

Christianity Clarified Volume 28

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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.

Continuity between the Testaments With the birth of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the New Testament, one would assume that the New Testament is now underway and the Old Testament is no longer functioning.

But that is not at all true. The Old Testament, with all its demands and practices, remained very much in force, not only when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but all during the 33 years of his physical life and beyond.

Christ lived and ministered in complete keeping with the Old Testament Mosaic Law, just as his ancestors did. He was an observant Jew who kept the Sabbath, ate only kosher food, frequented the synagogue, adhered to all that was prescribed by the laws that God gave through Moses.

But confusion does arise because Christians see the four Gospels as radically different from the Old Testament, when in fact they are not that different at all.

[1 : 17] Of course, where they are different is due to the Christ having arrived on the scene. Yet, all else about Israel remained the same as it was during the Old Testament.

Besides Christ arriving, and different enemies by way of the Romans subduing and occupying Israel, nothing else was really changed in the religion, culture, and life of the Jewish people.

You may be assured that no one was thinking when Jesus was born that, now we are in the New Testament times. Not at all. To them, nothing in their life or world was really changed at all.

It was business as usual, being a Jew, living in the land of Israel, dominated by a foreign power from Rome. Despite the gap of the 400 years that separated the closing of the Old Testament with the book of Malachi and the opening of the New with the birth of Jesus, nothing else had really changed because all that the Old Testament set forth remained very much in force and was repeatedly affirmed by Jesus during his entire earthly ministry.

From a canonical standpoint, yes, of course, the four Gospels belong in our New Testament. They are part of the canon of the New Testament. Yet, from the standpoint of practice, the four Gospels clearly fall under the continuing influence and demands of the Old Testament, not the New.

[2 : 48] Jesus lived and functioned in every way under the demands of the Old Testament as a loyal, obedient Jew. Not only was this true of Jesus in the four Gospels, it was also true of the twelve apostles whom he had chosen and their activities in the book of Acts.

There would be no significant change from Old Testament Judaism into what would become Christianity until the Apostle Paul arrived on the scene and received updated information from the risen and now glorified Christ from heaven.

It was this event in particular that will realize the most radical of changes from the old order under Moses to the new order under the Apostle Paul.

In fact, it will be such a radical change that most of the Jews living under the old order of Moses and the law will insist on remaining there. Biblical truth is progressively revealed. This is another crucial segment devoted to the theme of the whole Bible before its parts.

This critical truth has to do with the Bible being content and doctrine revealed by God to man in a progressive manner. It is a record that unfolds God's dealings with humanity in an ongoing way.

[4 : 17] Most will readily recognize that there is a decidedly progressive revelation or doctrinal update between the Old and New Testaments. All this, of course, centers around the arrival of Jesus the Messiah born in Bethlehem, which would change everything dramatically.

The events described in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did not occur until about 400 years after the Old Testament was completed as written Scripture.

To say the four Gospels constituted an update to the Old Testament records is a huge understatement. They represented an enormous update. To advance from the Old Testament promises of the coming of a Messiah to the actual fulfillment of His coming is about as update as one can get at that time.

And in keeping with the principle of progressive revelation, one must also consider the events of the Acts of the Apostles to be a further update of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, in the same way that they were an update to the Old Testament.

The Acts covered 30 years of developing, unfolding revelation. The people who lived during the last 15 years of those 30 years knew about the first 15, but those who lived and experienced the first 15 certainly did not know of the last 15 because they hadn't happened yet and would not be experienced and known until they did.

[5 : 51] Now what? Where do we go from here? We go where the Bible goes, with another progression. The letters of Paul the Apostle constitute yet a further update.

They reveal doctrinal truths never before even dreamed of by those who lived earlier. We might also add that Paul himself, who actually wrote the content of those letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and so on, never dreamed of them either.

He calls them a revelation of the mystery, which had previously been hidden in the mind of God from eternity past, but he had now been pleased to reveal them through this special apostle to the Gentiles, the former Saul of Tarsus.

And what would be the nature of all these writings of Paul? They are a further update. Read Ephesians chapter 3, and see firsthand about how it all came about as the risen Christ revealed a whole new order, merging Jew and Gentile into one new entity, previously thought unthinkable.

It's called the body of Christ, which Christ is the head, and it is the most current update we have, and it too will be followed by others later on, including the book of the Revelation, that will be yet a further and final update.

[7 : 26] It's a physical world early on. In addition to there being an unfolding and progressive revelation of God in the Bible in regard to doctrinal truth, there is likewise a progression between things physical and things spiritual.

Whatever does that mean? From things physical to things spiritual? Or, we might be more clear if we say from things physical to things non-physical.

Now, what does that mean? Simply this. In the Old Testament, beginning with the earliest of the Genesis account, all is in terms of the physical or materiality.

It's a very concrete way of looking at everything. In fact, we might even think of it as elemental or infantile in many respects. God speaks to Abraham and Moses from a physical face-to-face communication, and as well with Sarah and Hagar.

Jacob encountered a physical experience with the deity when he wrestled with him at the brook Jabbok in Genesis 32. It was then God changed Jacob's name to Israel.

[8 : 33] And while much about that event remains a mystery, there is no denying it was very physical, and left Jacob, or Israel, saying, I have seen God face-to-face.

Joshua would experience a physical encounter in Joshua 5 with the mysterious stranger called the Captain of the Host of the Lord. It too is shrouded in mystery, but its physicality must be admitted.

The entire unfolding drama of Israel as a nation focuses upon the physical. The land of Israel itself, the city of Jerusalem, the temple, all the physical appointments, furniture items, the holy place, most holy place, ark of the covenant, physical sacrificial system involving the various animals, all these and so much more relate to things physical and concrete, nothing left to the imagination.

