

Christianity Clarified Volume 49

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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.

Unmasking the Adversary, Part 1 Satan, whose very name means adversary, was identified in Chapter 3 of Genesis. He succeeded in convincing Eve that she could increase her knowledge and wisdom and even become godlike if she ate of the forbidden fruit.

Adam was not far behind. These original parents of us all thus forfeited the dominion the Creator had given them. In hearkening to the authority of Satan, they unwittingly handed over to him the controls of the entire created order, consisting of the three well-known categories of animal, vegetable, and mineral.

Let there be no mistake about this. Any doubters need only consult 2 Corinthians 4 that clearly identifies Satan as the god of this age.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the encounter of Christ in the temptation of the 40 days he confronted the adversary. Fifty-four times Satan is referred to in the Bible, plus thirty-six times he is referred to as the devil.

[1 : 29] Since Satan arrested the earth and its dominion from our first parents, bringing it to ruination in the fall, God has promised through the seed of the woman to redeem and restore the planet from ruination and control of the adversary.

This has set the conflict of good and evil in full array. All the ingredients of human history, large and small, are but bits and pieces of God's master plan of creation and redemption.

This means all the battles and wars fought, all the births and deaths of human beings, all the empires that have risen and fallen, each contribute to the master plan of God who orders all things after the counsel of his own will.

All that occurs between the time the battle lines were drawn and the final showdown at the second coming will be called human history and the history of God's creation ruined and redeemed.

This is what everything is all about. We today, like all those past and those yet to come, are players in one way or another, to one degree or another, in this great drama of the ages.

[2 : 49] And there is perhaps no greater obstacle or hindrance that we humans face than our ignorance of this very conflict. This is unmistakably revealed in the divinely superb document called the Bible, and it will be found nowhere else.

Understanding and appropriating these truths provide the peace, security, and stability for which the human heart yearns. And we are so thankful that God in His grace has been pleased to reveal it.

More of what He has revealed in His Word is just ahead, including another hindrance which even denies Satan's existence. Unmasking the Adversary, Part 2 Unquestionably, there are many who do not even believe in the existence of Satan as a person.

To these, the devil is little more than a figment of people's imagination, just a myth or a kind of vague concept of evil, but not an actual person. And this is just the way Satan wants to keep it. He much prefers to be an element of mere superstition rather than one of objective personhood. And the reason is simple. He couldn't possibly have a more effective ally than with the belief that he doesn't even exist.

[4 : 13] Seriously, who is going to be on guard against a fictitious foe? Nobody, which is, of course, to his great advantage. What is more, if people do regard the existence of the devil as a real person, that points to something else the devil fears even more than his discovery, and that is the thought.

If there is a real devil, that certainly points to the existence of a real God also. And who knows where that kind of thinking can lead people.

No siree. The devil much, much prefers to remain incommunicado. He is not at all put off by people denying his actual existence.

It provides him with the best of cover, while he, out of sight, works his nefarious schemes on the ignorant masses. So, how did those of us who do believe in the personhood of Satan arrive at this position?

The same way we have arrived at many other positions. It is set forth ever so clearly in the Bible. And as repeated time and again, the issue is authority.

[5 : 26] Always has been, always will be. For those engaged in the book, it spells out in bold letters the existence of his infernal majesty, the devil.

As referenced earlier, Satan, as a person, is mentioned 54 times in the Bible and referred to as the devil 36 times. When our Lord was tempted in the 40 days of exposure to every device Satan threw at him, Christ was not dealing with some non-existent hallucination, but with evil personified in a real individual being.

The temptation was merely the beginning of the struggle between Christ and Satan on the earth. This great cosmic conflict actually began even before Genesis 1 when God created the heavens and the earth.

Prior to humans, God and Lucifer, who in his rebellion against the Creator, earned the name Satan, which literally means adversary.

Other angelic beings, numbered as one-third of those God created, chose to align themselves with Satan. And these have become the demonic forces with whom Christ dealt in the Gospels, and they will surface more openly during the Great Tribulation period yet to come.

