

Christianity Clarified Volume 45

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Date: 01 August 2021

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[0 : 00] What is Christianity really all about? Here, in an ongoing effort to try and dispel some of the confusion, is Marv Wiseman with another session of Christianity Clarified.

A very important question. Before going further with the content for this 45th volume of Christianity Clarified, a very important question needs to be asked of you, the listener.

And, as a listener, it doesn't matter whether you are a Christian, a Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or even an atheist. Also, it doesn't matter if you are described as what is today called a nun, N-O-N-E. That is, one who may believe there is a God in contrast to an atheist, but does not subscribe to any kind of belief besides merely believing there is a God.

And the question. Here it is. If what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it? Note carefully, if you will, it is a hypothetical.

[1 : 08] If, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it? Your response may be, If what I now believe about what?

That's a good question. And here is the about what. If what you now believe about the meaning and purpose of life, if what you now believe about what happens to you after this life ends, whether there is life of some kind after this, or what it will be, or where it will be, or who will be there and who won't and why, if what you now believe about those issues is not true, would you want to know that? Be advised, your answer to this question will likely determine whether or not you find any satisfying answers. And now, while you are thinking about your answer, here is another question vitally connected to the first question, and it is this.

Is there such a thing as truth, and is it knowable? The reason this issue is even brought up as to whether truth actually exists is because there are many today who insist it does not.

And why would anyone suspect that? Well, it may be because they have already given it some thought and have been unable to arrive at any answers. Thus, they conclude there are no answers, which to them would translate into truth must not even exist.

[2 : 31] And there may also be room for an elevated ego here. Such would allow them to reason thusly. If an exceptional mind, such as I have, has not arrived at any answers, it can only be because none exist.

Otherwise, my superior intellect would surely have discovered it. Ah, yes, our superior intellects. Surely you can see what is meant by an elevated ego.

And despite the idea that some among us moderns thinking truth does not exist, yet, far from that being the case, there were those who thought that thousands of years ago.

And probably the most famous of all the deniers who apparently took the position that truth did not exist was one of whom you may already be thinking.

But if not, he will be revealed up next. An Early Denier of Truth's Existence Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus of Nazareth stood trial in a Roman court presided over by one Pontius Pilate.

[3 : 46] Jesus had just uttered the statement that he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.

Pilate's famous response consisted of just three words. What is truth? One can scarcely draw any other conclusion from Pilate's penetrating question other than truth is not known or is not knowable. He may have been limiting his statement to the situation at hand regarding the guilt or innocence of Jesus. There had been conflicting evidence regarding him and Pilate may have simply meant it was not possible to determine what the truth really was about the charges brought against Jesus.

And if that's what he meant, he was nonetheless willing to issue the execution order, knowing full well Jesus may have been innocent of the charges leveled against him.

In fact, as far as he, Pilate, was concerned, he freely admitted he found no cause of death in Jesus and was willing to free him. Or Pilate may have meant truth can be so elusive about so many things that one despairs of ever learning it.

[4 : 57] Whichever the case, it became clear Pilate was unwilling to spend the time and effort the discovery of truth would require, even if it existed. So, whether Pilate was speaking philosophically and denying that truth can even be known, or whether he was speaking practically as regards discovering the actual truth about charges brought against Jesus cannot be determined based on the evidence.

But the upshot of it all was that Pilate was unwilling to spend the time and effort to pursue the issue and took the quick and easy way out, all right, take him then and crucify him.

So, what is your answer regarding the effort required to discover truth? Would you second the decision made by Pilate? Or would you say, Now, wait just a moment.

I need to really look into this issue about truth. Does it not appear to be at least the more honorable approach? The most intellectually honest? And if, perchance, you are one who subscribes to the philosophical concept that truth is not knowable, we would only ask you this question.

Are you making that statement as a truth? After all, if truth cannot be known, how is it possible to say that what you are saying is true?

[6 : 16] And to say it is true and that there is no such thing as truth sounds very much to me like a self-defeating statement because if it is true that truth cannot be known and I am convinced that is true.

Well, isn't that a perfect example of us fallen mortals reasoning with a warped intellect? There is no such thing as truth and that's the truth.

Well, that's the mortals reasoning with that warped intellect thing we mentioned. More just ahead. A Sincere Search for Truth So, what is your answer to the question if what you now believe, what you now hold to be true, is not true, would you want to know it?

Now, as illogical as it might be, there are some who would answer no! And this is because whatever it is they regard as true is something they have become comfortable with and they avoid asking themselves questions about it.

They actually prefer to continue in a false belief system rather than rock the boat in considering something else they could discover to be true. And this again points out the skewed thinking process that fallen man is capable of using.

[7 : 34] Just think of it. Such a one is actually saying, even if what I believe is not true, I still prefer to align with that rather than pursue what is actually true that I do not now know.

Well, such an attitude is clearly not in the best interest of the one holding it. And their position is held and defended primarily based on fear, fear of the unknown, fear that if they even consider the possibility of what they now believe not being true, it could impact their relationship or standing among others who also embrace the same positions as they.

And to these worried souls, we can only say the God of all truth will never use the truth to hurt you, but only to reward you for your pursuit of it. The noblest and most intellectually honest thing we all can do is to answer that question with a clear affirmation.

If what I now believe about the greatest issues of life and death and purpose and meaning is not true, would I want to know it? I most certainly, definitely would. And if that is your response, then heartiest congratulations are extended to you.

Please realize, you can never go wrong by telling God what you now believe about these issues is the truth, but in the event it is not true, you are willing for Him to show you otherwise and expose you to what really is true.

