

# Christianity Clarified Volume 37

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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.

The Kingdom Lacks Only One Thing, Part 1. Our attention is drawn to a very revealing passage in Acts Chapter 3. It is Peter's follow-up message to the monumental address he gave on the day of Pentecost in Chapter 2.

He is again addressing an exclusively Jewish audience, and he tells them what they must do as a nation based upon what God had already done through Christ's death on the cross.

Peter reminds his audience that God has promised, by the mouth of His holy prophets, that He, God, would bring to earth a refreshing and restoration that would right the wrongs of this world.

Peter says that the Christ God sent, and who suffered for man, has occurred. In other words, he says there are two parts, two requirements that must occur before the Kingdom, that is, the time of earthly refreshing and restoration can come.

[ 1 : 15 ] It's another way of saying what the prerequisites are for the Kingdom to come. And prerequisite number one, Messiah must suffer, as stated in Acts 3.18. Peter says that's done.

God has fulfilled His part. Item number one has been cared for. Israel, it's now up to you. God calls on you to repent as a nation and embrace the one you earlier rejected.

And if you do, God will send Jesus back again, and He will resume what He began. It's up to you, Israel. And it's still up to Israel to fulfill their obligation of recognition and acceptance of their Messiah.

Remember, 3,000 did precisely that on Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Yet, these represented a mere pittance of the Jewish population, with the vast majority of the Jewish nation continuing in their mode of rejection.

Especially was this true of the Jewish establishment leadership. In fact, later in Acts chapter 7, this same establishment, called the Council or Sanhedrin, were the very ones responsible for the public stoning to death of Stephen, an early martyr for Christ.

[ 2 : 30 ] Their executing him was solely due to the fact of his insisting Jesus of Nazareth really was the Messiah. And, he charged Israel with his death, in the same way Peter did in Acts 2.

Now, in chapter 3, Peter is telling the Jews again that God has fulfilled his part for bringing in the kingdom, and it is now up to Israel to do their part by repenting of their sin and accepting this one whom they crucified as their rightful Messiah.

How Israel would respond to Peter's message follows in chapter 4 as they arrest Peter and John, and the persecution of Jews by Jews gets underway.

Soon, a self-appointed chief persecutor will surface by the name of Saul of Tarsus, and he will become, for all intents and purposes, a type of Jewish Gestapo, long before Hitler, Himmler, and Eichmann ever come on the scene.

So, item 2, Israel's acceptance of Messiah remains unrealized, and the kingdom remains in obedience because of that. God has done his part. Israel has not.

[ 3 : 42 ] And, why is Israel so important in all this? Upcoming. The Kingdom Lacks Only One Thing, Part 2 To say the kingdom lacks only one thing is a statement of incalculable significance.

We stated in an earlier segment of Christianity Clarified that there were two major events that must occur before the kingdom prayed about in the Lord's Prayer can actually occur by coming to earth and being set up here with its capital in Jerusalem and its King Jesus Christ on the throne of David. And here again are those two events. Number one, the basis, the foundation for the erecting of that kingdom must first be secured.

This has already happened. It happened when Christ was on the cross and shouted victoriously, It is finished! It was the death of Christ, Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the world, that paved the way for God judicially lifting the curse imposed on the world due to Adam's sin.

The payment Christ made balanced the moral scales of the universe, satisfying the righteous demands of a holy God. Christ, and he alone, was able to do that because of who he was.

[ 5 : 16 ] His death provided the basis for establishing the new covenant, mentioned 500 years earlier by Jeremiah in chapter 31. The night Jesus was betrayed, he took the cup and told his apostles, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

It was an act of amazing significance. As the original old covenant was inaugurated by Moses in Exodus and ratified with animal blood, Christ was now saying he was providing the offer of the new covenant that would be inaugurated by the shedding of his own blood instead of that by animals. This was the first of two things that must occur before the kingdom can come to earth. And this is what Peter meant in Acts chapter 3 when he delivered his follow-up sermon to the one he preached at Pentecost in chapter 2.

Recall, if you will, Peter said in 3.18, Those things which God before hath showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled.

So Peter is saying that was God's part of the covenant, and he did his part through Christ. Now, Israel, it's your turn to do your part.

[ 6 : 42 ] You can do that by repenting. That is, by changing your mind about your Messiah you earlier rejected. And if you will do that, that will ratify the new covenant Christ came to provide in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31.

Then said Peter, The times of refreshing will come from God, and he will send Jesus back to earth again to establish his kingdom. Both parties to the covenant.

Christ and Israel must sign off on it before it could be ratified and enacted. Christ had already signed off. The signature that is lacking is that of Israel.

That was Peter's message. The kingdom lacks only one thing. Part 3 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the law God had given him to relay to the people of Israel, it was not a case of God imposing his law on Israel.

It was a case of God offering it to Israel. His offer came with the stipulation that if Israel will accept his law and obey him, then they will be a peculiar people to him, and he will be their God, and they will be his people.

[ 7 : 59 ] The response of the Israelites was, Moses, you tell God he's got a deal. All that the Lord has said will we do. This is Exodus chapter 20.

Then, to ratify the covenant made between the two parties, God and Israel, we read in Exodus 24 that Moses took the blood of animals and sprinkled it on the altar, then on the book of the covenant, and then read the book of the covenant to the people.

The response of the people to the reading was, All that the Lord has said will we do. Then, in response to their commitment, Moses sprinkled the blood on the people as he said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

That constituted the official ratification or activation of the covenant to which both parties were bound, and it was solemnized with blood, which of course signified that something living had its life taken from it to complete or solemnize the covenant.

