

# Christianity Clarified Volume 39

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Date: 01 March 2021

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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 Two Administrations The previous volume of Christianity Clarified attempted to show the stark differences that existed between the administrations of law as given by Moses, and the administration of grace as given through the Apostle Paul.

Emphasis was placed on the fact that the law of Moses was intended for the Jew, the nation of Israel alone, whereas the administration of grace was provided for the entirety of humanity, Jew and Gentile.

Both administrations had their origin in God alone, and both were intended for the benefit and blessing of the human recipients. The law of Moses, demanding though it was, nevertheless served as enlightenment and provided for the safety and prosperity of those Jews who obeyed it.

The law was for Israel's own good. The law, as seen earlier, being a reflection of the character and holiness of God, made demands that humans could not meet, due to their sin and moral weakness as a result of the fall.

[ 1 : 19 ]     In an incredible stroke of love and mercy, God made provision for man and his sinfulness, whereby he could still come into favor with God, even though he failed to do so under the law.

Neither the law God wrote on the heart in Romans 2, or the Mosaic law that God gave through Moses. That provision is called grace.

It's an inadequate illustration, but try to think of it this way. Entrance into the very presence and favor of God has a front door and a back door.

The law holds the key to the front door, and will give it to anyone who is worthy and deserving of it. All that requires is the perfection that is equal to and compatible with the character and nature of God.

Any takers? I think not. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Consequently, all are barred from coming to God by way of the law.

[ 2 : 22 ]     Only because God is a God of love, there is a key to the back door. Grace holds the key to the back door, and will give it to those who admit their unworthiness to enter the front door.

Christ himself is that door to the back. We have dealt previously with the concepts of law and grace being administrations, a term we prefer to use rather than dispensations, which is not nearly as understandable.

The law of Moses was the administration under which Israel operated from the time God gave his law through Moses. That administration would be superseded by the administration of grace, provided not merely for the Jew, but for the Jew and Gentile alike.

And out of these two administrations, that were the governing factors for Jews by the law, and then grace that followed for Gentiles and Jews, people as individuals would function.

How were they different, and to what extent do those differences exist today? That will be the focus of our next few studies together on Christianity Clarified.

[ 3 : 32 ] And you are sure to see yourself and your perceived obligations surface in the material presented. So, be prepared to be comforted, perplexed, or agitated, depending on where you are positioned in it all.

Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 1 We have already seen the law of Moses and grace as delivered by Paul to be the two modus operandi for the masses of humanity.

And the masses were just two groups. Group number one consisted of Jews only, to whom the law of Moses was administered. And group number two consisted of Jew and Gentile, or everyone.

And once the law given by Moses became defunct, that is, no longer in force, grace was to be administered to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike.

Because in Christ and under grace, there is no longer any distinction. Yet, to appreciate the new concept of grace, we must reveal the old concept through law, as it was incumbent upon each Jew to practice it while it was in force.

[ 4 : 46 ] Later, we will consider when and how the setting aside of the law of Moses occurred, and why the Jew, to whom the law of Moses was given, never did come up to speed regarding it.

This is truly fascinating content that will enable many to piece together some loose ends that may have been rumbling around in some people's minds for years. Personally, it certainly had that effect for me over 40 years ago.

So, let's take the law of Moses and the Jewish people first. Besides all the lesser details of the law, there was one central, all-compelling issue that provided the very heart and soul of Judaism.

In fact, it even predated the law of Moses given at Sinai. And what was that issue? It was the critical principle of sacrifice. This issue stood head and shoulders above everything else found in the law of Moses.

In fact, an entire tribe of Israel was charged with carrying out all of the many and detailed requirements of the sacrificial system. These were men who were descendants of the tribe of Levi, the third-born son of Jacob.

[ 5 : 59 ] And an entire book of the Torah, or the Pentateuch, called Leviticus, was devoted solely to the priestly functions of the Levites.

What they were to do, how they were to do it, the animals they were to accept for sacrifice, and so on. This all constituted a kind of tutorial for the people of Israel regarding the critical issue of substitution.

That is, an innocent animal being made a sacrifice for a guilty human. The practice of sacrifice was engaged in by many others besides the Israelites, but theirs were not ordained by the true God, nor were their sacrifices offered to God, but to pagan deities of their own making, or those originated by demonic spirits, as Paul alluded to in 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Now, the critical issue is, why and when did the sacrificial system required by God, instituted by Moses to be carried out by the priests, when did that come to an end?

And why? What were the circumstances that prevailed? Was there a precise time of day and date in which it occurred? I think you may already know, but it's upcoming.

[ 7 : 26 ] Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 2 For the individual Jewish person operating under the law of Moses that God gave at Sinai, the whole system of Judaism centered around the concept of substitutionary sacrifice.

It required the death of an innocent animal to atone for or cover the sins of the guilty human. God made it very clear that he takes no pleasure in the multitude of sacrifices made with innocent bulls, lambs, or goats as recorded in Isaiah chapter 1.

Israel's religion had been reduced to mere ritual and tradition, just going through the motions with no true repentance or contrition at all.

Consequently, the Jews had completely lost sight of the real reason for animal sacrifice. It was largely to precondition the people to the whole rationale for the innocent animals being slain, and that was to acclimate the nation to the value and necessity of substitution, that is, the innocent dying in the place of the guilty.

But, where is the justice in that? There isn't any. Justice requires the guilty to be punished or to die for his own sin, not those of an innocent substitute.

[ 8 : 52 ] Then what do you call this, the innocent dying for the guilty? That is called grace. Grace, whereby the guilty does not get the justice he deserves, but he gets the grace he does not deserve.

The thousands of innocent animals sacrificed over hundreds of years by the priests of Israel were all a picture and a forerunner of Christ. It would be Christ as the innocent Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world.

He is what the entire sacrificial system under Moses was actually pointing to, all the while the sacrifices were going on. The entire letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament speaks very plainly and forcibly to this issue.

Chapter 10 in it reminds us, for it was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. All the blood of these animals could do was provide a temporary stopgap measure regarding sin.

