

Christianity Clarified Volume 01

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[0 : 00] What is Christianity really all about? The issue remains very confusing to a large segment of our society.

At times, it even extends to many who consider themselves Christian. Here, in an ongoing effort to try and dispel some of the confusion, is Marv Wiseman with another session of Christianity Clarified.

This is Marv Wiseman with an introduction to a brand new program aired here for the very first time today. It's called Christianity Clarified. Christianity Clarified has come to life because of a death, the death of Barbara, my beloved wife and soulmate for nearly 50 years.

What began as an ordinary Saturday morning in March of 2006 ended in the intensive care unit at the hospital 20 hours later.

A CAT scan had revealed profuse bleeding in the worst possible part of her brain. There had been no previous symptoms or warnings prior to this massive cerebral hemorrhage.

[1 : 09] Before requesting the ventilator be unplugged, family and friends each had a private time of saying their goodbyes to Barbara. We all spoke to her as if she could hear, but the monitoring device indicated she probably couldn't.

All I could do was stand by holding her hand. And finally, I asked a nurse if there was any way I could get my arms around her. I wanted to hold her, not just hold her hand.

Oh, by all means, she said, you get right up there on the bed and lie beside her. That was such a gift. I will always treasure that.

Hours later, Barbara died in my arms, and I knew exactly when she took her last breath. Now she is with our Lord and our daughter, Dawn Elizabeth, who died unexpectedly in 1995 at the age of 30. Barbara and I had retired only three months earlier, following a 35-year ministry, pastoring Grace Bible Church in Springfield, Ohio. The congregation established a memorial fund in her honor, and generous gifts began pouring in for this dearly loved woman.

[2 : 26] She had always had a great love for God's Word and God's people. I knew something had to be done with this fund that would be in keeping with her spiritual priorities, and a program like Christianity Clarified seemed a natural project for the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund.

These brief three-minute segments can edify believers and evangelize those seeking answers, both issues very close to Barbara's heart. Tomorrow, here on this station, we will launch our first teaching segment, consisting of eight brief sessions that encompass the entirety of human history in outline form.

My promise to you is that Christianity Clarified will be biblical in content, critical in importance, concise in explanation, and comprehensive in scope.

You are cordially invited to join us daily at this same time on this station for another edition of Christianity Clarified. Barbara would be delighted to have you as a listener.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

[3 : 45] This is the biblical history of earth and humanity. Without apology, we look to the Bible as the only available authoritative account of earth and human origins.

The first two chapters of Genesis contain the divinely inspired record of creation in six literal days and ceasing for the seventh, thus establishing worldwide the seven-day week still in place.

Christ affirmed the Genesis account in Matthew 19 when he chided the Pharisees by asking, Have you not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?

Christ did not subscribe to a six-day creation because he was captive to tradition, but because he knew it to be true. Taking the biblical account at face value and believing the Bible to be a book of divine disclosure, a straightforward approach to the Genesis account is the most logical.

Secularists insist the earth is billions of years old while the creation account settles in somewhere less than 10,000 years. Even 10,000 years forces man to stretch his thinking.

[4 : 57] Yet, we can do this. Many today can easily comprehend 100 years because they have lived them. Even 10,000, as long as it is, is merely 100 times the 100 we can comprehend.

Long, but not beyond our ability to compute. Billions is clearly incomprehensible. And why does earth's age need to be comprehensible?

Because scripture reveals God has made earth and man his centerpiece. Earth was made for man, placed where it is for man, and equipped for man.

Thus, man is able to identify with his God-given home of earth, including its origin and age. Further, to say that creation by divine fiat is religion or faith, while evolution is scientific, is complete nonsense.

There are reputable scientists worldwide with advanced degrees in varied disciplines who flatly reject evolution as scientifically unsustainable.

[6 : 10] Only special creation provides purpose and meaning for life. Origin and destiny are inseparably connected. Without deliberate origin reflecting intentionality, life is devoid of meaning.

The godless random acts behind the supposed billions of years provide no satisfying answers. Special creation does. And while that alone does not validate it, it certainly is in its favor.

And not merely man's past is accounted for, his future is disclosed as well, from the very same source. It's all in the book.

Why are people and the world the way they are?

It's all due to what is called the fall. Romans 5.18 tells us, Through one transgression, Adams, there resulted condemnation to all men.

[7 : 19] All of corporate humanity was in the loins of our first parent, Adam. We are all part of Adam's DNA. Adam's death became our death in the same way Christ's life is our life.

Death is not a cessation of being, but a separation. Separation of the spirit from the body is physical death, and separation of the spirit from God is spiritual death.

Adam died spiritually immediately upon partaking after Eve in Genesis 3. Years later, he also died physically, a process that began years earlier.

Death for us all, the sickness and debilitation it brings with it, are all part of the original consequences of Adam's sin passed on to us.