[9 : 02] How could anyone possibly go wrong in making a commitment like that? You cannot. Just tell God you want Him to confirm what you now believe to be true and in the event it is not, you want Him to reveal that to you as well.

Such is a heart and mind that is open and receptive to the truth of God and you are counting on Him to reveal it to you and He most definitely will. Because God never turns away a sincere seeker of truth.

We are reminded in Hebrews 11 that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Diligently means with seriousness of purpose.

We seek God and God's truth with no agenda or preconditions of our own to impose on Him. We merely open ourselves to God's truth and we are committed to following truth wherever it leads us. So, if what I now believe is not true, would I want to know it? Yes, most definitely yes and I hope that's your prayer as well.

[10 : 16] An Exercise for Truth Seekers Part 1 There can be no doubt the central issue of the Christian faith is the very person of Jesus Christ Himself.

To define Him and the tenets of the Christian faith is what Christianity Clarified is all about. So, without apology, an exercise is recommended that can aid any who are sincere seekers of truth. Untold millions from the past and like numbers in the present can testify that their primary search for truth ended when they encountered the very one described as the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ.

Be advised, the exercise recommended here and now is tied to the previous question, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it? The exercise will confirm your belief if you have already come to Christ as your Savior, but if you have not and are a sincere seeker after truth, willing to follow where it leads, the exercise can be extremely revealing to you, even to the determining of your eternal destiny.

Remember, the validity of the Christian faith rises or falls on the identity of the person Jesus Christ. The claims he makes about himself and that others make regarding him throughout the Bible are either true or not true, and the recommended exercise can enable you to determine which it is for yourself.

[11 : 45] It could be preceded by a simple prayer, I will offer for you as an aid for any not used to praying, and if you wish, feel free to join in this prayer with me.

Oh God, I really don't know if the claims about Jesus are true or not, but I really do want to know. And if they are true and Jesus is who the Bible says he is and he died to pay the penalty for my sins and those of the whole world, I am willing to be shown and I am looking to you to reveal that to me. Amen. If you followed that and were in agreement with it and sincere about it, one would assume you were not only willing but probably eager to engage the simple exercise.

So here it is. Find a Bible or New Testament and locate the Gospel of John. Begin reading in chapter 1. Jot down on a separate paper or underline each time reference is made to Jesus having been sent by the Father, sent by God, or reference to Him who sent me, spoken by Jesus Himself, and see how many such references indicating the heavenly or fatherly source from which Jesus came and dwelt on earth.

Then, ask yourself the question, are these statements made by Jesus or about Jesus having been sent by His Father in heaven true? Because everything pertinent to the core issue of Christianity hangs in the balance.

[13 : 13] And having counted the references in question, the numbers were astounding. In 21 chapters of John's Gospel, the issue of Jesus' deputation by the Father in heaven found a stunning 44 times.

44 times! See how many you can find. More later. An Exercise for Truth Seekers Part 2 If you counted the number of times Jesus is referred to as having been sent by God found in the Gospel of John, what was your total?

Did you find all 44 times in those 21 chapters averaging about two times per chapter? And if you have done the simple exercise, the next logical question surfaces rather automatically.

What did you think? What do you make of all that? Does it not appear rather obvious that something was being greatly emphasized? And isn't that what is done when one wishes to stress something so that everyone gets it?

So, did you get it? The next seemingly logical question then is, what do you plan to do about it? Kind of puts one on the spot, doesn't it?

[14 : 31] Jesus has a way of doing that, and always to the eternal betterment of those who respond to His invitation. In this same Gospel of John, Jesus informs us, as in chapter 6, verse 37, that He will not cast out any who come to Him.

And earlier, in 524, Christ says, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.

Question, how do we believe? How do we come? Answer, with your will. It is a deliberate choice on your part. The Gospel, or good news, is that Christ died in your place to pay for your sins so you need not pay for it.

Jesus loved you and gave Himself for your sin to prove it. In doing so, He took in His own person the death penalty incurred by you and by all of us.

The Bible says in Romans 5, 8, that God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That's why this is called the good news.

[15:47] And there's never been a better good news than this. Your response to that message is now what matters most. You come to Christ with your will to commit to Him in the very same way one comes to a marriage altar to commit one's will to the person they are marrying.

The bride loves and wants the groom and the groom loves and wants the bride. Truth be told, Christ loves and wants you. Do you love and want Him?

And if you do, you can make this prayer your aim. Dear God, there is much I don't understand about all of this, but I do know I have a need that I cannot meet.

I need and want your forgiveness. I admit my sin and I want to forsake it, turn my life over to Christ who loved me and bought me with His own blood.

And Father, as best as I know how, with doubts and questions, I'm turning my life over to you for your forgiveness and salvation. Amen. Remember, dear friend, Jesus said those who come to Him He will never cast out.

[16:57] Faulty Assumptions Via the Human Mind Part 1 What is historically and theologically referred to as the Fall that occurred in Genesis 3 explains more than anything else why the world today is as it is.

A dramatic moral declension occurred when our first parents rebelled against the Creator and took sides with a deceptive adversary, Satan. As a result, disease, death, and destruction were introduced into the earth that God had originally described as very good.

But now, it was no longer very good, but corrupted. Mankind forfeited the dominion He was earlier given over all of creation. And now, He is no longer the human authority on earth because He surrendered it to the adversary.

The devil is now, and since then, described as the God of this age in 2 Corinthians 4. In connection with the physical consequences man brought upon himself, such as disease and death, he also experienced a fallenness of his intellect.

All of his humanity, including ourselves, since the fall to the present, now think and operate with a skewed or warped intellect. Our reasoning powers are compromised so that we are capable of arriving at the harebrained ideas men consistently put forth.