Only a covering. Temporary covering, but never the finality that would be provided through removal. This is what John the Baptist was referring to when he introduced Jesus to Israel as their Messiah in John chapter 1.

[ 10 : 11 ] Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This singular event that would find Christ on that Roman cross was what all the thousands of sacrifices for all those hundreds of years was actually pointing to.

Again, Hebrews in the New Testament spells it out in considerable detail, but the Jewish people in rejection of the New Testament deprived themselves of the very truth that could set them free.

Thanks be to God, Not all Jews fail to see the light with which the whole concept of sacrifice came, and the first Jew who ever did was named Saul of Tarsus.

What a revelation! What a revelator! More just ahead. Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 3 We may safely assume there was a specific time on clocks and calendars when the old administration instituted through Moses called the Old Covenant became passé, no longer operative, obsolete, or whatever name you wish to give that denotes a discontinuation.

But we are not informed of such a time, or are we? For your consideration, your attention is addressed to each of the synoptic gospels from Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23.

[ 11 : 40 ] Each records the dramatic tearing, the ripping of the veil in the Jewish temple. This veil, or heavy woven curtain, provided the barrier separating the most holy place from the holy place.

The holy place, an area where the priests stood and ministered, was twice the size of the most holy place, and it contained several items of furniture. The most holy place, half the size of the holy place, had the veil or curtain between them, and there was but one item of furniture there.

This, in the most holy place, was the Ark of the Covenant. It consisted of a box made of wood, roughly two feet wide, by about five feet in length, and two feet high.

The contents of the box were Aaron's rod that budded, the tables of the law, and the golden pot of manna. The lid on the box was called the mercy seat, and it had two overarching angels with extended wings perched on its top.

Between the angels on the lid of the Ark was where God said He would meet with the nation of Israel, who would be represented by the high priest. He must appear by himself, and only one time in each year, called the Day of Atonement, or to the Jews, Yom Kippur.

[ 13 : 00 ] There, on the mercy seat, the high priest would sprinkle blood for his own personal sin, and blood for the entire nation of Israel. This is spelled out in Hebrews chapter 9 as well.

This could only cover or atone for the sins of Israel until the same time next year when the entire ritual must be repeated. It provided no permanence, no closure, or finality, but was an ongoing reminder that Israel's sins were being placed on hold until a permanent remedy that would take away sins rather than merely cover them could be provided.

Jesus did that when He, as sinless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us. With Jesus crying out, It is finished, bowing His head and giving up His spirit, the Gospels tell us that veil in the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

Simultaneously, an earthquake occurred as well, a darkness over all the land. The skeptics tell us that the earthquake was responsible for the rending of the curtain. Others of a scientific bent, however, tell us, had the earthquake torn the temple, the tear would have been from the bottom up.

But Matthew and Mark both specify it was torn from the top to the bottom. They do not say who tore it. We believe we know, which is why the texts are so detailed in their description.

[ 14 : 31 ] More ahead. Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 4 It has been suggested that the precise time of God dispensing with the Old Covenant, that is, setting aside the Law of Moses, came at that very moment the veil in the Jewish temple was torn from top to bottom.

One can hardly believe that three of the four Gospels mentioning this was purely incidental or accidental. It very much appears to be God's way of saying the Old Covenant given through Moses had served its purpose and its purpose was now over.

While one cannot be truly dogmatic about this, it is hard to reach any other conclusion. Such would mean the barrier that separated man from God is now removed.

Christ himself, by his own flesh, is now the veil that separates men from God, according to Hebrews 10, 19 and 20. All, whether Jew or Gentile, now have access to God through Jesus Christ, the very one whose sacrifice was always in God's mind during the offering of thousands of animals over hundreds of years.

Hebrews 10, 14 tells us that Christ, by this one offering of himself, has perfected for all time those who come to God through him. This sacrifice of Christ provided the closure, the permanence that animal sacrifices could never accomplish.

[ 16 : 00 ] So if there were this specific pinpointed time as we believe, do you suppose any of the Jews at that time actually understood that? I am confident they did not. One can easily envision the official Jewish establishment frantically trying to repair and replace that curtain that was torn.

It would never have occurred to them that God was in fact finished with the curtain, the temple, the sacrifices, and the entire priestly system. Their purpose had been served and now with that to which they had pointed becoming a reality, namely, that supreme final sacrifice of Christ accomplished, the old order was no longer valid.

And, while one can see how clearly this appears to us looking back upon all that, it surely did not appear that way at all to those Jews who were living then. And this, the death of Christ, is merely one of such events they were not at all able to put together.

Proving this point, consider, if you will, the statement made in Acts 21 to the apostle Paul by his fellow Jews who were also believers. This is truly eye-opening.

In verse 20, they tell Paul, You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.

[ 17 : 24 ] Believers, that is, in Jesus as their crucified Messiah, and they, as believers, are all zealous for the law. What law?

Well, the law of Moses, of course. It meant these were very much still serious about the law and were intent on fulfilling all its demands.

This was a full 10 to 12 years after Paul took his first missionary journey. These believing Jews were still locked in to the law of Moses.

Indeed, they were. This is extremely significant, and more upcoming will tell us why. Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 5.

To say this first century transition was new or dramatic is putting it quite mildly. It struck the first century like a thunderclap, especially for the Jews, like the 3,000 on Pentecost and the 2,000 added to them later in Acts 4.

[ 18 : 33 ] However, even though these had become believers in Jesus as their Messiah, it simply never entered their mind that the administration of the law of Moses was over.

But it was. You may be sure these Jews continued right on with all their practices as Jews, including circumcising their babies, observing the Sabbath, offering sacrifices stipulated by the law of Moses.

Clearly, even though they did not realize it, the administration of the grace of God had displaced the law of Moses, and they were trying to function with the mode that had now become officially set aside by God himself.

He did that when he tore the curtain in the temple from top to bottom upon the death of Christ on the cross. It is not at all clear that this first century generation of Jews who were living at this once-in-a-lifetime period of transition ever did understand that the law of Moses was now over.

