

# Christianity Clarified Volume 41

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

The ongoing pursuit of truth. The current sessions of Christianity Clarified are now entering a zone that might well be likened to a theological minefield.

Because there are potential explosions with every step taken. Do we have any guarantee that we are armed with a map that locates the precise location of those mines so we may avoid them?

Not at all. So what makes us think we can avoid the same kind of missteps we have seen others make? Missteps we have tried to identify and will try to identify to expose as errors.

Do we have some guarantee we can avoid them and assure you that all we teach is completely accurate? Not at all. And we are careful not to offer any such guarantees.

[ 1 : 06 ] Because, be reminded, nothing we say is true because you heard it on Christianity Clarified. Nothing is true because some preacher says it is. A thing that is true is true because of its inherent truthfulness and its correspondence to reality.

Truth is not determined by taking a poll. History is replete with examples of majority opinions being proved wrong. And the same can be said for minority opinions.

Our only fully reliable depository of truth lies with God himself and his revealed word, the Bible. And even then, it is subject to interpretation.

And that's the reason we spent so much time in the field of hermeneutics, the art and science of interpreting the Bible. So, the wisest thing we can do is to imitate those Bereans in Acts 17, whom Dr. Luke describes as noble.

Because they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether the things spoken to them by the Apostle Paul were true or not. Think of that. If the very man dubbed by God himself and selected to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, if even Paul had to subject his teaching to validation by the word of God, how can any lesser person with a lesser calling not be subject to the same?

[ 2 : 26 ] So, be reminded, we are now engaging in an area we have labeled faulty assumptions. And we have asserted that many doctrinal positions taken by those in the past were based on their faulty or erroneous assumptions.

And with that, we must also admit that we today, in our 21st century, are so much better positioned to spot those faulty assumptions than were they when they made them.

We now have all the history they did not have when they made them, and it is far easier with 20-20 vision and hindsight to see the errors made of others in times gone by than it is for us to see our own errors here in the present.

We ought to admit that had we lived in the times they did, under the circumstances they did, without all of the advantages we now have observed from history, we might very well have fared no better with our conclusions than they did with theirs.

So, while we reject some of their conclusions as based on faulty assumptions, they nonetheless passed on to us many priceless truths we can and should fully embrace.

[ 3 : 38 ] And just which or which is currently getting underway right here on Christianity Clarified, and it will be eye-opening upcoming.

Revisiting Interpretation and Application It was earlier pointed out that most of the differences of doctrine that exist today in Christendom are due to the different interpretations of Scripture.

Honest believers, with good intentions, simply have arrived at different meanings of key passages.

And when these well-intentioned persons are respected as key leaders among Christians, their views are often adapted as authoritative, and they soon become deeply entrenched among the faithful.

If only sincerity were the only requirement for arriving at the meaning of Scripture. But it is not. And while sincerity is an undisputed virtue, it does not guarantee one has arrived at the correct interpretation of a given passage.

And neither is there a guarantee of accuracy, because one can say, Well, I know this is the true meaning of this passage, because I have prayed about it, and this is the meaning God revealed to me in answer to my prayers.

[ 5 : 03 ] But what then shall we say about two other brethren, both godly individuals, who also prayed about the same passage, only to have God revealed different meanings to them?

Something or someone is wrong here, and it is not God. And please, let's not try to beg off by saying, Well, the passage means different things to different people.

The Scriptures cannot be confined to merely one meaning. This means the passage may be saying different things to different people, and that way nobody has to be wrong.

They can all be right. Isn't that wonderful? No, it is not wonderful. It is utter, absolute nonsense.

While it is true, a given passage may well have numerous applications that may illustrate important points.

A given passage does not have multiple meanings. It has but one meaning, and that is the meaning the writer intended to convey to those to whom he was writing, usually well established by the context of the passage in question.

[ 6 : 14 ] It is hoped you recall the importance associated with the law of context covered in past sessions of Christianity clarified. The application and illustration of a given passage may be several, but the meaning of the passage, the interpretation, is singular.

Were this not the case, the Bible would be at the mercy of the fancies and imaginations of whoever reads it, even those with great sincerity of soul and purpose.

This requires us to pursue the profitable practice of the right division of the word of truth, as relayed by Paul to Timothy in his last letter, wherein the soon-to-be-executed apostle offered solemn advice to his young protege.

Said Paul to Timothy in 2.15, Study, exercise diligence to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

You will soon see misinterpretation and confusion dispelled in our next sessions as we undertake the right division of the church. That's next.

[ 7 : 24 ] Differences in Doctrine A Handbook of Denominations is the title of a book compiled by Frank S. Mead.

As of its seventh edition, published in 1980, it had sold over a quarter of a million copies. We may be sure, since 1980 to the present, many additional copies have been sold.

In it, more than 250 religious bodies in the United States alone are listed, along with a brief history of each and the doctrine that describes those listed.

There is what we are after. The doctrine. The word doctrine simply means teaching. It is doctrine, or the things taught as truth, that distinguishes each of these 250 religious bodies from one another.

Many have very similar or even identical teachings like others in the group, while many also differ radically from other groups listed. The question automatically raised is, are all these diverse groups really that different?

[ 8 : 37 ] One from the others, that they can't do a better job of getting together? It does confirm the objection many have to doctrine, and that is, doctrine divides people.

Well, it does. And this listing mentioned is proof positive. But while it is true that doctrine does divide, it is equally true that doctrine unites.

Those groups with similar or identical doctrines come together and form their own communions, denominations, conventions, synods, and associations.

Still, why all the differences? How and why did those at the beginning of those denominations, being founded, arrive at the doctrinal differences that distinguish them from others?

More than anything else, it was due to the individual interpretation of Scripture. In cases where doctrine was not the issue, it was due primarily to personality differences that cause people to align with one leader as opposed to another.