Romans 5 provides the explanation for human behavior and death. All humans except Christ alone are conceived with the seeds of death in us, resulting from the inbred nature of sin.

[8 : 31] Sin produces death, whereof all are partakers. This alone explains why humanity and the world are as they are. Look around you.

It all fits. Look within you. That fits too. Our humanity is systemically contaminated with a terminal disease called sin.

It isn't pretty, but it is real, and there is no escaping it. Death is no respecter of persons, and it will overtake us all, no matter how good the doctors.

God's only resolution for death is through his appointed agent, whom he raised out of death, Jesus Christ, God's Son. He is referred to in 1 Corinthians 15 as the last Adam, who is a life-giving spirit.

Only the biblical record explains why people and the world are the way they are. This biblical account of human sin and rebellion against God the Creator is referred to as the fall.

[9 : 45] It alone is the only consistent explanation for why man and the world are as they are. We search in vain for another answer.

So, why are people and the world the way they are? It's all due to what is called the fall, and it is universal.

What provision has been made to reverse human death? Only one. And only the scriptures reveal it. A breathtakingly glorious passage, 2 Corinthians 5, tells us, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and that Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

And the sixth of Romans reminds us, the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These are now present realities, and their truths comprise what is commonly known throughout Christendom as the gospel, or the good news.

[11 : 06] The good news is preceded by the bad news, which is, we are all sinful beings, self-willed and self-serving, rightly alienated by our sin from the utterly holy and righteous God.

The good news is, despite our sin, God deeply loved us, and sent his only son to pay the penalty for our sin by dying in our place, the innocent, for the guilty.

Thus, balancing the scales of divine justice. Only Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, possessed the credentials for doing this. There was none other good enough, as the hymn writer put it.

And prior to the actual death of Christ, this desperately needed redemption for an entire human race was nothing but a promise. But, it was God's promise, and that assured its ultimate fulfillment. The promise surfaced in Genesis 3, almost immediately following the first sin committed by our first parents. They were assured that the offspring of the woman, Eve, would provide the singular remedy for the spiritual and physical malady of sin.

[12 : 25] This offspring of the woman would be none other than Jesus the Christ, directly from God, thus possessing deity, but born of a woman, thus possessing humanity.

It was this one, the God-man, representing both parties, God and man, that would triumphantly reconcile the two factions together again, thus establishing peace and joy through forgiveness. Eve was not told the fulfillment of that promise would consume 4,000 years of human history until that earth-shaking event would transpire in a lowly animal feeding trough in the obscure village of Bethlehem.

From there, Christ would make His way to Jerusalem 30 years later, where on Calvary He would be made sin on our behalf. This was God's one and only remedy for the human condition of sin.

Was there really a divine destruction of the first human civilization referred to as Noah's Flood? Indeed there was. Not only is the official and authoritative record of it found in Genesis 6-8, but numerous traditions of the Great Flood have been perpetuated from different areas in the world.

[13 : 55] Not all their details agree with the Genesis account, but the major aspects of the flood, its survivors, and its victims are all there. Men have always been reluctant to take the Bible at face value, not believing that it really does mean what it says.

Yet, this is the only logical and consistent way to understand any literary work, unless there is good reason to see it as allegory or some sort of figure less than literal.

It really was a flood. Worldwide, it really did destroy all humans and animals outside the ark of safety. Noah and his sons really did build that ark.

The animals really did come into it, two by two, and it did really rain for forty days. The great fountains of the deep did open up.

The water did prevail upon the earth for one hundred and fifty days. We cannot help but be curious as to how the logistics and details of all this flood and ark business came about.

[15 : 08] They are not, in reality, the issue at all. The issue is, as it always is, in what is purported to have come from God. Did it?

Did it really? Is this Genesis record truly trustworthy? There is no question that Jesus the Messiah believed the record of Noah and the flood to be true, for he cited it in Matthew.

There is not even a hint that the Savior questioned the validity of the flood and the events that transpired around it. If they were not true, then Jesus did not realize they were not true.

That clearly makes him an ignorant kind of Savior who was seriously out of touch. Or, if they were not true and Jesus knew that, yet went along with it without exposing the error, he would have been a deceptive Savior.

Neither an ignorant Savior or a deceptive Savior could be deemed a worthy Savior. The idea is abhorrent. While men seem ever-given to place more confidence in the ever-changing opinions of their fellow man, we keep coming back to the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture for the only truly authoritative account.

[16 : 29] Geologists and those of other earth disciplines find a stunning and undeniable connection between the records of the flood found in Genesis and the earth's topographical presentation throughout the world.

The most convincing evidences are, well, convincing. God's gracious response to man's need for redemption because of his sin was in the promise of a Redeemer.

In Genesis 3, a veiled promise is given that this Redeemer God will provide would come from humanity itself, an offspring of Adam and Eve.