God was doing an entirely new thing with this new administration called the grace of God. It was being administered by a Jew, Paul the Apostle, but it was not to the Jew alone as was the law of Moses.

[ 19 : 46 ] This new administration insisted that in Christ there is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile. This new administration put the Jew and the Gentile together on the same level without any differences between them.

That was the thunderclap. The Acts, as well as the epistles of Paul, made it quite clear all this was lost on the Jewish people at large.

Except for those like Paul and other Jews to whom he and his fellow apostles ministered, the idea of the law of Moses no longer being operative was preposterous.

Many will not believe it until 70 A.D. when Jerusalem, its temple, and everything there will be destroyed. The Jewish people will then be further scattered than what they were before.

The Romans will even rename the city of Jerusalem calling it Capitolina, and every vestige of Jewish emblems and paraphernalia will be replaced with Roman items of paganism and the worship of multiple gods.

[ 20 : 50 ] The scattered Jews will flee in every direction as refugees, relocating in the several areas throughout the Mediterranean basin. Acts 2 records the diverse areas from which the Jews hailed when they gathered in Jerusalem as pilgrims to celebrate the feast of Passover.

And as these new Jewish refugees begin relocating, they will reestablish their synagogues and pick up where they left off in Jerusalem before they left with one important omission.

And I do mean important. Please hear this up next. The plot is really beginning to thicken, and it's very important for your understanding that you thicken with it, and we'll thicken together upcoming.

Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 6 As has been noted earlier, the principle of animal sacrifice had been the very heart and soul of Judaism.

When the children of Israel arrived in Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, then the judges, and then the kings, certain changes got underway. And one of the first had to do with their earlier use of the tabernacle God instructed Moses to build while yet in the wilderness.

[ 22 : 16 ] This was a temporary, portable structure designed for constructing and then dismantling and reconstructing every time the people made a move.

This tabernacle that contained the Ark of the Covenant and its lid, the mercy seat, is where God said He would dwell and meet with His people. And it was here and here alone on the brazen altar that the Levitical priests were to offer the animal sacrifices prescribed by the law.

But, upon arriving in Canaan and establishing Jerusalem as their center, King Solomon, David's son, undertook the task of providing a permanent place of worship as opposed to the temporary portable tabernacle.

This would be the temple, magnificent in its beauty and structure beyond anything anyone had ever seen. Now, here in this newly dedicated temple, as described in 1 Kings 6-9, the items of furniture would be given a permanent home.

This would, of course, include the Ark of the Covenant, the same one they carried for 40 years through the wilderness. And yes, there would be on the Ark the lid called the mercy seat with the overarching cherubims and their outstretched wings.

[ 23 : 41 ] This place, this temple, this altar, will still be the solitary place where God will be represented in Israel.

And it will be here and here alone at the brazen altar that sacrifices to the God of Israel will be made. For years to come, it will be said that one must go to the temple to present themselves before the Lord, because there was no other place or way one could do this.

This became the basis for the Jewish pilgrimage going up to Jerusalem from all over the surrounding areas, even from as far away as those regions mentioned in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost.

And why did they come? Why all this distance, inconvenience, and expense? It was the only way one could present himself before the Lord. And when you did, you were sure to bring the obligatory sacrifice with you.

This went on with the annual Feast of Jehovah several times each year for hundreds of years. But now, fast forward to 70 A.D., temple destroyed, altar destroyed, the only place designated for sacrifice destroyed, no sacrifice possible, how can there be anything like official God-ordained Judaism with its very heart of animal sacrifice torn out and away by the Romans?

[ 25 : 11 ] More insight straight ahead. Join me. This is fascinating material. Law and Grace for the Individual, Part 7.

An extremely revealing passage relating to the Jewish people and their inability to practice authentic Judaism is given by the prophet Hosea in chapter 3.

What, of course, will make them unable to practice their authentic Judaism will be the absence of the place where they could present themselves before the Lord, namely, at the temple complex in Jerusalem.

But as of 70 A.D., and the Roman destruction of everything Jewish, there was no temple, no altar, no mercy seat, and no possibility of offering the prescribed sacrifice.

Hundreds of years prior to this actually happening, the prophet Hosea in the third chapter made this stunning prediction, and here is what he said. For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols.

[ 26 : 22 ] Did you get that? The prophecy says the Jews will be without a king or a prince who would be the next king, and without a sacrifice, and we have earlier explained what is Judaism without a sacrifice, surely less than the real thing.

How can Israel present themselves before the Lord when the Lord is no longer there, and the place is no longer there? They cannot. But understand, please, when Hosea uttered this prophecy, where was the temple then?

Right there in Jerusalem where it belonged, and the throne. There was the king of Israel upon it with his son, the prince, waiting in the wings to take his father's place. And what about the brazen altar?

Right where it was supposed to be. And the offerings were being presented in customary fashion. Yes, everything was in order, and Judaism, corrupt as it had become, was humming right along each day, observing all its prescribed form and ritual.

When Hosea prophesied this, it was approximately 700 years before the birth of Christ, or 630 years before the Romans would destroy the temple and force the Jews out of Israel into the continuing dispersion or scattering throughout all the Mediterranean nations.

[ 27 : 41 ] In addition, the Jews had to be truly puzzled as to why God had allowed this to happen to them, his chosen people. And those who were more spiritually astute knew very well why God not only allowed it to happen, he orchestrated it behind the scenes.

This was all about divine national discipline. God used the Romans to take Israel to the woodshed in the same way he used Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians, 600 years before Christ was born.

In both instances, God was chastening his chosen people with the likes of pagan or heathen armies, and he did so because he was under covenantal obligation to do it.

His chosen people had forsaken him and were behaving badly. The time for divine discipline had come, and what child is he whom the Father chasteneth not?

Israel was and remains the subject of God's severe displeasure and discipline. But, listen if you will, as Hosea continues in verse 5.