This emphasis will continue even into the four Gospels in the book of Acts. Our Lord's earthly ministry was about as physical as possible, with emphases on physical healing, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, physical water into wine, physical raising of the dead, physical stilling of the winds and waters on the physical Sea of Galilee.

Can there be any question that God is fully committed to things physical? After all, it was He who brought all this materiality into being when He created time and space to accommodate the physical universe.

[10 : 05] All these phenomenal and supernatural occurrences were experienced by real people in real time and space and verified by the physical senses of people seeing and hearing and attesting to their reality.

Throughout the Old Testament and well into the New, through the Acts of the Apostles, God works primarily in and through the physical, and such is in keeping with Israel as a nation and all that pertains to the land and its people.

God used one miraculous physical thing after another from Egypt to and through the promised land to present Himself to His chosen people. It is so apparent repeatedly to be undeniable, but this would change, and for good reason, upcoming.

It's a Physical World Early On, Part 2 Our previous segment depicted an obvious emphasis on things physical in God's dealings with the nation of Israel from Genesis through the book of Acts in the New Testament.

In fact, God even taught the Jewish people to look to Him for signs, miracles, and extraordinary displays of His power on their behalf. Israel was a nation born out of a miraculous physical deliverance from Egypt, only to be followed by a host of like miracles that became God's *modus operandi* on behalf of this fledgling nation.

[11 : 42] When Christ arrived on the scene in the four Gospels, He continued this motif of the physical in all His miracles that were almost exclusively performed on behalf of these people God had conditioned to expect the miraculous.

They served to actually authenticate the claims of Christ to be the Messiah of Israel. Jesus even rebuked the leadership of Israel for ignoring His miraculous efforts on their behalf.

Rather than acknowledge His miracles and embrace Him as the Messiah, they actually charged Him with performing His miracles through the power of Satan, an ultimate insult to be sure.

There were, of course, some isolated exceptions from the ruling class, as in the case of Nicodemus, a leading Pharisee who asserted that Jesus had to have come from God, because no man could do the miracles Jesus did unless God was with him.

The physical emphasis, the material, the obvious, all demonstrable by sight and sound, was standard operating procedure for the Jewish people. Now, to maintain the progression of revelation we spoke of earlier, to what will this emphasis on the physical progress?

- [12 : 57] If the physical is regarded as the earlier, the elemental, the relatively infantile, what then will be the progression? What will be the step-up or the update of all the physical?

What else but things spiritual? Now, don't misunderstand. The physical was as it should have been, because it was ordained and provided by God Himself.

But the physical dealings God had with His people is to change. An update is coming as the emphasis moves away from the nation of Israel to an entirely new entity never before imagined.

This will be the church, the spiritual body of Christ. And what will be the modus operandi of this new spiritual body of Christ? Just that, of course, the spiritual.

The physical emphasis will give way to the spiritual emphasis, and God Himself is the orchestrator of both. Things are changing, moving, progressing as you make your way through the pages of Scripture.

- [14 : 07] In the Acts of the Apostles, the shift takes place from the nation of Israel being front and center to this new entity called the body of Christ.

It is now front and center while Israel languishes in her unbelief for rejecting her Messiah. Read, please, Romans 9, 10, and 11.

It's a Physical World Early On Part 3 One cannot escape the reality and emphasis that is placed on things physical as the Old Testament opens and continues through the book of the prophet Malachi.

Things physical appear everywhere. The creation account itself records the bringing into being all manner of materiality, beginning with a physical earth that will be populated with physical humans and all imaginable kinds of animal and plant life as physical as could be.

And because all things material require time and space in which to have their being, the Creator brought these into being as well, thus constituting a very physical universe.

- [15 : 20] This was an apparent departure from the way things were before anything physical was created. And by the way, created ex nihilo, that is, out of nothing. Previously, all entities had their existence in a non-physical mode, that is, in the spiritual.

Scripture reveals throughout that God the Creator is not a physical being. Such is dramatically and pointedly revealed by our Lord in John 4 when He conversed with the Samaritan woman at the well that God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

So, what precisely is spirit? Spirit is immaterial, non-physical, but real. Nonetheless, every bit as real as the physical.

And this does tend to escape us because we are so tethered to things physical, things verified by our five senses. And from all we can presently see and grasp prior to God having created all things physical, the previous all things were non-physical or spiritual.

In addition to God Himself and His tripartite beings as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all being non-physical but spiritual, so too, all the angelic beings He had created were spirit as well.

- [16 : 38] All members of the triune Godhead were spirit beings. None of the three became otherwise until one of them, namely God, the Eternal Spirit Son, was enfleshed in a human body called the Incarnation and delivered through the womb of the Virgin Mary.

God is very much committed to the physical, which is, by the way, a gracious condescension on His part to all His creatures of our lesser physical being. This physicality will continue front and center in all the multitude of revelations throughout the Bible, but especially in the Old Testament.

And this period of time represents humanity in infancy. All is very concrete, not abstract, or spiritual as compared to physical.

And as we trace early humanity in general, and the people of Israel in particular, the physical and all its accessories are seemingly all humanity is about, at least insofar as seems detectable.

True, the spiritual or immaterial is always there along with that concrete, but surely obscured compared to all things physical.

[17 : 53] This was how things began, but a change will be underway, with the divine plan unfolding in a progressive manner as we move on through the Bible.

You will see. The only true interpreter The progressive revelation of the Bible means that things can be expected to change as one moves through the Scriptures.

From the earliest of times of the Old Testament to the latest times recorded in the New Testament, things are not fixed and static, but dynamically developing.

Not only was time and history unfolding and on the move, but so was doctrine, and so was God's methodology in dealing with mankind. While God Himself did not and cannot change because He is the immutable God, yet His methods of dealing with man do change, because even though God doesn't change, man does.

His circumstances do, and His needs do. We need only witness the quantum leap of change from the Old Testament sacrificial system of God's requirement from His people Israel to that now having become passé.

