

Christianity Clarified Volume 40

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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.

A Brief Review of Covenant Some brief review is in order to remind us of where we were with the controversial content as preceding Volume 39 concluded.

Recall, if you will, the usage of the word testament is misleading and ought to be replaced with the word covenant in each and every place it is found.

The word in the original Greek is diatheke, which clearly means to cut or to cut through and actually refers to the cutting of animals or the cutting in two of animals.

And this harkens back to Genesis 15 when God instituted the covenant with Abraham. He instructed Abraham to cut the animals in two. Their separation and blood would be the basis of ratifying the covenant between them as it would be sealed in animal blood.

[1 : 13] The dramatic antitype that would follow two thousand years later would be the blood Christ shed instead of that of animals. It's referenced in Hebrews 9 when speaking of Christ, And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood.

He, Christ, entered into the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption for us. We then noted the words of our Lord on the night he was betrayed.

He took the cup of wine and announced, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. In Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22, all use the right word, covenant.

There is no question or controversy Jesus was referring to the same new covenant Jeremiah prophesied in chapter 31. It would be the death of Christ shortly to follow his pronouncement that would constitute the fulfilling of God's part in establishing the new covenant.

The remaining part of the covenant would be the party of the second part with whom the covenant would be made. And there can be no question as to who that party would be.

[2 : 29] It would be precisely whom Jeremiah said it would. Israel and Judah. Jeremiah used both names because when he gave the prophecy, the nation was divided between the northern ten tribes and the southern two tribes.

The north retained the name Israel, probably because it did constitute the majority of ten tribes, while the south took the name Judah, because only those of Judah and Benjamin comprised the south.

And with Benjamin being the smallest of all the twelve tribes, Judah naturally surfaced as the name by which both Judah and Benjamin would be known. Jeremiah, in his prophecy, includes all twelve tribes of Judaism when he is inspired to write his prophecy.

And it was the establishment of the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah of which Christ was speaking on the night of his betrayal. All of this is not terribly controversial, but that which is, is up next.

And it is quite controversial and downright blockbuster stuff. Join us, please, and you will see for yourself. Rightly Dividing the Covenants, Part 1 It is customarily accepted among nearly all that is called the Christian constituency that we are now living in New Testament times.

[4 : 04] And already we have a problem with that word, testament. In every case, the word used in the original Greek, in which our New Testament, there's that word again, was written, and it should not be, it should be covenant.

So why do we call it testament? Most would answer, well, the Bible itself calls it testament. Does it now? No, it does not.

Where then did we get the idea that the books from Matthew through Revelation are the New Testament? From the people who printed the Bible. Were they inspired by the Holy Spirit as were

the actual writers of the Bible?

Not at all. Nor did they ever claim to be. They simply printed the text of the Old and New, and there is that word again, testaments.

And what they and others apparently assumed was that those first 39 books constituted the Old, and then followed the 400 silent years after the Old closed with Malachi.

[5 : 13] And since that was the Old, and Matthew opens with the birth of Jesus in fulfillment of his birth prophesied in the Old, this must be the New Testament or covenant.

On the frontispiece of the page preceding is the title page appearing in large bold letters, The New Testament of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The impression unmistakably given is that here, beginning with Matthew and concluding with the book of the Revelation, is the New Testament or covenant. In reality, it is no such thing.

It is a gigantic misnomer built upon a false assumption. What is assumed is that the mere arrival of Christ in his first advent comprises the New Testament or covenant, but it surely does not.

True, it records the birth of our Lord and his ministry just as prophesied in the Old, and it does constitute not so much a new beginning, but in reality it is a continuation of the Old.

[6 : 18] It is probably due to the fact that there was no written revelation inspired by God since Malachi put down his pen some 400 years before Matthew took up his pen. Four centuries of divine silence are sandwiched between.

That, it appears, is enough in itself to consider Matthew and all that followed to be the fulfillment of the Bible called the New Covenant, or naturally, following the Old Covenant, the New Testament. We can easily see how they reached that conclusion, but that doesn't mean it is accurate, and here is why it isn't. When Jesus said the cup was the New Covenant in his blood, he did not establish the New Covenant.

He merely provided the basis for it to be established, which would be his death. And having died, it was now to be the responsibility of Israel to ratify the covenant their Messiah died to provide.

They did not, and they have not. Thus, the New Covenant has never yet been ratified. The party of the second part is still absent. Rightly Dividing the Covenants, Part 2 The explanation given on the preceding segment stated that the commonly called New Testament, more correctly called the New Covenant, did not at all, as is supposed, begin with Matthew.

[7 : 44] The New Covenant still has not begun at all. Well, what then is the New Covenant? It is precisely what Jeremiah said it is in chapter 31.

It is the covenant or agreement, the contract yet to be made between God and the nation of Israel. It is designed to replace the Old Covenant God had established with Israel through Moses, which Israel failed miserably.

That failure would not be repeated with the New Covenant as stated so clearly. But it still has never come to be. So very many, practically all, assumed that when Jesus stated, this cup represented the New Covenant in His blood, that He meant when He shed His blood, that would be the fulfillment of the New Covenant.

But that is reading more into His statement than is justified. From the overall tenor of Scripture, it appears what He was saying is that His blood, or His death, provided the basis for the New Covenant to be realized.

It provided the opportunity for the party of the second part, namely Israel, to sign on in agreement with what the party of the first part had provided through His death.

