to do with the death and resurrection of Jesus, but had everything to do with his birth.

In fact, the word used in the Greek, the language of the New Testament original writing, was evangelion. That in English is translated evangel, which literally means good news.

[60 : 06] But be advised, this, the birth of Christ, was the extent of the message. The death and resurrection of Christ never even entered the picture at this time.

That would come later. But as of then, that, the birth of Christ, that was the good news and all the good news consisted of.

So, here is the first gospel in the New Testament, and it is limited to the good news of his birth. Nothing more at that time.

Here is gospel number one in the New Testament. Now, there are yet two gospels remaining, and they will arrive in sequence.

Next up will be the gospel or good news number two. And it will greatly override gospel number one of the birth. Very critical content, upcoming, having to do with that kingdom.

[61 : 13] More clarifying of the gospels, part three. In our previous segment, we related to you about there being multiple gospels in the New Testament.

The first gospel or good news we found in Luke 2.10, rendered in the King James Version as good tidings. The original Greek calls it euangelion, or in the English it would be evangel, also meaning good news.

But it's good news about what? In context, it's about the birth of Christ the Lord. And that we labeled as good news or gospel number one.

Now, we consider gospel number two. It was first preached by John the Baptist, then by Jesus and the twelve apostles. This newer gospel, newer than good news number one about the birth of Christ, had to do with the kingdom.

Now, let me be very clear and candid about this gospel number two, that one will either get with it, understand it, and connect the dots regarding it, or it will go right over your head, and you will not be able to see the distinction.

[62 : 25] I'm going to do all I can to enable those who are seeking real understanding, and the difference it makes, to get this kingdom concept clearly in mind. And let me say, without exaggeration, your appreciation of the plan and program of God, past, present, and future, being able to connect the dots, hangs in the balance.

Picking up on this kingdom concept will open the Bible to you as never before, and will enable you to see things in a light you never thought possible. And may I say, it may well separate the serious student of the Bible from the casual observer of the Bible.

So here we go with gospel number two. It's found in Matthew chapter three, first two verses following right after gospel number one, and the good news of the birth of Christ.

We have John the Baptizer, thirty years later, saying in John three, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Or repent, because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Immediate questions come to mind. What did John mean by repent? Why were the people to do it?

[63 : 41] What did John mean by the kingdom of heaven? And what did he mean by saying it is at hand? Folks, this is going to take some time. It will consume a number of segments in this volume, but it is well worth every single minute.

This is an area of enormous confusion in Christendom as a whole, and it need not be. When you follow Miles Coverdale's rules for interpreting the Bible that we spent some time on in earlier segments of Christianity Clarified, you can see how it will open the pathway for you to grasp the plan and program of God like you never imagined.

You begin to see where and how things fit. And that's what it has meant for me, and I get so excited about it, I want everyone to benefit as I have.

So get ready, if you will, for some eye-popping content upcoming. Why the Jew is Strategic, Part 1 The world continues to be baffled as to the global influence of what is surely one of the tiniest of all nations on the planet.

Throughout the centuries, millennia in fact, these people, consisting not even of 1% of the world's population, but a mere two-tenths of 1%, have had and continue to have a radically disproportionate influence in the world.

[65 : 20] For the most part, the world is completely clueless why this should be so and true of the Jewish people. The student of the Bible does not at all find it strange, but very predictable, literally in fact, prophetically essential.

Why this is so relates to the very issue we have pursued regarding the distinction between the Gospels and the Bible. Israel's Gospel, or good news, is all about the earthly kingdom which God promised they, the Jew, would head when that kingdom of heaven comes to earth, and their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, King of kings and Lord of lords, rules and reigns from Jerusalem in his glorious kingdom.

This is why the Jew is irrevocably strategic to the whole affair. The irony is in that the Jews, for the most part, completely dismiss the whole concept as nonsense, particularly the part about Jesus being that Messiah.

It all began with God's call to Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob, plus the twelve tribes that descended from them. It would be through the fourth-born son of Jacob, the man Judah, that the royal line of descendance would follow.

This genealogy is critical and spelled out for Joseph, being the legal father of Jesus in Matthew chapter 1, as the line for Mary is given in Luke chapter 3.

[66 : 49] So both Joseph and Mary descend directly from David the king. Joseph descends through David's son Solomon, and Mary descends through David's son Nathan.

Both converge on Jesus, being born in Bethlehem. He derives his legal right to the throne through his adopted father Joseph, and his birthright through his mother Mary.

