

Kingdom Superiority

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[0 : 00] Jesus and the Scribes Jesus and the Scribes Jesus and the Scribes

Jesus and the Scribes having a common pattern.

Jesus does something surprising. The Scribes challenge it by asking or at least thinking about one or more questions. And then Jesus responds in a way that silences the Scribes.

In Mark 2 verses 1 through 12 we saw Jesus healed a paralytic. The Scribes became incredulous when Jesus told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven. Mark 2, verses 6 and 7 gave us the scribes' reaction then.

Here are Mark 2, verses 6 and 7. Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming.

[2 : 43] Who can forgive sins but God alone? Jesus then visibly demonstrated his power by commanding the paralytic to walk. In Mark 2, verses 13-17, Jesus called Levi, better known as Matthew.

Remember that Matthew was a despised tax collector who responded by following Jesus and by hosting a feast in Jesus' honor. That feast included many other tax collectors and sinners.

Mark 2, verses 16 and 17 summarize the second interchange between Jesus and the scribes. Here are Mark 2, verses 16 and 17. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

The scribes almost certainly got the message that Jesus intended for them. Jesus came to redeem people who knew that they were sinners in need of a Savior.

[3 : 58] Those self-righteous scribes failed to recognize that they needed a Savior just as much, if not more, as the tax collectors and sinners did. And that exchange, following Jesus' party with the lowest of society, sets the stage for the passage that we'll study tonight.

Matthew's and Luke's accounts of the feast celebration and the fasting question indicate that the fasting question came shortly after the feast ended, possibly even during the same evening.

Listen to Matthew 9, verses 13 and 14. Matthew 9, 13 has Jesus' response to the question about the feast. Verse 14 transitions into Matthew's account of the fasting question.

So here are Matthew 9, verses 13 and 14. And in Matthew 9, 13, Jesus said, Go and learn what this means.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, Why do we and the disciples fast, but your disciples do not fast?

[5 : 06] Let's start digging into tonight's Mark verses now. We'll break tonight's passage into three sections, starting with just verse 18 of Mark chapter 2.

In Mark 2, 18, we see the puzzled crowd. So the puzzled crowd is your first set of blanks. Listen to Mark chapter 2, verse 18 again.

It says, Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and the people came and said to him, that is Jesus, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?

You might be wondering why I said that this is another conflict with the scribes, because after all, verse 18 says the people came to Jesus asking the question about fasting.

But when we go to the other gospel accounts of this event, we learn who the questioning people were. We just read Matthew chapter 9, 14. That verse told us that the people included John the Baptist's disciples.

[6 : 09] Luke chapter 5 has Luke's version of the feast with the tax collectors and sinners, followed immediately by this fasting question. In Luke 5, 30, the scribes and the Pharisees asked the question about tax collectors and sinners.

Then Jesus gives his answer to that. And then in Luke chapter 5, verse 33, the verse says this in reference to the scribes and Pharisees.

Luke 5, 33 says, And they said to him, The disciples of John fast and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.

So when we put all the gospel accounts together, we can be confident that the people Mark references included disciples of John the Baptist, scribes, and also Pharisees.

That combination is a bit surprising because we have the self-righteous religious leaders and John the Baptist's disciples teaming up to ask the same question.

[7 : 09] John had not hesitated to confront the scribes and the Pharisees, so why then would some of his followers join them in asking Jesus this question? Well, most likely, John's disciples genuinely wanted to get an answer.

John MacArthur offered this explanation. He said, Perhaps this group of disciples was ignorant of the fact that Jesus was the one whose coming John had foretold.

John ministered to tens of thousands of people. Multitudes traveled from Jerusalem and all over Israel to hear him preach in the wilderness and to be baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Not all of John's followers would have been present when he baptized Jesus. Many would not have witnessed that miraculous event nor heard John's clear testimony regarding Jesus on that day.

Almost 30 years after Jesus' baptism, the Apostle Paul encountered a group of John's disciples who still did not know that Jesus was the one to whom John's ministry pointed.

[8 : 12] It also is possible that these disciples were motivated by feelings of jealousy toward Jesus. He goes on to say, Though John personally felt no rivalry toward Jesus, some of his disciples were less enthusiastic about Jesus' growing popularity.

Perhaps similar feelings of contention motivated these followers of John. For his part, John the Baptist was already in prison, which meant he was unavailable to correct either the misguided ignorance or misplaced zeal of those loyal to him.

James Brooks provided other possible reasons for why John's disciples were fasting. He noted that the Jews fasted sometimes because of personal loss, sometimes as an expression of repentance, sometimes as preparation for prayer, and sometimes merely as a meritorious act.