[ 28 : 51 ] Upcoming. Law and Grace for the Individual Part 8 With the result of the Roman army destroying Jerusalem and the Jews' beloved temple, you may be sure the nation of Israel was in total shock, at least among many of the people.

But there were some Jews who were not shocked at all. In fact, there was a handful, only a handful, who knew Israel had been skating on thin ice for years prior to this Roman destruction in 70 A.D.

That handful consisted of godly Jews who knew the checkered past of Israel when it came to their obedience and disobedience toward their God. These were painfully aware how God used the pagan Babylonians to defeat and take them into captivity 650 years earlier.

And they were well familiar with Jeremiah the prophet who lived back then and warned the Jews that that is exactly what was going to occur and that God would be behind it.

Repeatedly, the prophets warned Israel and Judah of God's impending judgment unless they repented of their idolatry, moral, and spiritual corruption. Their response was, persecute the prophets.

[ 30 : 15 ] Nothing had changed by 70 A.D. as the same old corruption continued to plague the nation. It does appear they were cured of their idolatry due to the Babylonian captivity, but the corruption continued in every other level, causing both John the Baptist and Jesus to speak out against it.

Christ, in fact, even foretold the Roman invasion and destruction, and sure enough, in fulfillment of what he predicted in Luke 19, verses 41-43 came to pass.

In 70 A.D., it would be fulfilled exactly as Christ predicted. Yet, because God is faithful to his word, even though Israel was not, this divine discipline was not a permanent abandonment of the Jewish people, even though many may have thought so.

God's discipline of his people is always with a reversal of their behavior in mind, not to affect an end of the relationship. This is why another prophet, Hosea, follows his prophecy of Israel's being deprived of her throne, temple, king, sacred pillar, and all the items of worship for many days.

Bleak as was Hosea's prophecy of judgment, a brighter day lies ahead for the nation, because this same prophet, verse 5 of Hosea 3, wonderfully relates, afterward, the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and they will come trembling to the Lord and to his goodness in the last days.

[ 31 : 53 ] That is what is in store for the remnant of Jews who will be the survivors of the campaign of Armageddon, depicted in Revelation 19 and Matthew 24.

This remnant, consisting of only one-third of the total number of Jews who begin the 70th week of Daniel, it is they who will, as Hosea says, will come trembling to the Lord and his goodness in the last days.

This will then be the all Israel that shall be saved, all because of the faithfulness of God who had promised. Law and Grace for the Individual, Part 9 In 1990, I was privileged to spend six weeks in Israel participating in a historical geographical study of the Holy Land.

Our guide and mentor was Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the president and director of Arielle Ministries. Dr. Fruchtenbaum, born in Siberia to Jewish parents, came to faith in Jesus the Messiah as his Savior as a teenager, shortly after emigrating to the United States.

He went on pursuing studies, eventually earning his doctorate from New York University. Dr. Fruchtenbaum conducted these six-week tours every two years and that one in 1990 was the one I attended.

[ 33 : 18 ] It is not possible to describe the insight gained during that time. They were incredibly enriching days. On one occasion, our group was invited to meet with a distinguished Jewish rabbi that was assigned to answer the questions we Christians would ask about Israel and Judaism.

It was a very civil and friendly encounter and I shall never forget the question I asked him nor the answer he gave me and my question was, as I addressed him by name, the scriptures place a great deal of emphasis and importance upon sacrifice.

The kind of animal accepted and the manner in which the priest was to offer it on behalf of the worshiper. And with this institution of sacrifice being the very core of Judaism, or at least appears to be, how is the Jew today even able to worship without the sacrifices the law of Moses requires?

He did not take long to answer me. I suspect other groups of tourists before ours had asked the same question. His answer was, as he stroked his beard, well, we pray.



There was a period of silence. Yes, we pray. We have the western wall now where we can go to and pray and that takes the place of the sacrifice.

[ 34 : 40 ] I'm not wanting to challenge or argue with him because, after all, he was graciously hosting our group and we were his guests, but nevertheless, it was obvious to all present that the answer, though no doubt sincere, was sorely lacking in satisfaction.

Probably lacking only to those of our group who were committed Christians, but Christians who nonetheless loved Israel and the Jewish people and still do. And by the way, we love the Palestinians and Arab Muslims too.

We Christians have no license or basis to hate anyone, but are commanded to love as God loves and that encompasses the whole world Allah John 3 16. So, here in this now 21st century, we have the seed of Abraham, still largely scattered over the world, but gradually coming home to their land.

Listen, if you will, to what Hosea says about them in the future. This is Hosea chapter 3, verses 4 and 5. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.

And afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

[ 36 : 06 ] Law and Grace for Individuals, Part 10 We are offering, as a key to the book of Acts, the strategic nature of the thirty years of transition that was underway in this pivotal book.

We already established how determined the Jews were in their clinging to the law of Moses despite its having become passé. That's right. Defunct.

Inoperable. No longer in force. But who among the Jews knew that? Virtually none of them, but Paul and his co-laborers to whom the gospel of the grace of God had been given.

This gospel of grace contained the updated information given by Christ to Paul after Christ's ascension that this gospel of the grace of God was now the current provision by God and was for Jew and Gentile alike and not as the law of Moses given to the Jew only.

This, as mentioned earlier, was the theological thunderclap that stirred so much opposition to Paul and his gospel. It was effectively doing away with the exclusivity of Jewishness and its age-old separation of the Jew from Gentiles that had so long characterized it.

[ 37 : 29 ] No wonder they wanted to kill Paul whom they regarded as the worst kind of traitor to his own heritage and faith. What is more, these Jews who so vehemently opposed him were fully convinced God would want them to kill Paul because he had made himself a blasphemer by speaking against Moses and the law.

This, too, is precisely what Christ told the apostles would happen when he said in John 16 that the time would come when those who seek to kill you will think he is doing God a service.

Saul of Tarsus had been one of those, one who thought he was doing God a service by killing those who embraced Jesus as Messiah. And now, as the converted Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the Apostle, he is on the receiving end of the killing instead of the dispensing end.

