

Christianity Clarified Volume 38

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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.

It's all about the King and Kingdom. That's right. It's all about the King and His Kingdom. Miss out on this concept, and you can forget about ever grasping the plan and program of God, extending from all history in the past to all prophecy in the future.

In fact, this concept of the King and Kingdom are so paramount, I preached a sermon called, What Everything is All About. That, too, is no exaggeration. All about the Kingdom of God deals with where humanity has been, where it is now, where it is going, and how and why this is so.

And, of course, it is all right here in this book, our Bible. And not only is it here, but it is nowhere else. Read, if you will, the wisest sages and intellects ever produced among us mortals, encompassing all the years past, and you will find absolutely none who reveal what this book reveals.

Not only does the book reveal the what, it also discloses the why and the how. Amazing. Utterly amazing. This is what we continue engaging on Christianity Clarified.

[1 : 31] And all the while we are doing this, you are going to be building a case that will enable you to make connections, gain an understanding as to why and how things are as they are, how they got this way, and where it is all going.

Have you any idea how much of the world is in the dark regarding these issues? Tragically, many of them occupy positions of great authority and influence.

Yet, all that most of them have to work with is limited to human wisdom, human strategies, politics, diplomacy, and on and on. Is it any surprise the world is in the mess it is?

Having nothing more than puny human wisdom and efforts to solve our problems? It's only the grace of God that has allowed humanity to survive as long as it has. The explanation and divine rationale for that too is revealed in the Bible.

Exclusively. So, even as we have earlier explained how big, how important this matter is called the kingdom of heaven, it will, as it should, loom larger and larger as we go forth in our engagement of it.

[2 : 48] The king and his kingdom are, of course, inseparable in that what is a king if he has no kingdom? And what is a kingdom if it has no king to rule over it?

But wait, that's just the problem. They are separated, and as long as they are, this world will never be right. The planet will remain dysfunctional as it is right now, and only the king ruling over his kingdom can restore a broken, ruined world to its rightfully intended status, the status that was severely altered beginning in Genesis chapter 3.

We call that the fall. In Acts chapter 3, the apostle Peter calls the fix for the fall, the times of refreshing and the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

That's where we're going on Christianity Clarified, step by step, and you're invited to join us. The Universal Kingdom of God In sessions past, we have already divided law and grace, as well as the important dividing of the gospel of the kingdom from the gospel of the grace of God.

It is this gospel that hit the first century with such enormous impact. This gospel of the grace of God is so radical, radical in an utterly wonderful way, it remains unappreciated by the world at large, even unto this day.

[4 : 23] And much more elaboration will be provided about it on future sessions of Christianity Clarified. But for the present, we must pursue our rightly dividing the kingdoms as mentioned in the Bible.

And in saying kingdoms, we of course indicate their plurality. There are three such kingdoms that require we rightly divide them. Which kingdom of the three is meant will be determined by the context in which it is found.

Recall, if you will, the time we spent together in gaining an understanding and appreciation of the law of context and how critical it is to our understanding of any passage. So here in our study of the kingdoms and their right divisions is another sterling example.

So, here is kingdom number one, and it is called the Universal Kingdom. We might also add Eternal to its title, calling it more definitively the Universal Eternal Kingdom.

Its title fully defines it. Although this kingdom is not often mentioned by name, yet its presence and reality are depicted all throughout the scriptures.

[5 : 34] Psalm 135 quotes King David as saying, God's kingdom rules over all. Add to that 1 Chronicles 29, when David again exclaims, Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty.

For all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

This universal eternal kingdom is the totality of all the universe over which God rules and always has ruled and always will rule.

Nothing in existence has ever or ever will be excluded from his rule and reign over it. Rather inclusive, wouldn't you say?

And anything less than this universal eternal rule and reign would surely be unthinkable. Thus, nothing exists anywhere at any time that is not, has not been, nor ever will be outside his control and jurisdiction.

[6 : 44] Such is the meaning and scope of the universal eternal kingdom of God. And of all the kingdoms we will rightly divide, this is very seldom mentioned as such.

It's strange in a way because it is by far the most extensive of the kingdoms mentioned, being both universal and eternal. And reduced further, the universal kingdom of God is the absolute everything over which God has and always will be in complete control.

The Spiritual Kingdom of Christ In rightly dividing the kingdoms mentioned in Scripture, we have identified the first of three as the universal eternal kingdom. It is that entirety over which God has always ruled and always will rule.

And as all-encompassing as it is, it yet is only seldom referred to as in the references given earlier in Psalm 135 and 1 Chronicles 29. And now, brief attention will be given to the second of the three kingdoms mentioned, and that we will call the Spiritual Kingdom.

We give it also brief attention simply because it is referred to but one time in all the Bible. And that's found in Colossians 1, 12, and 13. It is labeled a spiritual kingdom because it is not a physical entity but non-physical or immaterial.

[8 : 15] If we think of the word kingdom being synonymous with realm or sphere over which a supreme being exercises control, that may help define it. Our greater problem is in the realization we are not merely physical beings but we have a non-physical component to our being called the Spiritual.

That is, we possess a human spirit in addition to our human body. When we receive Christ as our Savior, our human spirit is regenerated or saved, not our body.

In receiving Christ, we also receive the earnest of the Spirit who enters our body and regenerates or makes new our human spirit. Paul refers to this in Romans 8, 16, saying, the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

He adds to that in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 6, when he reminds us that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which we have of God. We are not our own, have been brought with a price.