So the disciples of John may have been fasting because of the imprisonment or perhaps even death of their leader by this time, his ascetic lifestyle, or his emphasis on repentance.

So important was fasting for ancient Jews that an entire volume of the Mishnah, which is the first written collection of the Jewish Torah, was devoted to that.

[9 : 31] Although Scripture doesn't provide the motive for why John's disciples fasted, we know why the religious leaders fasted. They fasted because they wanted to impress other people.

In Matthew chapter 23, in the first part of verse 5, Jesus said this about the scribes and Pharisees. He said, They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

The scribes and Pharisees practiced the type of fasting that Jesus condemned in his Sermon on the Mount. Listen to what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. These verses are Matthew chapter 6, verses 16 through 18.

Jesus said in Matthew 6, 16 through 18, And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your Father who is in secret.

[10 : 40] And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. The Old Testament actually commanded fasting only one day a year, and that was the Day of Atonement.

In Leviticus chapter 23, verses 26 through 32, God gave the requirements for the Day of Atonement. So listen to what Leviticus 23, 26 through 32 have to say.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present an offering of food to the Lord.

And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his

people.

And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. [11:50] It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month, beginning at evening, from evening to evening, you shall keep your Sabbath.

The Jews understood, and still understand today, that the afflict yourself references in those verses mean a prohibition against food and drink on that day.

Although the Old Testament mentions a number of other fasts, those fasts were voluntary, and they were associated with sorrow over sin, the sincere pursuit of communion with God, or other reasons that were completely voluntary.

Fasts motivated out of pride or self-righteousness were wholly rejected by God. By the time of Christ, fasting had been perverted and twisted beyond what was scriptural and sincere.

Fasting had become a ritual to gain merit with God and attention from men. Many Pharisees fasted twice a week, usually on the second and fifth days of the week.

[12:58] They picked those days, they said, because those were supposedly the days that Moses made his trips to receive the tablets of the law from God. But those two days also happened to be the major Jewish market days when the cities and towns were crowded with farmers, merchants, and shoppers.

They were the two days where public fasting would have the largest audience. So back in our Mark text, we know that the puzzled crowd has asked Jesus the question, why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast?

That your disciples do not fast. In verses 19 and 20 of Mark 2, we have the second section of the lesson, and Jesus begins to clear up the confusion, at least for those willing to hear his message. In verses 19 and 20, Jesus provides the proper context. So the proper context is your next set of blanks. Listen to verses 19 and 20 again.

And Jesus said to them, Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

[14:09] The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. Rather than apologizing for causing an offense, Jesus escalated the conflict to expose the spiritual condition of those who ask.

His response simultaneously eliminated the ignorance that might have existed on the part of John's disciples, and it also confronted the indignation that motivated the Pharisees and the scribes.

The Pharisees accused Jesus of being in conflict with the rules and rituals of Judaism. Jesus responded by pointing out that in reality, the scribes and Pharisees were the ones who were set in opposition to God's saving purposes.

If they had recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, they never would have posed their question in the first place. And Jesus' question there underscored spiritual truth.

Fasting was for times of grief and sorrowful reflection, but a wedding was a joyful and festive event. The attendants of the bridegroom, the groom's closest friends, were responsible for the execution of the wedding plans.

[15:25] A typical ancient Jewish wedding lasted up to seven days, with the celebration starting once the bridegroom and his attendants arrived. To fast at a wedding would have been inappropriate and insulting, and the ancient rabbinic rules actually forbade the practice of fasting at a wedding.

Jesus' words were emphatic. As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. For a member of the wedding party to mourn at such a joyous occasion would have been as ridiculous as it would have been rude.

It was equally ludicrous to think that Jesus' disciples ought to fast and grieve while the Messiah was in their midst. Jesus' point to his questioners was simply this.

Judaism, at its most devout level, as exemplified by the scribes and Pharisees, was completely out of touch with God's plan of salvation. They were mourning when they should have been rejoicing because they had rejected Jesus the Savior and clung to their own rules and regulations to earn salvation.

Consequently, they had no common ground with Jesus. They were consumed with self-righteousness. Jesus preached divine grace. They denied they were sinners. Jesus preached

repentance from sin.

[16:45] They were proud of their religiosity. Jesus preached humility. They embraced external ceremony and tradition. Jesus preached a transformed heart.

They loved the applause of men. Jesus offered the approval of God. They had dead ritual. Jesus offered a dynamic relationship. They promoted a system.

And most importantly of all, Jesus provided an opportunity for salvation. Daniel Aiken wrote this about Jesus' bridegroom analogy.