[19 : 10] And while that may be the most obvious difference, it is merely one of many that have changed since the body of Christ has come into being and the nation of Israel has been temporarily set aside.

This is an enormously important principle to grasp, that of the progressive revelation of Scripture. Also, it is one more key item in the subject of the whole Bible before its parts that we are trying to emphasize prior to the undertaking of the parts which we will engage when we embark upon the laws of hermeneutics.

They will prove so very valuable in arriving at the interpretation of Scripture. And, might we inject right here one more important item about interpretation, and it is, in reference to the Bible itself being the only truly valid interpreter.

That's right. We are saying that man alone, certainly including this man, yours truly, is not a capable, competent interpreter of Scripture.

Well then, who is? The Spirit of God who inspired men to pen the Holy Scriptures is the only authoritatively qualified interpreter.

[20 : 24] What we are saying, of course, is that Scripture interprets Scripture. The meaning of any passage is illuminated by other passages, near or remote from the passage in question.

This is because everything in the Bible is connected to everything in the Bible. It is all interrelated. As one might expect if the Bible is, as we have said, written by many human penmen, but authored by only one Holy Spirit who moved or inspired those penmen to write as they did.

It is exciting, as well as confirming and enlightening, to see how the passages in the Bible are best explained by other passages in the Bible.

So, how do we find those explanatory passages? How do we know where to look? After all, the Bible is a big book. Not to worry.

There are helpful tools to be utilized, and in the same way that a tradesman needs certain tools to enable him to ply his trade, so too, he who would study and profit from the Bible needs to be equipped with the aids that will do the job.

[21 : 36] This will be fully explained when we get to the nitty-gritty of hermeneutics upcoming. The Old and New Covenants, Part 1.

The Old and New Covenants are commonly referred to as the Old and New Testaments, and what is the Old is nearly by all thought to consist of the thirty-nine books beginning with Genesis and concluding with the prophet Malachi.

The New is considered to begin with the Gospel of Matthew and conclude with the Book of Revelation, for a total of twenty-seven books, making a grand total of sixty-six books in all. Yet this distinction is only assigned by man, not by the Spirit of God who inspired these books.

Of course, for general purposes of description and communication, we do refer to those books as the Old and New Testaments. But for the sake of accuracy and to offer another element to our category of grasping the whole Bible before its parts, here is another important item to factor into your understanding, and we begin with a question.

The question is this, Is one of these two covenants in force today? Don't be too quick to answer, but most would answer quite quickly and with complete confidence.

[23 : 01] Today, the New Covenant, of course. But the answer made quite clear by Jeremiah 31-31, which is repeated in Hebrews 8-10, that the New Covenant will be made with the nation of Israel.

These are the direct descendants of those with whom God made the first covenant at Sinai under the leadership of Moses. Exodus 24 tells us, Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments and all the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.

Then Moses built an altar, took animal blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Then, taking the book of the covenant, he read it in the audience of the people, and they again responded by saying, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient.

Moses then took blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

Again, let's be reminded of the striking and clear physicality involved in all this procedure. It marked the ratifying of the first covenant between God and Israel and is solemnly sealed with animal blood.

[24 : 28] The altar upon which Moses sprinkled the blood represented God himself in his presence and the people constituted the second party of the covenant. It was the equivalent of both parties, God and Israel, signing and agreeing to the terms of this initial covenant that will begin the governance of the nation of Israel.

Christ himself will live and operate his earthly ministry under this original covenant ratified by God and Israel there at Mount Sinai as recorded in Exodus.

It will not be referred to as the Old Testament or covenant until something very significant is done by Christ and that will change everything upcoming.

The Old and New Covenants Part 2 In our consideration of gaining a general kind of grasp of the Bible as a whole before examining it in its many parts we are focusing on the Old and New Covenants.

We briefly considered the Old that God gave through Moses in Exodus 24. We saw that both parties God and Israel agreed to the terms of that covenant.

[25 : 48] God presented the conditions Israel responded by saying all that the Lord has spoken will we do and be obedient. But they weren't. In fact they were consistently disobedient.

so much so that God would chastise them severely eventually allowing some pagan neighbors to overtake and enslave them for their idolatry. Israel clearly did not make good on all that the Lord has spoken will we do and be obedient.

But now what was God to do? Although Israel did not fulfill their obligations to the covenant God did. He remained faithful despite the unfaithfulness of Israel.

There was only one thing that prevented God from abandoning the Israelites like they had abandoned him. That was God's character and integrity that was reflected in his faithfulness.

He speaks in Malachi 3 when he says I am the Lord I change not therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. In other words God tells Israel who are all sons of Jacob the only reason you people are not completely destroyed is because I do not waver or renege on what I have promised.

[27 : 08] I am the Lord I change not. Did Israel renege on their promise all that the Lord has spoken will we do? Repeatedly grievously shamefully God in his infinite grace goes an unheard of extra mile by promising them an entirely new covenant this despite the fact that they were disobedient to the first covenant and listen to the terms that will be called the new covenant it's in Jeremiah 31 behold the days come saith the Lord that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Jacob not according to the covenant that I made with them in their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt which my covenant they broke although I was this is what the

Bible very clearly calls the new covenant but has this covenant actually been implemented upcoming in our efforts to grasp the Bible as a whole before its parts this is stunning material the old and new covenants part three on the night he was betrayed by Judas Jesus was with his apostles in the upper room and they listened as he uttered the words while lifting the common cup of wine saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you they did not have the slightest idea about what he meant but they would shortly afterward in effect Jesus was saying as Moses ratified the old covenant with the blood of an animal this new covenant will be ratified by my blood then he told each of them to drink from the common cup as it was passed around the old covenant had been in force since

God gave the law through Moses and it remained in force until Christ actually died on the cross it was then he cried out it is finished and Luke tells us that the veil in the temple separating the holy place from the most holy place was torn in two from the top to the bottom stated in Matthew 27 apparently this was God's way of closing out the old order or administration under the law of Moses the apostle Paul speaks of the closing of the old covenant in Colossians 2 when he says Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us and took it out of the way nailing it to his cross but not and here is a very important point if that was the end of the old covenant when did the new begin many assume that it was right away and the new was placed in operation when the old was completed and canceled on the cross but surely this could not be the case because the features of the new covenant are clearly stated in the prophecy of

Jeremiah 31 where God reveals that he will institute a new covenant with the nation of Judah and Israel, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they broke.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.