[6 : 47] At its close, Satan and all his demonic horde will be dispatched. But for now, you can take it to the bank. Satan is alive and well on planet Earth.

God, the Jew, and the Devil, Part 1 God, the Jew, and the Devil, there you have it, or them. These are the most principal players in the great drama rightly called the Cosmic Conflict of the Ages. Some no doubt will protest, asking, well, what about all the rest of humanity? The rest of us are, of course, very much involved. Yet, we do not possess the top billing as do these three, God, the Jew, and the Devil.

We Gentile humans are lesser members of the cast of characters, yet we shall enjoy the fruits of the labors of the main players as blissful beneficiaries of that which God with the Jew will provide for all humans who throughout the ages have allied themselves with God.

These are commonly referred to as believers, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, that will enjoy the favor and blessing of God throughout eternity. If you are a redeemed believer in Jesus Christ, you will be one of those.

[8 : 12] But to get us there, to bring all that we might call this enormous supporting cast of redeemed humanity to eternal glory, that will be the business of the principles, namely, God, the Jew, and the Devil.

Bear in mind also that in the expression God, one must include God's Son, who in His deity is aligned with God the Father. As well, in the expression the Jew, one must again include Jesus, who in His humanity is Jewish.

Jesus, the Messiah, is as much the Son of Abraham in His humanity as He is the Son of God in His deity. We might say that Jesus is cast in a dual role, one as the Son of God in magisterial deity, and one as the humble Son of Abraham and Messiah of Israel in His humanity.

And pertinent to all this, please keep in mind this cosmic conflict is presently taking place, ever edging closer to that time of the end.

Satan, whose very name means adversary, was active as Lucifer who became a fallen angel prior to Genesis 1 and the entrance of humans into the conflict.

[9 : 34] Jesus describes Lucifer, who is now known as Satan, as a liar who has no truth in him, a murderer who by deception caused Adam and Eve to forfeit their God-given dominion over earth.

Hence, Satan is now called the prince of this world by Christ. And in 2 Corinthians 4, the apostle Paul calls Satan the God of this age.

His ultimate defeat is assured at the second coming of Christ revealed in Revelation 20. Meanwhile, and for the past thousands of years, Satan has strived to maintain his ill-gotten gain of earth and its inhabitants.

And Satan's adversary is the seed of Abraham, the Jewish people in general, and Jesus, the Messiah, in particular. It is all very involved, and you will do well to follow it closely as it unfolds right here on Christianity Clarified.

God, the Jew, and the Devil, Part 2 Throughout the preceding 48 volumes of Christianity Clarified, the ancient Jewish patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have frequently been cited as strategically involved in the overall plan and program of God.

[10 : 56] The essence of the plan has to do with the redemption of this fallen planet and all of humanity upon it. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been and are today referred to as the Jewish people.

In Genesis chapter 12, God made unconditional promises to Abraham that through him and his posterity all nations of the earth would be blessed. The blessings via the seed of Abraham are multifaceted, but they find their greatest fulfillment in none other than the long-awaited Messiah, God's anointed one, his eternal son, who would become flesh and be born of the Virgin Mary. It needs to be understood and emphasized that the merit involved that elevates Abraham and his seed to the strategic position they will fulfill is not due to Abraham's faithfulness or to that of his offspring.

It is due solely to God and his faithfulness. The Jew, therefore, has no room for boasting, but every reason for gratitude. Because God, in his condescension, was desirous of involving human instrumentality in his plan, meant he would need to choose some human to initiate it.

He chose Abraham and bestowed upon him the promise, beginning in Genesis 12 and later confirmed multiple times. And as to precisely why he chose Abraham is not revealed, other than to say God obviously had his reasons.

[12 : 28] In reality, if God was determined to use anyone, he had to choose someone. He chose Abraham. And who in their right mind can fault the Almighty for any choice he makes about anything?

This establishes God and the Jew in our study title. Now we turn to the third party in the trio. It is the devil, Satan the adversary.

And as the adversary, he opposes with great evil energy all that God has revealed as to his plan and purpose. This necessitates that Satan oppose the very vehicle by which God is to accomplish what everything is all about.

