

Christianity Clarified Volume 10

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[0 : 0 0] 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.

The question is, are you saved or merely savable? Jesus Christ died for the sins of the entire world, meaning all of humanity who ever lived or ever would live.

But how could he do that as a solitary figure? His ability to redeem the billions constituting humanity is found in his identity. Jesus Christ was and is the God-Man, the theanthropic combination of deity and humanity, representing both entities in his own person.

This unique God-Man willingly became the sacrificial payment for sinful humanity, the truly innocent dying in the place of the truly guilty. This principle of substitution is the very essence of Christianity, and it makes no difference whether anyone believes this or not, or even if they deny it.

[1 : 1 4] No matter, their unbelief does not alter its reality and truth. We will admit this is a stretch, because it flies contrary to our very way of thinking, yet it coincides fully with God's way of thinking.

God is telling us how he effected this great redemption, and he was pleased to reveal it in the Bible. To refuse to believe that makes God a liar, unthinkable for the very one who is the personification of truth.

While the universality of Christ's redemption is found throughout the Bible, it centers upon the New Testament, because this is where the great act of redemption is carried out.

In the Old Testament, the world's redemption is merely promised, but in the New, the promise of God is fulfilled. In addition to the monumental John 3.16, don't overlook 3.17 that says, God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

The world indeed! But if the whole world was purchased by Christ's redemptive act, why then are men called upon to believe in Christ or perish eternally?

[2 : 2 5] It is because Christ's corporate or worldwide redemption removed Adam's transgression that plunged all of creation into ruin. As the last Adam, Christ dealt with the corporate consequences of condemnation by paying the penalty of death.

That made God approachable with open arms to all who act upon Christ's payment with their personal faith and trust. This is the act and response of the individual to what Christ accomplished.

Corporate redemption does not mean corporate salvation. It merely rendered all men savable, and being savable is not the same as being saved. To be saved, man must, as an act of his will, appropriate the truth of Christ's sacrificial death by personalizing it.

This is trusting in Christ as one's personal Savior, because salvation is not institutional, nor is it sacramental. It is personal, an individual act of human volition that believes on Christ unto salvation.

His death on man's behalf and reconciliation of the world made all men savable. One's personal act of trust and faith in Christ makes man saved.

[3 : 43] Which are you? Are you saved, or are you merely savable? There is a difference, and the difference will extend into eternity. Universal reconciliation versus universal salvation The biblical teaching of the universal reconciliation of the world is often rejected by Christians because they mistake it for universal salvation.

They are not the same, not at all. Universal salvation is a doctrinal aberration, contrary to Scripture. It insists that all of humanity will ultimately be saved in the final analysis, and none will be permanently separated from God.

The Scriptures give the lie to this in both the Old and New Testaments. Then, why do some teach it? They teach it because they insist on pitting the love of God against the righteousness of God.

Their reasoning, erroneous but no doubt sincere, is that since God is love, He could not bear anyone being alienated from Himself for eternity. One might embrace such a view of love if love were the only attribute that God possesses, but it is not.

The universal reconciliation spoken of by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 is clear that Christ's death makes all members of humanity candidates for salvation. It makes man savable.

[5 : 07] Because Christ made the adequate payment for the corporate sins of the entire human race, no person, however vile and undeserving, is beyond the reach of God's saving grace.

Christ's payment was such that it overwhelmingly made salvation accessible to any and all who would receive it. The quality of payment made by Christ was such that no man's sin, the amount of his sins, or the enormity of his sins could possibly exhaust or deplete the grace of God, made available through Jesus Christ.

Do you not see then how vast and wonderful was the substitutionary death of our Lord? This is why it is such good news. God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, says Romans 5.

But God is not only love, He is also holy and righteous. And this is evidenced by God's rejection of those refusing to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

If God were to make exceptions by allowing sinners to bypass the great redemptive work of Christ, what would that say as to the necessity and value of His sacrifice? It would say it wasn't really necessary at all.

[6 : 24] Man could still find the loving arms of God wide open to receive Him because God is love. This is simply not true. Revelation 19 and other passages make it clear there is a different destination assigned to those who reject Christ as opposed to those who accept Him.

While God's love is real and wonderful, so too is His holiness and righteousness that must not be overlooked or dismissed so as to elevate His love alone.

God is never conflicted with the presence or outworking of all His attributes. He never exercises one of His attributes at the expense of another. It is sentimentalism to suggest God will not punish sinners because He is love.

And to suggest any could be saved by bypassing the finished work of Christ is an error of the grossest sort. Universal reconciliation does make all savable.

So are you saved or merely savable? All right. Reconciliation is corporate and personal.

[7 : 34] A curious passage is found in 1 Timothy 4 where the Apostle Paul states, For therefore we labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.

Really? The Savior of all men does sound inclusive, does it not? But then he adds, especially of those that believe. Is he saying that Christ is the Savior of all in one sense and then in another, Savior of those who believe?

How can this be? It appears to relate to two levels or aspects of reconciliation. Christ is the Savior of all in that He reconciled the entire world through His death in accord with 2 Corinthians 5.19.

This was the corporate reconciliation that overcame the alienation brought on by the transgression of Adam. Adam's sin was corporate in that as the federal head of humanity, He plunged all of creation into ruin, resulting in death for all humanity, still taking its toll today.

But Christ's obedience and righteousness was corporate also and resulted in reconciling the world to God. In this corporate sense, Christ is spoken of as the Savior of the world.

[8 : 54] As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, is the way 1 Corinthians 15 puts it. And the all who are made alive in Christ cannot be made to be a different all from those who died in Adam.