[31 : 40] For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. The crucial question now is, when did this ever come to pass?

Christ paid the price in his own blood to validate and ratify the new covenant, but when did it ever come into operation? It never has. The new covenant, just like the old, had to be signed or ratified by both parties, God and Israel.

Christ did so by shedding his blood, but Israel has never responded by embracing that covenant. It remains unsigned and lacking enforcement because of Israel's unbelief.

If the new covenant continues to be held in abeyance, neither covenant is in force today. The Old and the New Covenant Part 4 As was the case of the old covenant, so it is with the new.

Both were made exclusively with the nation of Israel, excluding all non-Israelis. The first covenant, the old, Israel agreed to and signed on.

[32 : 50] The second covenant, the new, Israel did not agree to, nor have they to this day. It therefore remains unenforced, held in abeyance, awaiting Israel's national repentance.

This will come during the tribulation spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24. But until then, Israel remains in limbo, not really under any covenant at all.

Romans 9-11 addresses the present situation of the nation Israel. But then, is the Christian church under the new covenant? No, not at all, because Jeremiah 31 makes it very clear that the new covenant will be made with the same nation of Israel as was the old covenant.

The context of Jeremiah 31, as well as the New Testament in general, will simply not allow for the nation of Israel to somehow become the Christian church. Israel, to whom both covenants are addressed, are clearly Jews, and are exclusive recipients of God's favor through both covenants, the old and the new.

The Christian church is made up of Jews and Gentiles, and constitutes an entirely new entity altogether. This is spelled out by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3.

[34 : 09] This church, now labeled as the spiritual body of Christ, is a completely new organism, never before prophesied. It is said to have been hidden in God as his secret purpose, not to be revealed until he did so to the Apostle Paul.

It is called the dispensation or administration of the grace of God. And it does not belong to either the old or new covenants. The dispensation of the grace of God is non-covenantal.

It does not fit under either covenant, because it is not supposed to. This is what Paul meant when he said in Romans 6, You are not under law, but under grace.

He goes on in chapter 7 to give an illustration about being freed from the law in the same way a woman is no longer bound by the law to her husband after her husband dies.

Well, if Christians are not bound by the law of the first covenant, neither by the new covenant, neither of which are in force now, does this mean Christians are lawless or antinomian?

[35 : 14] Not at all. Paul explains this in Romans 8, when he says, The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemns sin in the flesh.

So we, in this present church age, are not under either covenant, but we are sandwiched between the old and new, living under the administration of the grace of God, bestowed without law upon both believing Jews and Gentiles.

It's a very important concept, and all too often misunderstood. Another grasping of the whole before its parts. The Old and New Covenant, Part 5 Be reminded, please, that prior to our actual implementing the principles of hermeneutics, that is, the science and art of interpreting, we have preparatory work to complete.

This consists of our trying to gain an overall workable knowledge of the Bible as a whole before we break it down in its parts. And one of the very most critical keys of the grasping of the whole of the Bible consists of its main two divisions.

[36 : 41] They are called the Old and the New Testaments. But all would be better served to discard the word testament and use the term covenant, which both the Hebrew and Greek employ in the Old and the New.

There are many covenants in the Bible, including the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Noahic, Palestinian, Davidic, and all of these properly belong to the portion of the Bible in which they are found, generally referred to as the Old Covenant.

Then there is the New Covenant. Where is the New Covenant found? Actually, it is found in the Old Covenant, Jeremiah 31 to be exact.

Here the New Covenant is promised by God and will displace the Old Covenant. Yet the New was a promise given, but never yet to this day implemented.

Christ provided the basis for the New Covenant to be enacted when He lifted the common cup the night He was betrayed and said, This cup is the New Covenant in My blood.

[37 : 48] In His sacrificial death, Christ fully paid the price and earned the right to extend the New Covenant to His people Israel for their official ratification by the officialdom of Israel.

The Apostle Peter told his Jewish audience on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 that God in the person of His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, had already met their part in the New Covenant by Christ providing His own blood, not the blood of animals as Moses provided.

While 3,000 responded, the vast majority of Israelites did not, particularly the chief priests and hierarchy. Peter would deliver this same message later in chapter 3, telling his Jewish audience that God had already fulfilled His part in providing Jesus as their sacrifice.

Now the response is awaited from Israel. Will they sign on to their part in this New Covenant, thus ratifying it so it can be implemented? Their answer was not with compliance, but with rejection and persecution of the twelve apostles, as revealed in chapter 4 of Acts onward.

Israel's refusal resulted in the New Covenant not being agreed to by them. Thus, this New Covenant God promised in Jeremiah 31 was not then, nor has it ever actually been enacted.

[39 : 17] Where is it? It is held in abeyance, and Israel as a nation is held in abeyance, with this covenant never yet to this day signed on by them.

One day, when the blindness in part that has happened to Israel is lifted, they will, and the New Covenant will then be implemented. Israel and Her Covenants We have taken the position that it is Israel and Israel alone as the recipient or intended recipient of both covenants, the Old and the New.

We have also stated that in addition to the New Covenant promised to Israel, it has never yet been in force, due to Israel not having signed off on it.