At the point of personal salvation, the believing person is baptized into this spiritual body of Christ. It is devoid of water or anything physical but is nonetheless every bit as real.

[9 : 28] This body of Christ mentioned in Colossians has no thought of Christ's physical body but refers to his spiritual body. Of what could a spiritual body or entity consist?

Not anything physical but exclusively spirit. All humans who have been saved and placed into union with Christ become members of Christ's spiritual body.

This body is the same as the church referred to in Colossians 1.18 where we read Christ is the head of the body which is his church.

Note also verse 24 and more elaboration is given in 1 Corinthians 12 regarding Christ's spiritual body and all believers being a part of that body. The body of Christ is spiritual and the members of it are spiritual.

Every regenerated human spirit is a member of Christ's spiritual body. This body of Christ is a spiritual realm or sphere in which all believers live spiritually awaiting the glorification of our physical body.

[10:33] It appears to be this to which Paul is referring in Colossians 1.13 by saying we have been translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son.

This is Christ's present spiritual kingdom inhabited by the spirits of every believer. Here is the second usage of the word kingdom and it is mentioned only here.

The Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ Part 1 Both the universal kingdom of God and the spiritual kingdom of Christ are mentioned only sparingly in the Bible.

The spiritual kingdom being found in the New Testament alone. The kingdom we now consider occupies by far the greater majority of time and space in scripture.

It is called the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ simply because it focuses entirely upon the rightful kingship of Jesus Christ who truly was born King of the Jews.

[11:37] Scripture in a plethora of passages make it ever so clear that he shall reign throughout the entire world and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Handel well expressed it when he quoted in his immortal composition of the Messiah from the 11th chapter of the book of Revelation The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.

The vast majority of the times kingdom is used in the New Testament as well as many in the Old it is in reference to this mediatorial kingdom.

It is given the name mediatorial simply because Christ himself is the mediator. This kingdom to which John the Baptist refers when he repeatedly preached about the kingdom of heaven being at hand is that very kingdom.

It is this same kingdom Jesus preached after John and then commissioned his twelve apostles to go forth and proclaim as well later adding another seventy to their number.

[12:48] It is this mediatorial kingdom of which Daniel prophesied in chapter 2 when he predicted that the God of heaven would set up a future kingdom that would never be destroyed like all the kingdoms before it but this kingdom shall stand forever.

It is this same kingdom to which David referred in 2 Samuel 7 described as the throne that will be established forever as well as Psalm 89 where King David's seed namely Christ the Messiah who would not yet be born for a thousand years after David would establish his throne that would endure forever.

And now then the question surfaces where is that throne? Where is that kingdom that when once established would endure forever? The answer is it never has been established.

It won't endure forever until it first has a beginning. It has never yet had a beginning because Israel nationally rejected Jesus as their Messiah and King in his first coming to earth.

Because of that national and official rejection the kingdom long promised to Israel is held in abeyance postponed and will continue in postponement until Israel says blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

[14:14] Israel hasn't said this isn't saying this but will say this and when they do he will come. This will be the king coming to establish his rightful mediatorial kingdom and then he shall reign forever and ever.

the mediatorial kingdom of Christ part two in our efforts to rightly divide the kingdoms mentioned in scripture we have separated them from one another because the main thing we have in common is the word kingdom yet the differences separating them are great so if one sees the word kingdom and assumes it means the same thing wherever the word is found confusion is sure to follow they would even be contradictory if they are not rightly divided but when they are the apparent contradiction simply vanishes and in nearly every case the particular kingdom in question can be identified as universal spiritual or mediatorial simply by the context in which each is found having already identified the mediatorial kingdom as the most frequently mentioned in scripture particularly