This is precisely what Christ meant when he said the cup was the new covenant in his blood. The writer of Hebrews contrasted the old covenant with Moses in Hebrews 9 when he wrote verse 12, stating that It was not by the blood of goats and calves, but by Christ's own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

[ 9 : 42 ] The blood of animals could not take away sin. The lesser value of animals to humans was not sufficient. This is why someone of greater, not lesser value than humans was needed to pay the sufficient price.

And who was of greater value than humans? The God-man, Christ Jesus. Remember the law of proportionate value in an earlier law we studied in our hermeneutics?

While we humans are made in the likeness and image of God, Christ as a member of the triune Godhead is the very likeness and image of God himself, allowing himself to say, He that has seen me have seen the Father.

To date, Jesus the Messiah, representing the party of the first part, signed off on the new covenant when he shed his blood to ratify it. Israel, unlike their ancestors who said to Moses with the first covenant, All that the Lord has said will we do.

Instead, they said, We will not have this man to rule over us. Israel's national repentance is the one thing the kingdom lacks prior to its being established.

[ 10 : 52 ] This is an important reason why Israel is so very strategic. The Origin and Purpose of Law Part 1 All of humanity everywhere, and at all times, is aware of the existence of laws, whether formally written or informally acknowledged with an understanding devoid of a written law.

But no matter where you live, when you live, or how you live in your social setting, there are things you just do not do. Call these negative behaviors and unwritten code, if you wish, but they are in the realm of law, however informal they may be.

One can easily see, then, that the existence of these laws, or taboos, reveal that a given standard is in place. Response to that standard will be in the form of compliance or non-compliance.

Compliance we call obedience to the law, and non-compliance is disobedience. The consequence of non-compliance takes some form of punishment, as mild as verbal rebuke, or as severe as capital punishment.

The point that must be established and acknowledged here at the very beginning of talking about law is that it automatically presupposes the existence and activity of a lawgiver.

[ 12 : 26 ] Laws, whether formal or informal, do not just happen as if springing up from no one and nowhere. Laws are given, laws are imposed, laws are enacted, but laws do not just happen.

An intelligent person, or body of persons, is behind the setting forth of laws that are intended to govern and control, particularly human behavior. lawgiver.

This behavior concept insists that there must also exist in the mind of the lawgiver such a thing as right and wrong. In order for right and wrong to exist, there must be a standard by which right and wrong can be identified.

How else can it be known whether reward or punishment is in order? As always, the issue is authority. With crystal clarity, the Bible establishes the creator God as that authority and the one who has established moral standards of behavior.

If such things as right and wrong exist, as we believe they clearly do, a lawgiver must exist to have established those standards. Human morality, apart from a moral lawgiver, is completely illogical.

[ 13 : 44 ] Creation in general, and the Bible in particular, reveal an intelligent being of order who with his creation has provided moral standards for its governance among the intelligent beings he has created.

Thus, a moral authority was in place from the initial creation of angels and humans. The first law of which we are aware came in the form of a prohibition to our first parents in Genesis 2.

This law enacted a standard for the behavior of our first parents, and noncompliance resulted in their punishment. And the far-reaching consequence of their noncompliance affects every one of us to this day.

We will pursue these two kinds of laws God has put in place for humanity. It's very telling and gives great understanding. Up next. The Origin and Purpose of Law Part 2 Worldwide, surely, there are more laws than can be enumerated.

Suffice it to say, laws, whether imposed by God or man, all served one purpose. It was to create a standard of behavior that required compliance and punished noncompliance.

[ 15 : 00 ] Many argue, and probably with good reason, that laws are required to govern behavior and make it possible for civilization to exist. Laws are essential for some semblance of uniformity and order.

Among humans, there are just laws and unjust laws. Our moral and spiritual fallenness make it impossible for man to enact only just laws.

So, among some laws that may be just, there are also laws enacted by unjust men who in turn make unjust laws. Consequently, humanity, in all parts of the world, function under both kinds of laws, just and unjust.

And because of this, it is impossible for humans anywhere to actually govern themselves with justice and equity on a consistent basis.

Such has never happened in all of human history, no matter the form of government employed. So, for purposes of pertaining to Christianity clarified, we plan to concern ourselves only to the laws

actually originating from God, the supreme law giver.

[16:17] His laws are exclusively just and consistent with his character and nature. In the Bible, there are two major laws that govern angels and humans.

It appears that all we might call laws of a lesser sort stem from one of these two major laws. And these two major laws we will call common law and special law simply for the purpose of rightly dividing them.

Common law, as the very name suggests, has to do with the law of God that is placed inherently into the entirety of humanity. All members of the human race are endowed with this infusion of common law.

Humans have never been devoid of common law no matter where or when they live. It appears that the angelic spheres are as well endowed with God's common law. It is this law to which the apostle Paul referred when he made the right division between common law and the law of Moses in Romans chapter 2.

Here, he referred to Gentiles who do not have the law of Moses, yet they do have the work of the law written in their hearts. Really. Who wrote the work of the essence of the law in Gentile hearts?

[17:32] God himself wrote it there. It is God's implanting of the knowledge of right and wrong in the very psyche and DNA of humans and angels. It appears also to be accompanied with a guilt indicator when the conscience is violated.

This innate knowledge of right and wrong is accompanied with another God-given factor called human volition. And how it factors in with the working of both common and special law will be seen. This is very insightful and very critical content. We really hope you plug into it. Common law and special law.

Romans chapter 2 gives us the direction we need in understanding common or natural law possessed by all angels and humans rightly divided from special law given exclusively to the nation of Israel.