We have further stated that the Old Covenant, as per the law of Moses, was done away with when Christ died sacrificially on the cross. Paul alludes to this in Colossians 2 by saying, Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us and nailed it to his cross.

Hebrews, especially chapters 8 and 10, talk about the law of Moses now being passé, because of that death of Christ. In reality, this means that since then, not even the Jews are obligated to the law of Moses.

[40 : 46] The problem is, of course, the Jews do not even know this, and those who would hear of it would certainly not believe it. But it's true. And even though the Jews would reject that idea, they do manage to embrace it partially, in that they no longer offer animals in sacrifice.

If you know anything about Judaism, as it was originally established, even before God gave the law through Moses, animal sacrifice was the very heartbeat of the faithful Jew.

Judaism without animal sacrifice just would not be Judaism. Neither would it be Judaism without circumcision. Unthinkable. Add to those Sabbath-keeping, kosher diets, and other things Jewish.

Where are all these things now? They are defunct. Not applicable. Why? Because they were all part of the Mosaic Law, and it is defunct.

But don't the Jews still do these things? Except for sacrificing the animals? Yes, they do do these things, particularly among the Orthodox Jews, a minority of Judaism.

[41 : 58] But why do they do them? Tradition! Well, yes, of course, they do do them from conviction also, believing that to be an observant Jew finds favor with God.

Nonetheless, their loyalty and sincerity does not negate the fact that the law of Moses that governed Israel's faithful for so many centuries is indeed passé. Of course, any self-respecting Jew would deny that to his last breath.

And we would commend them for their tenacity, even though we would disagree with their position, we respect their right to exercise their freedom of conscience, and we would not deprive them of that even if we could.

We would conclude, however, by adding that sincerity and conviction has never been a guarantor of truth. One may be ever so sincere and be sincerely wrong.

Does that maxim apply to Christianity Clarified and this teacher as well? Of course! It applies to everyone. Truth is not determined by who believes it, but by its inherent truthfulness.

[43 : 04] No one today is under the Mosaic Law, not even Jews, no matter how sincerely they believe or keep it. Israel is not the Christian Church.

A popular teaching held by many major denominations for hundreds of years states that the Christian Church has become the new Israel. It is believed that due to Israel's rejection of their Messiah, God has also rejected them permanently.

That whereas Israel once enjoyed most favored nation status by God and were called the chosen people, they no longer are. The chosen people of Israel of old have instead now become the new chosen people called the Church or Christians.

And this thinking is that God has written off the people of Israel permanently because of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. But to do this, one must reject the plain language of Scripture and adopt a non-literal interpretation of several key passages, one of which is that controversial 31st chapter of Jeremiah where God promises a new covenant to be provided to the nation of Israel.

Those who believe God is permanently finished with Israel interpret Jeremiah's usage of Israel to mean the Christian Church. It is called an allegorical interpretation of Scripture.

[44 : 37] And we'll learn more about this when we engage hermeneutics proper. That teaching which sees the Christian Church as the replacement for Israel is called replacement theology, sometimes also called supersessionism.

And the thinking is that all of the blessings God originally promised to the nation of Israel have instead been transferred to the Christian Church which has replaced Israel as the new chosen people and Israel is permanently out of the picture.

Replacement theology, also known as covenant or reformed theology, does go back many years even to the 3rd and 4th century. So it is very well established, particularly beginning with the earliest years of the Roman Catholic Church and then continued in the teachings of the reformers like Martin Luther and others that eventually became Lutherans, Anglican, Presbyterians and others derived from those.

Replacement theologians are earnest and sincere in their convictions and no one's salvation is threatened regardless of which view one espouses. Dispensationalists are as earnest and sincere in their convictions and are convinced that when the Bible uses the word Israel, it means Israel and when it says church, it means church.

The language employed in Jeremiah 31 goes so far as to say the new covenant God is making with Israel will remain inviolate so long as the sun, moon, and stars continue in place.

[46 : 10] A consistent hermeneutic will not logically allow for Israel to mean Israel in most places yet mean something entirely different when mentioned in other places.

The plain laws of grammar, language, and logic do not allow for this extreme latitude in interpretation. We would suggest that all should read or re-read Jeremiah 31 31 to the end of the chapter and add to that Hebrews chapters 8 and 10.

A compelling case is established by the context of all of these references that Israel means Israel. The Christian Church is not Israel.

The Christian Church is most clearly defined in those letters addressed to Christian churches by the Apostle Paul who was designated by the risen Christ to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.

The most dramatic things about this church were the combining of Jews and Gentiles into an entirely new organism called the body of Christ and that this new entity had Christ as the head of this spiritual body.

[47 : 26] Jews and Gentiles upon believing in Jesus Christ became members of that body. It is quite unthinkable to consider it as somehow being identified with the nation of Israel.

Israel nationally was very much opposed to the idea that Jesus of Nazareth was their long awaited Messiah all during the ministry of the Apostle Paul and up to this very present day.

A cursory reading of Ephesians chapter 3 and Colossians chapter 1 in particular plus others make it clear that only those possessing faith in Jesus Christ whether Jew or Gentile could be in that body called the body of Christ of which he is the head.

Since Israel as a nation stood in opposition and rejection of Christ they were certainly not willing to believe on Christ as their Messiah and were equally unwilling to band together with Gentiles who did.

Those Jews who did were disdained and repudiated by those Jews who did not and that was the great majority of those who comprised the nation of Israel.

[48 : 43] As one reads the Old Testament and for that matter much of the New Israel as a national entity and as the chosen focus of God himself consistently comes to the fore.

In fact about the only entity that is more prominently mentioned is God himself. Israel and God's relationship to Israel looms large over the entire scope of scripture.

One could even say prophecy is predominantly about Israel to say nothing of history. But where does the church as the body of Christ fit into prophecy?