Little wonder the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and that Damascus road experience remains the most radical conversions of all. Are we able to make connections as regards this very strategic time in early Christendom?

Can we not see the inevitable upheaval in the Jewish community as a whole as a result of the new updated commission that came from the ascended Christ?

[ 38 : 54 ] This one who recruited this least likely ambassador called Saul of Tarsus also known as Paul the Apostle? And further, please be reminded this confusion was spread out over nearly three decades.

Think of it. Thirty years of upset and turmoil theologically, doctrinally, ethnically, ritually, socially, and can you see how even today church denominations are influenced by the content they select and focus on from a time of doctrine on the move?

Next, we will move from the law part of law and grace for individuals to the grace part of individuals, and it will be just as eye-popping and it's coming just ahead.

Next, Grace for the Individual Part 1 The past ten sessions were devoted to law and grace for the individual, and that individual was the Jew.

Attention was given to the confusion of the first century as God was setting aside the law of Moses and bringing in an entirely new administration called grace.

[ 40 : 05 ] The mystery, unannounced, not predicted before, not expected, and in many quarters not accepted when it arrived. It remains so today and for many of the same reasons.

This thing called the gospel or good news of the grace of God simply seems too good to be true. Therefore, it must not be true. This thinking, probably more than any other, seems to be the sticking point people have regarding the gospel of grace.

Frankly, it does sound too good to be true. So, what exactly is this good news that many will not accept because it sounds too good to be true? Here it is.

This good news, this gospel of grace, the Bible sets forth, tells us that everything needed for man to be fully accepted by God has already been provided for him as a gift, and he needs only to accept it.

So, what is this everything that has been provided? Well, this everything is actually a person. He is the person who is also described as the Alpha and Omega, which in the Greek language is our English equivalent of saying that Jesus Christ is the everything from A to Z.

[ 41 : 28 ] He himself is the everything that has been provided. He is the gift and he was provided by his Father to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, that is, make ourselves acceptable to God.

And the writer God used to communicate that was the Apostle Paul. He wrote it, but shortly before he did, when he was Saul of Tarsus, there was no way he would have ever believed it.

And why wouldn't he? Well, for one thing, that was far too easy, couldn't possibly be true, too good to be true. There is the law, the law of Moses, and it is by observing the law and making the right sacrifice when you don't.

That's how you find favor with God, and of course this favor is just for Jews. The Gentiles are simply unable to come to God because they are Gentiles, and God is the God exclusively of Israel.

That would have been the position of Saul of Tarsus. Never in his wildest imagination could he have envisioned taking a message to Gentiles, telling them that God through his son Jesus has removed the barrier of sin from man, and that all people, Gentiles included, are welcome, even urged to come to God through the sacrificial payment Christ made on their behalf.

[ 42 : 50 ] The righteousness Christ secured when he met and paid the full penalty of sin, is extended to Jews and Gentiles alike as a free gift, and they have only to accept it.

Yes, sir, that surely does sound too good to be true. But is it? You'll have to judge, and there's more just ahead. Grace for the Individual, Part 2 This gospel of the grace of God was given to the Apostle Paul after Christ ascended to heaven.

It consisted of an update provided for Paul that did not exist earlier except in the mind of God, according to Ephesians chapter 3.

And sure enough, this good news of free grace certainly did sound too good to be true. Still does. That's a major reason why people didn't accept it when Paul preached it, and why many do not believe it today.

Just too good to be true. Then, there is a second reason many find the simple gospel message hard to accept, and it is this. Life just does not work that way.

[ 44 : 07 ] Because in this world everything operates on the merit system. We learn that as infants. Even a toddler, when he obeys mom and dad, he's rewarded, and when he disobeys, he's punished.

That's the way it's always been. No free lunch and no free gospel. Salvation and favor with God is reserved for those who earn and deserve it.

That's only logical, and that's the way everything in this world works. Well, that certainly is true from a purely human perspective.

But the good news about the gospel of the grace of God is that it is not provided nor offered from a human perspective, but from God's perspective. Can we allow God to have a perspective of his own?

Well, whether we will allow him that and agree with it or not, he does anyway. After all, he does work all things after the counsel of his own will, and this salvation provided as a gift is one of those things.

[ 45 : 13 ] And besides, to say that salvation and favor with God on the basis of receiving it as a gift makes it too easy, but that's the very point of its being called good news, a free gift, and not on the basis of human merit.

Many humans don't have a lot of merit or commendable items in their moral bank account, so guess what? They can come anyway. They can be saved anyway, because they only need to acknowledge their unworthiness and accept eternal life as a gift earned by Jesus Christ through the sin payment he made on the cross on our behalf.

That is utterly amazing. In fact, one by the name of John Newton was in that very category of total unworthiness, yet even he could and did come to Christ for total cleansing, forgiveness, and salvation.

And Newton was so grateful that he was smitten by this kind of grace and love, he was compelled to write a song about it, and he named it Amazing Grace. It may well be that when Newton first heard the gospel of grace, he too assumed it had its limits and it surely couldn't include the likes of him, but it did, as he discovered when he admitted his sin and unworthiness and trusted in Jesus Christ to save him.

And this he did, and John Newton never got over it, and neither should anyone else so save by a grace that is amazing.

[ 46 : 51 ] Grace for the Individual Part 3 We continue contrasting the administration of the grace of God with the administration of the law of God as given through Moses.

There are numerous distinctions between them, and these we must see in need of rightly dividing. One of those distinctions that divided them has to do with the emphasis upon the nation of Israel in regards to the law of Moses, and the emphasis upon the individual with the gospel of the grace of God.

There is no question about the corporate aspects of the nation Israel. This was due in part to the fact that God had entered into a covenant agreement with Israel as a nation, and no such covenant exists with the administration of grace.

So here, the focus is on the individual as a personal recipient of the message of grace. Even when Paul revealed Christ from the Old Testament passages to a body of Jews in the synagogue, the message and appeal was for a personal decision on the part of the hearers as individuals.