Later in Genesis, it's clear that the line of descent will narrow through Noah and one of his three sons, Shem. It is traced from Shem to and through the direct descendant, Abraham, as revealed in Genesis 11 and 12, then onward to Isaac and Jacob and of Jacob, his twelve sons became the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In addition to the genealogies in Genesis 35 and 46, the New Testament provides supporting documentation in Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

[17 : 53] All through the ancient history of the nation Israel, there was one subject that occupied and filled the heart and mind of every loyal Jew. This subject was the epitome of the Hebrew hope.

This subject represented the fulfillment of all their hopes and dreams for Jews as individuals, for Jews as a nation, and also for the whole world.

This subject was all wrapped up in one word in one person, Messiah. Messiah. Messiah means the anointed one, the chosen one.

Anointed by whom? Chosen by whom? By God himself, of course. Nearly all the Jewish prophets spoke repeatedly of God one day sending his chosen one to earth and when he comes, he will set the earth right.

He will be God's singular superman who will make justice and righteousness prevail. When the Messiah comes, every Jew believed, he will fix everything that's wrong and actually set up his throne in Jerusalem from which he will rule the entire world and Israel will be the world headquarters.

[19 : 14] Four thousand years after God gave that veiled promise in Genesis 3, the Messiah had still not yet arrived. Then one day, an unorthodox Jewish prophet by the name of John the Baptizer came upon the scene to inform the nation of Israel that God was making good on his promise and that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the long-awaited Messiah sent by God from heaven itself.

He formerly introduced Jesus to Israel as recorded in John 1, Matthew 3, and Luke 3. No longer was the promise of the Messiah just a promise.

Now it is a promise fulfilled in the person of Jesus the Christ as John the Baptizer so enthusiastically announced. Why did Israel reject Jesus Christ as their Messiah?

As the Spirit of God inspired and authored all four of the Gospels, each of them opened their early chapters with the arrival of Jesus of Nazareth whom they identify with God's long-promised Messiah.

He is on the scene, spellbinding the masses with his undeniable miracles, everything from water into wine, multiplying loaves and fishes so as to feed thousands.

[20 : 46] How did he do that? Opened the eyes of the blind and caused the deaf to hear. And then, his magnum opus, can you believe it? He actually raised the dead to life again.

Lazarus and others. Lazarus, not merely dead, but very dead. Dead for four days. Surely, this must have come from God himself.

Nicodemus, in that famous night visit recorded in John 3, said, Master, we know that you have come from God for no man can do the miracles you have done unless God is with him.

And Peter, in Matthew 16, declared in his famous confession, Thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

And, there was the standard convictions among many of the nation Israel. Mark 12 says, the common people heard him gladly.

[21 : 47] These were just the ordinary folk, but not everyone was common. There were the uncommon. These were the intelligentsia, the ruling class, shakers and movers.

These were the religious establishment, entrenched in their cushy, prestigious positions. You know, people with clout and connections.

They heard Jesus too, but they never heard him gladly. They heard him grudgingly, heard him with scorn and derision.

What was their problem with Jesus of Nazareth? Well, for starters, he was a threat to them. He exposed their corruption and hypocrisy. That's enough to evoke vengeance in itself.

And then, two, Jesus did not meet their qualifications of what the Messiah should be. Ask them what their qualifications were, and you'd probably get an answer like, well, we can't exactly say.

[22 : 50] But he doesn't meet them. Christ knew full well he was on a path that would end in his rejection and crucifixion. After all, that's why he was there.

And the officialdom of Israel saw to it, conspiring with Judas for a nice, quiet arrest of Jesus. Then, manipulate a pagan Roman named Pilate to do their dirty work.

After Christ's resurrection and ascension, Peter would indict Israel on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 by saying, God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. This is the account of Israel's rejection of their Messiah. What are the times of the Gentiles?

This is a fascinating prophecy, and it speaks of a fascinating time. We are currently living in the times of the Gentiles. It refers to the supremacy or domination of the Gentiles.

[23 : 57] And who are the Gentiles? Anyone who is not Jewish is a Gentile, and that's most of us. So, what does the times of the Gentiles mean?

It refers to the times that Gentiles are in the driver's seat of the world powers and decisions. Christ's prophecy referred to this in Luke 21 saying, Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Well, what does that mean? The times of the Gentiles being fulfilled? It means their day is over. It means Jerusalem will no longer be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.

It means the power and dominance fallen to Gentiles to pass around among themselves will come to an end. All through the ages of the past 4,000 years, Gentiles have beaten up on Israel, subjugating and persecuting and dominating them.

The Egyptians, the Philistines, Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Spain, and the rest of Europe using Israel as a punching bag until the worst of all, Hitler and his blathering nonsense about a super-Aryan race climaxed by the horrors of the Holocaust.