[9 : 03] Israel did not. Hence, the New Covenant, terms of which were offered to Israel, were never accepted. This coincides with our earlier conclusion about there being two things necessary for the Kingdom of Heaven to be established on the earth.

And they were, number one, the Messiah would have to pay the price for the legal redemption of the fallen world. And two, Israel would have to embrace and receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah. The first was accomplished with the cry of Jesus, It is finished. The second is yet awaiting fulfillment, while Israel is set aside in a rejection mode, as recorded in Romans 9-11.

Hence, the Kingdom is held in abeyance, and so as well is the New Covenant. These two realities are inseparable. The Kingdom coming, and the New Covenant ratified.

Both will occur when Israel corporately looks upon Him whom they pierce and mourn in repentance for the national sin of their ancestors in rejecting Jesus as their Messiah.

[10:17] That's found in Zechariah 12 and verse 10. Fascinating. Look it up. They shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and they shall mourn.

That will be on the behalf of a repentant remnant of Israel existing at that strategic time in the Great Tribulation. So then, if Matthew through Revelation is not the New Testament or New Covenant, what is it?

Good question. And you'll have to decide whether the answer we give is good or not. And it is upcoming. Rightly Dividing the Covenants Part 3 Our last segment of Christianity Clarified concluded with the question, If Matthew through Revelation are not the New Testament or New Covenant, what are they?

They are simply an additional revelation God provided through the men Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then more of Luke's inspired writings called the Book of Acts.

Oh yes, they definitely are the Word of God as much as Genesis, the Psalms, and all the remainder of what we call the Bible. But now, please hear me well. They are not the New Testament.

[11:40] There's that word again. So why do I keep using it? Because it communicates. When I use the word testament, you all know what we are referring to, but I'm telling you that's wrong.

And why are we making such a big deal of it? Because it is a big deal. It is such a big deal because so many have gone ahead and built a doctrinal superstructure upon a foundation that is faulty.

And that makes the superstructure built upon it to consist of layers or stories that are not sound.

Think, if you will, of the construction motif for a multi-story building.

If the foundation supporting it all is not solid, be sure the layers or stories that are constructed on it are tenuous at best. The case we are trying to make begins with the misuse of the word testament, which should, in every case, be rendered covenant, not testament.

Minor detail, says many. No, absolutely not. There is nothing minor about it because it leads to major wrong conclusions that people move out and build that superstructure upon that is also fraught with error, misunderstanding, and confusion.

[12:57] So, testament is the first error to recognize. I do wish we could eliminate it from Christian vocabulary, but it is so deeply entrenched it could never be done.

So, for now at least, among ourselves, please log that the word testament should always be covenant, just as diatheke in the original Greek always renders it that way.

Now, after that ordeal, let's move on. Beginning with the old covenant. When did it begin? And when did it end?

First, when it did not begin. It did not begin with Genesis. It began in the book of Exodus when God gave the law to Israel through the man Moses, beginning in Exodus chapter 20.

When Moses presented God's offer to Israel, they responded by saying in chapter 24, all that the Lord has said will we do. The covenant, the agreement, was then ratified with the blood of animals to seal the deal.

[14:05] Today, we sign contracts with pen and ink, but their closing the deal was a lot more serious. Life had to be taken from something and its blood sprinkled upon both parties making the covenant. Moses sprinkled blood upon the tablets of the law and then upon the people binding Israel to the terms of the covenant set forth in the commandments on the tablets of stone.

This was the beginning of the covenant, the administrator of which was the man Moses. Rightly Dividing the Covenants, Part 4 In our last segment, we revealed how and when the covenant of law between God and Israel began.

It was Exodus chapter 20 when presented and chapter 24 when Israel agreed to its terms. Moses then sealed the deal in the manner of the custom at that time with the shed blood of animals.

Then we ask, when did that covenant end? And as we earlier covered, it ended when Jesus cried out, It is finished as he hung on that cross.

He was referring to the act of humanity's redemption having been accomplished. And it was accomplished during the three hours of darkness that engulfed the world from noon to 3 p.m., during which time the Son was abandoned by his Father.

[15:29] It was this death, death being separation from the Father. Remember, death is never the cessation of existence. Death is separation. Physical death is the human spirit being separated from our physical body.

Spiritual death is the human spirit separated from God. Jesus died both deaths. When he expired upon that cross, and when he did, we are told in Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23, the earth was

darkened, accompanied by an earthquake, and the veil in the temple, separating the holy place from the most holy place, was torn in two from top to bottom.

God said he would meet with his people in the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. And this, from all appearances, looks very much like the crisis moment when God shut down, closed out, terminated the law, the original covenant established with Israel, and administered by Moses.

And, we have no reason to believe any of the Jews even knew it. It can't be proved, but I am fairly persuaded the religious establishment panicked when they realized what happened to the veil in the temple.

They had already been warned that under penalty of instant death. No one, absolutely no one, must even look into the most holy place where the Ark was, except the High Priest, and then, even he, only on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, and then, too, not without blood, blood to atone for his own sin, and blood to atone for the sins of the nation.

[17:07] Those items of blood the High Priest was to sprinkle on the mercy seat, the lid of the Ark of the Covenant that was overarched by two winged cherubim.

But now, upon the death of Christ and the ripping of the curtain, the entire scene was exposed, no veil. Yet, we've no record that anyone died, and it's hard to imagine no one even looking.