Here is what the passage says in Romans 2. For when Gentiles who do not have the law do instinctively the things of the law these not having the law are a law unto themselves.

[18:47] Now let's stop right here and make an important distinction demanded by the context.

Paul uses the word law in two ways. The translator tried to distinguish them by articulating one and generalizing the other.

Notice if you will his use of the law in verses 12, 13, 14, and 15. An amazing ten times in four verses Paul says the law as opposed to simply using the word law one time only in verse 14. The context makes it crystal clear that the law to which Paul refers is the law of Moses God gave to him on Mount Sinai. His use another ten times from verse 17 through 27 of the law is referencing the Jew and the Jew alone.

In the midst of all this there is one singular use of the word law without articulation. It is found in verse 14 and stands out in bold relief.

It begs to be rightly divided from the law by simply being designated as law. No definite article. It is an intended generalization of the word and purposely separates it from all the other uses called the law.

[20:14] This is the natural law we said is common to all humanity and angels and yet it was common also to the Jew who had not only the law of Moses that was special but also law that was common to all because before the law of Moses was given to the Jew in Exodus 20 he too was under the common law God built into every human and angel enabling them to distinguish right from wrong and good from evil.

along with that infusion of common law given to all humanity they're accompanied with it free moral agency allowing them to use their will or volition to obey or disobey the common law God had placed in their being.

Their use of volition became the basis for their accountability before God. How man uses his volition whether Jew or Gentile will be the gauge by which the Almighty will one day evaluate every human and angel.

When there is no rightly dividing of the common law God gave everyone from the special law God gave to Israel alone what do you think might be the consequences of not doing that?

Inevitable confusion results in a way we all know something about. you can identify and it is up next. Common law and human volition Although the subject of human volition that is the owning and

exercising of our will was dealt with on an earlier segment of Christianity Clarified it merits another exposure because of its close work with common law.

[ 22 : 05 ] In creating angels and humans God faced the choice of creating them as free moral agents able to decide for themselves whether they would obey or disobey that common or natural law God put in them.

It appeared the only alternative to that would be to create them without volition. Thus if they had no ability to exercise their will they could not disobey and go astray.

Their being pre-programmed to always comply with the lawgiver's laws would mean disobedience and its consequences would never become a reality.

Men and angels endowed with the common law knowledge of right and wrong good and evil would simply always choose the right and the good automatically due to that pre-programming.

Such would guarantee that no conflict or the ugly consequences that would ensue from it would ever arise. God did not do that. Instead he built into the very fabric of men and angels the ability to obey or disobey their giver of common law.

[ 23 : 17 ] And knowing full well the rebellion that would ensue both from Lucifer and Adam and Eve God also pre-devised a plan that would address the eventual rebellion of his creatures at least the human element.

It is called the plan of redemption. It included the promise of an exalted one who would serve as redeemer. He of course would be none other than a co-equal member of the infinite eternal Godhead who originally granted volition to humans.

Thus the fall that would eventually result from human rebellion was clearly anticipated and even had a promise of redemption in place for it as soon as it occurred in Genesis chapter 3.

The presence of this volition would also become the moral mechanism through which all humans would be held accountable for their actions. Being a free moral agent that we are poses serious consequences both good and bad in connection with the choices we make throughout our lifetime. We can clearly see that although God is blamed for much that happens in the world where men treat one another in a bad way God is not the culprit.

[ 24 : 38 ] Man is. And while it is true God is responsible indirectly in that he created all things yet he created them in a state of innocence that caused him to pronounce them very good.

It was man's volition and the choices we made in Adam that converted his innocence from good to evil. All the world lives with the consequences thereof.

An ugly example of the violation of God's common law that occurred in my own lifetime is upcoming next and it is stunning. A dramatic example of common law violation.

In 1945 shortly after the end of World War II the famous Nuremberg war crimes trial was convened. Nazis of higher and lesser rank and authority were put on public trial and charged with crimes against humanity.

The evidence submitted was incontrovertible. Photographs, official documents secured from the Nazis' own files plus numerous eyewitness testimonies of survivors were all heard and evaluated by the tribunal conducting the trials.

[ 25 : 57 ] Day after day the trial went on with the damning evidence portrayed non-stop. All of the accused had pled not guilty to the charges lodged against them. Any observer could only wonder what possible defense could any of the charged offer to rebut the evidence marshaled against them.

How could they possibly deny the charges or defend their actions? They had but one plea. Only one thing they set forth that they hoped would allow them to be found not guilty.

And what could it possibly be? Here is what they offered. They were only following orders handed down to them by their superiors. Their argument was designed to appeal to all who were in military or government authority.

For they above all, no matter whose side they were on in the war, knew how great and important it was to follow orders from your superiors. Thus went their defense.

How could they, acting as official officers or soldiers of their government, fail to carry out the orders they were given? Consequently, their actions should be understood and excused, or at least result in radically reduced punishment.

[ 27 : 10 ] Court was not buying it. They dismissed the defense of the accused, that they were merely following orders of their superiors. By rejecting their defense, they implied, there is a

superior to their superiors, whose orders they should have followed.

And, who else could that superior be other than the original lawgiver himself? Whether man is willing to acknowledge it or not, he cannot escape the inevitable conclusion that the mere existence of a moral code or law virtually demands the existence of a lawgiver.

That lawgiver, the scripture makes ever so plain, is none other than the creator and sustainer of all. And the law this lawgiver gave to all of angels and men is what we call common law, or natural law, in the sense that the Almighty imparted it to all of angelic and human beings.

This is the law of which the apostle Paul speaks in Romans chapter 2, when he said, the work of the law is written in the hearts of men with their conscience also bearing witness.