[25 : 30] And, adding insult to injury, there are those who are either ignorant dupes or just plain evil who tell us the Holocaust that claimed six million Jews during World War II never happened.

It's all a worldwide trumped-up hoax engineered by international Jewry to gain sympathy. This is the current claim of radical Islamists.

These are the times of the Gentiles. But, Markwell, the number one Jew's words, Jesus himself, said they will come to an end. Then, who will be in charge of the world's direction and decisions? Who's left when once the domination of Gentiles comes to an end? If the world's population is comprised of a huge percentage of Gentiles and a very tiny percentage of Jews, and the time of the Gentiles comes to an end, you tell me who that leaves.

Voila! You are so right! Israel! And it will be Israel led by Israel's Messiah, the same one their ancestors rejected 2,000 years ago.

[26 : 46] And when this Jew of Jews is reigning in Jerusalem, the Gentiles will fare much better than they ever did when they were in charge.

When will the rejected Redeemer return? We don't know. Unlike human governments, heaven never leaks, but keeps all the secrets it wants to keep.

We may be certain of one thing. Galatians 4 tells us that it was in the fullness of time that God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

This means that God the Father knew just precisely when the best possible time arrived for the entrance of Jesus into the world. That's when he sent him.

That was for the first coming of Jesus to Bethlehem. We expect nothing less by way of strategic timing when God has him return for the second coming.

[27 : 51] The differences between the advents are stunning. The first provided a lamb, gentle, meek, and mild, a suffering servant. The second will provide a lion, rapacious, and warlike.

Jesus is, after all, the lion of the tribe of Judah, and he will behave in a lion-like way when he comes again. No suffering servant here.

He did that. This time around, it will be as a conquering king depicted in Revelation 19. One way put it this way, Jesus is coming again, and this time he will not be in a good mood.

His arrival will be stunning, electrifying, if you will. It's recorded in Matthew 24 and 25 and Revelation 19, plus numerous Old Testament passages overflowing with promises and details of his second coming.

We are told that every eye will see him when he comes in the clouds. A generation ago, we couldn't quite grasp that, but modern technology and satellites simplify that.

[29 : 05] This second coming of Christ will serve multiple purposes. The destruction of the Antichrist will be high on the list. Coupled with that will be the rescue of the nation of Israel who will be at the very brink of annihilation.

This is not new to Israel. They've been there before. They live on the brink of annihilation, but never have they been so thoroughly and ominously threatened as they will be at the hands of the Antichrist.

The seven-year peace pact signed between Israel and Antichrist will be violated halfway through the agreed duration of it. Open season will be declared on all Jews worldwide, and multitudes will die during this time of Jacob's trouble, otherwise known as the Great Tribulation, or the 70 weeks of Daniel, spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24.

The rejected Redeemer returns at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation period, and every eye will see him, and all of Israel will embrace him.

Being a new and unknown program, I want to explain who we are and what we are about. I'm Marv Wiseman, and Christianity Clarified consists of three-minute segments of explanations focusing on various aspects of the Christian faith.

[30 : 41] The goal is to clarify great theological, biblical concepts in easily understood terms for the average layperson. God's great truths revealed in Scripture are too important to be misunderstood or unappreciated by the very people for whom they were intended.

Our objective is to address every major aspect of biblical theology and doctrine and to do so in brief, painless, three-minute segments. Twenty of these recorded sessions are placed on one compact disc, tracked and cataloged for easy retrieval, and made available to all who request it free of charge.

You may obtain your own personal reference library you can quickly and easily access at will, and it occupies almost no space at all.

Each month, a new free CD will be made available, consisting of the 20 programs most recently aired on this station. Why are we making these CDs available free of charge?

Simply because we believe the subject matter to be that important and potentially life-changing and comforting for those who obtain them. How can we do this financially?

[31 : 59] Funding for the free CDs as well as securing radio time is made possible by the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund. Money was graciously provided in honor and appreciation for Barbara by the generous and compassionate congregation of Grace Bible Church in Springfield, Ohio.

I have been privileged to be their pastor since 1971, and Barbara was very dear to the entire congregation. In honor of her life and her great love for Christ and the Word of God, Christianity Clarified has been established.

It is our effort to make the Word of God better understood and more greatly appreciated by God's people, as well as including an effective effort toward reaching those outside of Christ.

In addition to writing for your free CD, our mailing address will be given shortly. Grab a pen. But computer users may log on to gracebiblespringfield.com and follow the link Christianity Clarified.

You can download and burn your own CD copy if you wish, free of charge. That webpage address again is gracebiblespringfield.com These CDs may also be duplicated at will, provided they are not sold or altered in any way.

[33 : 32] You may consider them as giveaway gifts for evangelism or the edifying of believers. This is Marv Wiseman thanking you for your prayerful consideration. Of the first ten sessions of Christianity Clarified, we've presented explanations of how and why Christianity Clarified began.