My conclusion is, it no longer mattered. The prohibition was rescinded. God was finished with the whole business of the covenant of law established through Moses. The administration of the law of Moses was now defunct, inoperable, kaput.

But there is no record that any of the Jews even had a clue as to what had really happened then.

They went right on, observing the law of Moses, just as they always had, sacrifice, Sabbaths, and all the rest of it, clear up, and well into the book of Acts, and even unto this day.

Rightly Dividing the Covenants, Part 5 For clarification, one might well ask, if Matthew through Revelation does not comprise the New Testament or New Covenant, what is it?

[18:25] What it is, is simply additional revelation of inspired content by the Spirit of God, as is the rest of the Bible. Matthew is a continuation of where Malachi left off 400 years earlier, but it is not the New Testament, or, more correctly, as we have insisted, the New Covenant.

What Jesus meant when He declared His cross to be the New Covenant in His blood was that He was providing the requirement for the New Covenant to become available to Israel, in that He was delivering His part of that covenant?

Christ, in His death, would be making the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah 31 available to be presented to Israel for their acceptance of it.

He did not, and could not, institute the covenant as a one-sided affair. A covenant is not imposed upon one party by another. It is offered by the initiating party for the acceptance of the second party.

If the second party does not agree to the terms of the covenant, it is not enacted. The covenant was offered by the party of the first part, namely Christ, but not accepted by the party of the second part, namely Israel.

[19:41] To this very day, Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant remains unratified, and Israel remains estranged from her Messiah. Although many Jews, numbering in the thousands, did embrace Jesus as their Messiah during the first century, yet the national official Israel rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah.

Today, Israel as a national entity, as well as the vast majority of Jews who are scattered worldwide, remain in this rejection mode. No one is disputing the fact that Matthew through Revelation is inspired of God in the same authoritative manner as the Old Testament or Old Covenant.

And by the way, what makes the Old Covenant old? Who gave the so-called Old Testament the name old? Well, most would answer that it was the arrival of the New, which everyone knows begins with Matthew.

But wait! The New has never yet become a reality. It is only the provision for the New Covenant that has been realized, not the adoption or ratification of it by the party of Israel to whom it was offered but rejected.

Be reminded, the Jewish people have never called what we call the Old Testament the Old Testament. The Jews regard what we Christians call the Old Testament as their entire Bible, and they refer to the whole of it as the Law or the Torah, the Writings and the Prophets.

[21:15] They are very much aware of the various covenants contained in those documents and that they all pertain to Israel. But they do not accept the Christian New Testament as God's Word

nor the Gospels recording of Jesus providing the basis for the New Covenant with the shedding of His blood.

Now be assured, we have no interest in splitting hairs but we are committed to as much accuracy as we can muster. Very important stuff upcoming. Rightly Dividing the Covenants Part 6 The principle has been stated that faulty assumptions lead to faulty conclusions.

And if we act on faulty conclusions, we make faulty decisions upon which we often build our doctrinal positions which are, of course, faulty as well.

So let's begin enumerating some of the faulty assumptions much of Christendom has made through the centuries. False Assumption Number 1 When Jesus said on the night He was betrayed, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

That He was also saying when His blood would be shed the new covenant would come into being. But this was not at all the case. The covenant having been entered into by the first part Jesus was never entered into by the second part the nation of Israel.

[22 : 45] Hence the new covenant has never yet been activated. Matthew through Revelation continues erroneously to be called the New Testament or new covenant but it is no such thing.

Whoever said it was? Who got that started? It was the faulty assumption on the part of the printers for one who printed the Bible. They assumed the Old Testament is Jewish and the New Testament is Christian as do many others to this very day.

And merely because there is a page before the Gospel of Matthew that says the New Testament. Does it make it the New Testament or new covenant? By no stretch of the imagination can anyone conclude the terms of that covenant were ever realized or even close to being realized.

All Jesus meant was that He was going forth to do His part to make the New Covenant available to Israel. But to activate the New Covenant Israel would also have to do their part.

It was the same with the covenant of law administered by Moses. God did His part by setting forth the terms of the covenant and Israel did its part by agreeing to the terms in saying all that the Lord has said will we do.

[24 : 04] Moses then took animal blood sprinkled it on the tablets of the law and on the people effectively bonding both parties to the terms agreed to in the covenant. Jesus was simply saying He was providing the basis for the New Covenant to be established but it would be up to Israel to agree to its terms.

Only the actual text of Scripture is the inspired Word of God. All else including chapter and verse divisions and numbers all footnotes all column cross-references all explanatory notes as are found in many specialty Bibles none of those are inspired by God nor were they ever part of the original autographs or original documents that is the actual text upon which the original writer put his pen and wrote and also by the way the red letters used to identify the words of Christ actually mislead more than they help.

How and why this is so is explained next and it is very important. Damage Done by Red Letter Bibles Part 1 Damage Done by Red Letter Bibles?

Is that what I just heard? No doubt some of you are asking yourself that very question and yes you heard it right. We are speaking of the misleading concept assumed by the red ink being used in recording the words of Christ in the New Testament.

But wait those words in red ink that Jesus spoke aren't they more authoritative than what everyone else said printed in the regular black ink? More authoritative?