[ 9 : 45 ] Among the 250 groups, all the major denominations of Catholic and Protestant were listed, along with Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Adventists, and other lesser groups.

Many are united with the particular group merely because they were born and reared in it. Others belong to the group they do because of the particular doctrines they hold, usually in sincerity and honest conviction.

Convictions based on what? Based on their belief, the Bible teaches the doctrines held by the particular group they belong to. Yet, with all the different doctrines and interpretations of the same passages of Scripture, one thing should become readily apparent.

Somebody has to be wrong. Doctrinal conclusions from the same passage in the Bible that contradict each other makes it intuitively obvious.

Somebody is wrong. Each, of course, would say, well, it isn't us, it's those other folks. We will pursue this upcoming as we deal with how it is that doctrine is developed.

[10:57] It will be eye-popping. How Doctrine Develops In the vast majority of cases, particularly in the Western world, it is the Bible that comprises the chief source of doctrinal beliefs.

For some, the Bible alone is the authority that determines their doctrine. Others make the Bible to be but one source for their doctrinal persuasions, while they assign an equal place of authority to tradition and teachings by men outside the Bible.

In approaching the Bible as one sole authority for faith and practice, the main issue then becomes a matter of interpretation. How one interprets key passages of Scripture will determine the doctrine that is developed from it.

This brings to the forefront that upon which we spend a great deal of time in the field of hermeneutics, the art and science of interpreting the Bible. This extensive series began with volume 25 in Christianity Clarified and extends well into the several succeeding volumes, each consisting of 20 separate segments.

As a result of our attempts to employ and follow sound hermeneutical principles, doing so has convinced us that many interpreters in time past reached erroneous conclusions.

[12:26] These erroneous doctrinal conclusions were the basis for the doctrines they arrived at and were then adopted by their faithful followers.

And while many of their conclusions were sound and deserving of being sound doctrine, others were not. Yet they became entrenched as sound doctrine anyway and they persist under that guise to this very day.

How did this happen? It happened because the leader or leaders interpreting the passages in question based their conclusions on what we are calling faulty assumptions.

They assumed a certain thing they read was believed to be true and proceeded to build and expand upon it. These were honorable men and they labored under honest convictions that their assumptions and conclusions were true.

Sometimes they were and sometimes they were simply not true at all. Yet, despite their error, they were honestly propagated as true and worthy of being embraced by all the faithful.

[13:38] The problem was, they were not worthy of being embraced by the faithful. But the faithful, with complete confidence in their leaders, unwittingly embraced the errors anyway.

Such doctrines, in many circles, continue to be believed to this very day. And having done so for the past several hundred or even thousands of years, means those faulty assumptions that developed into doctrine have been set in concrete.

They have been believed by so many for so long, the very idea of their not being true is unthinkable. Still, in some cases, this is precisely how doctrine came to be.

It began with a faulty assumption. And this reality has plagued both Protestant and Roman Catholic theology and doctrine, as we shall begin to see upcoming.

Beware the Faulty Assumption All throughout human history, beliefs have been established, positions have been taken, doctrine has been determined, lives have been lost, causes have been promoted, and yes, even wars have been fought, often based on faulty assumptions made by someone.

[15:01] These are, of course, all related to information that was given, which was not accurate. Yet, it was received and believed to be accurate by those who embraced it.

They, in turn, acted upon that inaccurate information, sometimes with disastrous or even deadly results. All of this dynamic just described relates to faulty or erroneous assumptions.

If we act upon what really is truthful and accurate information, then we are taking a more wise direction than if we have been provided information based merely on an assumption that something

is true.

This becomes especially critical when the future of not only lives may be at stake, but sometimes even an entire nation. As an example, to be sure, the people of Japan and Germany assumed their leaders, Hirohito and Adolf Hitler, were leading their nations in the right path.

But no matter that their assumptions were held in good faith, neither acting in good faith nor being very sincere in what you assume to be true makes it true.

[16:17] So, false assumptions are often based on bad intelligence briefings. It is no different in any area of truth, whether that of nations at war or doctrinal information believed or assumed to be true and then passed on to others who also assumed that information to be true, usually because the source of that information was trusted and respected.

However, as painful experiences can testify, the only truly reliable source of information is God Himself. Where do we find the information that this trusted source provides?

only in the Bible. Ah, yes, but then, even this holy trusted source of the Bible is subject to, dependent upon, an accurate interpretation.

Do you sense what we are dealing with here? It is both simple and complex. It's simple to just go to the Scriptures for your information. However, the complexity arrives in that everything hangs on your interpretation and understanding of the information the Bible provides.

Such emphasis reminds us of the many sessions spent on the subject of hermeneutics. Nope, you just cannot get away from engaging this critical discipline if you desire to take the Bible seriously.

[17:46] As it became so apparent in our extensive study of hermeneutics, there are fixed laws and principles to be followed as one engages in the interpretation of Scripture.

And failure to do this inevitably results in the faulty assumptions we will be dealing with that we promise will be eye-opening.

The New Covenant Faulty Assumption Part 1 Recent segments of Christianity Clarified reveal a very important concept regarding the New Covenant we labeled as two different aspects.

Aspect number one consisted of Christ having provided the basis for the establishment of the New Covenant that God had promised to the nation of Israel. The promises prophesied are found in Jeremiah 31 and 32, Isaiah 55 and 61, Ezekiel 11, 18 and 36, and Hosea chapter 2.

It's called the New Covenant and also an Everlasting Covenant which appear to be one and the same. In all cases, the covenant was between God and Israel exclusively.

[19:06] The first aspect of the covenant provided the covenant for was realized by Christ in His death on the cross. The night before in the upper room He announced the cup of wine He instructed each to drink of was the New Covenant in His blood.