And so it is today. In any setting where the gospel of the grace of God is proclaimed, whether it's in a church or a large evangelistic crusade like the Billy Graham variety, the message and appeal is to the individual.

[ 48 : 15 ] And it is called taking or receiving Christ as one's personal Savior. As noted in previous sessions of Christianity Clarified, the original covenant of the law that God gave through Moses and the promise of the new covenant found in Jeremiah 31 are both contracts made between God and Israel as a nation.

Israel corporately signed off on the covenant of law, now regarded as the old covenant or Old Testament. Still, they have never signed off on the new, but they most certainly will.

And those who will are the remnant isolated and targeted by the Antichrist for complete annihilation. It is then that their Messiah, whom they nationally rejected earlier, will appear and deliver that entire remnant as depicted in Zechariah 12 and Revelation 19.

Then, what Paul stated in Romans chapter 11, which he quotes from Isaiah 27 and 59, prophesying that Israel's deliverer will appear from Zion, rescue Israel from the gathered armies of the Antichrist and will then remove ungodliness from Jacob.

This is nothing more than a divine promise for God's forgiveness by taking away their sins. And the phrase, all Israel shall be saved, refers to that believing remnant of Jews who are survivors of the great tribulation period that will end with the second coming.

[ 49 : 52 ] At that time, a full two-thirds of Jews living worldwide will have already been killed, and the all Israel will be only that one-third remaining. This will then be the Jewish remnant signing off in agreement to the new covenant that was provided for by Christ in his death, but never enacted until Israel embraces Jesus at his second appearing.

And this, too, will be corporate or national, as is always the case between God and Israel. Grace for the Individual, Part 4 The clarity and simplicity of appropriating salvation as set forth in the New Testament is a way that is not found in the Old.

We today, as well as those as far back as the Book of Acts, can simply say, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. But what would you have told someone living during Old Testament times, long before Christ ever came and died and was available to be believed on?

We have addressed the corporate connection Israel had with God through the law of Moses. But what about the 99% of other people in the world during Old Testament times who were not Jews?

These were, of course, Gentiles, most of whom were pagans or idolaters worshipping multiple supposed gods. Paul addresses them in two important passages during his course as the apostle to the Gentiles.

[ 51 : 20 ] And here is what he said in Acts 17 when he delivered a critical message on Mars Hill outside the city of Athens, Greece. Noting just briefly, Paul acknowledged the religiosity of the Greeks by stating they had idols erected to honor various deities, even one to the unknown God.

And then he went on to tell them about that one God they did not know, who to those Athenians would be a new God. In describing him as the creator of all things, Paul went on to say that God had in the past overlooked the times of ignorance on the part of man.

And the King James Version uses the phrase that God winked at them. It almost seems to infer that God held those of past times in ignorance to a different standard as opposed to the standard God has now set as of the time Paul was speaking.

And the powerful conjunction he uses in his but now implies everything has changed from that standard in the past.

Now, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new standard has been created and God's winking is not a part of it. Paul is telling the Athenians that they along with all others are going to be judged one day by the standard of divine righteousness and the one who will be the model of that is none other than Christ himself who rose from the dead.

[ 52 : 47 ] The response of some was the same as the response of some today. They merely mocked and jeered at the whole idea. But thankfully, some indicated a willingness to hear more from Paul saying, this is completely new to us and we do want to know more about it.

Well, these are to be applauded because all conversions to Jesus Christ must begin with thinking. And the apostle Paul certainly had them thinking.

And we would say they are thinking as individual persons, not in any corporate sense. The minds of each of them were individually processing the information that Paul was giving them.

And it all points to the personal thing again. Nothing here is corporate or covenantal at all. Remember, these were not Jews, but Gentiles.

And Gentiles are not in the old or new covenant, but comprise a body of individuals not involved in either covenant. They belong to the mystery of Ephesians chapter 3, the body of Christ.

[ 53 : 56 ] Grace for the Individual Part 5 Another passage attached to Gentiles as opposed to Jews must be added to the one given earlier from Acts 17.

And this one is found in Ephesians chapter 2 and is very revealing. With great clarity, the audience to whom Paul is addressing his remarks cannot be mistaken. In Ephesians 2, beginning with verse 11, Paul addresses the recipients of this letter by saying, Therefore, remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcised by the so-called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human ends, remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Well, that was the true plight of the Gentiles before Christ came and died for the sins of the world. And this ties in with that Acts 17 passage speaking of the same time frame, that is, prior to the coming of Christ, his death and resurrection.

Then, in verse 13, Paul again uses that same powerful conjunction, but now, that he used earlier in Acts 17, but now, in Christ Jesus, you who were formerly far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, and that he, Christ, might make the two, Jew and Gentile, into one new man, thus establishing peace.

[ 55 : 48 ] And peace is the opposite of the state of enmity that was the warlike state that existed between sinful fallen man and a holy God. It is the same enmity to which Paul refers in Romans 8, 7, when he says that the mind of flesh is at enmity with God.

This is the new status of the previously excluded Gentiles who have responded to the gospel of the grace of God. But was this not the same message the Jews had already believed?

No, no, not at all. This message of grace, administered or dispensed as it was through Paul the Apostle, never existed before so as to be available to anyone to preach, much less Paul.

Well then, where was it hiding all this time? It was, Paul said in Ephesians 3, 9, hidden in God all along. But never until Paul was commissioned to go to the Gentiles was it ever made known.

Friends, this is blockbuster stuff. In fact, this Jew and Gentile stuff in one new entity called the body of Christ was looked upon by many, especially the Jew, as utterly unthinkable.

[ 56 : 59 ] Not only did most Jews of Paul's day refuse to embrace this concept, so do most Jews today. And they aren't alone. Even Gentiles who hold to replacement theology do not see themselves as one with believing Jews, but see the church as taking the place of Israel altogether.

Indeed, the confusion marches on. But we won't give up in our efforts to clarify this truth previously held in God, but now made known, because it's far too good to give up, especially when it costs the one who made it available so very dearly.

The demonstration of law presided over by Moses coming to an absolute end.