He said, A relationship with Jesus is not a solemn, boring affair. It is a celebration, a spiritual banquet of joy and blessing. Of course, we should be holy, but we must not be somber.

We should be moral, but not legalistic, and righteous, but not stern. Why is that? Well, it's because there is joy in Jesus. And he goes on to close by saying, Christian, do not mourn when it is time to celebrate.

[17:51] Jason Meyer echoed similar thoughts. He said, The coming of Christ to save shows that Christians should be characterized by joy. Joy is an essential part of Christianity, not the icing on the cake.

It is not jewelry to dress up Christianity as an accessory. It is an essential part of the body of Christianity. The arrival of the promised Messiah bridegroom definitely should have been a time of joy.

And that point is one reason why Jesus used the example of a wedding. However, the Jewish religious leaders would have picked up on another reason why Jesus used the analogy.

That other reason would have made the religious leaders very angry. Here's another Jason Meyer quote. He said, There is something explosive about Jesus using the analogy of the bridegroom.

The Bible pictures the people of God as the bride of God. The book of Hosea portrays God's rebellious people as unfaithful, always wandering away from God.

[18:58] But Isaiah announces a new work as God himself will come as the husband for his unfaithful bride. Listen to the Isaiah verses to which that quote refers.

These verses are Isaiah chapter 54 verses 5 through 8. Isaiah 54 5 through 8 say, For your maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.

For the Lord has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you.

In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer. Here's why Jesus' reference to himself as the bridegroom would have angered the religious leaders so much.

The Old Testament never refers to the Messiah as the bridegroom. The bridegroom in the Old Testament always is God and the bride is Israel. But in the New Testament the bridegroom becomes the Son of God and the bride is his church.

[20:21] Given the Old Testament context of the metaphor, it's clear that Jesus was claiming even more than Messiahship when he referred to himself as the bridegroom. Jesus was claiming to be God just as he did in the first conflict with the scribes when he healed the paralytic.

We know that Jesus has every right to claim to be God because he is God. Consider two questions and then we'll hear an answer from Jason Meyer. Those questions are what honors the Lord and then what brings the Lord Jesus glory.

Again, what honors the Lord and what brings the Lord Jesus glory. Jason Meyer says, it is when the church of Jesus Christ as the bride of Christ says, there is nothing I would rather do than spend eternity with you.

We are more than friends of the bridegroom. The New Testament clearly shows that we are the bride. So let's take a short side trip to look at cross-references showing believers as the bride of Christ.

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul said this in 2 Corinthians 11 too. He said, For I feel a divine jealousy for you since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

[21:41] Then here is what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5 verse 23. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

Then John wrote these words in Revelation chapter 19 verses 6 through 9. Revelation 19 6 through 9 say, Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exalt and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saint.

And the angel said to me, Write this, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Mark 2, 19 and the cross references that expand on it should make us joyful. However, Jesus slips a darker future prophecy into verse 20.

[23 : 02] Look again at Mark chapter 2, verse 20. Jesus said, The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast in that day.

This is the first allusion to Jesus' death in Mark's gospel. Here we see that joy is exchanged for sorrow and celebration turns to mourning. This is an abrupt and surprising image.

In a normal wedding, the guests eventually leave. Jesus interjects the unusual thought of the groom forcibly being removed from the wedding celebration. The verb translated taken away carries the idea of sudden violent removal and serves as a clear reference to Jesus' crucifixion.

This is yet another case where Mark alludes to Isaiah. This time, Mark alludes to Isaiah 53, 8. So listen to Isaiah chapter 53, verses 8 and 9.

Isaiah 53, 8 and 9 say, By oppression and judgment he was taken away. There's the taken away reference again. And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

[24 : 19] And they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his death, although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth. death. The disciples did not initially understand Jesus' predictions of his suffering and death, but his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross was central to his earthly mission.

It was an integral part of the gospel of forgiveness that Jesus preached. We already can see that there are storm clouds forming over Jesus' ministry, initiated by the consternation of the scribes and Pharisees over Jesus' presumption to forgive sins that we looked at in Mark 2.10, his socializing with sinners that we saw in 2.13-17, and now he's escalated it with what we're looking at tonight. Jesus is aware of the future consequences of his confrontation with the authorities. We'll see that when we get to chapter 3, verse 6, in a couple of weeks. We know that as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus will be cut off out of the land of the living.

But here's where we see another instance of the gospel in Mark. Daniel Aiken said, the bridegroom, our Lord Jesus, would be snatched away to suffer alone on a cross to atone for our sins, to die the death we should have died, to pay the price for sins we should have paid.