This, of course, harkened back to the earlier first covenant instituted through Moses at Sinai. There it was the shed blood of animals that was used to ratify the covenant.

But this New Covenant of which Christ spoke was to be initiated by His own blood because it was not possible that the blood of animals could take away sin.

Still, Christ doing that only made provision for the New Covenant to be available and offered. It was made available and it was offered, but Israel would have none of it.

They continued rejecting Christ as Israel's Messiah after His resurrection just as they did before His crucifixion. So while the New Covenant was available because Christ had done His part to provide it, Israel refused to do their part by accepting it.

[20:20] The contract or covenant was not implemented unless entered into by both parties, the party offering it and the party accepting it.

Consequently, the covenant Christ described as new has not yet to this day been in force. The New Covenant so far has waited two thousand years to be implemented.

When will it be implemented? When Israel signs off on it by recognizing Jesus as their Messiah and embracing Him. And when will that be?

It will be when and what Jesus referred to when He said, But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

That's when the New Covenant with Israel and Judah will finally be a reality. But for now, even though all of humanity benefits from what Christ wrought in fulfilling His part of the New Covenant, Israel has yet to be its beneficiaries as a nation.

[21:35] The New Covenant provided for but not yet ratified. The party of the second part, Israel, remains absent. The New Covenant Faulty Assumption Part 2 It is Israel and Israel alone that is

designated as people of the covenants.

And they are several. The Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 12, Mosaic covenant of Exodus 20, the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89, the Palestinian covenant of Deuteronomy 31 regarding the land of Israel and the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31, Matthew 26, Hebrews 8, 9, and 10.

All exclusively with the Jewish people. But through the years, even nearly 2,000 years, the faulty assumption was and still is that these covenants include the Christian church.

Well, don't they? No, they do not. Not at all. Such is revealed to be a faulty assumption when considering what is recorded in Luke 1 in the praise song of Zacharias upon the naming of his son John who 30 years later would be John the baptizer.

Zacharias stated that God was performing the promised mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham.

[ 23 : 12 ] In Romans 9, the apostle Paul makes the amazing declaration that he would trade places with his Jewish countrymen by taking their condemnation upon himself and forfeiting his own salvation in doing so if he could.

He extols the many benefits of his Jewish brethren by saying they, Israel, have the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law.

Do you see that? Israel and Israel alone possessed the covenants God gave them. Such is further reinforced in Ephesians 2 where Paul reminds the Gentiles about their historic deficiency before God when he reveals that they, the Gentiles, before they came to faith in Christ were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world.

Did you hear that? Strangers from the covenants of promise? Why were they? Well, because the covenants God made were with Abraham and his seed exclusively.

[ 24 : 28 ] The church which would be comprised of Jew and Gentile, the two becoming one new entity, is not a partaker of Israel's covenants, but they constitute an entirely unheard of, unthought of, new organism, not covenantal at all, but mystery.

It's spelled out ever so clearly in Ephesians 3 and reinforced in Colossians 1 and 2. Please read them. Sadly, the faulty assumption insists on transferring the covenants of Israel to the Christian church when instead they must be rightly divided.

Neither Israel nor the church are shortchanged, but both enjoy the magnanimous grace of God each in their own right. So let's keep them where God put them, the covenants to Israel, the mystery to the church, and both are richly blessed.

The New Covenant Faulty Assumption Part 3 We begin this segment with a very important reminder, and here it is.

In every instance where the word testament is used, as in Old Testament and New Testament, it is clearly a mistranslation. In every single case, the word is, in the Hebrew Old Testament, berith, which literally means covenant.

[ 25 : 51 ] In the New, the word in the Greek is diatheke. The first part of the word is dia, D-I-A, which literally means through. We use this prefix with our English word diameter, which means the distance through, as in the measurement across a circle.

The second part of diatheke is theke, which literally means to cut. Put them together and diatheke means to cut through.

But what does that have to do with the word covenant? Everything! It harkens back to the original covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 15.

As bizarre as this sounds to us today, it was the common way in Abraham's day and culture of establishing a contract or covenant between two parties. Animals were to be cut in two lengthwise as one would cut a side of beef.

Half of the animal parts were placed in a row. Across from these with the space creating a path, the other halves of the animal parts were placed. Then those parties of the covenant sealed or entered into the covenant by walking arm in arm between those pieces.

[ 27 : 09 ] It was a most solemn way of saying, May what has happened to these animals also happen to either of the parties entering into this covenant should they fail to honor its terms.

This was the culture of Abraham's day and God condescended to accommodate Abraham. This was called the cutting of a covenant. Berith in the Hebrew and diatheke in the Greek.

Today, in our modern culture, we forego the slaying of animals and simply draw up a written contract which both parties sign on the dotted line, thus obligating each to the terms spelled out in the contract to which they agreed.

In no case, whether old or new, should the words berith or diatheke ever be translated as testament. But they are, in fourteen different places, all in what we call our New Testaments, but in actuality is nothing of the sort.

Rather than the New Testament, it is instead the New Covenant. Now, is this all so much ado about nothing? Merely the splitting of hairs? Well, many would think so.

[ 28 : 22 ] What's the big deal whether translated covenant or testament makes no difference? Popular writer Mark Twain was answering a question that arose after he explained how important it was to use just the right word as opposed to almost the right word.

And when asked the difference between a right word and an almost right word, he explained the difference is like that between lightning and lightning bug. We will see that prove true between the almost right word and the right word in Testament and Covenant upcoming.

Hang on to your seat. The New Covenant Faulty Assumption Part 4 The previous session of Christianity Clarified emphasized the faulty assumption behind believing the New Covenant to have already become a reality.