They are the same all in both cases. Thus Christ reconciled all of humanity to the same degree that Adam's sin separated humanity. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

Yet and beyond that, Christ is especially the Savior of men who have by faith placed their trust in Him with an act of their will. That which makes individual, personal salvation possible is the fact that Christ died for every person who has ever lived.

This gives us a gospel, or good news to believe and appropriate. Because Christ did die for all, He made access to God available to all. This enables us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, and we will then be saved personally and individually.

So what are we going to do about that? We can deny and dismiss the entire matter and forfeit the forgiveness that God has promised to all who trust in His Son, choosing rather to remain separated from God and His grace for all eternity.

[10 : 15] Or, we can accept the record God has given of His Son's sacrificial death for our sins, and in an act of our will, trust Christ as our personal Savior. He is the only one ever called Savior, you know.

We then personalize Christ's death on our behalf. The corporate reconciliation makes possible the personal and individual salvation.

It is not merely an opportunity to trust in the Savior, it is as well our responsibility to do so. You can do so right now, because you are in charge of your own will.

We pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God. All are born redeemed.

Romans 7, verse 9 presents a very puzzling statement. And while we cannot be dogmatic about our understanding of it, it nonetheless deserves our consideration, especially since Paul presents it in an almost matter-of-fact manner as if its meaning is a given.

[11 : 25] And while we think we are grasping its meaning, we still admit we are not as certain of it as we would like to be. So, see what you think about it. Here we go. In verse 9 of Romans 7, the inspired apostle states, quote, For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, end quote.

Whatever could Paul have meant by that? Let me repeat it. For I was alive without the law once. But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Well, we must first appeal to a widely understood truth that there are twin realities of life and death. Throughout the Bible, it is abundantly clear that there is physical life and death and spiritual life and death.

So, logic compels us to reject the idea that Paul was saying he was physically alive without the law, of course he was. That makes no sense at all.

So, this leaves only the spiritual. Paul then must mean he was spiritually alive without the law. That is, he was spiritually alive and connected with God, reconciled and redeemed, apart and without the law.

[12 : 47] The law, of course, meaning the law of Moses. But when was that when he was spiritually alive? It appears to have been from the time of his birth. Thus, Paul was born, redeemed, or reconciled to God in the same way everyone is.

This is affected by the death of Christ whereby he reconciled the entire world to God through his corporate redemption of the entire world. So, had Paul died as a newborn baby, or sometime thereafter when he had a child, he would have been covered by the redemptive work of Christ, wherein Christ reconciled the entire world to God.

All infants, not having reached an age of personal accountability, are likewise covered by the blanket redemption provided by Christ. This is when Paul was alive before the commandment came.

But when it did, he said, I violated it and forfeited the redemptive status with which I was born. Sin overtook him, and he then became alienated from God.

No one knows precisely when it is that one becomes accountable to God, knowing right from wrong, and acting out of the sin nature with which we were born, even though born redeemed.

[14 : 09] Now, the need the great apostle had was to be reconnected to God through the new birth. This, we may assume, took place on the Damascus road, or shortly thereafter in the city of Damascus.

Said he, I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Babies in death remain redeemed.

Since personal salvation is contingent upon one's believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death on our behalf, what then is the status of babies who did not live long enough to understand or exercise that required faith?

What happens to babies, newborns, stillborns, and the aborted whose lives were cruelly terminated while they were still in the womb? Some religious faiths water-baptize babies believing it removes original sin, thus preventing the baby from being in eternal limbo and then eligible for heaven.

And others provide water-baptism for infants for similar reasons, even though the Bible provides no justification for the water-baptism of babies by any mode. Traditions do die hard, and religious traditions die hardest of all.

[15 : 30] Caring adults who make such provisions for their infants do so, I'm sure, from a sense of duty as parents if they do not provide something religious for their little loved ones.

And we readily understand their motivation and sensitivity to what they think to be an important spiritual life experience. It is not unusual that many people place more reliance upon their traditions than they do upon what the Word of God actually says.

Christ faced this very thing, this misplacement of authority in Matthew 15 with the Jewish religious establishment of His day. They consistently superimposed their traditions upon the authority of Scripture, giving precedence to their long-standing traditions rather than to the solid authority of the Bible itself.

This, of course, simply overrode the authority of Scripture with man-made traditions. So, nothing has changed. While many religious establishments go by different names, their sad rejection of the authority of Scripture alone often remains intact.

If our understanding of Romans 7-9 is correct, babies and other children who die before attaining an age that makes them accountable to God and thus responsible for their own sin are covered by the merciful and substitutionary work of Christ and His death upon the cross.

[16 : 58] Are there other verses that confirm this apart from the inference given in Romans 7-9? Possibly. As when David lamented the death of his baby son and then remarked that even though his infant son could not come to him, nevertheless he, David, would go to him.

Admittedly, these are but inferences, but they do require careful consideration, especially in the absence of clearer statements. As to the merit of water baptism in any mode being prescribed by Scripture, there is not so much as one verse for authority.

Additionally, Christ referred to children as being of such is the kingdom of heaven, which is another positive sign of the eternal destiny of children.

These passages lend support to Paul's statement about his being alive once without the law. It appears he was referring to his having been born spiritually alive and redeemed as having been one of humanity that was drawn to Christ by his being lifted up in John 12-32.

Christ drew all men to him, part one. The subject of human salvation in the afterlife logically ought to be man's most compelling issue. Why?