in the four gospels it is important to note two different terms in regard to this kingdom that can be also confusing and misleading so let's get them on the table and out of the way so we can go on that of which we speak are the terms kingdom of heaven and kingdom of god and exactly how and why they differ there are teachers that see them as different but that they are the same kingdom with two different names seems undeniable but if they are the same why are different words such as heaven and god both used first when comparing the parallel passages in the gospels that is the passages that speak of the same issue time and place it becomes apparent the writers are using the terms kingdom of god and kingdom of heaven interchangeably so both are referring to the very same kingdom in the inspiration of the biblical writers the holy spirit allowed for and accommodated the human pen men to utilize their own vocabulary choice in the terms used and the words of description with matthew using almost exclusively kingdom of heaven while mark and luke referring to the same kingdom use almost exclusively kingdom of god both are accurate and we may be sure our lord used both terms from time to time kingdom of heaven is a term that simply referred to heaven's realm in contrast to earth's realm and the alternate term kingdom of god is referred to in contrast to kingdom of satan who is called the god of this world or age in second corinthians four also there was the practice among jews to use the name heaven as a synonym for the word jehovah or yahweh translated lord in our english bibles they had a fear of using the name of god in vain even though unintentionally and that often led them to avoid using the name altogether the prodigal son did this in luke 15 when he said i have sinned against heaven and in thy sight well you cannot sin against a place or thing but you can sin against a person and in the case of the prodigal he was admitting his sin was before god himself yet using the word heaven as a synonym jews even to this present day particularly among the orthodox or observant still shy away from using the original hebrew name for the deity we must then conclude the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of god both refer to the same kingdom the mediatorial kingdom the mediatorial kingdom of christ part three noting previously that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of god refer to the same kingdom it may be wise to note other often used names for this kingdom and they would include the messianic kingdom the prophesied kingdom or promised kingdom the millennium the thousand year reign of christ or the older lesser used term milleism from the latin meaning one thousand spelled c-h-i-l-i-a-s-m the greater controversy between sincere believers is whether this reign of christ is literal or spiritual that is whether christ literally reigns on this physical earth or whether it is confined to the hearts of men whether it is precisely one thousand years or whether that just represents an indeterminate time if interpreted literally which we at christianity clarified believe is the only consistent method it will be a literal presence of christ on this literal earth for a literal one thousand years as so clearly set forth in revelation chapter 20 it is of interest to note that all of the brethren who see the reign of christ as purely spiritual and not literal base that on the assumption that what was once literal and promised to the jews has instead been changed to a spiritual fulfillment also they believe the promise has been transferred from israel and vested in the church which they believe to be the new israel this is also identified as replacement theology that is the belief that due to the rejection of jesus by israel god has in turn rejected israel thus all the physical promises god made to israel have been changed to a spiritual fulfillment and are now being realized in the church they label as the new israel while the sincerity of their position is not questioned the wisdom of it is in order for one to embrace the purely spiritual fulfillment at the expense of the literality demanded by a consistent hermeneutic one must abandon the usual consistent and literal interpretation of all biblical passages that have anything to do with prophecy such appears to be wholly unjustified thus whether the kingdom of heaven or of god we must maintain the same consistent demand of literality for the understanding of this entire issue of the kingdom when the apostles asked jesus in acts one at the time of his ascension lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to israel he did not so much as hint that there would be no kingdom nor did he hint it would not be literal nor did he hint it would no longer go to israel he merely stated the time had not yet come for it to be established and that such would be carried out that the discretion of his father rather than see the church as the spiritual transference of the physical kingdom promised to israel we must see the church as a completely different establishment altogether altogether not to be confused with the promises god gave to israel suggest you read ephesians chapter 3 for the best and briefest explanation of the origin of the church an entirely different institution reviewing the three kingdoms you are reminded again of paul the apostle writing his last letter to young timothy in which he mentioned the necessity to rightly divide the word of truth the word of truth refers to the scriptures the very word of god the need to rightly divide the truth found in

scripture simply means distinctions must often be made between times places and people involved inevitable confusion and what may appear to be contradictions will surely occur if they are not rightly divided now in this segment we are concluding our brief study of the kingdoms in the bible and the need to separate or rightly divide them if we are to understand their meaning function scope and time of their operation brief consideration was given in the three previous segments of christianity clarified relating to the right division of the kingdoms referenced in the word of truth and first we noted the universal kingdom it is described as that universe over which god has always and will always reign as supreme call it the universal and eternal kingdom if you will it is mentioned only sparingly even though it is all encompassing in scope and time secondly we describe the spiritual kingdom it is called such in colossians 1 12 and 13 where all believers in christ are said to have been transferred from the spiritual kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of god's dear son the kingdom of darkness from which we were transferred is the spiritual evil kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of god's dear son is the kingdom called the spiritual body of christ christ's spiritual body is made up of the spirits of believers that comprise his body of which christ himself is the head this is colossians 1 12 and 13 lastly and most frequently the third kingdom is the mediatorial or messianic kingdom it is that so frequently mentioned in the four gospels and was proclaimed by john the baptist jesus and the 12 apostles and 70 others sent out later this is the same kingdom referred to by king david in psalm 89 and 2nd samuel 7 and when christ proclaimed it it was said to be near or at hand it never was established because israel rejected christ as their messiah so the kingdom he would have established is postponed until israel repents of their national sin as peter demanded in acts chapters 2 and 3 to date they have not but a great feature of coming prophecy is that israel will do that very thing and zechariah 12 10 prophesies that israel will look upon him whom they have pierced and they will mourn in repentance for him he will respond come to the rescue of israel and establish that kingdom so long held in abeyance each of these three kingdoms must be rightly divided one from another a fuller picture will be provided when future volumes of christianity clarify deal with prophecy progressive revelation demands right division there can be no question as to the content of the bible unfolding and continually being added to as the centuries of its composition came and went this simply means that new information updates if you will were consistently being added to the body of truth called the bible it was after all in progress of revealing more and more information over the 1500 years it was being composed by those 40 different jewish penmen the progress of truth being revealed really kicked into high gear with the coming of jesus the messiah and his brief three plus years of ministry on earth prior to his arrival his coming was limited to a predictive promise by so many of the old testament prophets but now with matthew mark luke and john here he is here he did what he came to do namely accomplish redemption for fallen humanity following his death and resurrection he ascended back to the father and the heaven from which he came with the promise he would come again we are now living between christ's first and second coming and have been doing so for nearly two thousand years the book of acts which closely connects with the four gospels deals with the aftermath of christ's first coming and its implications acts historically covers 30 years of dramatic events found in its 28 chapters in this book we have the bridge between the four gospels and the epistles of paul acts records the transitional period that is so vital to comprehend and so puzzling if we don't this book alone and its record is likely more responsible for the doctrinal differences existing between believers perhaps more than anything else it can be confusing because the transition refers to a development of something from something to something else a progression and in this case it is a progression or development of doctrine more particular it involves a movement of the emphasis on israel so very prominent in the gospels to the church which is the body of christ just try to make these two the same and the confusion and contradiction won't quit in these next segments we are going to be moving following the progression of doctrine as it moves away from israel and the law of moses toward the church and the gospel of grace remember that as moses was the administrator of the law paul is raised up by god to be the administrator of the church as the apostle to the gentiles this simple truth which transpired over a period of time during the 30 years the book with acts was unfolding is so very critical to understand and it is all compounded in its complexity in that both programs are running side by side for several years in the acts hence the influence of moses ingrained in the jews will clash with the influence of paul as the administrator of the grace of god and the beat will go on great grace not greatly known having earlier dealt with the subject of law in our effort to rightly divide law and grace we now come to the issue of grace the division between law and grace is so stark we can scarcely express it after