[26 : 00] No they are not. Now before you dismiss this as the grossest and grandest heresy you have ever heard please hear this out and when we are done I am confident Christ himself will fully agree with our conclusions of course some of our listeners may still not but as long as we know Christ does that's my greatest concern and I stand by my assertion that the red letters used in printing the words of Christ have brought great confusion and done terrible damage to the doctrine of divine inspiration the first let me make an admission about the origin of the red letter Bibles and we assign only the purest of motives to the printer who first produced the red letter New Testament we are confident his desire was to honor and elevate the person of Christ by making his words stand out with the red ink nonetheless pure motives and good intentions do not forestall the damage done by those good intentions and here is where the damage has been done and continues to be damaging and confusing with each red letter

Bible being sold throughout the world today and all told we are sure they number in the tens of millions that damage results in the confusion surrounding the doctrine of the inspiration of scripture itself and there is no way this doctrine can be overstated in its importance and this is because everything absolutely everything that is called Christianity and biblical truth is hardwired to the doctrine of the inspiration of scripture the idea given by Christ's words in red letters entertains the faulty assumption that they are of greater authority than the words appearing in black ink but let's be very clear now all the words of scripture are of equal authority which is authority to the ultimate degree we are reminded in 2nd timothy 3:16 that all scripture is given by inspiration of god this does not allow for some scripture to be somehow more the word of god than other scriptures there are no degrees of divine inspiration in the bible it is all god's word in its totality with none of it being more or less so than any other and you'll see what is meant when we continue explaining the damage upcoming folks trust me this is so very important that if you don't understand this it doesn't matter what you do understand because so very much is riding on this and it's just ahead the damage of red letter testaments part 2 red letter versions of the new testament have become a permanent fixture at least in many english versions of the bible the first appeared in 1899 and was motivated by the statement christ made that the cup of wine he held on the night of his betrayal represented the new covenant in his blood from this we are told the words of christ in red had their origin but bear in mind the original autographs of scripture bore no distinguishing marks to separate the writings of one from another and what did that infer at the very least it inferred the writings were all on the same level and why is that it is because all scripture is given by inspiration of god as paul reminded young timothy in his last letter to him chapter 3 what is behind the bible is summed up in just one word authority this is ever the issue always has been always will be from genesis 1-1 through revelation 22-21 absolutely everything hinges on the issue of authority between those references who is the authority and how much does he have the who is the deity our lord god creator and sustainer of all and how much does he have total absolute for all things were made by him and without him was nothing made that was made that statement is john one but the authority behind it is god as stated earlier this issue of authority is so very important that if you do not understand this in the final analysis it doesn't matter what you do understand and in understanding we need to know with all scripture being inspired meaning the very breath of god none of it is somehow more god's word than other parts or less god's word than other parts the faulty assumption that parts of the bible are more truly god's word than others has led to the tragic and damaging practice of pitting one writer against another multitudes confuse passages that are more inspiring to them as somehow being more inspired of god and such does an erroneous disservice to the spirit of god who equally inspire the totality of revelation there are modern scholars so called who consistently denied the authority of scripture with statements like well that's just peter's opinion in his epistle or that was john's idea or the apostle paul was simply expressing his feelings about such and such all of which robs each passage of divine authority and what damage does that do to the bible and its content overall it robs it of the authority it deserves and replaces authority with a mushy uncertain ambiguous questioning doubting eviscerated nothingness which in a very practical sense is how it is regarded by millions today why even take it seriously and most do not to their peril the damage of red letter new testaments part three no doubt some would consider our objection to the red letter versions of the new testament as petty or an overreaction being well aware of that we remain nonetheless unwilling to concede the issue to be minor it is not as stated earlier the placing one part of the bible in the special category that elevates it above other parts automatically demotes the others to a lesser stature of authority such as precisely what elevating the words of christ in red letters do it lessens the authority of the words in black the corrective is in the realization that not only is all scripture inspired of god but that all scripture is equally inspired of god there is no such thing as parts of the bible inspired of god kind of of course it is agreed there are parts of scripture more inspiring to read and contemplate parts more enlightening and parts more comforting but such does not somehow mean they are more authoritative for they are not they are all of equal authority despite the fact they make lesser or greater contributions to our understanding and appreciation the necessity some feel to elevate the writing of some over others perhaps even calling them contradictory would find their so-called contradictions to disappear if only they would apply the principles invoked by paul who emphasized the need to rightly divide the word of truth and once that is done one penman of scripture will not be embraced while ignoring the others but be seen to make his own contribution and when placed in right division his contribution is made whether from a past mosaic administration a current pauline

administration or a future johannine administration as is found in the prophetic revelation writings of john so back to the sad affair well intentioned but damaging nonetheless of the red letter new testaments by the way do i have any personally perhaps half a dozen or so line my bookshelves maybe more so i'm not leading a campaign to stamp out red letter bibles but i will gladly lead the charge to reveal how they lead people to wrong conclusions about the authority of scripture it is a fixed authority not a sliding or