[18 : 18] Because life itself and its preservation is foremost to us all. The status and continuation of life beyond this life is of paramount importance, again assuming one is thinking logically.

Nothing man faces, whoever he is, wherever he is, or whenever he is, can compete with that issue in importance. Eternity and the afterlife has been the vital issue for every generation from time immemorial.

It is bound up with the human psyche because God who created us put it there. Equally logical, we believe, is that God would also reveal adequate information about it, the basis for it, the appropriation of it, as well as the peace and stability that flows from it for each individual who possesses it.

He has, repeatedly so. Also in the most logical and dependable source, the Bible. A wonderful statement by Christ is found in John 12 when Jesus was talking about his coming death only hours away.

He referred to it as being lifted up. He would be literally lifted up while physically being affixed to a cross upon which he would die. His impending death is written all over this passage, but it was largely lost on those who heard him.

[19 : 38] He continued by saying, If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me. In what way would all mankind be drawn unto him?

In their being reconciled to God. When Christ was on that cross, God was reconciling the world to himself through his sacrificial death, the world meaning all mankind.

But, what about atheists, agnostics, and even God-haters? They surely would not be drawn to Christ, and they do not want to be.

No matter. They are all part of the all mankind of which Christ spoke, and he died even for them. He drew them as well when he died for the sins of all.

Even the Christ-deniers were born into the world as beneficiaries of the substitutionary death of our Lord. God's incredible love even for them, those who hate God and his Christ, were drawn and reconciled as members of corporate humanity, that is, all the world.

[20 : 49] This made them, along with all members of humanity, savable and free to come to God through Christ, if only they would. As Adam's sin and consequences excluded no one from death, even so the death of God's last Adam, Jesus Christ, left no one excluded from its consequences.

Namely, the positive aspect of the entire world being reconciled to God, according to 2 Corinthians 5 and Romans 5. While not all who could will come to God through Christ, all could, for all are those of the all men for whom Christ died.

He drew all men to him corporately, making it possible for men to believe and be saved, reconciled individually. Christ drew all men to him, part 2.

Our Lord Jesus Christ made a straightforward statement in John 12, 32, when he said, If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. Lifted up is undeniably speaking of his impending crucifixion, whereby he would literally be lifted up by being placed on a cross.

What he meant by drawing all men unto him cannot be speaking of popularity or acceptance because all men have not and are not so drawn to him. We may safely say the world at large, population-wise, still does not embrace Jesus for who he was.

[22 : 19] Neither is there any reason to interpret the phrase draw all men unto me to mean he will draw all kinds of men, that is, races, colors, cultures, and backgrounds. Had he meant that, he surely could have made it clear.

Nor did he mean he would draw all men of some select or elect group in contrast to all other remaining people. That too he could have made clear. The plain sense is the best sense, unless allegory or other figurative language is clearly obvious.

The saying, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me, coincides with numerous other verses clearly stating that Christ died on that cross for the sin of the entire world.

This speaks of the efficacy of Christ mentioned earlier. The all men of John 12, 32 consist of precisely the same company as the world in John 3, 16.

The drawing is simply another way of stating Christ is the propitiation for our sins and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world mentioned in 1 John 2, 2.

[23 : 26] Whether men realize it or not or believe it or not, they were reconciled to God by the sacrificial death of Christ and his payment was placed to their account. Their not knowing this, or even their denial of it does not negate the truth of it.

Likewise, most of all ages, especially our own, do not know or believe that the death sentence of every human from creation to the present remains imposed upon all humans due to the sin and rebellion of our original parents, Adam and Eve.

But man's rejection or even ridicule of this biblical axiom neither refutes nor changes its reality. God's gracious remedy for this every person to person and every generation to generation death cycle is found exclusively in who Jesus Christ is and what he did.

1 John 4 clarifies that in saying, The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, to which Christ himself added his willingness to be sent by stating in John 8 29, The Father has not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.

All that motivated both Father and Son in the incredible act of redemption, for a lost undeserving humanity, was an equally incredible love for that same humanity.

[24 : 52] When Christ died, he reconciled that humanity from its depths and extent to which it had fallen. That's what he meant in saying his being lifted up would draw all men unto him.

John 12 32 says what it seems to say. God was determined for man's salvation. A most comforting verse for any serious person who is searching for God is found in 2 Peter 3 9.

In it, the Apostle Peter tells us, God is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Slackness or negligence connotes the idea of being irresponsible or dilatory, that is, not making good on what one promised in a timely fashion. God did not do that.

He did not behave in the manner of men. On the contrary, God is diligent, the very opposite of negligent. In addition to God's being diligent to our needs, he is long-suffering.

[26 : 02] This means God patiently bears with us. In fact, says Peter, God is so patient with us, he does not wish any of us to perish, but rather come to repentance and change our mind, come to our senses rather than perish.

And what besides his patience is it that proves God's great care for us? It is nothing less than God's provision for us in the person of his own dear son.

That provision, the sinless one who was made to be sin on our behalf, is God's ultimate proof positive of his caring for us. Connect this, if you will, with what Peter's fellow apostle Paul said in Romans 5.8.

But God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. The meaning of us demanded by the context is unmistakable.

It is the us of humanity. God's love and God's long-suffering constitute a glorious duet of his attributes. His love prompted his sending Christ to die on our behalf while his long-suffering holds off his judgment giving man time to repent and avail himself of that gracious gift of his son.

[27 : 28] So, since God said he was not willing that any should perish, what did he do to prove that? God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

That's what he did. And the sacrificial death of Christ is how he did it. Since God has done his part, what yet remains for man to do?