Also emphasized was the fact that what is by nearly all understood to be the New Testament is in reality the New Covenant, not the New Testament.

The unfortunate use of the word Testament tends to separate it from the word covenant, the term Jesus used when he referred to the cup of wine as being the New Covenant in his blood.

[ 29 : 38 ] What he meant was he was providing the basis for the covenant instituted by Moses in Exodus 20 to be superseded by the New Covenant. This New Covenant of which Jesus spoke would be the fulfillment of that which God promised through Jeremiah in chapter 31.

This New Covenant would come with a supernatural ability enabling the nation of Israel to keep it, rather than violate it, as they so often did with the original covenant God gave through Moses.

The contrast between these covenants was the difference between failure and success. And, ever so clearly, this New Covenant was being provided exclusively for the nation of Israel, as was the first covenant through Moses.

Both constituted divine laws given for the obedience and benefit of the nation of Israel, completely excluding non-Jews who were, of course, Gentiles that comprised the vast majority of earth's population, then and now.

So, Gentiles are not and never were under the obligations of the law of Moses in the Old Covenant, or, for that matter, under the law of the New Covenant that would supersede the Old.

[ 31 : 01 ] Well, what then was the basis for Gentile compliance? What laws were the Gentiles under? A very key and familiar verse in Romans 2 tells us.

Here, the inspired Apostle Paul informs us in verse 14, For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another.

When Paul says the Gentiles do not have the law, he means the law God gave through Moses exclusively for the Israelites. God never gave his law to the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, nor to any other people, only Israel.

But these, as well as all others apart from Israel, did have the moral content of the law of Moses written on their hearts. Who wrote it there?

God wrote it there, and he did so in the heart of every human being. It consisted of a knowledge between right and wrong and included a conscience to reveal one's guilt.

[ 32 : 18 ] The Jews had the law of Moses, and the Gentiles had the moral essence of that law God put in their hearts. So neither Jew nor Gentiles were without divine law, and both were accountable to it.

The New Covenant Faulty Assumption Part 5 The essence of the misunderstanding regarding the New Covenant lies in the faulty assumption that it was the death of Christ that enacted the New Covenant.

His death did not put the New Covenant in force, but merely provided the basis for it. It would then be presented to Israel for their acceptance, and then it would be enacted if they accepted.

Remember, as it was with the first covenant of Moses, the commandments God gave were not imposed upon Israel, but were presented or offered to Israel for their acceptance. God told them if they would accept His laws and obey Him, then they would be His people, and He would be their God. Their response was, as indicated in Exodus 24, when they said, All that the Lord has said will we do.

[ 33 : 36 ] They, as a nation, signed off on the covenant God made with them, and it was then ratified or inaugurated by being sealed with the blood of animals.

Christ, in Luke 22, told His apostles that it would be His blood that would provide the basis for the new covenant. But as it was with the first covenant through Moses, Israel would sign off on it by accepting the terms of the new covenant.

The essence of that, of course, was that Jesus the Messiah provided His own blood to make the new covenant possible, since the blood of bulls and goats would not suffice for the taking away of sin.

The blood of the animals could atone or cover sins, but not take them away. That was why the animals were offered year by year on the Day of Atonement known as Yom Kippur.

But when John the Baptist introduced Jesus to Israel as their Messiah in chapter 1, he was referred to as one who would take away the sins of the world.

[ 34 : 44 ] Hebrews 8, 9, and 10 make the distinction between the Old and New Covenants and between the blood of animals and the blood of Christ ever so clear. Jesus was presented to the nation of Israel on their national holiday of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, when Peter, the chief spokesman, delivered his dramatic message to the Jewish people, claiming Jesus was sent from God to be Israel's Messiah.

But instead of embracing Him as your Messiah, Peter told them, you arranged for His crucifixion, but God raised Him from the dead. Three thousand Jews, probably a small number compared to all that were present, acknowledged Israel's sin and were personally repentant, which led to their being baptized with John's baptism that they had earlier rejected.

But do not make another faulty assumption by thinking Israel had come on board. They as a nation certainly had not, and the three thousand that did constituted a small minority.

The Jewish religious establishment continued their refusal of Jesus as their Messiah and would soon begin the persecution of their fellow Jews who accepted Him.

And this plot continues to thicken. An Interim Between the Covenants Part 1 Preceding sessions and their attendant scriptures fully attested to the presence and importance of different covenants between God and the Jewish people.

[ 36 : 26 ] Some, like the Abrahamic and Davidic, were between God and those individuals. Others, like the Mosaic, the Palestinian, and the New Covenant, were with the entire nation of Israel.

The most important and key feature of all the covenants is their exclusive Jewishness. A major faulty assumption on the part of many Christians dating as far back as the 3rd or 4th century was to assume God has changed the beneficiaries of those covenants from the Jews to Christians.

This faulty assumption is to this day embraced by the majority of Christian denominations, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. It has and still does present enormous confusion in Christendom and perhaps as much as anything else keeps Christians seriously divided.

But this is merely one faulty assumption about the covenants. There is another that is embraced by nearly all of Christendom, whether Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant, and it too produces great confusion.

It is the faulty assumption that upon the termination of the Old Covenant, the New Covenant automatically began. It appears this assumption relates to the perceived necessity of there being a covenant of some kind enforced continually.

[ 37 : 53 ] But there is no reason for insisting on this other than that of a faulty assumption.

Generally, it is agreed, the Old Covenant given through Moses at Sinai in Exodus 20 came to an abrupt end when Christ died and the veil in the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

It is related in Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23. That veil separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place in the temple. So recall, if you will, the Most Holy Place was where the Ark of the Covenant was placed, and no man was permitted to approach it or even see it except the High Priest once a year on the Jewish Day of Atonement called Yom Kippur.