There we have it. The internal moral code of right and wrong is inscribed on the hearts of all humans, and it provides the inescapable knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong.

[ 28 : 45 ] More of this important concept, and the need to rightly divide it from God's special law, is just ahead. Two kinds of law from God The two kinds of law must be acknowledged and understood by any serious student of the Bible.

It has already been shown that laws intended for the governance of creation have been provided by the Creator. The first we call natural or common law, and this is built into the psyche or personhood of all humans and angels.

It is the inherent ingrained internal knowledge possessed by all creatures that allows them to distinguish between right and wrong and good and evil. The first man on earth who was born of a woman was guilty of the murder of his own brother.

Cain slew Abel, knowing full well it was the wrong thing to do. His attempt to cover up his crime by denying he knew the whereabouts of his brother, stemmed from the guilt he was experiencing.

Cain used his God-given volition when he rose up and killed his brother, and he also used it when he lied about not knowing where his brother was, with that infamous line, Am I my brother's keeper?

[ 30 : 04 ] Cain was operating under the common or natural law that God built into all of humanity, and apparently angels as well. In addition to calling the common law or natural law, it might also be dubbed general law.

These all refer to the same internal code, whether called common, general, or natural. And while this law is implanted into all of humanity without exception, we are now, for the purposes of our study and understanding, going to reach into the entire human race and extract from it a certain segment of people who, in addition to their having the natural law, will have extended to them another law, peculiar to them alone.

This additional law is what Romans 2 was referring repeatedly, using the term, the law. The law is different from the natural law imposed upon all of creation.

The law will also be known as the law of Moses, or the law given to the Jew, the nation of Israel. Prior to the Exodus experience at Mount Sinai, this law did not even exist.

This law is a brand new set of directives containing prohibitions and commandments received directly from God through the man Moses. No one else, not before or since, has ever been a recipient of the laws God gave through Moses.

[ 31 : 35 ] Such is precisely what Romans 2.14 means when it says, For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these not having the law, are a law unto themselves.

First, who are the Gentiles? They are everyone and anyone who is not a Jew, a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Why was it that the Gentiles did not have the law?

Simply because the law of Moses was never given to nor intended for the Gentiles. It was exclusively provided for those of the nation of Israel as terms of the covenant God was offering to this special clientele of people.

How do we know the law was for Israel alone and not for everyone else? God said so. We will show you just ahead. The Law of Moses for Israel Alone, Part 1.

We are currently engaged in an area of enormous confusion and misunderstanding. It is so great that it has succeeded in dividing Christendom in ways that have wrought incalculable damage.

[ 32 : 51 ] We are talking about the law God gave to Moses to give to Israel and its implications for the rest of the world. In referring to the rules considered earlier on Christianity Clarified that were given by Miles Coverdale, we recall the last line of his advice was considering what goeth before and what followeth.

That's simply an expression that is called the context or the verses surrounding the verse in question. And when this simple but critical rule is applied in Exodus 19 and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, we are told in verse 3, Moses, thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel.

And then again in verse 6, these are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Question. Did the children of Israel also include the Egyptians, Babylonians, the Assyrians?

Of course not. How about the rest of the world? Not at all. Not only was this a particular set of laws intended exclusively for the Jewish people, but it also constituted a covenant or contract between the God of Israel and the people of Israel.

God tells Israel, If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. And you, Israel, will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[ 34 : 19 ] These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. Then Moses presented to the people what were the terms of the contract and asked for their response to God's offer.

It was a deal. God was offering to Israel. The deal was, Israel, If you will keep my commandments and do what I tell you, you alone will be a special people unto me, and I will look out for you and protect you, and I will be your God, and you alone will be my special people.

And when Moses then asked the people, Well, what do you think? Do we have a deal or not? The people replied in verse 8, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.

In essence, the contract was made and agreed to by both parties, God and the nation of Israel. And to seal the deal or ratify and give an officiality to the contract, Moses in chapter 24 took the blood of oxen and sprinkled it on the altar.

The other half of the blood he sprinkled on the people and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. Moses then took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of all the people, and the people said, All that the Lord has said will we do.

[ 35 : 38 ] This solemn act, ratified with the shed blood of the animal, sealed the contract between God and the nation of Israel. It is of paramount importance to note that there were no other people or nations included in this transaction.

It was exclusive to the nation of Israel, who alone would be expected to observe all it required. The Law of Moses for Israel Alone, Part 2 With unmistakable clarity, we noted in the preceding segment of Christianity Clarified that the law God gave at Sinai to present to Israel was for Israel alone.

It did not include any other nation, past or present. This law of Moses, Paul referred to repeatedly in Romans chapter 2, by calling it the law, 14 times in the context, and each time it had direct reference to Israel alone.

No other nation was ever under obligation to keep the law of Moses, then or now. Although no one else was under the Mosaic law, all were under the law called common or natural law that God had written on the hearts of all people everywhere.

In fact, it was this general law that the Jews were under also before the special law of Moses was given to them at Sinai. So rather than on the hearts of men, the law of Moses was a law or record given in specific words, clearly spelling out so all Israel could read it.

[ 37 : 19 ] It was a codifying and formalizing of the law of God, the contract, often called the Mosaic covenant. It was also this covenant of law to which the Apostle Paul referred in Romans 6.

He reminded his Gentile Roman addressee, saying, Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. It is commonly believed among Christians that whereas we used to be under the law of Moses, now, since the death of Christ, we no longer are.

Well, that is not true. Harkening back to the exclusivity of Israel being recipients of the law, we should remember that Gentiles never were under the law of Moses, not ever.