He needs to respond with his will to what God has done with his will. It begins with repentance. He must change his mind about himself, his sin, and God's remedy for it.

And why should he? Because this is God's only remedy for man to avoid perishing. God and Christ have done the very most they could do in making the provision so that man might do the very least he can do by simply believing in that provision.

God is not willing that any should perish. Motivation for repentance is not only the provision God made through Christ, but the need to avoid perishing.

[28 : 38] Christ said, except you repent, you will all likewise perish. God's Desire for Man's Salvation Part 1 Earlier reference was made to 2 Peter 3 and God's patience with man.

Patience because he was not willing that anyone perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the word for willing in 2 Peter 3 9 is not the word for will in 1 Timothy 2 4.

It is a word to express desire or preference and allows room for man's volition to align itself with God's preference. It does not mean God determined man to be saved and man had no choice in the matter, but rather that God's desire for man's salvation takes into account the volition God gave man and man's freedom to use it.

The word for will in 2 Peter 3 9 is the word for determination, not desire or preference. In other words, Peter is telling us that it was God's determination, not merely his desire, that man should be saved.

And how did God fulfill that determination? By providing the sin bearer as a substitute in the person of his own son in order to make all the provision necessary for man to be saved.

[30 : 03] This was much stronger than God's desire. It is elevated to God's determined plan or God's insistence that this provision be made. The father sent the son to be the savior of the world, and the son was willing to be sent because he too, in concert with his father and the Holy Spirit, was not willing that any man should perish, but come to repentance and salvation.

So, it was not merely God's desire that man should come to repentance, but God's determination that he do so. And to effect that, he provided his son to be the basis for man's repentance in coming to faith.

The Timothy passage emphasizes God's desire or preference, allowing room for man's volition. But the 2 Peter 3 passage emphasizes God's willful determination to make provision for man's salvation utterly apart from man's volition.

It was God's volition alone that provided redemption for all of humanity, none excluded. But having done so, it is man's volition as to what man would do about it.

God was sovereign in providing the remedy. Man is volitional as to what he will do about that provision. Here we have God's sovereignty taking initiative action in making the original provision to effect man's salvation.

[31 : 34] But man is not excluded by that provision being made. God requires a response from man for the provision made for him in order to personalize that provision.

When man responded in a positive manner to God's provision, he becomes justified before God on the basis of that volitional faith he exercised as an act of his will.

It is the human response to the good news or the gospel of the grace of God. God remains sovereign in his determination. Man remains responsible with his volition.

God's Desire for Man's Salvation Part 2 In writing to young Timothy, Paul the Apostle states in 1 Timothy 2 that God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Once again we take all men to mean all of mankind. Berkeley states it, who wants all persons to be saved, and William says, God is ever willing for all mankind to be saved.

[32 : 45] The original Greek in which Paul wrote does indeed convey the idea that it is God's wish, desire, or preference that all be saved. This is decidedly different than God's determining, a matter which would leave no possibility of its not being fulfilled.

If God determines something, that is the way it will be, and none can thwart his determination. But this word clearly does not convey that. It does, as others rendered it, express God's desire, preference, or wish, not his determination.

Why is this important? It's important because it places man's volition, or his will, in the picture. God has given man a personal volition, a will, a decider, the power to make choices, good or bad, and God honors the volition he has given man by not merely overriding it.

This is what makes us free moral agents rather than programmed robots. It's also the basis of our being held accountable to our maker. So even though God does not make us choose the right thing, thus removing our volition from us, he nonetheless does explain the benefits of making the right choice, in this case, believing on Christ for salvation.

The benefits consist of Christ's righteousness being placed to our account rather than our sin. God's forgiveness and eternal life with him and all other believers.

[34 : 17] So, God proved his desire for our salvation by providing a mediator who is also our ransom payer. And he did this for the entirety of humanity.

Could anything prove more convincingly that God desired all men to be saved, while at the same time respecting man's power to choose, thus honoring the very volition he gave to man?

You can choose, and God holds each of us accountable for the choice we make. God is sovereign in his determination to make provision whereby man could be justified or declared righteous before him.

Man is responsible and accountable to God for the use of the free moral will and volition God gave him. An error that persists tells us, on the one hand, that God alone is sovereignly responsible for it all, and the other hand, that man is able by his own efforts to make himself presentable to God.

Both are wrong. God is sovereign, and he alone initiates the provision for human salvation by providing the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. This provides man with a gospel to preach.

- [35 : 28] Christ died for our sins. Man is responsible for his positive response and acceptance of that message by exercising his trust in the work Christ accomplished.

Faith is man's answer to God's provision. God's sovereignty remains intact, as does man's accountability. Christ did not come to condemn.

We are barely through the first half of the segment on this particular tenth CD of Christianity Clarified, and we continue to elaborate on the theme pursued at the outset.

It is the oft-repeated subject matter relating to the provision God made for the entire world, and we do so without apology. This is because, as far as all of humanity of all the ages is concerned, there is no more important subject.

Each of us is going to survive the death of our physical body with our human spirit, our immaterial self, existing somewhere. God has graciously made provision for us to exist with him, enjoying all the benefits his love has prepared.

- [36 : 40] This current CD continues to explore God's accomplishment through his Son, Jesus Christ, to effect that provision. It is not an exaggeration to describe this truth as the very best good news ever delivered to the world, and it still is.

In fact, the very word gospel means good news. The gospel is the term often used in the Bible. More particularly, it is described as the gospel or the good news revealed about Jesus Christ, God's sole provision for the redemption of the entire human race.