The Jews, then of two thousand years ago, reject all of this as they continue to do so to this day. It is intensely ironic that the Jewish people, while so strategic and divinely indispensable to the whole of this plan and program of God, flatly reject the entire matter.

How's that for irony? Well, the world at large rejects it as well, often persecuting the Jewish people and even attempting to completely eliminate them, as did Hitler in the 1930s and 40s.

So, my Jewish friends, like it or not, believe it or not, you're smack dab in the middle of the very plan and program of God because God chose you and ordained it to be so with the promise he made to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[68 : 07] And the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Disbelieve it if you will. The time is coming when you will believe it, and then rejoice in it.

Why the Jew is so strategic, part two. Not only is the world at large in complete ignorance, even denial regarding the importance and future of the Jewish people and the nation of Israel, but the same negative attitude may be found among many of the Jews themselves.

Many of them struggle with the very concept of their being divinely chosen, while at the same time having absorbed so much cruelty and persecution from so many for so long.

How does that compute? How does the Holocaust of World War II, with six million of Abraham's seed being murdered, fit into their being God's chosen people?

They understandably ask, is this any way for God to allow his so-called chosen people to be treated? It's sad but true that many Jews have simply given up or rejected the very history of the Jew and their chosenness spelled out in the Bible, attributing it to so much Jewish folklore or mythology.

[69 : 34] In extreme cases, some Jews may have even embraced agnosticism or a full-blown atheism due to the apparent contradiction between their being a chosen people and the seeming indifference of the God who supposedly chose them.

Because Jews, even those who still hold to their faith and their belief of their chosenness by God, because they reject the Christian New Testament, they never get the full story of God's plan for them.

Actually, the full story is also largely embodied in their own Old Testament as well, as plainly as the prophets could make it, but those accounts are not given the credibility and authority they deserve. And bottom line? Just why is it the Jew is so vitally strategic, even though many of them fail to see it? It's all because the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, set the whole thing in motion, beginning way back in Genesis chapter 12, and then confirmed it repeatedly throughout the remainder of their Old Testament.

It's a major problem that so many Jews do not even regard their own scriptures seriously. If only they were as investigatively diligent as they are traditionally diligent, many eyes would be opened.

[71 : 04] They would then see how and why the Jewish people have been and are as they are, as well as what and how they will be in the future, that is, utterly God-ordained and God-promised.

Yes, despite all the adversity the Jew has suffered through the ages, the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. God will fulfill all that is promised to the seed of Abraham, and it will be a cause for great rejoicing when it happens.

Jews or Gentiles can count on it from the God who cannot lie, beginning with Genesis chapter 12, and the theme of God utilizing the Jew is found in all the remainder of Scripture.

You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. Preview of upcoming volume 37.

We have scarcely scratched the surface on the issue of rightly dividing the Word of God and its importance. In what is coming, we promise to be as enlightening as the past segments.

[72 : 30] The thing anticipated, and I might add with great excitement, is just how many things are going to come together for those participating. Frankly, we know of nothing more exciting than gaining understanding of how and why things are as they are, where they are heading, and why.

We are not speaking about opinions or speculation, but simply appealing to the Scriptures, which, by the way, are designed to provide this very understanding we speak of.

One might employ the term of present usage with the words, connecting the dots. It's not only satisfying and enlightening, but engenders an inner peace and tranquility which only truth can provide.

Upcoming segments on Christianity Clarified, volume 37, and subsequent volumes, will include the rightly dividing of law and grace, standing and state, rightly dividing the first and second coming of Christ, dividing the translation of the Church from the second coming, the right dividing of the future judgments and the resurrections, plus much, much more.

All allowing us to connect more and more of those dots that reveal how things fit and where it is all going.

[74 : 01] No doubt about it, this is thrilling content as you will see for yourself. And if you receive this present volume 36 automatically, then you will automatically receive our upcoming volume 37.

But if you obtain this current volume through any other way, and you wish to receive volume 37, you will have to make a deliberate request for it, because we can't send it to you since we don't know who you are or where you are.

These CDs are financially underwritten by the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund, and this was established by the generosity of the good folks at Grace Bible Church in memory of Barbara, my first wife, to whom I was married for almost 50 years.

Online, you may resource any of our Christianity Clarified materials and download any audios you wish free of charge. Mail order requests for the physical CD disc may be addressed to Grace Bible Church, 1500 Group Road, that's spelled G-R-O-O-P, 1500 Group Road, Springfield, Ohio, 45504. So once again, this is Pastor Marv Wiseman saying thank you so very much for joining with us on Christianity Clarified. It's been a pleasure to have you along.