When Jesus died, that veil was rendered in two, exposing the Ark and all else in the Most Holy Place. This area was the very dwelling place of God who said He would in essence reside among His people on the mercy seat between the overarching cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant. For anyone else to even view this sacred spot but the High Priest once a year meant instant death. But upon the death of Christ, this is now all exposed.

It appears to be God's way of saying He was finished with that entire setup. Now, because of the substitutionary death of Christ, the way of access to God is thrown wide open, and anyone may come to God completely apart from the ritual and rigid way of approach through the Old Covenant. [ 39 : 29 ] The Old is over, but does that mean the New has then begun? We shall see upcoming. It's another faulty assumption.

An Interim Between the Covenants, Part 2 Under current challenge is what has been identified as another faulty assumption that is responsible for great confusion among Christendom worldwide. It is the assumption that the New Covenant began upon the end of the Old Covenant, and it certainly does appear that upon the death of Christ, when the veil was torn from top to bottom in the Jewish Temple, the Old Covenant was then done away with.

Probably most Christians, whatever their denominational stripe, would agree. Where the faulty assumption appears to have been made is then in believing that the end of the Old Covenant meant the automatic beginning of the New Covenant.

And well, for sure, something did begin there, and it was the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself as announced in Romans 5 and 2 Corinthians 5.

[ 40 : 43 ] This was in keeping with the way of access to God being opened wide whereby man could come to God without any of the rituals of Judaism. This was described as one of two important aspects of the New Covenant.

It made salvation available to all based upon the propitiation gained by the death of Christ for the entire world. Paul spoke of this as he preached the gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike, referring to himself as an able minister of the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3.

This assuredly is one aspect of the New Covenant, and all of humanity is the beneficiary of it. But there is another aspect of it that remains exclusively for the Jewish people, as prophesied in Jeremiah 31, Matthew 26, Hebrews 8, 9, and 10, as well as others.

And these all refer to the actual implementation or fulfillment of the New Covenant with Israel we have referred to as the second aspect of the New Covenant. The text appear to be saying in numerous places that the whole of humanity is a beneficiary of one aspect of the New Covenant in that Christ's death was for the entire world, but the actual and full implementation of the New Covenant, which is for Israel exclusively, has yet to be a reality.

It remains future and will be realized when Jesus said it would, when he drinks that wine with the redeemed of Israel, after they, the Jewish remnant of world survivors, finally embrace him as their Messiah.

[ 42 : 24 ] Consult, please, Zechariah 12, 10, and Matthew 26, 29. Most assuredly, that has not yet happened, and such can only mean there is a gap, a very significant gap between aspect one of the New Covenant benefiting the entire world and aspect two, the New Covenant benefiting Israel in particular.

That gap began with the death of Christ and continues to this very day. The gap will not be closed until the New Covenant is fully implemented, but as of now, it is only partially implemented, and it gives us the basis for preaching the gospel to all, because Christ died for all as aspect number one of the New Covenant, insist.

Are there other examples of these gaps? Indeed, there are, and they are next. The Interim Between the Covenants, Part 3 It has been suggested that a significant gap of time, so far, about 2,000 years, exists between the ending of the Old Covenant, which appears to have been at Calvary, and the full implementation of the New Covenant, first prophesied by Jeremiah in chapter 31.

And we can easily see how one might never have considered this possibility early on, and had we today lived during that first, second, or maybe third century, we may very well have made the same faulty assumption they made, by merely assuming when the Old Covenant ended, the new began. We admitted one aspect of it did, and that was the redemption provided for all humanity, according to 2 Corinthians 5 and Romans 5.

[ 44 : 17 ] And to say a gap, now going on 2,000 years, exists, so that the New Covenant has yet to be fully implemented in order to be fulfilled with Israel, does seem completely arbitrary to those who

oppose this idea of a gap.

They may well respond by saying, now wait a minute, one cannot merely insert a gap willy-nilly into a biblical situation just to make it all fit one's particular interpretation.

Well, with that, we should all heartily agree. But that prohibition does not preclude the fact that such gaps in Scripture do occur, and more often than one might think.

A prominent such gap is obvious in the full implementation of the very salvation we who are in Christ enjoy. Did Christ pay in full the price needed to secure our redemption?

Indeed he did. Jesus did pay it all. There is nothing yet remaining that he has to do to make our salvation a reality. But, have the total benefits of the redemptive work of Christ become a reality?

[ 45 : 32 ] No, they have not. While the price of our full redemption has been paid, the application of it has not yet been made in full. And what do we mean by that?

Only that we who are in Christ remain a work in progress, physically at least. While our human spirit became regenerated at the point of salvation, and we were made a new creation in Christ the moment we received him as our Savior, it was, however, only our spirit that was regenerated and made new and alive to God.

our physical bodies remained unchanged. Why? Well, because the redemptive work of Christ has been applied only to our immaterial spirit, while our material body remained unchanged.

There is a gap between the two. Right now, we who are in Christ have received only the down payment on the totality of our redemption. The Bible calls this the first fruits or earnest part of the transaction of redemption.

While Christ paid the full price for our redemption, it has not been fully applied to us. Certainly has not. Such is an important and undeniable gap that Romans 8 makes even clearer.

[ 46 : 50 ] And it's up next. The Interim Between the Covenants Part 4 Gaps, gaps, and more gaps.

Whatever is this business of gaps all about? Well, it's all about the very strategic distance that God has put between certain key events of Scripture. And there are several.

Another such gap between key events is built into one verse of Scripture. And we speak of Isaiah chapter 9 in the oft-quoted sixth verse. Writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is how all authentic Scripture came to be, here is what Isaiah penned, a full 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Here's what he said. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. Clear enough, isn't it? This is a Christmas verse.