Yet, for hundreds of years, even including today, there are Christians and even entire denominations that insist Christians are bound by the law of Moses and we should live under its demands.

But then they do have a serious problem with the large parts of the law. Are we also to observe animal sacrifice, keep a kosher diet, observe the weekly Sabbath, keep the annual feasts established by God?

[ 38 : 31 ] Here it does get sticky. But then we are told, well, no, but we are to observe the moral requirements of the law only. Well, then are we to stone adulterers and homosexuals along with

juvenile delinquent teenagers?

These are moral issues and part of the law of Moses. Our pilgrim forebears struggled with these issues in the 1600s after landing and living in Massachusetts. They even imposed penalties on people who did not observe the Sabbath or who failed to attend church on Sunday, which they believed to be the new Sabbath.

Undoubtedly, this was due to their sincere desire and effort to be obedient to the entire Bible. And while their intentions were good, their hermeneutic was bad, very bad.

They failed to rightly divide the law, probably never having considered it. And this is the task to which Christianity clarified has devoted itself. We trust you've already begun to see its importance and the confusion that is realized when right division is ignored.

More. More. Much more. Just ahead. Present Confusion About the Law of Moses Part 1 A recent segment of Christianity Clarified made reference to our pilgrim fathers and the confusion that confronted them about the Old Testament laws God had given to Israel.

[ 39 : 58 ] Desiring to be obedient to the entire Bible and fearful of dismissing any of it, they entangled themselves with inconsistent demands and consequences.

Eventually, a position was codified by the earlier colonists and these regulations were imposed by the existing government upon the general pilgrim population.

When the laws were drafted, they were printed on blue paper and soon took on the name Blue Laws. Essentially, the Blue Laws set forth a formal list of do's and don'ts for the people.

Cheapest among them had to do with Sunday activities each week. Believing that the Sabbath had been moved from Saturday to Sunday, probably because of the resurrection, although some believed it was changed by the Pope in Rome.

Nonetheless, they erroneously concluded that everything that was wrong for the Jewish people to do on Saturday was now wrong for Christian people to do on Sunday.

[ 41 : 03 ] And at the top of that list, of course, was that no labor or work of any kind was to be done. Penalties were exacted for those who violated these laws. Farmers couldn't plow or reap.

Shopkeepers must certainly lock their doors on Sunday. No financial dealing involving buying or selling could be done. But the only things that did not evoke penalty or criticism was you could pray and you could read your Bible and you could attend church and you could engage in rest for your body.

Anything else was forbidden or at least suspect. So ingrained were the blue laws in much of America that for the most part, business came to a halt each Sunday.

In Pennsylvania, one of our more historic states founded by the Quaker William Penn, the blue laws were observed with greater strictness. As a youth in the 1950s and 60s, I recall hearing baseball commentators speak of the scheduling difficulties encountered by the then Philadelphia Phillies and the Philadelphia Athletics, both major league baseball teams.

The problem was, the blue laws were seriously applied and it meant no baseball on Sunday in Philadelphia. Still today, in parts of America, particularly in the Southland where Christians tend to be more traditional and conservative, the blue laws remain in place and many business transactions are suspended until a weekday, out of tradition and respect for what many consider to be a biblical injunction.

[ 42 : 42 ] It isn't, but old habits and ways die hard. Of course, along with business closings, churches are open and we applaud every effort to get people in church under the hearing of the word of God.

Still, unlike our pilgrim fathers, we don't seek to find them if they don't attend. My, my, how the times do change! More content addressing confusion about the law of Moses, upcoming.

Present Confusion About the Law of Moses, Part 2 If one is of sufficient age, the transition of several things in our culture are readily seen.

Only a generation or two ago, practically all businesses, not regarded as critical to health and safety, were closed on Sundays. Back then, it was largely due to the acknowledged respect given to what was erroneously called the Sabbath.

Truth be told, the Sabbath of the Bible has never been changed from ancient times when it was first imposed on the Jews with the Seventh Commandment. The first Sabbath, the word Sabbath actually means seven, was in connection with the six days of creation having been completed and God ceasing for the seventh day.

[ 44 : 10 ] Biblical days are reckoned as evening and morning, as stated in Genesis 1, where the evening and the morning were the first day. Somewhere in history, that phrase evening and morning, that constituted a day, got changed to morning and evening.

This remains our way of reckoning a day to the present time. When the weekly Sabbath was instituted, it began at sundown on the sixth day and ended at sundown on the seventh day. For Jewish people worldwide, it still does. Also, originally in the Bible, our days of the week are not found. In Scripture, there are no Sundays, Mondays, or Fridays, or Wednesdays, or any other day so named.

All the biblical days are referred to by numbers, such as the fourteenth day of Nisan, or the fifty days after Passover. Male babies were to be circumcised on the eighth day of their birth, and so on. The days of our week, consisting of Sunday through Saturday, are all names that honor pagan gods and have no biblical connection at all. While our week still consists of seven days worldwide, its designated days are all man-made.

[ 45 : 31 ] The New Testament in Acts 20 and 1 Corinthians 16 seem to indicate the first day of the week as the day that believers gathered together, and it probably was in commemoration of the resurrection of the Lord, which was the first day of the week, three days after His crucifixion.

This prompts the question as to the time of day. Remember, biblically, the seventh day of the week began on our Friday at sunset, and ended on what we call Saturday at sunset.

Then, the first day of the week began on what we call Saturday at sunset, until Sunday at sunset. Biblically speaking, it appears believers met after the resurrection on the first day of each week. That did not begin on our Sunday morning, but our Saturday evening. And it concluded on our Sunday evening. That is the biblical first day of the week, and the most likely time the early church held its weekly gatherings.