[18:26] Fallen mankind, to which we all belong, has fallen prey to the pagan deities of wood and stone we find in the Old Testament. Baal, Dagon, Molech, and so-called gods were seriously worshipped as deities by the pagan neighbors of the Israelites, and at times by the Israelites themselves.

In fact, it was because of their persistent idolatry that northern and southern kingdoms of Israel were turned over by God to their pagan conquerors. In Acts 17, the apostle Paul found pagan statuary all over the city of Athens in honor of the several different so-called gods worshipped by the Greeks.

Now bear in mind, these were intelligent people, the likes of these who produced the Aristotles, Sosthenes, Platos, and numerous others of a powerful intellectual bent.

Yet, they too reasoned with a warped intellect. Today, we cite religions with millions of adherents given over to Hinduism and the 300 million gods they say exist.

Add to them like millions of Muslims, Buddhists, and other followers of aberrant religions, and they are all seen to suffer from warped or skewed intellects. But, these are not stupid people.

[19:47] Many of them may even be quite brilliant IQ-wise. But still, a high IQ cannot deliver one from a fallen intellect that allows and even demands they make very faulty assumptions that produce these bizarre beliefs.

These are among those of whom Paul speaks in Romans 1, calling them futile in their imaginations and their foolish hearts being darkened. The only panacea for this and all aberrant beliefs is the word of God rightly divided and understood.

And such is our goal and the direction in which we are headed. Come with us. Faulty Assumptions Via the Human Mind, Part 2 In previous sessions of Christianity Clarified, it was observed there are but three possible sources of information from which we can process data and reach conclusions. First, and that which is most frequently relied upon, is the mind of humans. We ourselves tend to place more confidence in our own minds than we do those from any other source.

And you can add to ours, the minds of those exalted among us as the experts, the intelligentsia, the scientific community and their findings, and so on. This mind of humans is our most frequently appealed to source for authority and direction for making decisions large and small.

[21 : 15] The second possible source of information is that of the adversary, none other than Satan, also described as the devil. He is depicted as the arch-deceiver of mankind and the sworn enemy of God the Creator.

He does have deceptive information to dispense and is extremely successful in doing so. He is also referred to as the God of this present age in 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

Satan is the personification of evil and deception. Still, he is a source from which information can be received. And there are numerous biblical incidents where this has been the case.

To name only a few, you can begin with Eve in the garden, and then Judas and Satan's manipulation of him to betray Jesus. And there's Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5, and then Satan's extreme activities in the book of Job, and in the final wrap-up recorded in the book of the Revelation.

So, number two for a source of information to process is the mind of Satan and his devices.

Demons are in league with Satan and apparently consider him their master.

[22 : 31] Although there are some humans who consciously and deliberately cooperate with the devil, we would like to think there are not many in number. They are called devil worshippers, but they are out there, and some of them boast of their connection with Satan.

So, of the three possible sources of information, only one remains, and that is the source of divine revelation called the Bible. And in this timeless and bottomless book, the very mind, attitude, disposition, preferences, and will of the Almighty is revealed.

And it is available nowhere else. It is the third and only reliable source of information available to us. And even it is subject to interpretation, so there you have it.

Only three possible sources of data from which we may derive our information. And upon processing the information, we draw conclusions that form our worldview, and they are what we think and why we think them.

They determine our value system as to what we regard important. They determine our personal agenda, and so on. And to be sure, nothing is so critical to our being as determining the source of information we choose to embrace.

[23 : 45] So choose well. Your choice will deliver you or damn you. There is no known alternative to these three choices. Faulty Assumptions Via the Human Mind Part 3 Of the three possible sources of information, the first is surely the most relied upon.

And it was described as the human mind which we all tend to make our authority. Our own mind is by far that with which we are most comfortable, and surely it is the most accessible to us all.

And after all, we do know what we think about this or that, don't we? At least we know what we think about the day-to-day issues, the everyday stuff that consumes the time and thoughts of us all.

But is this routine, mundane stuff we all face and process rather automatically, the stuff that really matters, matters with long-term consequences, even consequences about eternal things, things beyond this life?

What is your information source about the meaning and value of life? The destiny you will arrive at and the evaluation you will undergo followed by whatever the final disposition of your case will be.

[25 : 05] Have you conjured up in your own mind the answers to these questions? And if you have, have you ever been wrong about anything? Have you ever been wrong about anything you've conjured up in the past?

And if you have, and who among us has not? Can you safely with any degree of certainty judge your own personally contrived answers to be correct?

And don't forget what's riding on this. Sobering thoughts, are they not? Are you resting in the conclusions reached from your own mind about these issues, so much so you are quite willing to stake everything on it?

Or does your heart and mind long for some more authoritative answers than you can provide? Most of us would answer yes. Where or how may I find them?

And there is but one source infinitely authoritative and fully trustworthy. This is why we have the Bible. It comprises the very mind, attitude, disposition, and requirements of the Creator God Himself.

[26 : 11] Of the three possible sources of information, the mind of man, the mind of Satan, or the mind of God, only this last source can provide the information that brings peace and comfort.

The prophet Isaiah, inspired of God to pen these words some 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wrote, Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord and he will have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon for my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Three sources of information the mind of man, the mind of Satan, the mind of God.

This third is the only one with authority. Can you even think of a fourth? Neither can I. And of the three make your choice and choose well for you'll live with that information throughout eternity.

[27 : 22] Faulty Assumptions and Politics Part 1 Already revealed in past segments of Christianity Clarified were the three and only three possible sources of information available.