While not dogmatic about it, we did say this appears to have taken place with the death of Christ while still on the cross. It was suggested that the crisis point occurred when Jesus uttered the words, it is finished, and the veil in the temple separating the holy place from the most holy place was torn into from the top to the bottom.

Many, myself included, believe at this point God was also effectively temporarily dismissing the nation of Israel from being his chosen people because of their rejection and murder of their Messiah.

[ 58 : 47 ] In addition, to many of these same folks, it would appear that the old covenant of Moses passed away and the new covenant then replaced it. After all, the night Jesus was betrayed, he spoke of the cup he held and passed to the apostles to be the new covenant in his blood.

It all seems to fit, at least on the surface. Add to that his resurrection, plus the forty days Christ then spent on earth, plus another brief ten days, and we arrive at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

And this traditionally has been assumed by nearly everyone as the beginning of the New Testament church. And this remains, of course, throughout the world the majority position to this day.

But it is scripturally holy without merit. To begin with, the word testament should be replaced with the word covenant, which much more accurately describes it, and is the way it's rendered in the original.

Then the question arises as to when the new covenant actually began. The answer is, it hasn't. It has never begun at all. When Jesus said the cup was the new covenant in my blood, he simply meant his impending death on Calvary would be the basis or provision for the new covenant to be made available.

[ 60 : 05 ] It did not mean it was in force, because it could not be until the party of the second part, that is Israel, signed off on the new covenant, something Israel has yet to do.

Recall the promise of the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah in chapter 31, that it was to be made with the nation of Israel, and it would replace the old covenant God gave through Moses.

The Christian church, which is the body of Christ consisting of both believing Jew and Gentile, is not covenantal at all, neither old or new.

It is clearly called a mystery, and does not belong to the old or new, but constitutes a separate organism altogether. I know, I know, this may be strange stuff, but the only issue, really, is, is it true stuff?

You'll have to make up your own mind about that. Next up. Grace for the Individual, Part 7 We have noted earlier that the grace of God has been presented and poured out on individuals as far back as Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and others.

[ 61 : 25 ] But, never did the subject of grace become so pronounced and prevalent as it later was to become through the ministry and mission of the Apostle Paul. In fact, we can say that God's grace through Paul became as dominant as was God's law through Moses.

Both in their respective positions constituted the *modus operandi* during their administrations. In no way was Paul a continuation of Moses, but an entirely new operation or administration altogether.

It is this new administration of grace that combines Jew and Gentile into one new body that does not belong to the old covenant nor the new covenant. This new entity called the mystery, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, is actually sandwiched in between the old and new covenants not belonging to either.

It's also called the church age, or the age of grace, or the dispensation of grace, the administration of grace, the stewardship of grace, and so on. But never once is it associated with the covenant, whether old or new.

Peter actually offered the new covenant to Israel on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, asking the nation to repent of their sin and be baptized in the name of the one whose earlier crucifixion they had demanded.

[ 62 : 51 ] The same offer was extended to Israel again by Peter in chapter 3, and they responded by instigating a concerted persecution of the apostles, clearly spurning any interest in Peter's offer.

This is so very clear in Acts 3, one wonders how it is overlooked by so many. But in honesty and embarrassment, I must admit my overlooking it as well, and I did so for several years.

The national refusal of Israel to embrace Jesus as their Messiah before and after his resurrection simply rendered them unable to be the party of the second part and endorsed the new covenant Jeremiah prophesied for them in chapter 31.

Christ, in the shedding of his own blood, clearly established himself as being the party of the first part of that covenant, and by his death had ratified it. It then is up to national Israel to ratify it in order to actually activate the new covenant, and until they do, the entire matter of the new covenant is put on hold, which is where it remains to this day.

In the meanwhile, this present age of grace finds the Jewish people set aside from being the centerpiece of God's activity, while he works through this new parenthesis between the old and new covenants, but not a part of either.

[ 64 : 18 ] And during this interim, the way of salvation by grace through faith is open to absolutely all Jews and Gentiles, and will remain so until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, as Paul mentions in Romans 11.25, and then goes on to mention that when that occurs, the new covenant that Jesus made provision for when shedding his blood will then become a reality.

Controversial Content Part 1 There is no question the content currently underway is controversial. The standard thinking regarding the Old and New Testaments is that the old, as given through Moses and the prophets, has passed away and the new is now in force.

This is by far and away the majority position. Here is an offering of a concept believed to be biblical, even though it departs from that majority position.

We begin with this suggestive correction. The word testament is unfortunate and should always be translated covenant, in what we call the new and the old.

The word testament is not found in the old covenant at all, but the word covenant is found hundreds of times from the Hebrew word berit. It means a cutting.

[ 65 : 42 ] The cutting was tied to the animals that were severed in two to facilitate the making or cutting of a covenant, agreement or pact between two parties.

The first example of this is in Genesis 15, when God instructed Abraham to sever the animals in two for the cutting of the covenant that would be established between God and Abraham.

Understandably, it was and is called the Abrahamic covenant. Others will be established later as the Mosaic covenant of Exodus, the Davidic covenant regarding the throne of David in Psalm 89 and 2 Samuel 7, the Palestinian covenant regarding the land of Israel, and the latest being the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah in chapter 31 and referenced again in Ezekiel 37, quoted in Hebrews 8 and 10.

It is the new covenant that is our present focus. The word testament is never found in the old and appears 14 times in the new.

In every case of the 14, the word in the Greek is diatheke, D-I-A-T-H-E-K-E, and it should be rendered covenant, not testament.

[ 67 : 01 ] The word diatheke refers to a covenant, agreement, contract, or pact activated between two different parties. In the case of the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31 and cited again in Hebrews 8 and Hebrews 10, the new covenant is clearly that concerning the Jews in Israel, the northern ten tribes, and Judah, the southern two tribes, all Jewish exclusively.

This prophesied promise was predicted by Jeremiah nearly 600 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Thirty-three years later, on the night before his crucifixion, Jesus took the cup of wine and stated, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

He was clearly referring to a partial fulfillment of what Jeremiah had prophesied, and it was only partial because it was one-sided. A covenant requires another side, not merely one party.