But what is going to happen between the time Jesus was born and the next thing Isaiah says about him? Huh. Please listen and see. If the chronological gap we speak of doesn't simply jump off the page at you, and here it comes.

[ 48 : 05 ] Isaiah continued saying, And the government shall be upon his shoulder. Really? Has any government of any nation been upon the shoulders of Jesus from the time of his birth to the present?

Back to his birth, there are things about him that do issue forth from his birth. And among them are these. Jesus will be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

All these names are assigned to him to this very day, at least by those called Christians. But here comes that gap again. Isaiah continues, Of the increase or expansion of his government there shall be no end.

And upon the throne of David and upon his kingdoms to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. By no stretch of the imagination can these characteristics be declared as fulfilled.

And while God's integrity and the sure word of prophecy declares they will one day be precisely, literally realized as Isaiah says, they certainly have not been.

[ 49 : 16 ] Efforts to spiritualize the text and force some kind of fulfillment upon the text that plays fast and loose with the plain meaning of words and language do a serious disservice to the very purpose of Scripture.

And that purpose is to communicate truth in understandable terms, not in fuzzy, esoteric, and mysterious meanings that demand creative imaginations.

What it is, of course, is plain, simple, and straightforward. But it's another gap. The gap between Jesus being born and Jesus ruling the government of the globe is 2,000 years and counting.

To deny the literality of the rule and reign of Christ over the government of the earth and to deny the literality of the throne of David upon which he will sit to do it also requires denying the literality of the child being born and the son being given.

All these events demand the consistency of being fulfilled just as the text records and the gap between his birth and his ruling is very literal also and just as stated a 2,000 year gap and counting. [ 50 : 31 ] The Interim Between the Covenants Part 5 The subject at hand is gaps. And we have posited the reality of gaps existing in Scripture and in no case are they more obvious and prominent than in prophecy.

For instance, God told Eve that her seed or offspring would be bruised by the serpent but her seed would deliver a mortal crushing blow upon the serpent.

And the gap existing from the time the prophecy and promise was made in Genesis 3.15 to Eve was 4,000 years. Her seed would be her offspring Jesus.

But Eve surely had no idea it would be 4,000 years away fulfilled in Bethlehem when Jesus would be born. And consider another gap. Currently, whenever one comes to faith in Christ his human spirit is regenerated a la Titus 3.5 and he becomes alive spiritually to God.

That's the new birth. Yet, despite his spirit being regenerated his physical body was not. And physically speaking we are still going to die even though we have been made alive eternally in spirit.

[ 51 : 49 ] Romans 8 reveals when our physical bodies have redemption applied. Listen to the text. Paul said, For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

And not only they but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the spirit. even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption that is the redemption of our body.

This glorious concept ties in with 1 Corinthians 15 where more gaps are present. Right now we have a corruptible physical body that is mortal as well.

But the promise is our corruptible body will put on incorruption and this mortal body will put on immortality. But between these there is a gap.

And the gap is the amount of time that lapses between your spiritual life that began when you came to Christ and the time your physical body is made incorruptible and immortal which it certainly isn't now.

[ 52 : 56 ] This according to 1 Corinthians 15 52 occurs at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.

But for the present it's only our immaterial spirit that has been changed through regeneration while we continue residing in a physical body that is unchanged.

This promise is reinforced by Philippians 3 where Paul reminds us that we look for our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our corruptible body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.

And do you not see an inescapable gap between these two times? It's the gap between our spiritual salvation and the glorification of our physical body.

And 1 John 3 appears to reinforce this when it says Beloved now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

[ 53 : 59 ] The gap is obvious and undeniable. A gap is the key to prophecy. What many scholars call the key or linchpin of prophecy is in the book of Daniel chapter 9 verses 24 through 27 centering upon the message given Daniel by the angel Gabriel.

Daniel is informed that Israel is to be the focus of a future span of time encompassing a total of 70 weeks. The Hebrew makes it clear he is not speaking of 70 weeks according to our calendars which would total 490 literal days or merely one year and 125 days.

In Hebrew 70 weeks literally means 70 periods of 7 years each or a total of 490 years not days. The term used is actually 70 sevens in reference to years and not days. The 70 prophetic weeks are divided into three segments.

They consist of 7 weeks meaning 49 years and 62 weeks meaning 434 years and 1 week meaning 7 years.

[ 55 : 14 ] These three all comprise the grand total of 70 weeks or 490 years. The first segment of 49 years would be the length of time prophesied as necessary to rebuild Jerusalem since it had been destroyed earlier by the Babylonians.

This would be a massive construction project authorized by the Persians allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem rebuild and fortify it as would be fulfilled under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Add to those 49 years the number of years that would pass from the time the Messiah of Israel would be cut off or executed under the Romans and one arrives at a total of 483 years or 69 prophetic weeks.

But the prophecy delivered by Gabriel calls for a total of 490 prophetic years and we are left with one week or a period of seven years that are missing in the equation.

Verse 29 reveals the missing week of seven years and it is the critical key to it all. So for 69 weeks or 483 years of the prophecy have already been fulfilled.

[ 56 : 29 ] They began as verse 25 states when the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was ordered and they ended when Jesus the Messiah was cut off in death. But this accounts for only 69 of the 70 weeks and the description given as to the contents of the 70th week are revealed in verses 26 and 27 describing the prince that shall come to be none other than the Antichrist.

Clearly, these events have not yet occurred leaving only 69 weeks that have actually transpired and one week of seven years yet to be realized. We are not living in the 69th week that's already passed nor are we living in the 70th week which yet remains future.

So where are we? We are between the 69th week in history and the 70th week which is prophecy but we are not a part of either. We are in a gap of an indefinite period of time between the 69th and 70th week.