The remaining eight sessions contained a very brief but critically important explanation of the major events of all human history. We began with the Genesis creation account, followed by the failure and moral fall of our first parents that plunged all of humanity into the death cycle.

This followed closely by God's gracious promise of a coming Redeemer who would be the offspring of the woman and would deal a final defeat to the adversary that tempted her.

Earth's early population was destroyed, excepting Noah, his family, and the occupants of the Ark.

The anticipation of the promised Redeemer would be a direct descendant of Noah, his son Shem, and later arrivals in the Semitic genealogy of Noah, namely Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with his twelve sons who comprise the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The promised Redeemer was still anticipated with every succeeding generation, and later in this same direct descendancy, David the shepherd king would arrive to be followed in that same direct line one thousand years later by none other than Jesus the Christ, the Redeemer, who arrived in the obscure hamlet of Bethlehem, just as Micah foretold five hundred years earlier.

[35 : 21] Humanity had waited four thousand years for God to make good on his promise of providing a Redeemer. How then would he be received? He wasn't.

This long-awaited one was rejected by the nation of Israel, leading to his crucifixion, but reappearing triumphantly in his resurrection. Before ascending to heaven, he promised his apostles he would return.

And our wait for him has consumed two thousand years, but only half as long as was the wait for his first coming to Bethlehem. Where have we gotten all this information?

We have gotten it from the Bible. The Bible exclusively. It is not merely our main source book, but our only source book. The only valid question then is, is it true?

Is this book a reliable historical record of past events? It has had and does have its critics, but yet it stands.

[36 : 23] Because authority is such a key issue, we are devoting the next several sessions of Christianity Clarified to the one and only source for our information about these events.

Every item we can muster to justify our reliance and confidence in the Bible as our authoritative and worthy source will be thrown into the fray.

At the conclusion, several sessions ahead, there will be no question about the necessity of our usage and continual appeal to the scriptures.

If we are in any wise going to clarify Christianity, we are cast entirely upon the Bible to do so. This is because, apart from the scriptures, there is no Christianity and nothing to clarify.

This means we are of necessity appealing to the Bible as not merely our authority, but as our only authority. Perhaps you have heard the expression that the Bible is our only rule for faith and practice?

[37 : 35] Is the Bible worthy of this kind of total reliance? Have Christians simply surrendered their brains to an old book? Critics would charge that appealing to the Bible alone and in this manner makes one guilty of bibliolatry, that is, you are then a worshiper of the Bible and not God.

Our response is that there is no such thing as intelligent worship apart from the Bible. Only in it are we informed of the great truths of Christianity.

Left to mere revelation gleaned from what God has created in nature, called natural revelation, we can know that God is, but we cannot know the God that is, apart from the revelation he has given of himself recorded in the Bible.

And such is the very purpose for his giving it, that man might come to know him. So again, and without apology, we intend to make much of and from this grand old book, for out of it are the very issues of life.

We intend to explore not only the doctrines contained in the Bible, but the rationale and authority behind them. And make no mistake about it, the issue of authority is absolutely critical.

[38 : 59] It is the watershed issue. Everything we believe about everything we believe is inseparably linked to this purported authority behind it that sets it forth.

Anytime we hear someone make a statement, a claim or accusation that we consider the least bit questionable, the immediate and automatic response is, who told you that?

Where did you hear that? Their answer helps greatly to establish credibility or to discredit the statement they have made. It always depends upon the credibility of the source of the information. It is precisely the same with the Bible. We shall give, on future segments of Christianity Clarified, multiple reasons why open-minded thinking people will subscribe to the authority behind every jot and tittle of this book.

We will all be enlightened, edified, and equipped. To ignore what the majority of Western culture has recognized as the authority for thousands of years, because today's arrogant minded generation thinks they have outgrown it, is pure folly.

[40 : 15] Consequently, several future sessions will consider the supreme worthiness of the Bible. From the time man first understood what the Bible claimed to be, and from whom it claimed to have originated, it has since been regarded as earth's most prized and precious possession.

Merely the fact that it is a revelation given by God in and of itself makes it valued beyond all other valuables. But, is it the revelation it claims to be?

One thing is certain. It is, or it is not. The law of the excluded middle is invoked and rejects the possibility of there being any middle ground.

No grayness here. Nothing but black or white. This old book, commonly referred to by the believing as the very word of God, must be precisely what it claims to be or it is not.

Either answer poses enormous implications. If the Bible is true and is the direct revelation from the Creator God to man as it claims, it is understandable that embracing it and its message affords enlightenment not available from any other source.

[41 : 41] The Bible alone reveals to the reader how this world began, what happened to make it as it is, and what will yet transpire toward its ultimate culmination. One need not read between the lines to understand this.