Then he personalizes it, and we can personalize it too. He says, he died in my place, he bore my wrath, he took on my judgment, God killed his son so that he would not have to kill me.

[25 : 59] There is an appropriate time to fast and to mourn. It is when I consider the infinite price paid for my sin by my Savior. Every true believer understands that Jesus suffered for his or her sins, died the death that the believer deserved, and that is why the celebration of Jesus' arrival is appropriate, but that also is why sorrow because of the price Jesus paid is appropriate.

So far, we've considered the puzzled crowd and the proper context. Next, we'll see that Jesus provided the pictured cases. So the pictured cases is your next set of blanks.

In these pictured cases, Jesus uses two illustrations to demonstrate the superiority of his kingdom. Look at Mark 2, verses 21 and 22 again.

In Mark 2, 21 and 22, Jesus said, No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old and a worse tear is made.

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins, but new wine is for fresh wineskins.

[27 : 25] Let's consider the first illustration, and that's the folly of sewing an unshrunk piece of cloth on an old garment. Not only would the new cloth not match the faded color of the old, it would shrink when washed and pull the garment, causing it to tear.

Our Lord's point was that his gospel of repentance and forgiveness from sin could not be patched into the legalistic traditionalism of Pharisaic Judaism. The true gospel cannot be successfully attached to the tattered garment of superficial religion that was worn so proudly by the scribes and Pharisees.

Apostate Judaism's rituals and ceremonies were like filthy rags. They were beyond repair. Jesus did not come with a message to patch up their old system.

He came to totally replace it. Here's where we have to be very clear, though, about what the old garment represents. The old garment to which Jesus alludes is neither the Mosaic law nor the Old Testament as a whole.

Jesus did not come to destroy the law. He came to fulfill it. Moreover, the Apostle Paul explains that the law of God is righteous and good in Romans 7.16.

[28 : 44] But the Jewish leaders had added their own rabbinic stipulations and traditions to God's law to the degree that Judaism now had more to do with keeping extra-biblical prescriptions than honoring divine requirements.

So the old garment is the legalistic system of rabbinic tradition that had obscured the law of God. Jesus was not interested in mending the religion of the Pharisees.

The good news of salvation by grace through faith in him could not be combined with the works righteousness of Judaism. Let's move on to verse 22 now.

Here is verse 22 again. Jesus said, And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins.

But new wine is for fresh wineskins. To better understand this verse, we need to know how the Jews in those days kept wine.

[29 : 48] John MacArthur had the best and most succinct explanation. This explanation will give you a better understanding of the verse, and you may also get a better appreciation for how we store things today versus then.

Wine was stored in ancient Israel in containers made from animal skins. Often, goat skins would be used. The animal's hide would be uncut except at the legs and the neck, and sometimes would be turned inside out.

The leg openings would then be sealed shut, and the neck would be used as a spout, so that the wine could be easily poured in or out. As new wine began to ferment, gas would be released, causing the leather skins to expand.

An old wine skin, having lost its elasticity, could break during the process of fermentation.

Consequently, the wine would spill and the flask would be destroyed.

To avoid this, new wine had to be placed in new wine skins, containers that had the strength and flexibility to hold up as the wine fermented. Those of you going out to dinner after our study have at least two more reasons to be thankful, assuming that you already are thankful that Jesus paid the price for your salvation.

[31 : 04] You can be thankful that you will be feasting instead of fasting, and you can be thankful that your server will be pouring your drink out of something other than animal skin. Here's another Jason Meyer quote.

He said, The point of these two parables about the old and new is quite clear. The teaching and practices of the Pharisees and scribes represent the old traditions.

They have added many things to the Bible. These man-made rules and man-made traditions have become stiff and brittle. Jesus cannot be added to their traditions.

He is like new wine that will bust their traditions wide open. Meyer continues, The new wine and the new patch represent the fresh teaching of Jesus. Everything must be recalibrated now that the times of fulfillment have come.

The religious traditions of the Pharisees are like a religious straitjacket which Jesus will tear apart. People must be prepared to follow Jesus and break free from man-made tradition.

[32 : 08] The pertinent question isn't why Jesus' disciples didn't fast but why the Pharisees didn't feast and celebrate the presence of the Messiah. Jesus informs us that he came to make things new and not to perpetuate the old.

With the coming of the Messiah, Judaism must give way to Christianity and rightly so for in Jesus the Hebrew faith finds its fulfillment and completion.

Listen to this comment from Warren Wearsby. He said, Salvation is not a partial patching up of one's life. It is a whole new robe of righteousness.

The Christian life is not a mixing of the old and the new. Rather, it is a fulfillment of the old and the new. I like this analogy he used. He said, there are two ways to destroy a thing.