floating authority why do you think the apostle paul stated in first corinthians 14:37 if any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge that the things that i write unto you are the commandments of the lord and so it is with all the writings of all the human penmen old and new testaments all is fully thoroughly inspired god breathed and of equal authority throughout in fact we see this reflected consistently in the authority our lord jesus christ assigned to all of the old testament writers divine inspiration briefly revisited it was not intended that this issue of inspiration of scripture be reconsidered at this time but it was nonetheless deemed necessary in view of the christ in red letter issues that we felt compelled to address recall if you will the subject of biblical inspiration was treated on christianity clarified volumes 1 2 and 3 and you would likely find a review of those to be profitably reinforcing that the bible in itself assumes divine inspiration begins in the very first chapter with and god said all throughout the content that follows through its last book the revelation the fact that god is the author and he employed human penman to give the bible a two-fold dimension god being the author provided it with its authority and his using human penman to record it gives it a human touch so as to identify with the humanity to which it was addressed while it is correct to say the bible was written by men it is not correct to say men authored the bible the difference is immeasurable it is theonoustos that gives the bible its authority and the word theonoustos from the original greek literally means god breathed or breath of god the english spelling is t-h-e-o p-n-e-u-s t-o-s when we humans speak we do so while inhaling and exhaling air breath we do so automatically every time we speak we form our words with our breath paul wrote to timothy in his last of two letters in the third chapter that all scripture is inspired of god that is god breathed think of that the bible is a compilation of words breathed into and through the agents god employed as human pen men of course much remains about the process of inspiration that escapes us like everything else god does yet we should not think of god as dictating his word to human penman as would an executive to a stenographer because it is quite clear the style of writing and vocabulary of the writer have obvious and predictable nuances so with the authority behind the words being god's and style and vocabulary being that of the human penman we have a bible containing both the divine and human elements we might suggest an interesting parallel in the word of god made flesh in the person of christ he possessed an authority about him that was clearly deity while also owning a likeness from mary that gave him his humanity so please be sure to offer the corrective to the next person you hear

who says the bible was written by men agree with them that the bible was written by men but they were men who were divinely inspired by the author the spirit of god there is a huge difference between being a writer and being an author the new covenant controversy part one it is with the issue called the new covenant first prophesied by jeremiah in chapter 31 that we see the fruits of what we have learned earlier in our material on hermeneutics do you recall the importance we assign to the literality of scripture wherein the laws of language require us to understand the meaning of what is written by taking it at base value or literally as it is written this does not discount the usage of figurative language where the meaning is obviously not to be interpreted literally yet in the main in the vast majority of instances the text is to be understood as meaning precisely what it says a case in point has to do with our issue at hand called the new covenant and the fallout resulting from how the interpretation of this passage in jeremiah 31 is arrived at is incalculable in fact it has been as responsible as any subject for the division that exists among true sincere believers in christ here is the crux of the issue and it has divided christendom for centuries still does if taken literally we believe the laws of hermeneutics require the passage simply means what it says god through jeremiah approximately 600 years before christ promised he would provide a new covenant for the israelites both those of the 10 tribes of israel and the two tribes of judah but it would not be like the first covenant they entered into via mooses that covenant is real failed miserably to keep this new covenant would come complete with a divinely provided enablement allowing israel to keep it that is the literal at face value meaning of the jeremiah 31 text and it appears to be the most logical and consistent but not by everybody in fact not even by most who call themselves christians and no one is doubting whether they are truly christian of course they are

provided they have acknowledged their sin and have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for their salvation and that makes them as Christian as any so their faith their sincerity and the honesty of their conviction and interpretation is not in question but their conclusions about the covenant are and their conclusion is that whereas the Jeremiah 31 new covenant was originally intended for Israel they view that as having been changed so who changed it and why they believe God changed it and he did so because the original recipient Israel proved themselves disqualified to receive the blessings of the new covenant since they were responsible for the death of their Messiah Jesus of Nazareth their belief which we acknowledge to be the majority position is that God withdrew the promise of the new covenant originally intended for Israel and Judah and has transferred the new covenant and its promises to the Christian Church instead they believe God has cast Israel aside permanently as His chosen people and has in their place installed the Christian Church as the new chosen people we shall identify these constituting this majority when they did so and their reasons for doing so and as said earlier it truly is a main source of the things that divided Christendom and it's up next the new covenant controversy part two the largest religious bodies in the [43:22] world that are commonly referred to in a religious census are Roman Catholic and Protestant both groups have adherents numbering in the millions and in both there are those who are true believers in the biblical sense and there are also many who are merely church members not possessing a personal faith in Christ as their savior a commonality between these two huge bodies is their understanding of the new covenant most Roman Catholic theologians as well as most of those who are Protestant believe the new covenant God made to Israel in Jeremiah 31 has been withdrawn from Israel by God and transferred to the Christian Church instead this the Christian Church they believe has become the new Israel and this we have earlier identified on Christianity clarified as replacement theology sometimes called supersessionism the view is the church has replaced or superseded Israel as the chosen people of God but how can they possibly believe that in view of the plain language used by Jeremiah in this 31st chapter doesn't Israel mean Israel and Judah mean Judah their response is well yes they did mean Israel and Judah originally when Jeremiah wrote it but say they due to Israel's rejection of Jesus as their Messiah and King the meaning has changed from the literal to the figurative or spiritual and now Israel and Judah really means the Christian Church now for those of us who have sought to be consistent in language usage and also agree to the Bible's frequent use of figurative language this appears to be a quantum leap in language usage and meaning that simple logic cannot justify but these both Roman Catholic and Protestant whose majority numbers in the hundreds of millions obviously have no problem in justifying their conclusion our position utilizing the hermeneutical principles we labored to explain insist that Jeremiah's usage of Israel actually means Israel and Judah really means Judah such appears to us to be the more consistent and logical meaning those of us who embrace this straightforward literal meaning are evangelicals of various denominational and non-denominational connections we do see God's promises to Abraham Isaac and Jacob and David as well being unconditional promises dependent only upon the integrity and faithfulness of God not the integrity and faithfulness of man for their eventual fulfillment the majority that insists Israel means the church see those covenants God gave as being conditional dependent upon the obedience of those to whom the promises were made the former is driven by man's obedience the latter is driven by God's grace the former the majority insist God's promise is withdrawn because of Israel's disobedience the latter the minority insist God's promise stands fast despite Israel's disobedience and herein lies the crux of the covenantal controversy the new covenant controversy part three our last segment described the majority position regarding the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 and it was that this covenant God promised to Israel and Judah has been withdrawn from them due to their rejection and crucifixion of Christ and has instead been given to the Christian Church the principal components of the Christian Church are Roman Catholic and Protestant and they do comprise the majority but not all the Roman Catholic or Protestant factions usually synonymous with the reformed in their theology see it as a transfer from Jewish to Christian but actually believe it never was for the Jew but was always intended from the time Jeremiah made the prophecy to mean the church they insist that the words Israel and Judah stated so clearly in Jeremiah 31 never did