Merely read the lines, and the origin, course, and destiny of humanity become very clear. The most supreme of all its revelations concerns what the Creator God did through the very incarnation of deity to reconcile a fallen and rebellious planet to himself, and this all through the humanly unthinkable plan of redemption wrought by the substitutionary death of that deity, Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Conversely, if the Bible is not what it claims to be, if it consists merely of ancient religious writings, fables, and the sort, it is limited to being little more than an interesting but unauthoritative collection of outdated morals once thought to be important but no longer are.

In reality, therefore, the stakes are so high with either position, one should not rest until a personally satisfying answer is reached.

Intellectual honesty, as well as one's personal well-being for time and eternity, require it. This crucial subject, the origin and authority of the Bible, by its very nature, deserves, even demands, an honest and thorough examination of its claims.

[43 : 20] The Bible must be what it claims to be, or it is not what it claims to be. Either answer poses enormous implications. Either it deserves our thoughtful obedience to its claims, or it may be safely ignored.

Middle ground simply does not exist. This is Marv Wiseman inviting you to Christianity Clarify, dealing with several important truths misunderstood by non-Christians and often by professing Christians.

Our goal is to make biblical faith clear, and we emphasize biblical, because much passed off as Christianity is not biblical.

Yet, apart from the Bible, we have no valid support for truths we hold dear. It is all we have upon which to base our faith, and it is all we need.

However, many regard human authority superior to the Bible. Modern pagans worship at the altars of science and psychology, elevating those as ultimate authorities, despite these false gods being disproved time and again.

[44 : 40] No doubt this is due partly to issues of antiquity and modernity. The Bible is seen by many as hopelessly outdated to the point of irrelevance, while the latest scientific findings, fresh out of a scientist's laboratory, reveal this or that to be so, and they do sound authoritative.

After all, science has come a very long way and has achieved much. But the Bible, many conclude, is simply stuck in the past, way in the past.

Those making these comparisons, while dazzled by recent achievements, ignore the key difference between the Bible and science. Science is ever a work in progress, never finished, but fluid.

Everything learned scientifically rightly constitutes a building block upon which further discoveries are made. Not so with the Bible.

It's done. Complete. Finished. The Bible records the past and the future, with no need for retraction or correction.

[45 : 53] So, while we owe much to science and its ongoing endeavors, we dare not make it the ultimate authority as many do.

God, the author of the Bible, is the only ultimate authority. It's a case we plan to make consistently. With science, the jury is always out.

Discovery is its very life breath and is a never-ending endeavor. No true scientist ever speaks of his findings as being total or complete.

There is always more to be discovered, and every scientist worthy of the name knows that. The scriptures, however, in contrast to science, claim a finality only God can provide.

The psalmist said, Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. It's a case we plan to make consistently on Christianity Clarified, and we are honored to have you join us.

[46 : 55] We have made the point in the past that whatever we believe is inseparably linked to what we accept as the authority behind the matter.

And authority is especially vital in the area of origins, how earth and man came to be. The lines are clearly drawn, or ought to be, when it comes to recognizing biblical authority versus scientific authority.

Or we could say biblical authority versus man's authority, because the authority behind the latest scientific position is man.

And while we readily and gratefully acknowledge the contribution of science, and they are several, we are foolish to worship at its altar as some do.

Because science by its very nature is all about discovery, and how newer discoveries are to be applied for the betterment of humanity. This is surely a noble endeavor.

[48 : 04] We have all benefited greatly from the ongoing discoveries of some of mankind's best and brightest we call scientists. Yet, any scientist worthy of the title will readily admit there remains so very much yet to be learned.

Because science is forever a work in progress. We might say that in several disciplines of science, the jury is still out.

This, coupled with the innumerable times that the scientific community has had to reverse itself, from the findings of earlier colleagues, should make all wary of counting too heavily on science. Perhaps this has been vividly demonstrated, especially in the field of medical science. We all know the best medical scientists and researchers of a century ago were absolutely certain about things we now know to be untrue.

So, while we admire and respect the scientific endeavor, it has revealed its flaws repeatedly. But, we urge them to keep at it.

[49 : 16] Learn and improve our world all they can. We cheer them on. The Christian's ultimate authority, however, is God's Word alone.

Such was described by Jesus Christ when he said in John 10 that the Scripture cannot be broken. It means the Bible's existence and authority are without peer and without question.

God's Word is unshakable, unbreakable, unable to be destroyed, diminished, or done away with.

This elevates the Word of God to a position superior to all else, including the latest scientific findings.

Authority is, has been, and will remain the watershed issue for all of mankind for all time. Scientific discovery is man's perpetual learning curve.

Scripture is God's wisdom inscripturated and settled in heaven. The Bible is a very important thing. The Bible is a very important thing. The Bible is a very important thing.