There being the mind of man, the mind of Satan, and the mind of God. And only the last, the mind of God, is infallible. Yet, it is the mind of man in general and our own minds in particular that are most heavily relied upon.

What makes the mind of man treacherous is the fact that we all reason or reach our conclusions while operating with a warped intellect. That is, an immediate and pervasive consequence of the fall as recorded in Genesis 3.

And, it is the reasoning of skewed intellects that has allowed humanity to arrive at and implement so many wrong courses of actions over the past several thousand years.

Actions that resulted in the deaths of untold millions as man has developed more effective ways of doing away with his own kind. There are those who have claimed that religious belief has been mostly responsible for those deaths, but that is not at all true.

[28 : 39] Killings perpetuated by religions of all kinds cannot begin to surpass the death toll of untold millions under atheist communist and Nazi regimes in Russia, China, Germany, Cambodia, Africa, and others just in the past century.

How and why did these godless political forces arrive at the kind of conclusions that justified their slaughter of so many, nearly all civilians?

Well, the answer is quite simple and thoroughly biblical. The Hitlers, Stalins, Mao Zedong's, and Pol Pot's reasoned with their warped political intellects and the game plans they came up with resulted in all those innocents being sacrificed to the skewed reasonings and conclusions of those powerful political leaders.

Don't you see the connection? The first, most basic tenet of communism, for example, is there is no God. Well, if there is no God, who makes the rules?

Whoever is in the most powerful position among men, they make the rules. They did, and millions died. Don't you see the connection? Why?

[29 : 54] How could they do that? Easily. When there is no singular overarching authority recognized, each becomes his own authority. And if such an one can gain power, he then exercises that authority and ideology over others with his own agenda and objective.

For communists, it's to bring in the wonderful worldwide revolution that will equalize everything. So, to bring in this glorious new world order, you simply have to eliminate several hundred million people who just don't get it.

That is the old mantra, the end justifies the means. It's purely warp-skewed reasoning that contaminates the human thinking and the process that causes all of humanity to suffer from its effects.

Don't you see the connection? Political Faulty Assumptions, Part 2 There is no question that political personages have risen to power and implemented their faulty human reasoning in ways that have sacrificed the lives of millions of innocents.

All because some political fanatic used his warped intellect and came up with a disastrous philosophy that negatively impacted millions. This skewed message nonsense has gone on since the days of Nimrod on the plains of Shinar in the book of Genesis.

[31 : 20] If humanity has learned anything from history, it is that humanity has not learned from history. Men with huge egos and big mouths gather a following that intrigues the masses and they are off to the killing fields.

And no one sees the end of it all until it's too late. No one, of course, other than Satan, who deftly operates behind the scenes and orchestrates much that is taking place.

And when the mind of man and the mind of Satan unite, the earth is subject to a double whammy. Satan's objective is to have as high a body count as possible.

And we are told when this will culminate, and that's in Revelation chapter 19. You can look it up if you wish. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect about this entire scenario of warped human thinking is the blindness and inability of people to see it.

The tendency is to think the reasons that things go wrong is simply because the wrong people or the wrong political party is in power. Elect us, and we will clean up the mess those other guys made.

[32 : 29] No, you won't. Not unless you stop relying on your fallen intellect, because if you don't, your results will differ little from the group you replace. So what is the likelihood any politician with clout will renounce human reasoning and appeal to a biblical sense of direction?

Don't hold your breath. The likely outcry against a political leader even hinting at such would cause apoplexy among the media. So in response to the age-old question in Psalm 11, the question is asked, If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?

The foundations spoken of have nothing to do with anything physical, but with everything moral and spiritual? The question is, how can the righteous function or survive in a society that has destroyed its moral and spiritual underpinnings?

That was precisely what had happened in ancient Israel, and now is happening in the USA. In the case of Israel, divine judgment was on the way, and eventually arrived.

Is it on the way for the USA? It is if there is no heeding the moral principles upon which our nation was founded. Ruth Graham, wife of American evangelist Billy Graham, was quoted years ago as saying, If God does not judge America, he will owe an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah.

[33 : 54] And who can argue? There is no hope unless the warp thinking of humanity can be scrapped and replaced with the divine wisdom higher than ours, and that's what a true revival would entail.

More faulty assumptions via ancestry. So far, the manner through which we humans arrive at our faulty assumptions has been identified as being due to a misinterpretation of a passage of Scripture that leads us to falsely assume it's teaching something it isn't.

Secondly, satanic influence, which is always afoot, contributing deception and lies, as described in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. And three, the fallen or warped intellect with which all of us humans must function.

And four, faulty assumptions we arrive at due to the heritage we are a part of. Although there is no truth to it, it is very likely that most who follow a certain religious persuasion do so simply because they were born into it.

This is the false assumption that certain things one believes are true because your parents, grandparents, or even further back believe those things.

[35 : 11] It probably even includes the persuasion that this particular belief system, whatever it is, is actually where you belong because you were born into it. And being born into it makes it right for you.

However, as the truth of Scripture makes so clear, if it isn't true, then it isn't right for you, even though you were born into it.

In fact, if it isn't true, it isn't right for anyone. It is not one's ancestors that determine the rightness or truth of any position.

Parental respect or grandparental admiration or appreciation, even affection, have nothing to do with what is true or right. Believing that it does is surely a sterling example of one making a faulty assumption.

And this faulty assumption is a very easy one to make and a very hard one to abandon, because emotions that are powerful are intertwined with it.

[36 : 13] The sad mantra of folks who made their faulty assumptions on the basis of their heritage can be heard echoing from every religious group one can imagine. It goes like this.