Christ's substitutionary death for the human race made God accessible to every person who ever lived or will ever live. It is true that not all avail themselves of that access, but it is provided for them nonetheless.

Those who ignore or reject it do so at their own eternal peril. Our current text, along with others of equal clarity, spells out that marvelous provision.

John 3.18 tells us that God did not send his Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Was that accomplished?

- [37 : 58] Can we possibly assign failure to God? Well, he certainly did fail if he did not realize his objective of reconciling the world to himself.

He failed if the Son he sent specifically to redeem all of humanity did not do that. But he did do that. God the Father's ultimate objective in expressing his love for humanity was demonstrated when Christ willingly was sacrificed for man, the creature's sin.

This is precisely what Jesus meant when he cried out from the cross, It is finished! What was finished was the great task of deity paying the ultimate price on behalf of humanity.

This painfully paid price opened the way of access to all men to come to God through the way that was made for them, namely Christ himself, declared to be the way, the truth, and the life.

It only remains for man to believe Christ accomplished what the scriptures say he did and respond to that message of grace with his will. His trusting in Jesus Christ and submitting himself to him as his only hope for salvation and connecting with God.

- [39 : 20] Christ Tasted Death for All, Part 1 One very common objection to the claims of Christianity, perhaps the most frequent objection of all, is its claim to the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

Why, we are asked, must you Christians be so narrow in your claim that Christ is the only way to God? But it was not our idea. We are merely repeating what God has made abundantly clear in the Bible in numerous places.

Another such reference to sight is that written to the Hebrews in chapter 2. Verse 9 states, But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

First, we are told why Christ assumed the status below angels. It was so he could undergo death, a human death that angelic spirit beings could not experience.

This was the major purpose of the incarnation of Christ, in order that he could die. Secondly, he was crowned with glory and honor, no doubt as a rewarding consequence of his willing substitutionary death.

[40 : 38] Thirdly, we are given the rationale or the basis behind it all. It was all prompted by the grace of God. It was because God is just that Christ was placed upon that cross, and it was also because God is gracious that Christ was placed upon the cross.

This justice, coupled with God's love, constitute the motivating factor for God to act as he did, and for Christ to cooperate as he did.

And what was the consequence? What was the payoff? Christ, in his obedience to his Father, tasted death for all mankind. He experienced death, underwent death, partook of death, and he did so for us all.

Who else do you know that did that? Who else do you know that was commissioned to do that? Who else do you know that was sinless and qualified to do that?

And who, apart from Christ, do you know that ever claimed to have done that? This is the principal reason why Christ alone is set forth as the exclusive Redeemer of the entirety of mankind.

[41 : 51] It is insisted upon simply because it is true. This is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son has life, and he who has not the Son of God has not life, but the wrath of God abides on him. John states it in his first epistle, chapter 5.

Christians have no alternative but to affirm that Jesus Christ and he alone is man's Savior from sin. How, it may be asked, can Christians be faulted or criticized for accepting from Jesus Christ what no one else even claims to offer?

Forgiveness, peace, pardon, eternal life. And this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. Do you have the Son?

If you have the Son, you also have the life he alone gives. Christ Tasted Death for All Men, Part 2 The theme we are following reveals the very essence of what Christianity is all about, and that is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[43 : 05] One would think this pivotal point of all human history would be well understood by now. After all, this truth has been proclaimed for 2,000 years. But it isn't well understood.

Great confusion and misunderstandings still abound. Many cannot get beyond seeing Christmas and Easter with little more than tradition and sentimentality, apart from realizing their true significance and vital impact upon their eternal destiny.

Christianity Clarified seeks to explain what was really involved and why it is so critical to every human being who ever lived. Substitution is the key to Christianity, the key to Christ himself, and to all who want to be rightly related to God.

Hebrews chapter 2 uses a curious but wonderful expression in stating that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. Three vital elements are found in this brief phrase.

The motivation was God's grace. That is, the graciousness of God toward man was the motivating factor for God sending his Son, and for Christ to willingly be sent.

[44 : 17] And two, the purpose for his coming was to taste death for every man. We all know that to taste something means to take it to ourself, ingest it, and experience it.

Christ did that very thing with death. He experienced or underwent it. He took death unto himself, and death took him. And thirdly, the beneficiaries of the death he experienced was every man, a simple generic expression meaning all of humankind.

This sums up what is both the most simple yet the most profound event ever to take place in all of human history. The moral scales of the universe were balanced when Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

That claim from 2 Corinthians 5 echoes Hebrews 2, Christ tasted death for all mankind, no exceptions. All that remains is for the individual person to embrace that fact and trust in that great transaction wrought by Christ.

Precisely how is that done? It's done in the same way we make a decision about anything else. We do it with our will, our decision-making mechanism.

[45 : 40] We all have one, you know. The very reason for the proclaiming of the gospel is to provide people with the opportunity to believe it, accept it, embrace it as being true just as the Bible says.

We make a conscious choice by acknowledging our need for a Savior and reaching out by faith as an act of our will to Jesus Christ. When we admit our sin, which is why we all need a Savior, Christ stands at the ready to receive, pardon, forgive, and cleanse us from all our sin.

This is why the gospel is called Good News. Have you ever heard any better? Have you done anything about it? We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Christ's Ransom Was For All In the Apostle Paul's continuation of his theme to his young protegee, he adds in 1 Timothy 2 that there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

Simple enough? Clear enough? Not much needed for this Christianity to be clarified? Or is there? Well, there shouldn't be, but there is.