[50 : 23] The Bible is a very important thing. The Bible is a very important thing. The Bible is a very important thing. A familiar complaint often heard among the Bible's critics is that it is outdated and outmoded. How, they ask, can such an ancient writing possibly have anything of relevance to say to today's modern and sophisticated man?

In the Bible, there are no trans-oceanic jet planes, no orbiting or moon-visiting spacecraft, no computers, no iPhones, TV, or not so much as an old-fashioned radio.

No doubt about it, the Bible is hopelessly out of date in regard to man's latest inventions and gadgetry. But, the Bible is incredibly spot on as regards man himself.

And this is really all the old book claims to address or wishes to address. It speaks to the unchangeable nature of man.

Man who is essentially the same generation after generation. That's it. The Bible speaks to man himself. Man with all his faults and foibles.

[51 : 35] Man with his hurting heart and his tendency to hurt other hearts. This man who occupies all our continents and generations and languages.

He is essentially the same wherever you find him. His technology has evolved, but he hasn't.

Actually, the God of the Bible considers man's latest scientific and technological achievement to be mere trinkets compared to what it is that really interests the Almighty.

And that is? That is that which he created in his own likeness and image. Man himself. This is where the God of the Bible and this book he has given us really focuses attention.

The Bible reveals the real need of the human heart. And it's not on the latest technological breakthrough. It's on man coming to know the very one who gave him the ability to fashion his gadgetry.

A knowledge of the holy supersedes all of the wonderful breakthrough evictions that tend to impress us so much. Wonderful as they are, they pale by comparison to the knowledge of the God behind them all.

[52 : 54] To ignore that is to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. No. The Bible is not at all out of date as regards what it intends to address.

It places priorities where they belong. Not on man's cleverness and inventiveness, but on man himself. This is God's way of letting us know what's really important.

God and man connecting or reconnecting. No mere human invention can compete with that. In reality, this connection between Creator and creature is what the revelation of Scripture is all about. The issue of authority in general, and biblical authority in particular, is rightly identified as the critical watershed issue for all of humanity, for all of time.

Now, that's a very expansive statement. Yes, it is. And we are confident it is accurate. Because the Bible in no uncertain terms sets forth the God of creation as the ultimate authority on all issues of life and death, its claims is absolutely true or absolutely false.

[54 : 25] There is no middle slot to jump into. Logic employs what philosophers label the law of the excluded middle. Some would strenuously object to such a claim.

Their objection may well be, But that's so black and white. I would prefer some gray. But there is no gray.

It is black and white. Life's most important issues are black and white. They are made to be black and white because they are so very important.

And God wants the contrast to be obvious so it's easier to make the right choice. Oh, sure, there are gray areas. Lots of them.

They are the fuzzier issues of life that are not of critical importance. Gray areas of living include subjective preferences, personal opinions, individual tastes, etc.

[55 : 48] These are the to-each-his-own kind of matters and issues, and they are an important part of everyone's life. But here is the difference between objectivity and subjectivity.

Gray areas cannot compare in importance to those black and white. We categorize the issue of biblical authority as the biggest black and white there is.

How so? Because what we believe about absolutely everything stems from what we acknowledge to be the ultimate authority. The stakes could not be higher, and the consequences could not be greater.

We would urge anyone who has never given this issue serious thought to do so, starting now. May God guide you.

It would be the most important undertaking you ever engaged. Thoughtful consideration on the part of us all will serve so very well toward reaching conclusions that really matter for time and eternity.

[57 : 04] The Word of God, whether written in the Bible or incarnated in the person of Christ, has always been denied or questioned as regards its authority.

Our first mother, Eve, questioned who was the real authority when she heeded the serpent rather than God. The Creator's authority she simply set aside by heeding the authority of another creature. When Christ began his public ministry, absolutely everything he said and did was inseparably linked to his authority, which was repeatedly challenged or outwardly denied.

Nothing has changed. This is why Christians insist the Bible is our only rule for faith and practice. We wish to affirm that, and will do so, we believe, with good reason during the several upcoming sessions.

Initially, we will concern ourselves with the issue of biblical authority and why it is so very critical. If the Bible is not reliable and accurate, having originated from God himself, then not only is this program futile and baseless, so also is everything that falls under the name Christian, including all such churches worldwide, the pastors who lead them, and the members who attend them.

[58 : 32] That's how critical the issue of authority really is. A principal verse declaring this was penned by the Apostle Paul shortly before his martyrdom.

Writing to his young protege Timothy, as the Spirit of God inspired him in 2 Timothy 3, he wrote these words, We take these words seriously.

The Apostle Paul took them so seriously, he forfeited his own life for what the Scriptures declare. It is logical and we believe essential that with Christianity clarified, being based solely upon the Scriptures, for the clarification we will be offering, that we take time at the outset to establish

unequivocally that upon which we will be basing all our positions and conclusions, namely, God's Word, the Bible.