The church age, the dispensation of the grace of God, not the dispensation of Israel. It's simply another of several gaps in scripture. Judaism is covenantally exclusive.

When one examines scripture, whether Old or New Testament, every time a covenant is mentioned it involves God covenanting with those of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[ 57 : 57 ] The Apostle Paul affirms this in Romans 9 when he describes his fellow Jewish countrymen as those to whom pertains the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises.

That all of these assets, adoption, glory, covenants, law, services, promises, are extended exclusively to the Jewish people is crystal clear if words mean anything.

And although no reinforcement should be needed, Paul offers it anyway as he does in Ephesians chapter 2. And here he reminds the Gentiles of their former low estate how they as Gentiles were terribly disadvantaged, even desperate, prior to the time they were gloriously elevated through trusting in the substitutionary death of Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul tells them, you Gentiles, prior to the time you came to Christ, you were really in a desperate fix whether you knew it or not. You were, in fact, Paul says, the uncircumcised, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

To say these were in a bad way is an understatement. But actually, such is also the case of every Gentile alive today who has not come to faith in Christ for his salvation.

[ 59 : 32 ] And, of course, like the Gentiles of Paul's day, they today have no idea as to how bad off they truly are. In this text of Ephesians 2, the phrase strangers from the covenants is found.

And why were they? Why were Gentiles strangers from the covenants? Well, simply because Gentiles, or non-Jews, were never included as recipients of any of the covenants God made because they were all made with and for the Jews alone.

Now, this fact really rankles many today. No doubt they see it as discriminatory. And it is. It's discriminatory on the part of God in the same way that when you shower your children with gifts on their birthday, you discriminate against your neighbor's children to whom you gave no gifts.

When God lavished all these benefits listed in Romans 9 and Ephesians 2, which he did not lavish upon Gentiles, he was simply gifting his children.

Sadly, the ignorance that pervades today's culture with its political correctness is beyond hope of understanding any of the spiritual dynamics implemented by the sovereign God of the universe, whose existence some even ignore or deny.

[ 60 : 54 ] Still, the record stands. The covenants and all contained in them are designed to favor and bless Israel, the apple of God's eye, and to whom God refers as Israel, my glory.

It's an unmistakable theme in both the Old and the New Testaments. Judaism's Exclusivism is Ended Under the Covenants being addressed, we have noted the exclusive nature of each of them

by their being extended only to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Jewish people, if you will.

A Gentile could become a Jew and thus be included in all the provisions God made for Israel through the covenants, but in order to do so, he would have to be circumcised and undergo initiatory rites incumbent upon anyone wanting to convert to Judaism.

One might think of Judaism as constituting a kind of religious club or exclusive national organization. Still, any non-Jew that dwelt among pagan idolaters as a Gentile might come to the realization that the God of Israel was in fact the only true God there was, and, having reached that conviction, might then wish to become a proselyte to Judaism.

But to do so involves circumcision for starters. Now, that just might be a deal-breaker for some adult Gentiles. For sure, it would tend to separate those who really meant business as opposed to those who did not.

[ 62 : 35 ] Judaism was not a religion of convenience for sure. That, and all the rest of the law of Moses called the Torah, would be part of the obligation for any Gentile who wished to formally become a proselyte to Judaism and a recipient of all God promised to the Israelites.

But, for a Gentile, apart from that, he was nothing but uncircumcised, without Christ, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

And, as stated earlier, this was a terribly deficient position to be in. But the first two words, found in verse 13 of this second chapter of Ephesians, resound like a glorious and welcome blast of a trumpet, blaring away joyfully, but now!

And, surely, this has to be among the greatest conjunctions of contrast in all the Bible, but now! But now! As opposed to the way it was before, when you Gentiles had all the negative deficiencies stacked up against you, something has occurred to radically change all of that.

And verse 13 goes on to say, But now! In Christ Jesus, you who were formerly far off from God as Gentiles, are brought near by the blood of Christ.

[ 64 : 08 ] The blood of Christ is in reference to the substitutionary death of Christ on Calvary. Christianity, as well as Judaism, is all about sacrifice, substitution, whereby an innocent victim died in the place of the guilty sinner.

This, in large part, is why Judaism is often referred to as the cradle of Christianity. And it is! There are many commonalities between Judaism and Christianity, but none so important and obvious as that of the principle of sacrifice and substitution.

More upcoming. Judaism itself is ended. The previous session of Christianity Clarified revealed the way to God being open to all Gentiles.

And while it is true that the exclusivism of Judaism came to an end with the door of salvation being open to Gentiles, it is also true that Judaism itself came to an end.

Now, whatever is meant by that? Surely, Judaism continues to be practiced by millions of Jews worldwide. How can such a radical thought of Judaism coming to an end be entertained?

[ 65 : 26 ] But it is! And no, I'm not espousing anti-Semitism in any form. The Jewish people remain the sole chosen covenant people of God as the seed of Abraham.

And yes, they still remain as the key ingredient God would use to usher in the kingdom of the Messiah, during which Israel will be the lead nation on earth and all nations will flow into Israel to acknowledge their status.

God will make good on all he has promised to the seed of Abraham. However, Judaism, as the religion, complete with its 633 laws, is defunct and has been since the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom.

That completed work of Christ also brought the rituals of Judaism to an end. The sacrifice of Christ and its finality ended the very core of Judaism that focused on animal sacrifice.

As the book of Hebrews declares so plainly, the finality of the sacrifice of Christ brought an end to the sacrificial system of Judaism. In fact, that supreme work of Christ ended the law's demands for Sabbath-keeping, dietary regulations, and even the clear demand of circumcision that was so deeply ingrained in Judaism.

[ 66 : 45 ] But, what is the common Jewish response to what we have said about Judaism being defunct, no longer necessary or required by God? Well, Jews would say this is the most absurd thing they have ever heard and would likely attribute the whole idea to radical nonsense.