actually mean Israel and Judah in other words there was no transfer the Christian Church was what was meant from the very beginning and Israel and Judah never did at any time mean Israel and Judah their explanation is that Israel and Judah are terms used in speaking spiritually and when you do they believe a good case is meant for the Christian Church not Israel some of us have to scratch

our heads in amazement get up and walk around our chair a time or two in trying to process this position also there are those who embrace the replacement theology position usually synonymous with what is called reformed theology who believe even though the jeremiah 31 text uses the jewish terms israel and judah it used them in a purely spiritual manner and those words actually refer to the christian church even when jeremiah wrote them to the christian church even when jeremiah wrote them a full 600 or so years before the christian church came into being it only needed for time to pass for it to become evident that it was not as real god had in mind all along but the christian church even from the very time jeremiah wrote it we protest saying but the words are israel judah how can you deny that they respond with we do not deny the use of those words we just say that's not what the words israel and judah mean what they mean what their actual interpretation is israel and judah means the christian church and again we scratch our heads and again we scratch our head in amazement indeed it is curious that these interpret all other passages and issues of scripture as we do in a straightforward literal sense yet when the issue of prophecy arises and speaks of god's promises to israel the horses of interpretation are changed in the middle of the stream and such we insist will simply not stand the test of time logic or consistency let's give israel her due as god does the church has its own share of abundance of blessings and need not rob israel to realize them truth must trump tradition an attempt and that is all that can be called an attempt to clarify some long-standing faulty assumptions about our christian faith is underway and let us inject right here a statement that needs to be made for everyone thinking who cares what difference does it make it makes a ton of difference when once you are able to make the connections the faulty assumptions now in place inevitably result in reaching faulty conclusions and traditional christianity has a ton of them why else do you think christianity worldwide is so divided and diverse it is precisely because men give more credence and attention to man's traditions than they do to god's truth and is this not the very thing for which christ criticized his opposition listen to what our lord said to the religious leadership of his day with a well-deserved rebuke when he asked them in matthew 15 why do you transgress the commandment of god by your tradition that was the principal offense against god 2000 years ago and it remains man's principal offense today the jewish religious establishment of christ's day was apostate apostates were those who heard the truth and fell away from it or stood away from it rather than embrace it nothing has changed judaism today remains in an apostate mood but lest the pot call the kettle black let it also be acknowledged that catholicism as well as much that is called protestantism is every bit as apostate as the ancient jews as we have so often said the issue is authority always has been always will be jesus told the jewish leaders that they had made the word of god of none effect through their tradition read it in mark chapter 7 such remains the cardinal sin of judaism catholicism and much of protestantism each has displaced the authority of god and his word with the authority of church fathers tradition and the ever-present so-called experts among men it matters not the exalted experts and those called authority are often in total disagreement among themselves they are still appealed to more than the authority of god's word pathetic and what you get is what we've got a weak divided and anemic substitute for biblical christianity with only a little imagination we can hear the voices of jesus day saying we know what jesus is saying is not true because it's not what we've always believed and we know that what paul is saying is not to be believed because it isn't what we've always believed god bless those noble bereans of acts chapter 17 chapter 17 they didn't compare what paul said to what they had always believed but they compared his teaching to the scriptures it is the scriptures and they alone that provide the only true authority and safeguard for mankind god bless the word of god and bless the god of the word may the tribe of the bereans increase aspect number one of the new covenant since christianity clarified is all about efforts to dispel confusion and elucidate the christian faith as best we can we owe it to our listeners to attempt as thorough treatment as we can regarding the new covenant more often incorrectly called the new testament there are two different aspects to the new covenant and both must be understood and rightly divided like so many other things we have addressed aspect number one has to do with the death of christ he himself referred to when on the night he was betrayed took the cup of wine and made the dramatic announcement this cup said he is the new covenant in my blood meaning of course it would be his death that would provide the basis for the new covenant of which jeremiah prophesied would come but and please hear this carefully christ providing the basis for the new covenant is not the same as the new covenant being realized or fulfilled his death provided one half of the necessary requirements for the new covenant to actually be put in place but only one half that's because a covenant or contract is never made for a party of

one but at the least two parties each party must sign off on the agreement before it can be put in force christ as much as signed off on it when he shed his blood providing the basis of there being a new covenant yet as long as there was but one signatory to it it was not and has not been actualized the necessary second signature is that of israel as a nation it remains lacking hence the new covenant has been fully provided for but never yet actually realized