Look, I was born into the religion of so-and-so, raised a so-and-so, lived and worshipped as a so-and-so, and I will die as a so-and-so, and I know I'm right for doing this and believing this because this is what I was born into.

Well, with all due respect for the warm emotional connection one may have with parents or grandparents, the belief system they honored and passed on to you is not automatically one of truth and worthy of continuing.

Admittedly, the emotional attraction is strong, and all too often what is emotionally and generationally based will usually win the day.

When tradition and truth conflict, it is very often the tradition-based position that prevails. And one should never confuse honoring the beliefs of others, no matter how much we love and revere them, with honoring the truth as revealed in the Word of God.

[37 : 26] It is an especially happy occasion when the belief of one's forebears does indeed line up with the truth of Scripture. Then, conflict is avoided and affirmation is peacefully enjoyed.

Ongoing Faulty Assumptions, Part 1 Let's be clear. It is without apology that we continue pursuing the ubiquitous theme of the Faulty Assumption.

And it is called ubiquitous simply because it is everywhere at one and the same time. The Faulty Assumption is the main vehicle allowing men to arrive at an incorrect interpretation of a given passage of Scripture.

Doctrine is then built upon that erroneous interpretation, and eventually it makes its way into official statements of faith adopted by the various groups. By embracing that doctrinal conclusion, voila, one has arrived at the birth of another denomination, council, presbytery, order, or whatever designation that group chooses to call itself.

To date, as referenced earlier, there are nearly 300 such religious entities that separate themselves from the others, all because of different doctrinal emphases made by them.

[38 : 47] The result is the reducing of the power and influence that could be wielded upon the world if all those separated entities were united. What keeps them separated is, of course, their doctrinal divergencies.

And why do these divergencies exist? Their doctrines were built upon faulty interpretations of various passages of Scripture. Interpretations arrived at, in most cases, via that ubiquitous, faulty assumption.

The assumption that a given passage teaches something it simply does not teach at all. And nearly always, the one who has arrived at that interpretation did so in good faith and complete sincerity. If such an one has stature, respect, and is admired by whatever group is under his influence, his doctrinal findings and conclusions are adopted by the group and are written into their statement of faith.

And if there are some in that group that will not accept those findings and embrace those doctrinal conclusions, then they depart, and they begin their own group that develops doctrine from the conclusions of the departed leaders.

[40 : 06] And so it goes. Another denomination, split, splinter, or whatever is formed. Many have lamented this reality over the past 500 years and have dreamt of a coming together of all the groups into one grand alliance.

And occasionally some groups, whose differences are relatively minor, have arranged to consolidate and somewhat enhance the overall influence of the group. But these have been of little notice or effect.

Of all these that call themselves Christian, the two most involved numerically are, of course, the Roman Catholic Church, which experienced its first separation in 1054 with the East-West Division that spawned the Orthodox Church, headquartered in Constantinople, from the Roman Church, headquartered in the Vatican.

And then another separation that birthed Protestantism in 1517. And out of the latter, there arrived more than 300 others already mentioned.

More upcoming. Ongoing Faulty Assumptions Part 2 Christianity Clarified is revealing differences that separate believers in the body of Christ.

[41 : 17] And it is different doctrinal persuasions that have caused these separations. And while we do question and often disagree with some of their doctrinal conclusions, we do not fault anyone's intent or good faith.

It is nearly always the case that departures and separations were made because those departing were persuaded they were standing on the principles of truth. And who can fault them for that? One must be true to one's conscience. And in addition to doctrinal issues, there were no doubt some separations made due to personality conflicts and oversized egos that got in the way.

And some groups were formed due to popularity contests, as the Apostle Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1. And there he rebuked the congregation for lining up behind certain personalities. One group was for Peter, another for Paul, and for others, Apollos was their guy. And Paul's admonition was, knock it off. Your pettiness and favoritism and immaturity does not become you.

[42 : 26] Christ and Christ alone is the one behind whom we unite. And speaking of Christ, it was he who prayed in that monumental 17th chapter of John, requesting of the Father that all who believed in the Son might be one.

Well, we are. Certainly, we are not organizationally, as has already been shown repeatedly. Nonetheless, we are organically.

That is, all who are true believers in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross and have placed their faith in Christ for their salvation are as one as one can get.

Doesn't make any difference what denomination or group they may be a heart of. Never mind the numerous doctrines and the erroneous interpretations that divide us organizationally.

It is Christ who unites us organically. We are all members of his spiritual body, of which he is the spiritual head. And this, dear brethren, this is the unity that counts.

[43 : 31] And while we should all strive for doctrinal correctness and valid interpretation of Scripture, please realize and be thankful it doesn't take a ton of doctrinal correctness to be in union with other believers in the body of Christ.

We are thankful the text does not say, He who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and has all your doctrines straight now shalt be saved. Well, if such were the case, who would populate heaven besides God and unfallen angels?

So, as has been often noted, all of us have wrinkles in our theology. When we arrive in heaven, we will all get straightened out. And until then, we still do what we can to arrive at a sound interpretation of each passage of God's Word.

Its being God's Word alone justifies our bending every effort to interpret and apply it correctly, as we seek to do so, rightly dividing it a la 2 Timothy 2.15.

And it also demands we identify the plethora of faulty assumptions as best we can. We will plow ahead with those faulty assumptions. Jewish faulty assumptions continue.

[44 : 43] Earlier segments of this 45th volume of Christianity Clarified dealt with erroneous conclusions arrived at by Jews making faulty assumptions about events that occurred in both the Old and New Testaments.