That is, the redemption of the fallen earth and humanity. That also necessitates he oppose the Redeemer, the Messiah sent from God and the source through which the Messiah is to come, namely, that of Israel.

Thus enters the Jew. Don't miss this connection. It is key. The fact that the nation of Israel did not accept the one God sent as their Messiah then caused Israel to enter the time of their dispersion throughout the world.

[13 : 46] This, in part, made the Jewish people fragmented internationally and a source of long and bitter persecution. So here, in a real way, is the activity of Satan who will energize many Gentiles to join in the persecution of the Jews.

It still goes on today and more to come is just ahead. God, the Jew, and the Devil, part 3. It is clear that in the successful temptation of Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 3, Satan's aim was directed at the entire human race that would be generated from their own physical bodies.

Perhaps a thousand years of population growth would occur before massive corruption and violence dominated early humanity. This, according to Genesis 6, prompted God to bring a halt to it all through the worldwide destructive flood of Noah's day.

The text refers to a corruption of fallen humanity via their cohabitation with fallen angelic beings.

Now, if this ancient Jewish interpretation is correct, Noah and his family were the only ones to have escaped that corruption that chapter 7 states that they alone were called righteous before the Lord, having escaped the rampant corruption and violence that contaminated the rest of humanity.

With those under judgment and marked for destruction being a mix of fallen angels and humans, we may be certain that the chief of fallen angels, Satan himself, surely had a hand in it all, likely as the chief instigator.

[15 : 30] Admittedly, there is much about this angelic and human cohabitation we do not understand, yet it does appear to have credibility. And is this not the very tactic of the adversary Satan that one might expect, given his nature and opposition to the Creator?

Here, in this singular event, the adversary succeeded in eliminating all of the Creator's humans made in his likeness and image, excepting the eight souls who would survive the flood.

We can only conclude they enjoyed protection from the hand of the Creator, or they also would have perished. Yet, out of those eight souls, one would retain the connection from which the eventual Jewish line and Hebrew nation would emerge, and that would be Shem, his very name being the source of the Shemites, or Semitic people.

Directly from Shem's generations later, as referenced in Genesis 10 and 11, would emerge one of Satan's nightmares. His name was Abraham.

Reference further into Matthew 1 and Luke 3, and you will discover from this man Abraham will come Satan's ultimate and greatest nightmare ever. His name?

[16:50] Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. In his first letter, in chapter 3, the Apostle John gives us the mission upon which Jesus was sent.

from his Father, saying, For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Christ began his task by dismantling the curse and sentence of death imposed upon all humanity via Adam's sin.

Thus we are told, As in Adam all die, so in Christ are all made alive. A glorious truth revealed in Romans 5. And as a result of Christ's death, a new combatant is pressed into divine service, and it is called the Church, the spiritual body of Christ.

It's one more element moving toward what everything is all about. God, the Jew, and the devil, part 4. The cosmic conflict of the ages rages on, and for the most part its reality is lost on the vast majority of humanity.

While most understand there is an ongoing struggle between good and evil, few have any appreciation of its origin, its scope, its combatants, or its outcome.

[18:12] Those who do derive their understanding solely from the Bible because it is revealed nowhere else. Of the principles involved, God, the Jew, and the devil, only God and the devil are really abreast of what it is all about.

And even though the Jew is caught right in the thick of it all, most Jews are utterly clueless about the whole conflict. And as for Gentiles, they do not even have a clue that they don't have a clue. But the conflict is real, very real, and very brutal. High body counts all over earth for literally thousands of years and more to come.

After all, it is a conflict, and there are casualties where there are conflicts. But this, this conflict, is appropriately dubbed the conflict, the cosmic conflict, embracing all of the created order, angelic and human.

Doesn't get any greater than this. Doesn't involve any greater powers than these. Doesn't have any greater consequences than these. We are speaking of ultimates on every count.

[19:27] The ultimate in principles involved, the ultimate in persons involved, the ultimate in purposes involved, the ultimate in objectives involved, and ultimate in consequences.

One should readily see and understand the oft-repeated title, What Everything is All About. The conflict, as mentioned earlier, by divine choice and wisdom, involves both angelic and human beings.