a poor illustration but perhaps one that sufficiently shed some light let's think in terms of real estate an owner has property he wishes to sell and a buyer is interested in making the purchase the price for the property is stated in the real estate contract that is drawn up at the bottom of the terms of the contract is the line for the owner to affix a signature he signs it thereby agreeing to surrender the property for the amount of money stipulated in the contract the pen is then passed to the buyer he holds the pen and hesitates and then he lays the pen down saying he will not sign the contract what happens nothing there is no sale no deal no transaction at all takes place the owner retains the property and the would-be buyer leaves empty-handed Christ bought and paid for the item he is offering to israel that would secure their redemption their response was to reject the offer the price Christ paid with his death gave him the legal and moral right to offer its benefits to israel via the new covenant promised by God in Jeremiah 31 if israel would but accept it they decline and they still decline the new covenant like the kingdom of heaven both remain unrealized awaiting their future fulfillment yet something of a far greater scope was realized through just one half of that covenant having been provided and it's just ahead it is aspect number two aspect number two of the new covenant we have identified aspect number one of the new covenant and it was secured when Christ died on the cross providing the wherewithal for the new covenant promised by God in Jeremiah 31 when israel signed on to the old covenant

God presented through Moses israel failed miserably in their compliance although they said all that the Lord hath commanded will we do but they didn't the new covenant will spell israel's success as opposed to failure with the old just as Jeremiah prophesied in chapter 31 they will be successful with their compliance because of supernatural capability provided them as terms of the covenant we have said there are two aspects to the new covenant and what it provided for we have just concluded aspect number one with the new covenant offered to israel only to be met with their rejection and that continues to this day we have tied the coming of the kingdom to the implementing of the new covenant because they appear to be inseparable not synonymous but surely connected now we rightly divide the issue by looking at aspect number two of the new covenant and something additional was accomplished in the death and resurrection of christ that even transcends the offer god made to israel while christ accomplished his one half of what was required to make the new covenant available to israel there was in his death enormous redemptive benefits for those not at all connected to the prophecies of the new covenant all the rest of the non-jewish world that is the gentiles as individuals have become beneficiaries of the redemption christ secured quite apart from any legal or prophesied connection to the new covenant we take it that this is what the apostle paul referred to in second corinthians chapter three when he said our sufficiency is of god who has made us able ministers of the new covenant not of the letter but of the spirit but did we not already conclude with aspect number one that the new covenant has not and will not be actualized or fulfilled until israel signs off on it indeed we did and we still hold to that yet christ having provided his part of the new covenant is not for nothing simply because israel has not embraced it that redemptive act christ provided is available to all whosoever will embrace it as an act of their will the new covenant in its first aspect is corporate that is a national provision for israel as a state and they are the covenant people and they alone bear this national relationship to god which sadly they have spurned but that redemptive work is graciously applied to all gentiles who completely apart from the new covenant have the redemptive work of christ applied to them by faith at the same time this believing body of gentiles though not covenantal benefit from what christ provided for members of his spiritual body of which he is the head we have our own position called the mystery as opposed to covenant ephesians chapters two and three as well as colossians chapter one spell this out ever so clearly israel and the new covenant by insisting on a consistent literal interpretation of the wording used in jeremiah's new covenant promise found in chapter 31 we automatically disavow the figurative interpretation given to it by the majority of what is loosely called christendom this christendom consists of what is commonly referred to as catholicism and protestantism these two large bodies while they have their differences generally agree that the new covenant prophesied by jeremiah in reality is actually speaking of the christian church never mind that

[61 : 57] clear-cut language employing the names of israel and judah are used and that those appear to be the recipients of the new covenant in reality say they they are not but the real meaning is the church realize if you will that this interpretation held as we said by the majority of those called christian has been in place for at least seventeen or eighteen hundred years placing the adoption of that position only one to two hundred years after the death of christ that is a very long-standing traditional position to overcome and it has not been overcome but remains the party line for most christians worldwide this as mentioned earlier remains one of the principal obstacles that divide christendom truth be told most christians who are a part of that majority position that is just those who sit in the pews don't even know of it nor understand it they just fall in line with whatever their official church leaders tell them as to what they should believe after all many reason shouldn't those things be left to the religious experts who know all about those things so even as we defer to the experts to tell us what we should know and believe we do this with the other professions be they medicine law architecture or whatever why shouldn't we do that with religion just leave it to the experts well why you shouldn't for starters is the fact that our relationship or lack thereof is to a personal god who has granted each of us a personal will or volition thus we are all accountable to this personal god for the decisions we make about him and our relationship to him it will not do on the day of our great individual and personal accounting before him to simply say i only followed what my religious experts told me actually that was the same kind of policy in place during our lord's earthly visit in the first century recall if you will jesus said the so-called religious experts in the jewish establishment of that day he called blind leaders of the blind in matthew 15 so how do you know that christianity clarified is not simply the same thing you don't that's why you need to be a borean like those in act 17 and check out everything you hear with the word of god it is absolutely critical that you do so further clarifying those aspects part one the two aspects or dual components of the new covenant are so very critical we see the need to revisit them aspect number one or the first component realized by the death of christ consisted of his being the party of the first part in the creating of the new covenant prophesied by jeremiah this we believe to have been the promise made to israel it was a gracious follow-up on the part of god and it was despite israel's miserable failure to abide by the terms of the first covenant that god made with them through moises this new covenant would be contrary to the first in that divine provision for keeping it would be provided by god as opposed to israel's ability and obedience for keeping it a consistent hermeneutic in interpreting the new covenant requires the recipients of the new covenant to be the same people as the recipients of the covenant of moises and the law in fact it is