The several reasons we are convinced it is God's Word will be forthcoming in the sessions following today's introduction. This content will provide no middle ground.

Simple logic prevents it. The Bible is true and worthy of our trust, or it is not. Each of us must decide for ourself, and not to decide is to decide.

[60 : 07] Please join us daily and think of Christianity Clarified as critical biblical theology in painless three-minute snatches. This is Marv Wiseman inviting you to join us each weekday at this same time on this station for Christianity Clarified.

As regards Christianity, any statement a believer may make about his faith may well be responded to by someone saying, Oh yeah? Who says?

And when the Christian replies, Well, God says, right here in the Bible. The next retort will likely be, Well, big deal. Why should I believe that just because your Bible says so?

It was just written by a bunch of men. So, who made the Bible to be the authority? Okay. You're on. What do you say then?

And while you're praying for an answer, they continue, And another thing. Why is your Bible any more authoritative than other religious books? Other religions have their holy books, too.

[61 : 23] Why does your Bible have to be the only real authority? Don't those who follow their own particular holy book, whatever it is, stand just as acceptable to God as those following the teachings of another holy book?

Religious writings have been compiled and handed down over thousands of years in many languages and cultures. Why should any of them, including the Christian Bible, be thought superior to others?

All religious writings are merely the teachings and opinions of those who wrote them. Some of their sayings sound wise and some of them sound ridiculous and not so wise.

Christians sound so arrogant in promoting their Bible as the only thing people should follow. Where do they get off with that? And on and on it goes.

Actually, those questions do in themselves raise several important points. All major religions, including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, as well as Christianity, plus several lesser religions, each have their particular holy books as their authority.

[62 : 37] And each is in serious contradiction to the others. Their contradictions are so glaring and so numerous that one can only conclude somebody has to be wrong.

While it's possible, logically, that all of them could be wrong, it is not possible that all of them could be right. Simple logic by which the whole world functions disallows that.

This in itself should put us on the track of realizing that just because the follower of a certain belief thinks it is right, doesn't make it right.

Truth is not determined by someone thinking it's true. Subjectivism relates to opinions, preferences, and tastes, but it does not establish truth.

Only objectivity can do that. A thing is what it is, not what I want it to be. Someone said, everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but no one is entitled to their own facts.

[63 : 41] This will become apparent as we move through the balance of our consideration of biblical authority. If the Bible is not the very word of God, we will simply be making much ado about nothing.

In fact, what you will be hearing on future segments of Christianity Clarified will be a mere time waster and not ultimately helpful to you at all. But if it is, it is indeed the singular, inscripturated revelation from the Creator God, and it deserves more time and attention than the rest of our lives can give it.

Because we are already convinced this latter position is the correct one, we want to enumerate for you how our consideration of the following topics has brought us to our settled conclusion long ago. Is the Bible inspired of God, and what exactly does that mean? If God gave the Bible, why did men write it?

And if He gave the Bible, why did He do it? What is meant by verbal inspiration? What is inerrancy? Some Christians say the Bible is infallible.

[65 : 05] What does that mean? Aren't there mistakes and contradictions in the Bible? Hasn't the Bible been translated and retranslated so many times, nobody really has the original Bible

anymore?

How do we know there aren't some books of the Bible missing? And how do we know the books that are in it all belong? And who said so? And what makes them the authority?

What is meant by plenary inspiration? Why does it matter? Don't other people and cultures have their own holy books apart from the Christian Bible?

What makes them different? And aren't there holy books of equal authority to the Bible? And what about people who have never seen a Bible and never heard of Christianity or Jesus Christ?

What does the Bible say about them? These questions and more could be added are all worthy questions deserving of satisfying answers. They are questions stimulated by an inquisitive and thinking mind.

[66 : 10] And Christianity is a thinking faith. That will become more and more apparent in future segments of Christianity Clarified. We want to examine and think through these questions with answers that will stick to our spiritual ribs.

In doing so, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. It is sadly true that most people today do not give serious consideration to these issues.

Why not? Well, most just don't think them to be important. Certainly not important enough to devote adequate time to the discovery of satisfying answers.

But for those who do, Christianity Clarified is here to help you. Great truths, great issues, eternal consequences in painless three-minute snatches.

This is Marv Wiseman and that's my promise to you. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. Our hope is that the preceding 20 brief sessions of spiritual content has been somewhat clarifying to you and that your perspective of biblical truth has been enhanced.

[67 : 42] Plans for the release of our upcoming compact disc, also containing 23-minute sessions, will elaborate more upon the subject of the veracity and authority of the Bible as the very Word of God.

Without this reality, nothing said on Christianity Clarified can have any real purpose. Because absolutely all, everything, in toto, depends upon the authority and accuracy of this book, our Bible. I hope you will obtain the next CD and learn along with us why we appeal to this book. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman thanking you for listening.

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