[46 : 51] There shouldn't be because words mean something. There is because some are always looking for a way around the words when they refuse to take them at face value. Yet we are persuaded that face value is precisely the way the Bible is intended to be taken.

Of course there is figurative language and poetic license found throughout Scripture, but in the vast majority of instances it simply says what it means and means what it says. For the Bible to be a book seeks to disclose information, it must be intelligible.

We may be sure the Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible with such great clarity and frequency addressed the issues that are most important in understandable terms, such as the case in 1 Timothy 2.

Jesus Christ, who is the mediator between man and God, is the one and only mediator to the exclusion of any other would-be mediators. He was a man, a mediator, and a ransom.

As a man, he was able to die. That's why he came. As a mediator, he was the go-between. The basis on which he mediated was via his own death, which served as the payment for the sins of the world.

[48 : 06] The world, we believe, to be synonymous with the all in verse 5. All means everybody, none excluded. All is all in 2.5 and all is all in 2.6.

Christ, in his ransom-paying debt to divine justice, was responsible for redeeming as much of humanity as Adam ruined in his sin and rebellion.

And how many were they? The entirety of the human race. No one escaped Adam's imposition of death, and no one was omitted from Christ's sacrificial death for their redemption.

Adam alone was the singular individual through which the world was plunged into ruination, and Christ alone, and Christ alone, referred to as the last Adam, was the singular individual through which the fallen world was redeemed.

Adam, the federal head of humanity, was held responsible, and it is thusly referred to as Adam's transgression in Romans 5. This is also why Christ alone is the only mediator between God and man.

[49 : 19] God did not provide a half-dozen saviors from which we could choose as the one most appealing to us. 2 Timothy is merely another of several unmistakable references that insists upon the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ and Christ alone.

After all, such exclusivity was never the Christian idea. It was God's idea. Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father to be the one and only Savior of the world.

Christ's death was for all. Of all the several passages declaring God's love and redemption for the entire human race, the Apostle John speaks so clearly to the issue, both in his Gospel and his first epistle near the end of the New Testament.

In 1 John chapter 2, unmistakable language is used in his saying that Christ is the propitiation for satisfaction for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

For our sins, and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world? We do not know, when John refers to our sins, whether he was speaking of his Jewish brethren, or in reference to all who were believers at that time.

[50 : 43] But no matter, whichever it might have been does not change his next remark, which states, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Any attempt to reduce the whole world to mean some element less than the whole world is an inexcusable and faulty exegesis of the text that one should be embarrassed to put forth.

No one has the right to handle any text of Scripture in such a way as to make it support one system of theology. Rather, our theology is supposed to be derived from a clear meaning of the text, and few texts are clearer than this, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Again, we must deny the idea of universal salvation that some would read into this. The text is not teaching that the whole world is or will be saved, as is the central tenet of universalism.

It is teaching, rather, that provision was made for the whole world through the reconciliation by Christ whereby God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, as in 2 Corinthians 5.

[51 : 57] This act of Christ's death reconciling the world was as great and complete in its scope as was the degree of separation caused by the sin of Adam.

In the 1 John 2 text, John may have been referring to his readers and himself when he said Christ is the propitiation for our sins, or he may have been referring to the nation of Israel in saying, our sins, whichever really makes no difference, as he goes on to say, and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

This designation simply leaves no room for dispute or ambiguity. How many worlds other than ours do we know? Any attempt to interpret the world other than the world's inhabitants cannot be seriously entertained.

We would again assert that Christ, as the last Adam, was able to accomplish a redemption for humanity to the equal extent that Adam's sin produced the fall and alienation from God.

The very idea that the death of Christ somehow was not adequate to cancel the ruination caused by Satan and Adam is irresponsible and textually unthinkable.

[53 : 14] An honest, simple, and straightforward look at the text that treats it all as prose ought to be treated readily reveals that it simply means what it seems to mean and says what it seems to say.

The Gospel in a Nutshell It is arguably the most often quoted verse in all of Scripture. It's been called the Gospel in a Nutshell, and we speak, of course, of the beloved John 3.16.

We even see zealous Christians waving the name and number of John 3.16 on handmade placards at ball games and other sporting events, anywhere a roving camera can pick it up and transmit it to the millions who are watching TV in their home.

The Spirit of God inspired the Apostle John, who was hand-picked as an apostle of Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago. Here's what John wrote, For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The first elements that become apparent in the verse are who is doing the loving, and who it was that is love. It was God, the greatest being, who loved the greatest entity, namely the entire world, that is, humanity.

[54 : 32] God's love was not bestowed upon the physical world, the planet Earth, but upon its inhabitants, people, all people, of all times, and in all places.

Then we note the manner in which God loved the world. It is wrapped up in the little two-letter English word, SO, S-O. And while not obvious in English versions, it's very obvious in the original language of the New Testament, which was Greek.

The word for SO in the Greek is spelled in English equivalency as HUTOS, O-U-T-O-S, and it means, in this manner, or in this way.

But really now, what's the difference, and should we care? Lots of difference, and yes, we should care. It's a wonderful truth that distinguishes the quality of God's love from the concept of quantity.

It isn't how much God loved us, in a quantity, but the nature and kind of God's love, which had to do with quality, not quantity. God's love was of such a quality, or nature.

[55 : 40] God's love never increases from a little bit that God loves to a lot that God loves. His love is of such a nature, it cannot be increased, nor decreased.

His love did not build over the centuries until it reached a quantity that he was moved to do something. When God loves, he loves with the nature and character and quality of his entire being.