nearly 60 years of study and teaching the bible it is more and more apparent that the world at large is completely bereft of any good understanding of the word grace but in reality is that not what we should expect from a world blinded by their own sin and the deceit of the adversary satan himself in truth it is hard to fault non-christians for their lack of understanding the concept of grace but beyond that what is even more tragic is the fact that so many people called christian who have been saved by grace also know so little about it it this grace in which we stand is the most liberating exhilarating and gratitude producing truth in all the word of god so how is it possible that anyone actually saved by this grace understands and enjoys so little of it that too is due only to the grace of god as great a theme as grace is and as wonderful and life-changing as salvation is it doesn't take much understanding of it to become a believer receive forgiveness and salvation and be assured of a home in heaven all on the basis of

[30 : 32] this grace that we don't understand very well that too is grace john newton was a former captain of a slave ship in the 1700s and he was so radically changed by the grace of god revealed to him by christ dying as his substitute he wrote a song about it called amazing grace it even became a popular play on secular radio stations and recorded by numerous musicians surely it is a favorite at funerals and when accompanied by scottish bagpipes it is tremendously moving yet one can only wonder how many people who hear it and even sing it really identify with it and embrace its message for many no doubt it's just a popular religious song with which they do not personally connect but then no doubt some do we may be sure and for each of them praise be to god god stunned john newton with his grace enabling him to write those words as a personal testimony so they could be sung around the world even 200 plus years later another example of the grace of god because this evil old world was not deserving of that song and its message but god gave it anyway such grace and god's grace has been available and applied to the undeserving beginning with adam and eve for whom god slew sacrificial animals to cover their nakedness also we are reminded noah found grace in the eyes of the lord and was instructed to build that ark so god's grace has been around so long as humans have been available to need it beginning with the very first two but something is going to happen to amplify grace a million fold upcoming rightly dividing grace from law part one there are two great divisions found in the bible that surely beg to be divided they are as different as night and day and as mentioned earlier are like the proverbial oil and water completely incapable of mixing these divisions are by most bible teachers referred to as different dispensations and they are that to be sure but there is another term by which they may go that is much more understandable while it is true a dispensation means that which dispenses or meets out as in the ordering of a household we understand a dispensary to be a place where medical attention or medicine is dispensed to those in need of it and mooses was the dispenser of the law still the word dispensation though admittedly technically correct is not as practical in understanding as the word we prefer to use in its place and that word is administration in fact some translators even render the word administration preferably to dispensation and our reason for using it is because everyone rather well understands what an administration is because it is used so frequently in government and politics but there are many who are lost to understand the term dispensation or worse still dispensationalism and the most who are somewhat familiar with the term almost always associated with a block of time which is a completely inadequate understanding what we now seek to rightly divide are the administrations of law and grace ample time has already been spent dealing with the administration of law particularly as it was administered to the nation of israel through the man god chose namely mooses though no one

disputes the distinctives of the administration of the law of mooses there is considerable confusion about its being canceled and replaced with the administration of grace and while it is true grace has always been been around and operative as in the cases of adam eve and noah cited earlier but what has become so different and so dramatic and also problematic and confusing to many is that this brand new administration called the administration of grace broke forth on the scene seemingly out of nowhere it was not promised beforehand as an item of prophecy nor did anyone at all expect it this administration will introduce not only a new paradigm but it will effectively replace or update the old paradigm of the law of mooses in effect this new administration of grace will be a veritable doctrinal bombshell that will face much rejection from one element of humanity and glad reception from another suffice it to say the rejecters will be the jews the receptors will be the gentiles and the new divinely appointed leader of this brand new administration will pay a huge price in replacing mooses and the law and he will be another jew perhaps the most unlikely jew of his day for this task

saul of tarsus this is utterly stunning content and more coming rightly dividing grace from law part two we present-day gentiles have no appreciation for how steep the jewish people were in the law that god gave them through moses even the word ingrained is probably not adequate because from the earliest age jewish children were encouraged to memorize lengthy portions of the torah the first five books of the law also called the pentateuch the jewish people at least those called devout lived breathed ate and drank the law of moses in addition to its being from god it was also assumed to be as permanent as was god himself apparently many overlooked the prophecy of their respected prophet jeremiah who made it very clear the original law or covenant given through moses would one day be replaced with a new covenant as the first covenant given through moses was intended for israel alone so also would the new covenant prophesied by jeremiah be for israel alone well so much for the administration of law whether through the old covenant from moses or the new mentioned by jeremiah where does this thing called the administration of the grace of god spoken of by the apostle paul of which he said he was a minister where does that come in certainly not in the old covenant of course not well then it must come under the new covenant surely that's it the administration of grace is under the new covenant no no it is not the administration of the grace of god doesn't belong to either the old or the new both of which are law oriented the administration of grace is not covenantal at all it is wholly different so different it simply did not belong to anything by way of a definitive administration in the past well where then is this administration of grace to be put where does it belong or fit into the plan and program of god it belongs where it is right now between the old and the new covenant but not belonging to the jurisdiction of either this administration of grace comes across like an orphan with no parent in either covenant it's an anomaly different brand new and by all existing first century standards downright radical why do we say that because that which most distinguished the jew