If they started their worship service at the beginning of the first day of the week, as we suppose, they would have met around sunset on our Saturday evening, because that was the beginning of the first day of the week.

[ 46 : 53 ] Present Confusion About the Law of Moses Part 3 Scripture has no specific command as to when believers are to meet for corporate worship.

Hebrews chapter 10 does reveal the importance of believers gathering together for the purpose of provoking one another to love and good works. Elsewhere, in 1 Corinthians 11, 12, 13, as well as Ephesians 3 through 5, the case is clearly made that we are designed by God to be societal beings who need each other and must be accountable and available to each other for edification.

This can occur only when the brethren come together. The place where they meet, or the day and time of the meeting, is inconsequential. It is the meeting and making ourselves available to one another that is essential.

And a radio or television program, no matter how gifted the preacher, does not allow for the interaction between believers that the Bible enjoins. Now, as an aside of some interest, how was the Sunday morning worship hour arrived at, and in so many cases around 11 a.m.?

Well, first, the morning part developed from making the morning to be the beginning of each day that then ends in the evening. And probably this was settled on because that was when daylight first showed up, meaningful activity could begin.

[ 48 : 23 ] Then again, we do tend to feel more energized following a night of rest. Besides that, the vast majority of the ancient world was agrarian in its livelihood, and also often involved livestock that needed to be cared for.

That plus the general opinion that Sunday morning should be the day of worship instead of work. But, wait, how about chores on Sunday morning? Milking cows and tending livestock, aren't those work?

Well, yes, but they still need to be done, don't they? Well, what about working on the Sabbath?

Well, God will understand, won't he? And so the rationalizing goes.

After all, didn't Jesus say we could work to rescue an animal that had fallen in a ditch on the Sabbath? Yes, he did. But just allow me to insert a statement here.

I hope you will remember forever. And it is this. There is no such person as a consistent legalist.

Remember that, because you will have occasion to need it while meandering around in the body of Christ.

[ 49 : 38 ] Jesus dealt on a daily basis with the nitpicking Pharisees who majored in legalistic details. So, as regards congregating and worship of believers, it is the reason for the meeting that takes place when they meet that is far greater importance than when or where they meet.

And, actually, it was nearing 11 a.m. on a Sunday morning by the time the average family could do everything they needed to do in order to get off to the church gathering.

Preachers consider it to be a daunting enough task just to get the brethren out on Sunday mornings at 11. We will take a pass on trying to recruit them for Saturday evening. Reviewing the two laws We have attempted for the past several segments of Christianity Clarified to establish the two kinds of law God has given to mankind.

The first we labeled natural, common, or general law given to all. This is the law spoken of by the Apostle Paul in Romans 2 where he declares it to be written by God into the hearts or psyche of all humanity.

It is this sense of divinely imputed law that enables man to know right from wrong and good from evil. Secondly, there is another law labeled special or particular and given to only one specific group of people, the nation of Israel.

[ 51 : 13 ] This is called throughout the Bible the law of Moses. It did not come from Moses, but it did come through Moses as the vehicle. We revealed what the Bible declares so clearly that this law was directed to the nation of Israel alone and never was intended for any people other than the Jews.

Unfortunately, many non-Jews read the mail addressed to the Jew only and then try to appropriate it to themselves. Why would they do that?

Well, I believe they do it out of a sincere motive. It is their desire to be obedient to the whole Bible and all its commands. Unfortunately, the idea of rightly dividing the laws God has given not occurred to them, and some would probably mistake the dividing with an incomplete obedience.

Still, they do agree the law of Moses is not incumbent upon them as regards the sacrifice of animals or the forbidding of eating pork, shrimp, lobster, and other foods clearly labeled unclean, therefore inedible by the faithful.

This attitude and conviction is nothing less than religious legalism. And perhaps the saddest thing about it is it is held by sincere and devout people who want to please the Lord.

[ 52 : 47 ] It's another example how sincerity is no guarantee of truth. These dear people, most of whom are believers, know little or nothing of the freedom wherewith Christ has set us free.

They, generation upon generation, encumber themselves with the yoke of bondage spoken of by Paul in Galatians 5. For some, this stubbornness and rigidity will not even allow them to consider that they just may be wrong in their position.

Such would be seen by them as abandoning the old ways they regard as sacrosanct. We can hear them along with Tevye the milkman and the fiddler on the roof crying out all that he needs for justifying his position with the one word, tradition.

Tradition is not bad, but good, provided it is rooted in truth and not rooted in time and practice only. Remember, the two kinds of law that must be rightly divided, common or natural to all people everywhere and the special given to Israel and Israel alone.

Separate them, because the Bible separates them. Law is law and grace is grace.

[ 54 : 07 ] During earlier segments of Christianity Clarified, we labored to show the importance of rightly dividing the word of truth as demanded by 2 Timothy 2.15, and we have concentrated on the necessary divisions of the different Gospels in the Bible, particularly the Gospel of the Kingdom, designated for the Jewish people exclusively, and the Gospel of the Grace of God, designated for all of humanity, whether Jew or Gentile.

Much more deserves to be said about both, and even though it is so fascinating, we must resist going there, especially with the prophetic implications.

And yet, we do need to discipline ourselves to continue addressing the hermeneutical aspects of our material, and this currently has to do with the right division of the numerous critical elements in the Bible.

At a later date, subsequent volumes of Christianity Clarified will be devoted to prophecy, with more details about the end time and establishment of the long-promised kingdom.