God loves with everything he's got, and everything he is. HUTOS, rendered SO, in our English versions, conveys the idea that qualitatively, not quantitatively, God's love was of such a kind, such a manner, such a distinctive quality of love, that he could only demonstrate it by what he was to do for the world, the object of his love.

God's love was of such a kind that he gave. He gave that which was the very dearest to him for this world that he loved. He gave his only begotten son.

This kind of love prompted this kind of giving, his only son. And don't forget, not only did the father give his only begotten son, but this only begotten son was also willing to be given.

[57 : 01] CHRIST'S PARAMOUNT MISSION That there is unmistakable cooperation involving all three members of the triune God in the creation of the world is unchallenged by any serious student of the Bible.

In fact, such threefold activity is evident at numerous historical events in the history of the world. Among these are what we should think of as the most critical of all, at least as regards human welfare and eternal destiny.

And obviously, we speak of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His mission is spelled out in 1 John 4 and couldn't be clearer.

It reads, The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. But did Christ really do that? Or was his mission a failure?

The world certainly doesn't look like it is saved, does it? Yet, the idea that Christ somehow failed in his mission is repulsive and impossible to entertain, simply because of who he was.

[58 : 02] And add to that his own words, It is finished, that he uttered while dying on that cross. So precisely, how then did Christ accomplish the mission of saving the world as the Father sent him to do?

He redeemed the world in that he took the penalty for the world's sin upon himself, thus reopening the way of access to God that Adam's sin had closed. Both figures, Adam and Christ, were federal head representatives of the human race.

Adam as the progenitor of all humankind and Christ as the last Adam, who referred to himself as the Son of Man. And as the Son of Man and the Son of God, he fully carried out the mission he was sent to accomplish.

The task was a monumental undertaking, the most monumental ever engaged because it involved the entire world, that is, every human being who ever lived or would live.

And that same world was what Adam's fall impacted in such a devastating way, it resulted in human alienation from the Creator involving the sentence of death to every member of humanity.

[59 : 12] It was this sad reality of alienation and death for which the Father sent the Son to save or redeem the world. This reconciliation Christ accomplished gave him the exclusive right to the title of Savior.

No one else has ever claimed that right or that title. The exclusivity of salvation being through Christ alone is predictable and logical since no one else has ever assigned to complete that task, nor has anyone else ever claimed to have done so.

Having rendered all mankind as being savable or able to be saved, man need only acknowledge his own sin, repent of it, and embrace by an act of his will this Jesus whom the Father sent to be the Savior of the world.

And by a person doing so, Christ becomes a personal Savior. The Father through Christ the Son made the provision for forgiveness and salvation through death, burial, and resurrection.

Man as an individual responds to what Christ accomplished through the exercise of his will. He responds to what Christ accomplished by putting his trust and confidence in Christ.

[60 : 30] Have you done that? God's part and your part. Part 2 While the scriptures throughout reveal that Christ died for the entire world, it is implied that the world needed dying for, and that death would have to be accomplished by one not tainted by sin himself.

He could not die substitutionally for others if he had sin of his own to contend with. Man in his spiritual naivete would like to think Christ died for those who were worthy and deserving of him.

But human worthiness and deservedness negates the need for a Savior. It is precisely because of our unworthiness and undeservedness that necessitates a Savior.

And unflattering as it is, there exists not one shred of goodness sufficient to merit our being connected with God. In fact, some test God's limits to the maximum, but they still cannot exhaust God's love and grace poured out for them in the vicarious death of his Son.

Unreasonable as it is to our human thinking, there is no sin or sins, the greatest and most evil among us, past or present, that is so great God's love could not overcome and forgive.

[61 : 49] No one, no matter how vile, is so vile that the grace of God is insufficient to redeem them. To even think that demeans and depreciates the death of Christ.

And yes, this extends to the most notorious of mass murderers that history can identify. And while these almost certainly died horrible deaths and were separated from God and his salvation, it was nonetheless available to them had they only accepted it through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of these moral ingrates are referred to by Peter in his second epistle, chapter 2, whom he identifies as false teachers. Peter said, these teachers secretly introduced destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.

What? How and when did the Lord buy those who deny him? When he died. When he died, he died for every person, even those who deny him.

He died for those who deny him today, even as he died for those of whom Peter spoke. Christ dying for the entirety of humanity makes him the Savior of the world, not the Savior of certain ones in the world to the exclusion of others.

[63 : 06] Of course, we humans see no logic or rationale in dying for enemies or those who would deny the very one giving up life for them, but that's what grace is all about.

That's why it's so amazing. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, including all the unbelievers who deny him as referred to by Peter.

And let's not forget to include one who labeled himself the chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, whom God saved and used to write one-third of the New Testament. Saul became Paul, the great apostle, who humbly declared, I am what I am by the grace of God.

And aren't we all? Christ loved and died for even the likes of us. Saul of Tarsus, amazing grace indeed. Christ's love saves the very worst among us.

God's part and your part, part one. Efforts have been made to establish and affirm one very important and straightforward concept that permeates Scripture and the New Testament in particular.

[64 : 18] It is so straightforward and plain, one should feel embarrassed not to acknowledge it. Christ died a substitutionary death for the sins of and on behalf of the entirety of the human race, past, present, and future, no exceptions.

Insisting that Christ died for all does require the redemption of all humanity. This is because the sin of Adam resulted in the fallenness of all humanity, no exceptions.

Christ's sacrificial death was equally effective in providing redemption for all humanity as Adam's sin was in producing ruination for all humanity.

However, we again emphasize that the corporate redemption of humanity Christ provided does not render all of humanity saved, but did make all of humanity savable.