from all others was their separateness jews had a separate religion language worship diet laws customs clothing even separate haircuts for some of them now purveyors of this new administration called grace led by the apostle paul is saying none of those separations and distinctions matter anymore in fact this new administration of grace grace says barriers previously existing between jews and gentiles no longer exist because god has made the two jew and gentile together into one new man no wonder they accused paul of teaching against the law of moses and no wonder they considered him a dangerous threat to judaism no wonder some jews took a vow to kill him we will pursue this upcoming rightly dividing grace from law part three only when the word of truth is rightly divided and only when the progressive revelation of that truth is understood only then can one begin to understand the upheaval taking place in the first century failure to do both has resulted in so much confusion and differences among believers that our witness is actually weakened our adversary satan loves to sow discord among the brethren and this is one of his favorite devices paul said of him in second corinthians chapter 2 that satan is always seeking an advantage to use against the brethren and that we are not ignorant of his devices his schemes purposes and objectives satan's chief instrument is deception it causes people to think and act in a way that is different from the way they would act or think if not deceived and satan really worked overtime in the book of acts particularly on paul the apostle who even spoke of satan's hindering him in first thessalonians 2 when he said he would have come to them on multiple occasions but satan hindered them from doing so a mere glance at all the opposition paul faced should convince anyone of the continual uphill battle he faced with this brand new gospel of the grace of god and to be sure most of the opposition came from his own jewish countrymen why so largely because paul was preaching that there was no longer to be a distinction between jew and gentile nor men and women nor even between those who were free and those who were slaves because in grace all are now on an equal footing before god and all the distinctives that set the jews apart from the gentiles are now cast aside can you envision the opposition the outrage the utter contempt the observant jews had for paul no wonder they in acts 23 made a vow they would not eat nor drink until they had killed him they regarded him to be a cancer growing on judaism that must be stamped out and is it not ironic that that was exactly how paul felt about his fellow jews who came to faith in jesus as israel's messiah while he was on his way to damascus but now as one who joined them due to his conversion and damascus road experience just look at what he was subjected to in second corinthians 12 on five count them five different occasions he was beaten with 39 lashes by his fellow jewish brethren three times beaten with rods in perils of my own countrymen all this opposition simply because he was preaching the gospel of the grace of god extended to all jew and gentile alike but none of the opposition surprised him he knew exactly how and why they hated him

so because he was once one of them

besides in acts 9 when saul of tarsus was converted god made it clear to ananias who was to go to saul that said god i will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake and suffer paul did and through it all he considered it a small price to pay all because of the risen christ and the gospel of grace he was commissioned to preach rightly dividing grace from law part four let's be reminded of the critical distinction that separated law from grace during the first century that began primarily with saul of tarsus being converted and given a special message that was completely new to everyone saul included first be reminded that the law of moses was the only standard for israel from the time moses received it at sinai he was the undisputed administrator of it and he too received opposition not only from his fellow jews but even from his own family sister miriam and brother aaron yet moses and the law god gave him eventually became the only standard for israel and was eventually accepted as such even though israel would stray from it frequently and lapse into idolatry in the same way moses was administrator of the law so also was paul the administrator of this new controversial gospel or good news of the grace of god and yes predictably there would be opposition from his own countrymen and from satan himself who would influence inflame and instigate opposition as well and sure enough as the law had become the standard for israel at sinai there would be frequent departures from it the jews caving into the peer pressure of their brethren were tempted with idolatry and so also with paul this gospel of grace will establish a new standard for jew and gentile and yes there will be those who will frequently depart from it paul calls these false brethren in galatians 1 they were purveyors of another gospel which paul forcefully denounced as not being the gospel at all but a perversion of it the same perversion of adding something else to the gospel of pure grace is alive and well today man in his fallenness with his inflated ego just can't stand the idea of his merit and good intentions being worthless for acceptance with god no doubt some then as well as some today would label paul's calling those who would add to the gospel of grace a curse too extreme surely not loving enough and downright intolerant but the apostle gave no hint of backing down because he truly understood what was at stake so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you and so should it be with grace believers of today no backing down and no watering down the gospel of grace for the same reason as paul we understand what is at stake is it not truly amazing that this gospel of grace is the best news ever heard by a human being and yet it contends with opposition everywhere it goes rejection confusion deception wrought by satan himself and the fallen intellect of men whose minds satan blinds in accord with second corinthians chapter 4 yet full steam ahead we must embrace it and proclaim it because we know what is at stake