But for now, consider, if you will, the necessity of rightly dividing law and grace. There are so many references that distinguish between the two, but none perhaps do it so dramatically as John 1.17

that tells us, For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

[ 55 : 36 ] And then Paul's classic statement in Romans 6.4, declaring, For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

These two concepts, found all throughout Scripture, are like oil and water, impossible to be mixed. Yet, there is no end to the countless number of believers who insist on doing so.

Paul the Apostle reveals the folly of mixing law and grace by saying in Romans 11 that God has chosen His people Israel on the basis of His grace, not on the basis of their works.

He emphasizes, If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace. It's another way of saying, Works are works, and grace is grace, and ne'er the twain shall meet.

And to try to make them meet or mesh means you end up with neither works nor grace. The moment you infuse one into the other, you destroy both.

[ 56 : 45 ] They must be rightly divided. With clarity, it must be acknowledged that law came first. And while the text in John 1 says the law came by Moses, law itself actually predated Moses.

The law was given by God to Adam and Eve when they were forbidden to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was the law. It was God who gave it and Adam and Eve who broke it.

Why did they do that? They wanted to. They chose to do so. The fact that God had empowered them with a will, a volition, plus the fact of a temptation from the adversary Satan, disguised as one of the animals God created, led to their violation of the law they were given.

And the plot is thickening upcoming. Rightly Dividing Law and Grace, Part 1 We've noted previously that God in His creation empowered our first parents with volition, that is, a will, that enabled them to obey or disobey as a free moral agent.

If not volitional, God could have pre-programmed them so as to be unable to disobey Him. But to obey because one can do nothing else has no merit any more than does loving someone because you were unable to do otherwise.

[ 58 : 11 ] Only a love and obedience that are voluntary are worth anything. God opted to give both angels and humans a volition, allowing them to make choices as free moral agents.

Such ability also became the basis for the creature's accountability to the Creator. Humans and angels will be brought before the Creator Himself for His assessment of their use of the volition He gave them.

Following that, rewards or punishment will be determined. All this flows from the law God has given in one of two venues. The first is the law said to be given by God as written on the heart of every person in accord with Romans chapter 2.

The text of verses 14 and 15 read, For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another.

In addition to this general concept of inbred knowledge of right and wrong given to all humans, a more specific code is given in the law God gave through Moses for the exclusive use of the seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel.

[ 59 : 35 ] The Bible is very clear in revealing man's failure to keep God's law, whether implanted in his heart and conscience described in Romans 2, or via the law of Moses with its 613 laws recorded in the Torah or the Pentateuch.

Contrary to human belief, the law, no matter which way it came, was never intended to give life. The law is a reflection of the character and holiness of God and is designed to reveal the great disparity between what God could accept and what man could provide.

Man fell short, far short, of God's righteous demands and thus stood unaccepted and justly condemned by divine justice.

The amazing thing about this entire matter is that God, in a gesture of unfathomable love and grace, moved to make up for the deficiency of man.

God himself, in the person of his Son, made up for man's lack by providing a way through which man, flawed and sinful though he was, could still become acceptable to God.

[ 60 : 46 ] It was all provided through the righteous payment of Christ himself. And when Christ's payment is transferred to sinful man by a man's exercising of faith in Christ, he then becomes acceptable to God on the merits of Christ, not on the deficient merits of himself.

Grace is God's panacea for man's sin and deficiency. Rightly Dividing Law and Grace Part 2 While unaware of who turned this phrase, it certainly merits repeating.

It is stated thusly, Do this, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings.

What a picture is that of the gospel of the grace of God. The problem with the law of God is that it is so perfect it defies compliance from sinful humans. But why would God give a law he knew man could not keep?

Firstly, to reflect the character and righteousness of God. The law showed man what he was up against, and if he was honest, he would be stricken with terror. No one wants to fall into the hands of the living God is the way Hebrews 10.31 states it by describing it as terrifying.

[ 62 : 08 ] And why is it so terrifying? Isn't God a God of love? Indeed he is. That is why he went to the incredible extreme of disrupting the triune nature of deity to provide a way of escape for sinful man.

And what does he require of man? nothing more than acknowledgement of his sin, repentance of it, and faith placed in the person of Christ. On the one hand, we have the righteous standard of God that man is called upon to meet but cannot, while on the other hand, we have this God himself meeting his own demands for man.

That is grace, pure, unadulterated grace. Please hear what God says in Romans 8, for what the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did.

Sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

How did all this work? God, in the person of Christ, met the requirement of the law in Christ. And what was that requirement? Death. Christ died, and in doing so, he paid the full penalty the law required.

[ 63 : 26 ] He died a physical death when his spirit was separated from his body. He died a spiritual death when his spirit was separated from God, leading him to cry out why God had forsaken him, abandoned him, left him alone while he was being made sin on our behalf so we might be made the righteousness of God through him.

The law could condemn and exact the penalty of death, but the law could not impart life. Paul wrote Timothy that the law is good. It is a perfect reflection of a perfect holy God.

That's the problem. Essential incompatibility. How can these become compatible? Could God somehow lower his standard?

After all, perfection does not become us humans. Does God really demand something from us he knows full well we cannot provide?

How is that just? How is that loving? How is that reasonable? It is all of the above, since the God who demanded it also provided it on your behalf, requiring you only to accept it from him as a free undeserved gift called grace.

[ 64 : 43 ] Have you done that? Rightly Dividing Law and Grace Part 3 The concepts of law and grace are as completely different as any two things can be.

They absolutely must be rightly divided, or they will surely be wrongly mixed. Not doing the former sets one up for doing the latter. Why, pray tell me, would any child of God insist on placing one foot in the law and the other in grace?