It doesn't. Not at all. And that is precisely the point. The church called the body of Christ with Christ being the head is completely foreign to the subject of prophecy.

Paul the apostle to the Gentiles refers to the church with an entirely new designation. He calls the church a mystery quite different from prophecy.

[49 : 50] prophecy. This mystery or sacred secret as it is often called simply sprang into being unpredicted and unexpected as Paul explains it in Ephesians 3 and Colossians 1.

Whereas Israel is a nation comprised of the Jewish people the church is an organism comprised of believing Jewish and non-Jewish people.

The distinction between the two could not be greater and must be kept as separate and distinct as the scriptures keep them. Grasping the theme of it all Please keep in mind what we are now doing in preparation for engaging the subject of hermeneutics the art and science of interpreting the Bible.

Briefly we have called it grasping the Bible as a whole before we explore it in its parts. This is because there are large pervasive truths about the Bible as a whole that must be appreciated and understood before we can delve into its parts.

And perhaps the most pervasive truth is the majestic theme of redemption the buying back restoration of something that has been ruined and it was our world that sank into ruin and devastation through human sin that prompted the need for redemption.

[51 : 15] This redemption often called the central theme of the Bible focuses upon the central nation that is to be the divinely appointed vehicle of that redemption and the singular individual through whom this redemption is to occur.

The nation is Israel and that individual is Jesus the Messiah son of God in his deity and son of Mary the Virgin in his humanity.

To be sure redemption is the scarlet thread that runs all throughout both the Old and New Testaments. This romance of redemption provides the majestic background against which all the remainder of the Bible should be viewed.

The poet John Milton captured this concept centuries ago with his classic tale of paradise lost. The paradise that was lost was the original creation that caused the creator to look upon it all and pronounce it very good in Genesis 1.31.

But that pronouncement would be short-lived because in Genesis 3 the volitional human creatures God had created in innocence lost that state of innocence when they rebelled against the authority of their creator.

[52 : 33] This was when paradise was forfeited. Everything in the created order came crashing down. Our first parents came under the sentence of death which has passed on to all their progeny including us.

The original paradise God called very good became paradise lost. And from that point historically and theologically all the remainder of the Bible Old and New Testament have recorded the steps a gracious God has taken in order for that lost paradise to be regained.

This is where everything is headed and has been headed since that fateful day in Genesis 3. It is the redemption the restoration spoken of by the apostle Peter in Acts 3.

The last three chapters of the book of Revelation assures us of reaching that ultimate and the spirit of God informs John the beloved apostle and the sole survivor of the original twelve to write down all the visions God revealed to him in a scroll.

And that scroll is our present book of the Revelation the apocalypse the unveiling of Jesus Christ returning as he promised in power and great glory.

[53 : 51] And it is essential we grasp this as one of the great themes of the Bible as a whole. The Bible and its Jewishness It is nothing short of ironic that the very people who have historically been targeted for annihilation a people more persecuted hated isolated more despised and rejected by the world at large are the very same people God has chosen and designated to be the vehicle of the world's redemption.

How about that? God does work in mysterious ways. It was not an idle boast when Jesus declared to the woman at Jacob's well in John 4 Salvation is of the Jews for indeed it is.

Redemption for the entirety of humanity and personal salvation for all who accept the substitutionary death of Christ on their behalf all through God's gift of his Son who entered this world through a Jewish maiden named Mary.

And added to the irony of all of that is the fact that what we just described is largely lost on those very chosen people through whom God designated to make it all happen the seed of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

And why is this lost on them? Because through their rejection of the Messiah blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

[55 : 20] You can read about it in Romans 11. The very plan and program of God finds the Jewish people central to the whole drama of redemption. But what else can we expect from a book that is so intensely Jewish?

And yes we speak of what is commonly called the Christian Bible but never forget it was Jewish before it was Christian for Judaism is the cradle of Christianity.

Non-Jews play a relatively small part in the overall revelation of Scripture. Most agree with that as regards the Old Testament but few realize how strikingly Jewish is the New Testament.

In fact the only part of the New Testament we can rightly call non-Jewish or Christian has to do with the letters to churches by the Apostle Paul and even these Christian congregations had an element of Jewish believers among them Paul addressed them as such.

And by the way who was Paul? Paul was the former Saul of Tarsus a Hebrew of Hebrews circumcised the eighth day of the tribe of Benjamin. How Jewish can you get?

[56 : 27] This Jew Saul who became Paul was raised up of God to be the Apostle to the Gentiles and a Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew. In this world there are Jews and then there is everyone else who are Gentiles.

In the Gospels our Lord in his earthly ministry had very little to do with Gentiles and it showed in his revealing the occasions to be an exception since he was not sent to the Gentiles but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew chapter 10 In the Acts it is not until after the resurrection of Christ years after that a non-Jew a Roman army officer named Cornelius was admitted to the household of faith through the ministry of the Apostle Peter and it caused quite a stir.

And why was that? Because Cornelius was not a Jew but a Gentile. Miss the critical nature of the Jewishness of the majority of the Bible and you shut yourself away from an understanding of the Bible as a whole that will blind you to its parts.

The Pivotal Book of Acts Without fear of contradiction we are persuaded that the Book of Acts is the most pivotal of all Biblical books in regard to the plan and program of God.

[57 : 50] And there is no doubt as well that the Acts of the Apostles have suffered from more misinterpretation than any other Biblical book. There are entire denominations whose doctrinal positions and differences are based upon their particular interpretation of this strategic book.

So how and why has so much diversity arisen from everyone looking at the same content in these 28 chapters? We are persuaded it is because this book records the crucial pivot or turning point in God's dealings with humanity.