rightly dividing grace from law part 5 your attention is called to galatians chapter 2 where an incredibly important situation occurred in it paul recounts a definitive visit he made to jerusalem in order to confer with the original apostles or at least with peter james and john paul understood their importance and influence by calling them pillars or chief supporters of the truth he was not seeking their permission for what he was preaching he did not need that paul was already under orders from christ himself yet it does appear obvious he was seeking their blessing and cooperation paul saw the need to inform these jewish believers and apostles about what he had been preaching to the gentiles it seems rather obvious if paul were preaching the same message as the twelve there would be no need to brief them but if his message to the gentiles was different from their message to their fellow jews they very well needed to know that and certainly paul did not want any of the twelve to be in disagreement with what he was teaching he had enough opposition from these unbelieving jewish brethren he certainly did not need any opposition from his brethren who were believers as were the twelve paul relates in verse 2 that he had been given a special revelation to go to the apostles at jerusalem and tell them exactly what he had been preaching to the gentiles the core of their message whether from the twelve or from paul was the same both proclaimed christ as god's son crucified and resurrected from the dead with life and liberty to all who believe but whereas the twelve apostles were called to israel exclusively paul was called to the jew and the gentile true he was raised up to be the apostle to the gentiles still he also was called to jews as well and even to those of royal status indicated in acts 9 15 this is why paul always headed for the synagogue every time he arrived in a new town and now the plot is thickening and it presents a truly major problem while paul the apostle is the administrator of the administration of grace set forth so clearly in galatians 2 7 and ephesians 3 as a brand new thing what do you suppose that happened to the old thing that is the law of moses in reality it was defunct and had been since the veil in the temple that jerusalem was torn into from the top to the bottom upon christ's death on the cross that was god's

way of indicating he was through with the old system of the law and christ himself constituted the new and living way that he consecrated for us through the veil that is to say his flesh did you get that christ's flesh is now the veil his body took the place of the old curtain under the mosaic law now men come to god through christ the new and living way do you think the typical jew of paul's day understood that not for a minute and the conflict continues next up rightly dividing grace from law part six all right here's the problem the problem of the first century following the crucifixion of christ despite the wonderful truth of the gospel of grace coming into full focus it was not without problems big problems

[50 : 47] chiefly with the jews that were clinging to the administration of the law of moses its sacrificial system sabbath keeping and circumcision then along came this brand new administration called grace that was extended to jew and gentile alike not requiring any elements of the administration of the law of moses how do you think these two utterly diverse administrations fared together they were the major theological clash and rumble of the remainder of that first century the old mosaic administration was fading away but the jewish people did not know that nor even suspect it and were certainly not fading with it no sir as far as they were concerned the law of moses was as permanent as god himself listen to the conflict erupt when paul and barnabas are on their first missionary journey and remember this event took place 10 to 12 years after the crucifixion acts 13 44 and the next sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of god but when the jews saw the crowds they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by paul and were blaspheming and paul and barnabas spoke out boldly and said it was necessary that the word of god should be spoken to you first since you repudiated and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life we are turning to the gentiles for thus the lord has commanded us and when the gentiles heard this they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the lord and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed and the word of the lord was being spread through the whole region but the jews aroused the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city and instigated a persecution against paul and barnabas and drove them out of their district this was the kind of conflict that will dog the steps of the apostle paul throughout the rest of his life turmoil, opposition, confusion principally because these two radically different administrations of law and grace are running together side by side it is a time of transition while the old was passing away it wasn't as far as the devout jews were concerned and while the new administration of grace is emerging it isn't without opposition and controversy often causing riots in nearly every venue paul visited it is very doubtful that we as believers today can even begin to imagine the turmoil and difficulty that was rampant in this first century transition period and remember this was the case even 10 or 12 years following the crucifixion more transition material coming up rightly dividing grace from law part 7 we have previously related from acts 13 a passage that is critical to our understanding of early christendom not only was what happened there but when it happened that it was 10 to 12 years after pentecost makes it so significant it explains the ongoing opposition paul and his co-laborers were undergoing can you not see the confusion that surrounded this strategic time frame in the book of acts jews loyal to the law of moses and paul extending the message of grace without any demands of the law to gentiles how were these going to mesh they didn't and they still don't because each is different in its own right for the time and people god intended nearly all churches today lay claim to the book of acts as their authority for their particular doctrine and practices and any church or pastor worthy of the name surely seeks to be obedient to everything the bible says but really obedient how some who object to the whole idea of rightly dividing the scriptures have been heard to say things like i don't believe in that business about dividing the bible and taking some parts and omitting some parts i believe in taking the whole bible well indeed but taking it how does anyone believe it's possible or even advisable to try being obedient to the law administration god gave through moses and at the same time function under the grace administration god gave through the apostle paul while these are not contradictory unless you try implementing them at the same time then they are contradictory each to the other but if you assign each to its proper place and people the administration of grace is not contradictory to the administration of law but represents an updating of god's revelation the law of moses served a specific people in a specific time and place the law of moses was god given and served the purpose for which it was intended at the time intended but now with the arrival of this new administration of grace the time for the law of moses has passed but so many of the jews of paul's day would not entertain that thought for a moment and continually charged paul with teaching against the law of

moses and to them that was clearly an offense punishable by death and on more than one occasion the jews sought to carry that out now today in our present 21st century do you think christendom has gotten beyond this this failure to understand these two programs were for two different people at two different times and constituted a progression in the doctrinal revelation from god not at all there are whole segments of christendom still trying to straddle the law and grace with no more success than those of the first century and what suffers most is the lack of clarity as to what christianity is all about and even worse the freedom and peace christ died to provide are so often not enjoyed by his people more clarifying just ahead paul and a practical problem part one an incident took place in acts 21 that to this day evokes controversy between bible scholars it has to do with paul's attitude toward the law of moses since it was now defunct we've often pointed out the turmoil and confusion that existed due to this transition between law and grace and this transition was not something that was once in a human's lifetime rather it was something that was once in the world's lifetime because in the history of planet earth nothing like this had ever occurred a seismic shift in the baseline of authority from the administration of law through moses to the administration of grace through the apostle paul the first included the jew only and the second included everyone jew and gentile the upheaval was monumental now here's the setting as recorded in acts 21 beginning with verse 17 and we will hear from the penman himself dr luke and when he had come to jerusalem