And we recognize that Jews do not accept the validity of the New Testament. Their refusal to do so is to their hurt. But we have no illusions of their agreeing to that.

It is important, however, whether in Old or New Testament, to point out the several faulty assumptions made by the Jewish people over the past thousands of years. And at the same time, let no one think the Jew is to be singled out as the only ones in error.

There were, as we shall see, so very many wrong assumptions made as well by Gentiles, in some ways even more than the Jews. Gentiles, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, have plenty of false assumptions of our own.

But for our purpose of trying to embrace the whole of the problem, we must focus upon the Jew, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And why is this? Two reasons.

[45 : 50] Number one, they were and remain the specifically chosen people of God and are recipients of inviolable covenants God made with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

These include the Abrahamic, Davidic, and the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31. And they are called inviolable because they are unconditional in nature. That means their fulfillment is not dependent upon the worthiness or obedience of the Jewish people, but solely upon the trustworthiness and

faithfulness of God.

And reason number two that we focus upon Israel and their faulty assumptions in this study is because chronologically, they were here first, actually even predating Abraham.

Abraham, who is generally considered the patriarch of Israel or the first father of the Jewish nation, has his genealogical roots originating with Noah. Of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, it was out of the loins of Shem that Abraham and all his posterity would be born.

Racially, the Jews are Shemites rather than Hamites or Japhethites. They are Shemitic or Semitic race of people. And those who oppose the Jews for whatever reason, whether religious, political, or racial, are called anti-Semitic.

[47 : 09] Yet, in an ironic kind of way, it was through the oft-hated Jew that deliverance for humanity was to come. It is through Abraham and his seed that all nations of the earth are to be, and in many ways already have been, blessed.

This is all so very involved, yet so very strategic to the whole plan and program of God, we cannot even think of shortchanging it, and we won't. Does this, then, make us lovers of Jews?

Of course it does. In fact, it is because of one Jew in particular, called Jesus of Nazareth, that it also requires us to be lovers of Arabs and Muslims. And why stop there? When Jesus comes into the human heart, he brings with him an ability and an obligation to love as he loved.

Namely, all fellow humans dwelling in this fallen world. Folks, this whole matter is so absolutely huge, we despair of treating it adequate. But we will give it our best shot.

More to come. Lots more. The Divine Necessity of the Jew, Part 1. While attempting to remain focused on the concept of the faulty assumptions made by Jewish people through the years, even centuries, it is necessary to tie with that the reasons that made it so easy for them to make their faulty assumptions.

[48 : 30] As mentioned earlier, this subject is so very involved that it has trails leading from its hub-like spokes on a wheel, all interrelated and connected to the source of the hub.

And in the case of the Jew, the hub is the God of the Jew, creator and sustainer of the universe. This entire subject, and its spokes, as it were, is so strategic to the ordained plan and program of God that we despair of treating it adequately.

But that will not keep us from trying. Get this. And if you do, you will have gained an understanding of the way things truly are, how they got this way, where they are going, and why.

All these are answered only in what is set forth in Scripture. You're wasting your time looking elsewhere. Let's begin with a foundation in this segment regarding the Jew.

And no matter how you think about the Jewish people, good, bad, or indifferent, if there is anything the Bible, Old and New Testaments make crystal clear it is this. The Jewish people, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are set forth as the specifically designated people through whom God has committed for the restoration and redemption of a fallen and broken world.

[49 : 52] It is the Jewish nation in general, and the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth in particular, through whom God has determined this shall be done.

That this makes the Jewish people irrevocably strategic is a recurring theme throughout the bodies of the Old and New Testaments. And we shall see that this is so even if only in brief.

In brief, because a thorough treatment requires more time and expertise than I can give it. It is truly that involved. At this outset, let's be clear that the Jewish people are not merely strategic to the plan and program of God, but necessarily so.

Does this mean God cannot accomplish His purpose without the Jewish people? That is precisely what it means. But wait, does this not make God dependent then, subservient to a particular race of people?

And isn't God being sovereign able to do whatever He pleases without the cooperation from any person or nation? Yes and no. Of course, this sounds like what?

[51 : 00] Backpedaling, fudging, hemming and hawing, equivocating? Is God sovereign or is He not? Well, yes and no. Now, don't allow the yes and no to frustrate you.

There is a perfectly logical and, more importantly, biblical explanation of it all. And it's up next. You just may want to take some notes. The Divine Necessity of the Jew, Part 2 Our last segment of Christianity Clarified, left off by declaring God to be sovereign, that is, able to do as He pleases, while at the same time insisting that God is dependent, dependent upon the Jewish people for the outworking of His will?

How can these both be true? This segment is titled, The Divine Necessity of the Jew, for good reason. While God is completely sovereign, in His sovereignty He has chosen, because He chose to choose, a particular race or group of people through whom to work His will in the affairs of men and angels He has created.

In doing so, God made certain inviolate promises to certain people. And in doing so, God looked to Himself in the fulfillment of making good on all He promised to the recipients of those promises. It is abundantly clear, God need not have done that. He need not have done anything. But He did. And He did because He was pleased to do it, not because He needed to do it.

[52 : 38] Understand that while God can and does use the instrumentality of humans and angels, He need not have done so. God has no needs He does not fully meet within His own being.

God is self-contained and self-sustained. But to say God need not go outside Himself to meet His needs does not mean He cannot go outside Himself from purely personal desire.

That He has done this innumerable times is the testimony of Scripture throughout. A verse relied upon earlier that explains this is not well known, but it does explain, to the extent it can be explained, why there is something rather than nothing.

And it is found in Revelation chapter 4 and reads thusly, beginning with verse 10. The four and twenty elders fell down before Him that sat upon the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy art Thou, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, because Thou didst create all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.