This pivot occurred within the period of the 30 years of history that Acts records. The pivot is from the Jewish emphasis presided over by the Apostle Peter who along with the other 11 apostles were delegated by Christ to take the gospel of the kingdom to the nation of Israel to whom and through whom God promised that kingdom and the Gentile emphasis presided over by the Apostle Paul to take the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles.

The confusion arose over the fact that both of these programs were operative and functioning side by side for a period of years within the scope of the book of Acts.

A transition was underway that must have been confusing and unsettling to both groups at times, Jew and Gentile. While Jewishness and its requirements remained intact, Sabbath-keeping, circumcision, ceremonial purification via multiple water baptisms, a kosher diet and other things Jewish, yet none of these things were demanded by the Gentiles who were coming to faith.

[59 : 41] Peter and the Twelve were right in step with all these items as they preached the offering of the kingdom God had promised to the Jews and to the rest of the world as well. Likewise, Paul the Apostle was right in step when he preached his gospel of the grace of God that was clearly devoid of all the trappings the Jews considered essential.

Winds of change were clearly blowing. The old order of a law-based program was fading out and giving way to a purely grace-based program for the Gentile constituency to which Paul was called.

All this within the space of the thirty years history recorded in the Acts. As Israel and the kingdom offer was being set aside due to Israel's rejection of their Messiah, Gentiles and the gospel of God's grace apart from the law of Moses was coming front and center.

The former was regressing and the latter was progressing but both were present and operative during the same period. The record of Paul's visit to the original twelve apostles in Jerusalem confirms these differences explaining the content preached to the Jews the circumcised as opposed to that of the Gentiles the uncircumcised.

the distinction is undeniable. This was the issue of the pivot within the book of Acts of the Apostles. Necessity number one is realized.

[61 : 16] It was mentioned on an earlier segment of Christianity Clarified that God's ultimate plan for humanity is the restoration of planet Earth or the regaining of paradise that was lost due to human rebellion against the Creator.

It is also reflected in lines commonly referred to in Matthew 6 called the Lord's Prayer. The prayer is for thy kingdom to come so that God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Surely we have all noticed this has not occurred. So what is preventing the coming of this kingdom so that God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

There are but two necessities that need to be realized. One has already been fulfilled and one has not. Necessity number one is that justice must be served so as to satisfy the righteous demands of an utterly holy God who was deeply offended by man's rebellion and rejection of his authority in the person of our first parents in Genesis chapter 3.

In their rebellion they brought death upon themselves and their entire progeny. Despite their disobedience God promised a deliverer a redeemer who would be the offspring of the woman.

[62 : 35] It was not known then in Genesis 3.15 where the promise was given that this offspring would also be of the same character quality nature and makeup of the God who made that promise.

That offspring would be Emmanuel God with us Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God and the human Son of Mary would arrive in Bethlehem four thousand years after the promise was given.

He would be the one to make good on the promise of God. He would be the one designated by his Father to balance the moral scale of the universe. He did so by meeting the full demands of the law and its penalty.

It was death and he paid it in full. With justice being satisfied we are told in 2 Corinthians 5 that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

In his death payment for sin all human sin of all ages God is morally justified in lifting the curse upon humanity and the earth by restoring it to its original pristine state it enjoyed before being ruined by human sin.

[63 : 46] Now in Christ human sin had been dealt with in the person of the Savior. He died physically when on the cross his spirit was separated from his body and he died spiritually when he was separated in those agonizing hours of darkness on the cross forsaken by his Father who had sent him.

Romans 5 speaks gloriously of the last Adam succeeding where the first Adam failed. This first necessity to be completed before God's kingdom could be restored and come to earth was met fully in the death, burial and resurrection of God's only Son himself a member of the triune Godhead.

The doing of it all was a responsibility God took upon himself in cooperation with his Son. Necessity number one was realized at Calvary only necessity number two remains upcoming.

Necessity number two remains outstanding. In Acts chapter three the Apostle Peter delivers a message to his exclusively Jewish audience.

In a way it's a continuation to the content he delivered earlier in that monumental occasion on the day of Pentecost. Here in chapter three Peter exclaims that God had already fulfilled what he had promised earlier in prophecy saying the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all his prophets that his Christ should suffer he has thus fulfilled.

[65 : 22] Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from ancient time.

In a clear manner Peter tells his audience that God has already done his part by providing the promised Redeemer. Now Peter says it is time for Israel to do its part by repenting of their sin and returning to their God.

Like all their ancestors of past centuries Israel trafficked in moral and spiritual rebellion against God as is verified throughout their history attested to by all the prophets.

Peter pleads with his audience not to follow in the ruinous footsteps of their forefathers. His pleading fell on deaf ears and hardened hearts. Rather than embracing their crucified and risen Savior they would soon begin orchestrating a campaign of persecution against the apostles and other Jewish believers who were followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

And why was the compliance of Israel so essential? It was because of the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob regarding the key position as the chosen people.

[66 : 51] Chosen for what? Chosen as the singular race of people God would use to effect the coming of that kingdom through the Messiah born out of the Jewish tribe of Judah Israel would constitute the catalyst nation and Jesus the catalyst person through whom all the world would realize restoration and all that remains since God did his part at Calvary was for Israel nationally to do their part by signing on to the new covenant and receiving this Jesus as their Messiah.

In doing so Peter tells them God would then return Jesus to earth once again the process of realizing that kingdom of God coming to earth would get underway. Cannot God do this without the cooperation of Israel?

No, he cannot and he cannot because of the promise given to the fathers regarding the nation of Israel. But does Israel deserve this? Of course not.

Neither Israel nor the rest of the world deserve this restoration. Its coming is dependent entirely on the promise and graciousness of God, not the deservedness of Israel.

Though not now cooperative, they will become so during the time of Jacob's trouble, namely the tribulation period. Necessity number two will then be realized and that long-awaited kingdom will come.