the brethren received us gladly and now the following day paul went in with us to james and all the elders were present and after he had greeted them he began to relate one by one the things which god had done among the gentiles through his ministry and when they heard it they began glorifying god and they said to him you see brother how many thousands there are among the jews of those who have believed and they are all zealous for the law and they have been told about you that you are teaching all the jews who are among the gentiles to forsake moses telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs what then is to be done they will certainly hear that you have come therefore do this that we tell you we have four jewish men who are under a vow take them and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses in order that they may have their heads shaved and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you but that you yourself also walk orderly keeping the law of moses but concerning the gentiles who have believed we wrote having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrifice to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication and then Paul took the men and the next day purifying himself along with them went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification until the sacrifice was offered for each of them now here is the setting and here is the situation should Paul have done this very jewish thing in keeping with the law of moses and did he thus compromise his own message or was he acting appropriately in doing so reputable bible scholars continue to come down on opposite sides of this issue we will engage it upcoming Paul and a practical problem part 2 so how should we interpret this incident of the apostle Paul and his willingness to accommodate his Jewish brethren by participating in a Jewish religious ritual that was then clearly passe are we to conclude as some that Paul compromised the truth that he knew better but lacked a spine and courage to stand for the truth but how can we possibly concur that in the face of the many times he did and courageously giving no quarter standing for the truth of the gospel while he was staring death and persecution in the face for doing so now we are not interested in putting

Paul on a pedestal of infallibility he was as human as the rest of us and certainly not immune to the temptation to compromise but we are simply insisting that the compromise charge leveled by some against Paul does not fit all the facts we know about this man none of the facts given are consistent with a sellout his track record from the time of his conversion in Acts 9 to the time of his martyrdom after Acts closes belies that charge this is the same man with sufficient enough courage to confront and rebuke none other than Peter the chiefest of the original twelve apostles when he arrived in Antioch as recorded in Galatians chapter 2 and there also is the record of his refusing to be bullied into requiring Titus to be circumcised because some of the Jewish false brethren demanded it nothing doing said Paul we did not give way to them and their demands no not for an hour and the reason we did not was in order that the truth of the gospel and its integrity might remain intact for you that doesn't sound much like a compromiser does it but in addition to these displays of fortitude and commitment there remains a far greater reason than Paul's accumulated track record that explain his fidelity to the gospel it was simply the ironclad resolve he demonstrated time and again that was linked to his statement in Acts 20 after having repeated warnings about what lay in store

for him when he got to Jerusalem he said this in verse 22 now I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem not knowing the things that shall befall me there except that the [63 : 51] Holy Spirit witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions await me but none of these things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God time and again when such negative painful circumstances would justify bailing out most of us would not have blamed him there was never an option for this man Paul he loved too much and he was loved too much to ever entertain such a thought what else what other powerful motivation would have driven Paul to go through with that Jewish Mosaic Law observance in Acts 21 is there something else indeed there is upcoming Paul and a practical problem part 3 the costly and painful ordeals the apostle

Paul was called to undergo in the acts of the apostles enormously benefited the world that then was and continues to benefit untold millions to this day Paul's consuming passion was simply to spend and be spent for and by Jesus Christ and it all stems simply from what he knew to be true there is no higher motivation truth is its own justification for propagation besides Paul's love for Christ and Christ's love for Paul the apostle spells out his attitude and actions that explains his behavior his methodology and his goal we reference 1st Corinthians 9 where he stated though I be free from all men yet have I made myself servant unto all that I might gain the more we curious ones might well stop Paul here and ask the question what do you mean by making yourself servant to all just this said he beginning with verse 20 and to the

Jews I became as a Jew that I might win Jews to but because like those who are under the law to those who are without law as without law though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ that I might win those who are without law to the weak I became weak that I might win the weak I become all things to all men that I may by all means save some and I do all things for the sake of the gospel that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

There is another way of saying this. Paul is telling us we all have our comfort zones, the places, people, and issues where we feel most comfortable and secure. Well, said Paul, when you were called to preach this gospel of grace to everyone, you were continually getting out of your own comfort zone and into theirs.

But that is what it takes. As a Jew who has been enlightened by the gospel of grace, I no longer am comfortable with fulfilling the law of Moses, but I place myself there for the sake of those who belong to that comfort zone.

[67 : 14] Consorting with a bunch of Gentiles practicing their ungodly lifestyle of idolatry and paganism, that's not my cup of tea either, but I gladly do it that I might gain them.

There is too much at stake not to. Paul is walking a tightrope of sensitivity toward everyone. Yet, he was resolute, consistent, compassionate, and understanding.

Here was a man with a generous supply of patience toward the unbelieving Jew, because he well remembers his own ignorance and arrogance he displayed before his Damascus Road awakening. He was not harsh nor inflexible toward those to whom he was called, but was, as he wrote to the formerly pagan Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 7, We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children.