Implications of this are simply stunning. The passage informs us that for no other reason than that it was according to God's good pleasure that He created anything and everything.

[54 : 06] This God, this Creator sovereign God, who inhabits eternity, brought into existence that which He did simply because it pleased Him to do so.

No other reason is given, nor is any needed. And it is fruitless to ask the question, at least on this side of heaven, what was it that made Him pleased to do so? We only know it did.

Cannot suffice. If we are able to allow God to be who He is, without demanding He answer us in our curiosity, it should be quite sufficient. As in creation itself, God also, because of His good pleasure, made the Jew another part of His good pleasure, and it's upcoming, and really something.

The Divine Necessity of the Jew, Part 3 In considering the divine necessity of the Jew, and I don't know how else to put it, because that is precisely what the Jewish people are in the plan and program of God, the divine necessity, one might wonder about myself with a name like Wiseman. Is my emphasis upon the Jew due to myself being Jewish? With a name like Wiseman, it is a Jewish name, is it not? Well, yes, particularly depending on how you spell it.

[55 : 24] My name is spelled W-I-S-E-M-A-N, just like it sounds. Most Jews spell it W-E-I-S or W-E-I-Z. Dr. Kaim Wiseman, I believe his spelling was W-E-I-Z, was the first president of the new state of Israel when it was founded in 1948 under its first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion.

However, I myself am not Jewish, but a garden-variety Gentile like 99.8% of the world's population. In fact, biologically, I'm not even a Wiseman, but in reality, my name is Stevens, and that's about as British as you can get genetically with some Scotch or Irish mingled in.

So, no, I am not at all Jewish, so none need think I am focusing upon the Jewish people for that reason. But the reason I do is simply because this is where the Bible focuses from Genesis to Revelation.

The Bible throughout beats with the Jewish pulse, as it were, and the heart of all the Jewishness is none other than the principal Jew, Jesus of Nazareth.

It was this Jesus, you know, who in speaking to the women at the well in John's Gospel, chapter 4, said, Salvation is of the Jews. And indeed it was, and is.

[56 : 47] As clear as that could be, it is astounding how many Gentiles do not understand that. And it's perhaps even more astounding that there are many Jews who do not understand it as well.

But for you who listen to Christianity clarified regularly, I am sure you will understand it and with considerable insight and appreciation. Now, as regards the Jews, you do understand, do you not, that each of the writers God inspired to record the Bible were all Jews?

It is the Jewish people in general and the Jewish Messiah, Jesus, in particular, that the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are all about.

Miss this, deny this, reject this, and you are hopelessly confined to never understanding the plan and program of God as set forth in the Scriptures and in the Scriptures alone.

The Jewish people and the Jewish Messiah, who, by the way, the Jewish people as a whole do not regard as their Messiah, these are the critical components in all of history and all of prophecy as well.

[58 : 01] Now, how and why this is, and how did they come to be that, that divine necessity of the Jew, it's just ahead, and it is promising to be very enlightening.

Once again, you might want to take notes. The Divine Necessity of the Jew, Part 4 There's an old saying bandied about for years that goes something like this, How odd of God to choose the Jews. Well, odd or not, that is precisely what he did. He said so, for starters, in Deuteronomy chapter 7, with about as clear a language as could be spoken, starting in verse 6 through verse 8.

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen me to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any other people. For ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

[59 : 23] Now, it really doesn't matter what you or I or anyone else thinks of that. God did not ask for opinions from mortals. He chose Abraham and his seed because he chose to choose them, over and out.

He could have done the same with the Babylonians, or the Sumerians, or the Assyrians, but he didn't. He chose Abraham, the Hebrew, and his descendants.

The bald fact of the matter is, if God is going to choose anybody, he cannot choose everybody. He must choose somebody. He did. He chose Abraham, and why did he choose them, the Jews?

Well, like the word says in verse 8, because the Lord loved them. But doesn't the Lord love everyone? Didn't God so love the world? Indeed he does.

That is precisely why he chose the Jews. They were to be the vehicle through which the Messiah would come to be the redeemer of this fallen world and the fallen humans living in it.

[60 : 28] The world came to moral and spiritual chaos through the one man, Adam. And its redemption, its reclamation, will come via the last Adam, referred to as the seed of the woman in Genesis 3.15 and fulfilled in 1 Corinthians 15.22, Well, how so?

Simply through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, whereby he paid for the sins of the entire world. And how was it he came?

He came via the Jewish patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do you not see then how, as Jesus said, salvation is through the Jews?

The benefit is for all. But the Jews themselves, for the most part, do not benefit from the work of Christ on their behalf, remaining to this day in a mode of rejection of their own Messiah.

More light is on the way, upcoming next. The Divine Necessity of the Jew, Part 5 This whole affair of the divine necessity of the Jew has its origin in the 12th chapter of Genesis.

[61 : 56] This passage is surely one of the most monumental in all of Scripture. Also, as we have said, strategic, in addition to being monumental. When God singled out this man, Abraham, who had a history of paganism, to be the progenitor of the Jewish nation, he set in motion a plan that would resonate all throughout humanity.

It will culminate in the great prophetic wrap-up called Armageddon and the end of this present age. Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then the 12 sons, would be the progenitors of the 12 tribes of Israel.

And as early as these surface in the book of Genesis, they will endure through a hostile future in the land of Egypt for 400 years. The biblical account of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, numbering nearly 2 million after the four centuries spent in Egypt, is very well known to all Jews and most Christians.