I am persuaded many try to do both, because both are clearly found in the Bible, and they want to submit themselves to everything the Bible teaches. Does it teach keeping the law?

It certainly does. Does it teach reveling and rejoicing in grace based on not being under the law God gave through Moses? It certainly does.

But how can this be? Does this not pose a contradiction? Does this not have the potential to produce some kind of schizophrenic, neurotic person who truly does love Christ, but cannot enter into the abundant life Christ came to provide?

[ 66 : 02 ] Well, it surely has that potential. And the more sincere and conscientious that person is, the more delicate their conscience they possess, the greater their anxiety and inner turmoil.

Don't be surprised if there are panic attacks accompanying this kind of confusion. And from which comes all this? There is no peace, no inner tranquility, no assurance, and you may be sure that the joy of the Lord is completely foreign to these dear folks for whom something much better has been provided.

It's like having a million dollars deposited to your personal bank account but no one ever told you it was there. It might as well not be there for all the good it does.

Well, Christianity Clarified is telling you today, here and now, that you are far wealthier than a meager million dollars in your bank. God has deposited incredible riches of His grace in your name but if you don't know they are there and draw upon them, God might as well have not even provided them.

Actually, it amounts to a kind of ignorant squandering of what Christ died to provide for us. We are told in Ephesians 1 that we are blessed with spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.

[ 67 : 31 ] These blessings are for all who are in Christ. No exceptions. The problem is so many are unaware of it. They fuss and fret and fume over whether they are good enough, whether they have done enough, whether they have prayed enough, whether they have given enough, whether they have been forgiven enough, whether they have confessed enough.

Is someone saying joy, peace, serenity, confidence, assurance? What are those? I know them not. Just leave me alone and let me get on with my worrying.

Well, I am not going to do that. We all have to see law and grace rightly divided and it gets better as it goes along.

More coming. More coming. Rightly Dividing Law and Grace Part 4 I dare say, my dear friend, the unsettledness, the lack of inner joy, the nagging fear that one has not been good enough, all these negatives and more are very predictable consequences derived from either an unawareness of rightly dividing the word of truth or a stubborn unwillingness to even explore it.

And why would that stubborn unawareness be there? Well, for most, it may be that this business of rightly dividing the word of truth is something they've never even heard of, never done, and it's not at all the way they're used to doing it.

[ 69 : 08 ] Well, that in itself makes it suspect to many. And maybe you've never heard of it, but the Apostle Paul insisted upon its importance and told young Timothy to be sure he does it.

It's right there in 2 Timothy 2.15, and Paul admonished Timothy, if he did not rightly divide the word of truth, he would have reason to be ashamed as a workman who produced an inferior piece of workmanship.

So right now, let's spell out the purpose of the law, to whom it was given, why it was given, how and why it is, we are not under the law of Moses and never were, what the law could and could not do, why and how grace entered the scene in the person of Christ and the incredible assets that are available to every present-day believer because of grace.

Consider the purpose of law given by anyone, at any time, for anyone. The giving or making of a law is to establish a standard. Whether you are talking about the Ten Commandments God gave Israel or the local traffic laws in your own community, the purpose remains the same.

Laws establish standards for human behavior that require compliance from those to whom the law is given. In addition to giving the law, there are punishment consequences meted out for non-compliance.

[ 70 : 35 ] Paul reminds us in Romans 3.20, By the works of the law, no flesh will be declared righteous in God's sight, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

In other words, where there is no law, there is no violation of law. But, once a law comes into being, our violation of it means we broke the law.

This, in addition to the law being a reflection of the character and holiness of God, it also makes it clear that we are in violation when we disobey the law.

What then? Well, then, as violators of the law, we are justly assigned punishment consequences for non-compliance. And because all humans are direct descendants of Adam, all are infected by our corporate fallenness and all are contrary to the character and nature of God.

For, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And this results in the just condemnation of all humanity and creates the need for a Savior, a deliverer who can rescue the non-compliant from their deserved sentence.

[ 71 : 50 ] Who but Jesus fits that description. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. Music Music Music Music Music Music Music Music Music Preview of

Volume 38 Upcoming With Volume 38, we will enter the most difficult to grasp concepts that were thrust upon the early believers.

They began in the very first century. And this will include the earliest incidents in an entirely new dynamic never before imagined by anyone that will burst upon the scene during that first century.

And it will result in great hostility from those who were deeply entrenched in the traditional brand of Judaism as revealed by the law of Moses.

In fact, what will be introduced during this time produced a conflict that lingers on to this very day. And nothing so dramatically adds to that conflict past and present as the confusion that surrounds it.

One may suspect that all of this confusion lies with the Jewish people due to their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. But that would be a huge mistake.

[ 73 : 24 ] And while that error of theirs is not to be minimized nor dismissed, it is also the Christian community that contributes mightily to the conflict with major confusion of its own.

Yet, we of Christianity clarified are persuaded there is no true justification for the confusion on the part of either Jew or Gentile when once we rightly divide the word of truth revealed so very clearly in the Bible.

It is sheer joy to see confusion give way to clarity. And when we do, joy and thanksgiving are the predictable byproducts.

There is no doubt that you who engage this material with us will share in that joy. Your appreciation index for God and His word will reach a new height.

And I personally look forward to reliving the spiritual ecstasy I enjoyed years ago when discovering these oh so important truths. You will see of what I speak as we get into volume 38 of Christianity Clarified.

[ 74 : 38 ] But be reminded please if you receive this current volume 37 of Christianity Clarified automatically then volume 38 will be likewise.

But if you obtain 37 from a friend or some other way and then wish to obtain 38 for the follow-up material just mentioned you will need to request it directly.

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