It was all because of what Paul knew to be true, the greatest motivation of all for the most effective service. Paul and a Practical Problem, Part 4 With the administration of the Law of Moses now set aside, and the administration of the grace of God committed to the Apostle Paul, let's ask ourselves a question.

[68 : 36] Whenever Paul arrived in a new town, he always headed for the synagogue, where he knew on the Sabbath he would find a congregation of local Jewish brethren. What do you think Paul would have told them?

He would have taken their very own scriptures, which contained only the Old Covenant, and he would have pointed out Christ to them from Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, just as Jesus himself did in Luke 24 to the disciples on the Emmaus Road.

Paul would have sought to convince them that the crucified and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the very same one prophesied there in their scriptures.

It was essentially what Peter had told his audience in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. The result was usually mixed in that some believed, while some believed not.

Paul is still doing the very same thing as the book of Acts closes in chapter 28. But what Paul did not tell his Jewish audience was that you can forget the law of Moses, that's passé now, it's defunct, gone, over with, and we Jews no longer need to keep the Sabbath, observe dietary restrictions, and by the way, circumcising your eight-day-old baby boy is optional.

[69 : 55] You can do it out of tradition if you want to, but it's no longer required like it was under the Mosaic administration. Was all of that true? Absolutely!

But do you think Paul did that? Most certainly not. I am equally clear he did not teach them to observe the law of Moses either, since it really had no legitimacy, since the administration of grace had replaced it.

I think he did what he could to avoid the whole matter and simply focused on the person of Christ having risen from the dead as their Messiah and Savior. But now, let's ask this.

What did Paul teach the Gentiles to whom he ministered? Well, he certainly did not seek to put them under the law of Moses, since they never were, nor were they supposed to be.

Paul taught the Gentiles the pure message of grace, as spelled out so clearly in Ephesians 2. Now, here's where this plot thickens. Paul was also teaching, of necessity, to Gentiles that God accepted them without observance of the law of Moses, but on the basis of grace alone.

[71 : 07] He also made clear there was no longer any distinction between them as Gentiles and the Jews. Now, how else could the law-keeping Jews interpret this other than Paul was teaching against the law of Moses?

Was he? Well, yes, kind of. Now, can you see a little more clearly this rampant controversy and confusion laced with suspicion and opposition?

Like I said, only once in the lifetime of humanity has a situation like this ever occurred. Only once in all of human existence has this kind of situation occurred.

And many still don't see it even today. I hope you do, after what we've tried to explain. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman.

Preview of Upcoming Volume 39 For the past ten or so sessions, the subject of rightly dividing law from grace has been undertaken.

[72 : 24] Principally, focus has been upon the dispensation or the administration aspects of each. And by that, it is simply meant that both law and grace constitute very important whole categories to which everything else in the Bible belongs.

And they are in every way completely opposite one toward the other. While each is essential to the understanding of the other, to commingle them or approach them as if they legitimately run and operate side by side is disastrous and prevents the right understanding of either.

Both law and grace enjoy a legitimate God-ordained place in Scripture, but it is not together.

They must be rightly divided or separated. Yet, this attempt to place them together is precisely what much of Christendom has done and is doing.

They are, as we have said, like oil and water that will not mix. And this is why, as Paul wrote to Timothy, they must be rightly divided.

[73 : 44] That is, each must be treated separately from the other. Law is law and grace is grace. One points out the need for the other, but neither can do what the other does.

All that, plus the fact that the subject of grace is probably the world's number one area of confusion and misunderstanding, we are compelled to pursue certain aspects of it on the upcoming volume 39 of Christianity Clarified.

As these past segments have treated law and grace from their administration perspectives, those sessions following on volume 39, will concentrate primarily on the personal perspective rather than the larger administration.

And because we did deal with grace as it connected with faith, and somewhat extensively on earlier volumes 14 and 15 of Christianity Clarified, this upcoming content will, to some extent, be a refresher to that.

Yet we do so, without apology, on the basis of three things. Number one, the critical importance of the subject of grace. And two, those who may not have obtained volumes 14 and 15 will find this to be new and valuable material.

[75 : 09] And three, repetition is the mother of learning. And this grace content is so very important that another exposure we trust will prove even more valuable than the first.

Those wishing to obtain materials from Christianity Clarified are invited to our website at gracebiblespringfield.com.

There, you may follow the links and download free of charge any materials posted from Christianity Clarified, Marriage on the Rock, or any of the regular Sunday messages delivered at Grace Bible Church.

And you who are following this series of Christianity Clarified may anticipate more critical issues understood only when they are submitted to the principle of being rightly divided.

These will include, but are not limited to, our standing and state, the believer's old nature versus the new, flesh and spirit, the distinction between the rapture or translation of the church and the second coming of Christ, the great white throne judgment, and the judgment versus the believer's award throne before Christ, the right division and distinction between the multiple judgments of men, angels, Israel and Gentiles, the first and second resurrection, and more.

[76 : 31] These all have one thing in common. They may be understood only when the principle of right division is employed. This we plan to do and we invite you to join us.

For those who are not computer savvy and are using the snail mail, you may write to and request what is wanted by addressing your inquiries to Christianity Clarified, Grace Bible Church, 1500 Group Road.

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Thank you so much for being a student with us on Christianity Clarified. This is Pastor Marv Wiseman saying, May the Lord richly bless you.