this that makes the new covenant new the fact that it follows the first that jeremiah definitely defines as the covenant which i made with their fathers when i took them out of egypt now who else could that possibly be but israel and the old covenant given through moises well how then could the new covenant possibly be called new if it referred to no former first covenant recipients but to an entirely different group of people altogether namely the christian church we conclude it could not after all words must mean something logic and consistency must count for something so to reiterate despite our views being contrary to the majority party line for nearly the past two thousand years we must maintain the concept that the provision christ made for the new covenant was for israel and intended to be corporate or national jesus in his death was providing his part for entering into that new covenant with israel as a nation and it was with national israel alone the first covenant was made via moises and it will be with national israel alone with whom the new covenant will be made through israel's messiah like previous covenants two parties are involved it constitutes an agreement it is a pact or a deal if you will entered into with the agreeing parties signing on to the terms of the covenant in christ's death he was saying he established the part necessary for offering the covenant to israel what remains is for israel to do likewise by embracing jesus as their messiah thus ratifying or completing the new covenant to this day of course israel has not done so further clarifying those aspects part two we labeled the substitutionary death of christ as serving a dual purpose truth be told we are confident to serve a lot more than that yet for our present purpose of clarification we are focusing on these two aspects elements or components associated with his death and the first we described as providing the very basis or setting forth god's part and offering the new covenant to israel that was god's part of the covenant it was the provision of his son who would be the mediator and the very basis of there being a new covenant provided after his having done so it would then be up to israel to agree to that covenant by ratifying it as a nation this of course they have not done to this day but they shall according to zechariah 12 10 as the entire

remnant of israel that remains coming to terms with the very one their ancestors rejected 2000 years ago however despite israel's rejection of their messiah it does not follow the death of christ has been for naught for in his very provision of himself for man's sin he not only created the basis for extending to israel the new covenant but he as well secured the redemption of the entire human race this we declared to be aspect or component number two in the sacrifice of christ but for all excluding israel this is not covenantal nor is it at all national it is personal the redemptive work of christ is offered to people as individuals giving rise to christ being one's personal savior aspect number two and herein lies the dual nature of christ death on the one hand it provided the basis for israel's new covenant being offered per jeremiah 31 31 and on the other hand the basis for extending the good news of the grace of god to all of humanity outside of jewry simply based on one's personal faith in christ as their savior all we can say is hallelujah what a savior and to be sure an event of the magnitude of the substitutionary death of the son of god you may be sure accomplished far more than we have noted here but for the present these two facets or components loom very large in the revealed plan and program of god god is making good on his promises made to israel his chosen people and he is at the same time making provision for all others outside of israel in essence god has left out absolutely no one neither nationally nor personally but has graciously extended reconciliation to all conditional again upon the exercise of that volition given us all allowing for our placing our personal faith in jesus christ you've just heard another session of christianity clarified with marv wiseman preview of upcoming volume 41 few things serve to explain the numerous differences that divide sincere christians throughout the world as the very issues we are considering now and these differences have been in place for hundreds of years and some of them for thousands in addition it may also safely be said that every one of them is linked to the issue of hermeneutics that is interpretation the art and science of interpreting the bible and this is precisely why we spent so much time previously and presently dealing with this art and science of hermeneutics to repeat the old adage as true now as it has been for a long time you can make the bible say whatever you want it to say it's all in how you interpret it also in addition we will be taking time to explore the rationale often lurking behind the ideas that many set forth of an interpretive practice because we need to know not only the positions taken that are different from what we have been proposing but we also need to know how these who differ from us have reached their position because these are not ignorant brethren nor are they insincere in their conclusions most who differ with us in these issues of interpretation are nonetheless true believers in

Christ hence they are certainly due the courtesy and kindness that we would extend to those who do agree with us because disagree as we might there is no cause for those on either side to be demeaning or unkind to the opposites rather we need to understand them and how and why they reach the conclusions opposite to ours everyone deserves to be understood even if we do not agree with their conclusions and not only that but knowing the conclusions of the other side and how they reach them should only strengthen the conviction we have regarding our own position and allow us to articulate it all the more convincingly either that or that their arguments are so powerful and they override ours that they end up winning us over to their position but that should not be a problem if we are all about the pursuit of truth and the willingness to follow truth wherever it leads us so in our upcoming volume 41 of

Christianity Clarified we intend to treat issues that are beyond our calling them important they are issues that will in some cases truly alter some of your previously held positions they certainly did that in my case about 45 years ago and we are convinced that in the main many who hold positions contrary to what we are setting forth are doing so because they honestly embrace a number of faulty assumptions and upon these assumptions that I think we will reveal and refute certain doctrinal positions have come forth and then add to those the power and influence and time and tradition and one can easily see where these have come from and how and why they believe as they do today you will find this I believe to be riveting and revealing and

[76 : 02] I trust it will allow you to connect a lot of dots that were perhaps previously disconnected without making much sense so you may address us by email or snail mail or telephone at the numbers on the face of this CD these CDs are provided free of charge no strings attached through the generosity and kindness of Grace Bible Church it was they who established the Barbara Wiseman memorial fund to make these and other materials available to the public so this is Pastor Marv Wiseman saying thank you so much for being a part of our ongoing endeavor to clarify Christianity may the Lord richly bless you