While Christ's corporate redemption reflects the love and grace of God for humanity, it deals only with God's blanket provision for humanity. This is God's part of the plan.

- [65 : 23] But because we humans have been individually gifted by God with a personal volition or will, man's part of that plan is his responsibility for responding to God's part.
- This human and personal response, activated by the individual will, is called faith. Faith is belief, trust, reliance, commitment to what God did through Christ.
- Man is saved by grace alone through faith alone. This is not faith in faith. Faith must have an object in which it is deposited, and in Christianity that object is a person and the person is Jesus Christ.
- All kinds of people have faith or confidence in all kinds of things, things they believe will make them acceptable to God. The Bible declares repeatedly that it is faith in Christ, who he was, why he came, what he did, and why he matters so very much that alone saves.
- Human faith deposited in any other person or thing cannot and will not save anyone. Only Christ can save. This is why he and he alone is designated Savior.
- [66 : 33] He is Savior exclusively. He alone is qualified to own that title, and he paid ever so dearly for that right. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he uttered those electrifying words, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- It was a prophetic statement that was to be fully realized three and a half years from the time John declared it. The fulfillment would come when Jesus was being crucified and cried out from the cross, It is finished.
- The great transaction was done. Christ in his own person willingly took upon himself that which his Father sent him to do. He who knew no sin was made to be sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.
- This singular glorious truth is called the gospel, and believing it is to the personal salvation of the soul. Christ's gracious provision includes all.
- God's Part and Your Part Part 2 Throughout Scripture, God's gracious provision for man's salvation and eternal life with him is abundantly clear.
- [67 : 48] Whether in John 3.16 or Paul's expression in 1 Corinthians 15 that Christ died for our sins or any of the myriad of other passages, the message is the same and it is utterly glorious.
- What else could it be called but good news? Sins forgiven, righteousness imputed, acceptance with God assured, and an eternity spent in his presence. What could prevent anyone from enjoying these gracious eternal benefits?
- only the refusal to appropriate them. This incredibly generous provision of God through Christ must be applied to the individual, believed by the individual, received by the individual, because salvation is individual, personal, it's not institutional, nor is it sacramental.
- While salvation may and should be proclaimed by the church, the church is not the instrument that imparts salvation. that is the exclusive prerogative of the only one wearing the title Savior.
- Mary, his mother, was told by the angel, Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Christ and his salvation are presented throughout the New Testament as God's only remedy for man's lost condition.
- [69 : 10] Upon hearing of this, one must do something about it. One may ignore it, reject it, ridicule it, or gratefully embrace it. Whichever is done is one's response to what God in his great love has provided.
- And one's response, whatever it was, was an act of the will. We have a God-given capacity to make choices, decisions, for which all will one day be accountable.
- And when we repent of our sin, we are acknowledging that we are, in fact, quite the opposite of a holy God. When then we call upon him for his salvation, we acknowledge our moral weakness and inability.

Of course it's a humbling thing. It's a wound to our pride, but it's what truth and reality demand. God will save us from our pride, but he will not save us in it.

Coming to Christ means coming to an end of yourself and your feeble efforts to improve yourself, clean up yourself, and hope God will say you did a good enough job. With repentance, humility, and contrition, we exclaim, Lord Jesus, I believe you died in my place for my sin.

[70 : 29] I want to appropriate what you did for me by putting my faith, trust, reliance, and confidence in you and you alone.

Thank you for dying for me and for doing for me what I could never do for myself. I want you as my Lord and Savior.

That is the response that gets a response from him, including his forgiveness and eternal life. Yes, my friend, it is just that simple.

You believe with your will. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. This is Pastor Marv Wiseman.

Having addressed the universality of the redemptive work of Christ for all humanity, past, present, and future, we are reminded this corporate act of Christ, dying for the sins of the entire world, makes individual salvation available.

[71 : 31] It does not make individual and personal salvation a reality. It merely makes it potential. What yet remains and is necessary to make personal salvation a possession rather than merely a potential is the application of the provision Christ made by each person.

God has done his part by providing redemption for all through Christ, thus opening the way of access to God. When this good news, this gospel is proclaimed, man's responsibility is in his answer to that provision.

It is called the response of personal, individual, human faith. Human accountability to God is based upon the reality of a God-given will or volition that is part of the human psyche.

The use of our will as free and responsible moral beings constitutes the basis for God's ultimate evaluation of us and our lives.

It is with our will that we respond to what God accomplished through Christ's death on our behalf. Precisely how we apply our will so that Christ's corporate redemption becomes a personal reality in one's life will be addressed in detail on the upcoming CD number 11.

[72 : 51] To request your free copy, simply return the card enclosed with this CD number 10, or email us at gracebiblechurch@gracebiblespflld.com That's all one word, gracebiblechurch@gracebiblespflld.com If you know of others you would like to receive a free copy of this present CD number 10 which you just heard, you need only send us their complete name and mailing address.

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We simply want to get this systematic theological content out to all who want it. Funds to do so have been graciously provided through the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund originated by Grace Bible Church, the church I have pastored since 1971 to the present.

This is Pastor Marv Wiseman thanking you for listening and for caring enough to refer others to benefit from the content also. Please remember to get the next release of CD number 11 either return the enclosed card in the mail to Grace Bible Church 1500 Group Road that's spelled G-R-O-O-P 1500 Group Road Springfield, Ohio 45504 or you may email your request to Grace Bible Springfield at Grace Bible SPFLD dot com Thanks again for listening and for caring.