[68 : 22] God's pervasive long-suffering The long-suffering of God is an unmistakable theme that surfaces time and again all throughout the Bible. His patience and long-suffering first surfaced when he told Noah to build the ark in Genesis 6.

God tolerated a violent and wicked humanity during the many years the ark was under construction. Each year was a reprieve for the people from judgment until finally the reprieve ended.

The rain began to fall. Noah was unable to persuade anyone outside his immediate family to repent of their sin despite scores of years that warned about judgment coming.

God spoke through Isaiah in chapter 65 when he says I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people which walketh in a way that was not good after their own thoughts a people that provoke me to anger continually to my face.

Malachi 3.6 is a powerful reminder as to why God's long-suffering has not been utterly exhausted due to the ongoing rebellion and disobedience of Israel and he states I am the Lord I change not therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.

[69 : 45] The sons of Jacob are of course the twelve tribes the heads of which were one of the twelve sons of Jacob. God is telling them the only thing that has kept them from total destruction from his hand is the fact that he the Lord does not change.

Because he had bound himself to an oath made to Abraham Isaac and Jacob he was duty bound to himself to make good on it. That would require and guarantee the perpetuity of Israel.

Despite Israel's rebellion and rejection of their God their God did not respond to them in kind by writing them off as they had written him off.

They could attribute their continued existence only to the integrity of a God who cannot lie and cannot go back on his promises. This perpetual attitude on the part of God reflecting his grace and long suffering is one of the continual recurring themes throughout scripture.

It is another of those items that must be grasped by the Bible as a whole. Yet because God's long-suffering and patience via his grace is so prominent in the Bible no one should conclude it cannot be exhausted.

[71 : 00] The generation of Noah could attest to that. God's patience magnanimous as it is has its limits beyond which the Almighty will not go.

That curtain will come down. Doomsday for the unrepentant is also a mark of God's faithfulness and integrity and that he will produce all he has promised to produce including the great assize that day of reckoning described in the 20th of Revelation when the books are opened.

Mankind has great cause to be thankful for God's long suffering but not so foolish that he seeks to take advantage of it. Like the door on the ark of Noah God will shut the door and the opportunity for repentance will have been exhausted.

God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. Preview of Volume 29 Biblical hermeneutics is defined as the art and science of interpreting the Bible.

Interpretation is nearly everything to literature since it alone determines the meaning of that which is written. The statement has been heard that the Bible can be made to say anything one wants it to say.

[72 : 29] It's all in how it's interpreted. Well, unfortunately, that is true. But that does not mean that it does say what we want it to.

What it does mean is what the writer intended it to mean by what he said. Fortunately, we have at our disposal a collection of tools developed by Biblical scholars that will be implemented as we engage the rules and principles of hermeneutics.

We are confident that the logic and consistency of these will become apparent as we reveal them. You will be learning invaluable keys that will unlock otherwise obscure passages of Scripture.

Some things that were previously vague and mysterious will be grasped with a clarity you never thought possible. We will see how the Bible really does interpret itself when we allow it to do so, rather than rush to an interpretation of our own making, which is usually based upon our human wisdom.

But does this mean we will fully understand every passage of Scripture? Well, of course not. The Bible remains divine while we remain human.

[73 : 46] It is, after all, an inexhaustible book that no mere human has ever plumbed in its depths. Such is the word of our God. Yet we are satisfied that all of us can garner a lot more understanding than what we currently possess.

And remember this, the more we learn, the more we have with which to learn. And in the midst of all our learning, the meaning of Scripture, let's address our motivation for doing so.

First, what our motivation is not. Well, it surely isn't so we have grounds for boasting or crowing about our knowledge of the Bible.

The Bible's teaching about humility will make short work of a motivation fueled by our pride or ego. So let's consider the three greatest positive reasons for undertaking this subject of hermeneutics that will enable us to see how Scripture interprets Scripture.

Reason number one. Simply because of the source of this book. The mere fact that it is the revelation given by the God who is creator and sustainer of everything is reason enough in itself to seriously engage it so as to understand its message and meaning.

[75 : 08] Reason or motivation number two. We seek to arrive at the Bible's interpretation in order that we might be obedient and in compliance with what it requires of us.

The greatest honor we can bestow upon our Lord is in being obedient to Him. Nothing so delights the heart of God than that His children render intelligent and loving obedience to Him.

Our Lord asked a question in Dr. Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount in Luke chapter 6 by saying, And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Provocative, penetrating question, is it not? In fact, complete contradiction when one confesses and addresses Jesus Christ as His Lord and then is disobedient or indifferent to what the Lord says.

Motivation number two. We pursue the understanding of Scripture that we might render an intelligent, joyous obedience to what we have learned. And motivation number three.

[76 : 17] Last but not least. Simply that we glorify and exalt our God through the process of taking in His Word in order to live out His Word before Him and others in our day-to-day lives.

Do we really need any more motivation than these three? Or any one of the three for that matter? And no doubt you can think of other positive motivations that would lengthen the list considerably.

Oh, one more thing. Honesty compels me to add this and admittedly it is a bit selfish. It's the plain and simple sheer enjoyment that comes from exploring and coming to an understanding of what God has been pleased to reveal to us.

Nothing like it in the world. Well, this is where we intend to go in upcoming volume 29 and onward and you are most welcome to join us. If you've automatically received this CD volume 28, you will automatically receive volume 29.

But if you came by this in some other way and you want volume 29, you'll need to request it. You can do so by calling 937-322-3113, preferably between the hours of 9 a.m.

[77 : 34] till noon Eastern Standard Time. Or you may request it by writing Grace Bible Church, 1500 Group Road, that's spelled G-R-O-O-P, 1500 Group Road, Springfield, Ohio, 45504.

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This is Pastor Marv Wiseman thanking you for being a part of our Christianity Clarified audience. Feel free of charge any of a Church. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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