And who was the other party? Israel! When Christ died on the cross, he provided the basis for the new covenant to be enacted. But it wasn't, and it still hasn't been.

The party of the second part remains absent. Controversial Content Part 2 The biblical dynamics of covenant-making is generally not understood by many of us outside the ancient Middle Eastern culture.

[ 68 : 36 ] But these covenants were much like our present-day legal contracts drawn up between multiple parties and signed by each in order to implement the contract.

But the biblical contract, or covenant, differed in that it was implemented or ratified by blood. And with most covenants, animal blood was shed, providing a solemnity, a kind of seriousness for the terms of the covenant.

The outstanding feature of the new covenant was its being provided for with the blood of Jesus Christ himself, not that of animals.

But now there arises an abnormality regarding this new covenant. Christ, being the party of the first part, shed his blood on that cross to enable the covenant to be activated, ratified, by the party of the second part, Israel.

Where were they when Christ provided the first part of the new covenant? All that was needed for the new covenant to be implemented was for Israel to sign off on it.

[ 69 : 51 ] It did not require their blood to do so, nor even the blood of animals. Christ's blood had already been provided, the blood as of the Lamb of God without spot and without blemish.

Israel need not supply blood. Only the acceptance of their Messiah was needed to put the covenant in place. But acceptance was not provided.



Quite contrary, the rejection was there on the part of Israel. So, where is the new covenant now? It's patiently waiting in the wings, never yet having been activated.

There is the Messiah, and there is the nation Israel. But they are not at all together. There is now no covenant that joins God and Israel.

The old Mosaic covenant, the law, is defunct, no longer viable or operable. The new is being held in abeyance, never yet put in force.

[ 70 : 53 ] It takes two to make a covenant, and the party of the second part continues to be absent. Tied with Israel's need to ratify the new covenant, Christ provided for by doing his part, is the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

And you will recall we noted the two things necessary for that kingdom to come. Number one was for Christ to make that judicial sacrificial payment that satisfies God the Father and his holiness.

Jesus did that when he cried out, It is finished. Item two is for Israel nationally to embrace the Messiah their forefathers rejected 2,000 years ago.

And when they do, it will not only result in the kingdom of heaven being established on earth, but will as well fully ratify that new covenant Christ provided for in his death.

The kingdom being established and the new covenant being ratified are inseparably tied together. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman.

[ 72 : 13 ] Preview of Volume 40 Upcoming With the conclusion of this current volume 39 of Christianity Clarified, we fully admit we have dealt with some controversial issues, some of which may have sounded foreign to you.

I fully understand that because that's how they sounded to me too, when I first heard these. We all have a natural tendency to reject, or at least hold in suspicion, teachings that do not line up with what we have always believed.

And that's not a bad thing. We should be slow to adopt teaching that does not comport with what we have accepted as true. It would be just as foolish to accept everything as it is to reject everything.

We all need a healthy dose of Bereanism. You know, those people described as noble by the Apostle Paul in Acts chapter 17. They, the Bereans, are contrasted with many of the crowd at Thessalonica, who apparently wouldn't even consider what Paul said, because it wasn't what they were used to hearing.

We shouldn't be eager to accept or eager to reject, but we should be willing to consider and do what the Bereans did. They listened to what Paul taught, and then they went to the Scriptures to see if the Scriptures backed up what Paul had said.

[ 73 : 43 ] If they did, Paul's teaching was embraced. If they contradicted Paul's message, it was Paul and his teaching that was considered to be wrong, and not the Scriptures.

The Bereans ought to be our example for accepting or rejecting things that are different from what we've always believed. We are to weigh, compare, consult, and debate among ourselves when a new teaching is proposed.

And truth be told, sometimes it's our pride or ego that gets in the way and won't allow us to even consider anything contrary to what we've always believed, because we can't stand the thought that what we may have believed for so long was actually not true.

It's embarrassing to have to admit how much we earlier embraced that we later found was not worthy of our acceptance. And we all know, don't we, that there is something much harder than embracing new information, and that is letting go of old information.

Yet, my dear brethren, that is the stuff that spiritual growth is made of. So, always before us should be the question, does this new information square with the overall teaching of the Word of God, as best as I understand it?

[ 75 : 08 ] If it does, go with it and build on it. If it doesn't, question it, make the one teaching it, further clarify and explain it. By the way, if you ever get teaching material from someone, anyone, who refuses to take questions and answer them, avoid them like the plague.

Anyone who will not allow his teaching and positions to be questioned, probably has something to hide, so don't be taken in. And be reminded, all pastors and teachers are flawed, and our teachings are flawed as well.

We all are subject to doctrinal and theological biases. We all want the Bible to teach what we want it to, and we all struggle with the influence of tradition, peer pressure, denominational pressure to conform.

These negatives are systemic to humanity, and Christians are not exempt from them. So, as I have often said, we all have flaws in our thinking and doctrine, and when we get to heaven, we will all get straightened out.

Of course, some of us will need a little more straightening than others, but that's okay, because we will all come out where we should in the end, and that is, complete in him.

[ 76 : 38 ] Meanwhile, brace yourself for volume 40 upcoming, lots more wonderful dots to connect that make this old book throb with the life it wants to impart.

If you'd like to correspond with us by snail mail, you may address your information or your questions to Grace Bible Church, Christianity Clarified, 1500 Group Road, that's G-R-O-O-P, 1500 Group Road, Springfield, Ohio, 45504.

Or, you may log on to our website at [www.gracebiblespringfield.com](http://www.gracebiblespringfield.com) And there you may download anything that is of interest to you, free of charge.

You can burn your own CDs if you have that capability, or you can place an order there of anything you want in regard to the email. So, once again, this is Pastor Wiseman saying, thank you so much for being a part of our ongoing class of Christianity Clarified.

I assure you, the pleasure is all mine. May the Lord richly bless you. English and share in English words