The story unfolds in the book of Exodus where the unlikely leader named Moses is chosen by God to lead his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Bear in mind that none of those Moses would lead had ever seen the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

That promise God made 400-plus years prior to the Exodus, and all the originals had long since died off while in Egypt. Their descendants that Moses was called to liberate and lead out of Egypt didn't even know the name of the God who originally called their father Abraham four centuries earlier.

[63 : 35] God had then spelled out the entire plan for Abraham's descendants to be in the land of Egypt under bondage until he would arrange for Moses to lead them out.

It was in this massive undertaking and exodus from Egypt that the Hebrew people were actually birthed as a nation. The exodus appears to be the historic coming out of the nation.

Prior to that, they were merely numerous Hebrew slaves laboring under punishing conditions at the mercy of their Egyptian taskmasters. God could not do otherwise than bring the Hebrews out of Egypt into the land he promised their ancestors simply because he had promised to do so.

The exodus of the Jews from Egypt was not optional with God. It was a divine necessity. The Jew was a strategic necessity because the promise of God to the Jew was strategic.

Repeatedly, throughout the Old Testament and into the New, the promises God made to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are reiterated and reconfirmed.

[64 : 42] This very reality remains the divinely essential ingredient through which the prophetic plan and program of God is to be carried out, coming to culmination in the second coming of Israel's Messiah.

Jesus the Christ is critically strategic to it all, as is the surviving remnant of Israel at the time of his coming. The Divine Necessity of the Jew, Part 6 While in this present series of Christianity Clarified, effort has been made to reveal the necessity of the Jewish people and nation to the plan and program of God.

And not all Christians see it that way. There are those who in good faith believe that Israel, the nation, forfeited their special status with God when they rejected His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The result of their rejecting Christ resulted then in the rejection of the nation of Israel by God permanently. These are referred to as supersessionists, believing that the Christian Church has superseded the nation of Israel.

They believe, whereas originally Israel was the chosen people of God, they forfeited that coveted status by their disobedience in rejecting the very one God sent to be their Messiah.

[66 : 03] This is also called replacement theology, the idea that Israel has been replaced with the Christian Church. It also requires that all of the future blessings God originally promised to fulfill for the nation of Israel have been transferred to the Christian Church instead.

Hence, Israel, as a nation, has no prophetic future by way of God's promises any more than any other nation. For centuries, probably as early as the 3rd or 4th century A.D., this has been the majority viewpoint found in the Christian Church, Roman Catholic, and Protestant, and remains so today.

The minority position, held by Christianity Clarified, insists that, Despite Israel's disobedience and rejection of their Messiah, God's rejection of them is but temporary and is explained in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapters 9-11.

You can read those yourself with great profit. In God setting Israel, the nation, aside, He has done so only temporarily until what is called the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

During this time of Gentile domination over Israel, as has been realized from the 1st century to the present, God has birthed an entirely new entity comprised of Jews who did and do today believe in Jesus as Messiah and Savior, plus all non-Jews or Gentiles who do likewise.

[67 : 34] This new entity, called the Christian Church, is referred to in an all-new description as the spiritual body of Christ, of which Christ Himself is the spiritual head.

This body is not comprised of denominations, but of individuals, Jews and Gentiles. And when a Jew receives Jesus as Messiah and Savior, he does not cease to be a Jew.

He does not even become a converted Jew, but he does become a completed Jew. A Jew who remains as Jewish as always, but who now embraces a fellow Jew, Jesus the Messiah as His Lord and Savior.

A striking reality, never even imagined before, is that in Christ, Jew and Gentile are equals and members of the same spiritual body of Christ. Ephesians chapters 2 and 3 explains it and are well worth your reading.

You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. A preview of upcoming volume 46.

[68 : 48] As prominent and strategic as the Jewish people are to the plan and program of God, right up to the ending of this age and the beginning of the new, including the millennial reign of Christ, most of this entire scenario is hidden from the Jew, who ironically is in fact at the very center of it.

The reason for this is spelled out in Romans chapter 11, verse 25, where the apostle Paul, himself a completed Jew in the first century, informs us that blindness, that is, a spiritual blindness, has in part happened to Israel until the times of the Gentiles, has been fulfilled.

So, striking and ironic as it is, the Jew, who is in every way the strategic necessity to God's plan, is for the most part oblivious to it.

In fact, most of modern Jewry today is terribly unaware not only of the New Testament, which they reject, but also largely unaware of the Old Testament, the Jews historically embrace as the very Word of God.

Jews today, however, much like Protestants and Catholics have so little interest in the Bible and its authority, it might as well not exist. Yet there have been encouraging reports of numerous Jewish younger persons coming to faith in Christ, perhaps more during the past two decades than in the previous century.

[70 : 23] And this reality excites many in that it may well portend a wrap-up is nearer than many think. Christ's imminent return may be very soon, sooner than we think.

So, in the upcoming volume 46 of Christianity Clarified, an elaboration of Jewish faulty assumptions will be noted, and they are very significant.

The historic dynamics that have led to severe persecution of the Jewish people will also be explained. And added to that is the unmistakable input and influence due to God's chief adversary, Satan himself.

That the evil one has a hand in so much that takes place in the world's stage is simply undeniable. Yet, he manages to remain in an out-of-sight profile that causes many to deny or discount his very existence.

Yet, he is not so well hidden as he might wish, and this too will be revealed in volume 46 just ahead. So again, thanks to all who continue with us when Christianity Clarified, we are grateful for your presence and sensitivity to these issues that God has revealed as worthy and demanding our attention.

[71 : 47] This is Pastor Marv Wiseman at Grace Bible Church. May the Lord richly bless you. He has me.