True it is. Millions of Jews, particularly among the Orthodox, continue worldwide to practice what is still labeled as Judaism, and no one doubts their sincerity or their commitment to the historic faith of their fathers.

Yet, the fact and point remains that it is all based on tradition more than anything else. It certainly is not based on any demand from God because all his demands were fully met in the sacrifice of Jesus, their Messiah.

As a result, any Jew who wishes to come to God and find acceptance must come the same way as Gentiles, since now there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, slave or free, male or female. Judaism is practiced since the death of Christ is now reduced to a religious study in futility, fueled by tradition and little else. However, the same is also true of much taking place in Catholicism and Protestantism.

[ 68 : 09 ] Because the Jews do not have a corner on defunct religion, Catholicism and Protestantism come on board as well as we shall see upcoming.

Protestants, Catholics, and Apostates Biblically speaking, while Jews, since the death of Christ, continue to practice Judaism, they do not do so because God requires it, but because they are locked into their traditions.

As has often been said, tradition trumps truth nearly every time. But while Jews are guilty, even if sincere of practicing a defunct religion, the majority of Roman Catholic and Protestants are equally guilty of apostasy.

And by being apostate, it is meant they have departed from the faith once for all delivered to the saints, as Jude stated it in verse 3 of his brief epistle.

A superficial look at much today that is practiced by Catholics and Protestants has little resemblance to what the Bible sets forth as things surely to be believed.

[ 69 : 26 ] beginning with the authority of Scripture itself, nearly every doctrine that once topped the list of their statement of faith has been severely compromised or simply repudiated altogether.

Great educational institutions, rich in history and wealthy in endowments, have long since departed from the very biblical premises upon which they were founded.

This is what is meant by apostasy. It's a compound word in Greek, apo, which means from, and stasis, which means to stand. Together, apostasy means to stand away or fall away from that which was once embraced.

Some render it to fall away or depart from positions previously held. And such is the sad reality of many churches and even whole denominations that no longer hold as valid or even believable the doctrines earlier generations loved, embraced, and eagerly contended for.

There is absolutely no question they have done this. It is not debatable but factual and freely admitted. The question is, why have they done this?

[ 70 : 43 ] What brought on this departure called apostasy? The answer is the same it has always been. It's all about authority. Always has been, always will be.

Men and institutions become apostate because they become more impressed and enamored with human wisdom and intellectualism than they are with the simplicity that is in Christ as set forth in the Bible.

Make no mistake about it, this is the crux of the whole issue. whether one is talking about defunct Judaism or apostates in Romanism and Protestantism.

And be reminded, this issue of authority and who is in charge goes back to Genesis 3 when Mother Eve became more impressed with the authority of the creature than she was with the authority of the Creator.

Eve was the first apostate. She introduced a concept to Adam and apostasy was off and running. And it's still running today and plays havoc with the minds of men who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, changing the truth of God into a lie.

[ 71 : 54 ] It's there in Romans chapter 1. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. A Preview of Volume 42 For those who worked their way through Volumes 26 onward, you will recall the time and effort devoted to hermeneutics.

It was defined as the art and science of biblical interpretation. Numerous laws and principles that govern the interpretation of all types of literature were engaged, but the emphasis was upon how they related to the Bible.

Now we are just entering into what may be regarded as the real payoff for those studies. We've already had just a taste of the issue labeled faulty assumptions, and there is lots more to come. You will see how much that is embraced as doctrine today has its origin in faulty assumptions, which of course led to faulty conclusions.

That is the in turn produced faulty or erroneous doctrine. This by far and away accounts for the 250 plus denominations, conventions, synods, councils, and so on that exist today.

[ 73 : 27 ] Doctrinally speaking, these are all over the map. And while many conclusions reached were based on solid biblical authority, such cannot be said for many other conclusions that were obviously built on faulty assumptions.

false doctrine. Faulty assumptions, when held by men of respect and integrity, often become embraced by the faithful simply out of admiration for those who promoted them.

And that leads to false doctrine. No one can even give a casual reading to the differences in doctrine reached by those 250 different groups without concluding, somebody has to be wrong. And, of course, each denomination or group is quick to agree. Somebody does have to be wrong. But it isn't us. It's those other folks.

And for those naive souls who claim to have little interest in doctrine, they need to realize why doctrine is so critical.

[ 74 : 37 ] It's because duty issues forth from doctrine. Doctrine is teaching. It's what people believe. And it is out of our beliefs that our behavior comes forth.

That's why doctrine is important. It can't be separated from our doing, because our doing is determined by our doctrine. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he warned in chapter 1 of his first letter, and also in chapter 4, to beware of what is contrary to sound doctrine.

And for Timothy to be nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, that Timothy is to give himself to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine, to take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine.

And to Titus, Paul wrote that he was to speak the things which become sound doctrine. And again, in the key 2 Timothy 3 passage, that all Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be mature.

And out of all that list just recited, what led the way in that list? Doctrine. Profitable for doctrine, which simply means the Word of God is profitable, beneficial for imparting doctrine.

[ 76 : 21 ] But back to a core problem. Doctrine must be arrived at by a correct interpretation of what is written. If men make faulty assumptions as to what a given passage means, they will then reach a faulty conclusion, from which faulty doctrine will emerge and then lead to faulty behavior and practice.

You do see, do you not, how all this is vitally connected. And it's what we will be exploring on future volumes of Christianity Clarified, and we promise you some eye-opening revelations that will enable you to, shall we say, connect the dots of Scripture and allow the Bible to make more sense to you than you ever thought possible.

Can't wait. Hope you feel the same. This is Pastor Marv Wiseman for Christianity Clarified.