You can smash it or you can permit it to fulfill itself. An acorn, for example, can be smashed with a hammer or it can be planted and allowed to grow into an oak.

[33 : 12] In both cases, the destruction of the acorn is accomplished, but in the second instance, the acorn is destroyed by being fulfilled. R.C.

Sproul noted, with these metaphors, Jesus was saying, in essence, you cannot take the new and force it into the old structures because the old structures cannot bear it.

Jesus was not condemning the Old Testament law of God. He was condemning the traditions that had developed among the scribes and Pharisees. He was warning them that their king had come and they would not be able to deal with this king unless they got rid of the structures that made it impossible for them to receive him.

something so transcendently new had happened that they could not receive Christ into their lives without being made new themselves. It would be impossible to be a Christian and keep to the old ways.

That finishes our look at what Mark covered in his account, but we have a bonus verse to cover.

Luke's account shows that Jesus added a third illustration to his answer, and that third illustration also involves wine.

[34 : 21] Turn over to Luke chapter 5 verse 39. Again, that's Luke chapter 5 verse 39. Jesus says there, And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says the old is good.

That final analogy depicted the lost condition of the scribes and Pharisees whose sensibilities had been deadened by the inebriating effects of their false religion.

Those who would reject the true gospel in favor of a system of works righteousness are like spiritual drunkards, desensitized to the point that they no longer care about how the wine tastes.

Drunk on their old ways, they had no desire for the new. They would rather savor the foul flavors of false religion than imbibe the fresh purity of the true gospel. The Jews, with their ancient traditions passed down from generation to generation, were so deeply ingrained in rituals and ceremonies that it was difficult for them to relinquish them.

They had cultivated such a taste for their own superficial system that when offered something new and something far better, they simply were not interested. John MacArthur bluntly but accurately summarized the two illustrations in Mark's gospel and the third illustration in Luke's account.

[35 : 46] MacArthur said, Taken together, these three metaphors illustrate the exclusivity of the Christian gospel and the tragedy that results when any attempt is made to syncretize the truth with the false religious system.

The only true message of salvation is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that is that pardon from sin comes by grace alone through faith in him. Anything else is a false gospel that leads not to heaven but to hell.

In an age where relativism reigns, believers need to be reminded of the fact that truth is exclusive and absolute. Rather than trying to build bridges of artificial unity with false religions, Christians ought to heed the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6 verses 14 through 18.

You just heard MacArthur reference 2 Corinthians 6 verses 14 through 18. Here are what those verses say. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

[37 : 04] What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Therefore go out from their midst and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Then I will welcome you and I will be a father to you and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.

Remember the main idea. Jesus explains the superiority of his kingdom and provides the first reference in Mark to his upcoming death on behalf of sinners. We learn from these verses that in

religion it is worse than useless to attempt to mix things which essentially differ.

When the real thing has arrived, we do not continue to worship the shadow. To do so is to create a false religion, one that cannot save but can only damn.

Listen to Hebrews chapter 10, verses 1 through 10. The verses expand on that concept. For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

[38 : 29] Otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins. But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me.

In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.

When he said, Above, you have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings, these are offered according to the law. Then he added, Behold, I have come to do your will.

He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that we will have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

[39 : 35] Remember that Jesus did not come to reform us, but to regenerate us. Not to improve us, but to make us new. This is true on the personal level and on the corporate level as well in whole religious systems.

The gospel of Jesus Christ didn't add to Judaism or reform it. The gospel fulfilled Judaism and superseded it. the new covenant replaced the old.

With Jesus' life, ministry, atoning death, and glorious resurrection, everything changes. It changes for the better and it changes for the good.

There can be no compromise between Judaism and Christianity, between works-based religion and salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, or between my old life and my new life.

salvation is not a partial patching up of one's life. It is a whole new robe of righteousness. The Christian life is not a mixing of the old and new. Rather, it is a fulfillment of the old and the new.

[40 : 44] The message for us is that if we have indeed embraced Christ in his newness, we may look eagerly to the future when people from all over creation will sit down with him in his father's house celebrating the marriage feast of the Lamb.

We read about that marriage feast of the Lamb earlier when we cross-referenced Revelation 19, verses 6 through 9. Listen again to just the last part of Revelation 19, 6.

All believers will join in saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder of why Jesus came to this earth.

Help us realize that he came to make us new. Help us be appropriately joyful for that. And let us celebrate that coming and what he has done for us.

And let us be appropriately mournful when we think about the sacrifice he made to accomplish that. Be with us as we go through the week. Help us be more willing to share the gospel with others.

[41 : 54] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.