And both were endowed with the capacity to comply or rebel against the will of God, their Creator. History records that both chose to rebel, thus initiating consequences of ongoing conflict throughout angelic history with the result of Lucifer before the heavens and earth were created, and throughout human history with the revolt of Adam and Eve after earth was created.

The Creator responded to the revolt of both angels and humans with a plan to reconcile or redeem our ruined and corrupted earth. This is clearly stated in 2 Corinthians 5 that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

How He chose to do that was through the actual offspring of a human that would not be contaminated with what had caused all the conflict. That's called sin.

[20:44] So, provision was divinely made for a sinless human possessing greater value than all fallen humans He would redeem. He paid their price for redemption in His own person.

Jesus died for the sins of the world. How this Son of God would get here is the reality of Christmas. What He would do is the reality of Calvary.

The degree to which He was successful is the reality of an empty tomb. Where is the Jew in all this? Right in the very thick of it. More just ahead. God, the Jews, and the Devil Part 5 Wow!

What a trio! God, the Jews, and the Devil! Can it be more diverse than that? And why these three? Because these three constitute the principles most directly involved in what everything is all about. When God, for His own good and sufficient reasons, chose Shem, one of the sons of Noah, to be the originator of the Jewish race, He maintained that ancestry in choosing Abraham, a direct descendant of Shem.

[21 : 52] Out of Abraham, Isaac. And out of Isaac, Jacob. And out of Jacob, His twelve sons, one of whom was Judah, the fourthborn. And out of Judah, in direct descent, came David, the giant-killing shepherd lad, who became king of Israel, and established the house of David with a dynasty intact, so that one thousand years later, the direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Judah, and David, would be Jesus of Nazareth, the virgin-conceived son of Mary and adopted son of Joseph.

Four thousand years earlier, in Genesis chapter 3, God promised that the seed, or descendant, of the woman, Eve, would crush the head of the serpent, dealing a death blow to it.

Jesus, the Messiah, is that seed, long promised, and long awaited. He, the Redeemer, was born into a fallen world in conflict and desperate need of redemption.

And when He cried out from the cross, It is finished! He did redeem the world. But the conflict goes on. Why? Because while Christ paid in full the price for our redemption, it has only partially been applied.

Only the human spirit of believers has been redeemed. This is the earnest or down payment for our redemption, but it has not yet been applied to our physical bodies. This is why, although one may be a Christian, he still has to die physically.

[23 : 25] Romans chapter 5 reminds us that even though we enjoy the firstfruits of our redemption, we still await the redemption of our body. When God saved the believer upon trusting in Christ, He made him spiritually alive internally.

But nothing happened to the body externally. The payment Christ made was indeed in full with nothing left to be paid, but it has not yet been fully applied.

This will occur when we receive our glorified body at the resurrection, indicated in 1 Corinthians 15. Now, we Christians still live in a fallen physical body with a redeemed human spirit internally.

And this is the part of our being that was regenerated and made alive to God. Nothing happened to our physical body, but our spirit was made alive to God spiritually.

This new birth that came from the Jewish Messiah introduced a new element into the cosmic conflict called Gentiles.

[24 : 29] Gentiles are new combatants in the ongoing cosmic conflict. But what became of the Jews? One of the three major combatants, remember?

God, the Jews, and the devil. Just ahead. God, the Jews, and the devil, part 6. As a result of the substitutionary death of Christ for sins of the entire world, meaning Jews and Gentiles, a whole new dynamic has been inserted into the mix of this cosmic conflict, and it is called the Church, the spiritual body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ as their sin-bearer.

This came about due to the national rejection of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and the subsequent embracing of Him by Gentiles. The Jews previously occupied center stage in this drama, but they have been temporarily reassigned from center stage to the wings, off stage and behind the curtain. The Church, which according to Ephesians chapter 3 is made up of believing Jews and Gentiles and is named the body of Christ, is now occupying center stage.

Israel is off the stage and has been for about 2,000 years. They unknowingly await their cue from God when they will re-emerge from behind the curtain to once again occupy that center stage position.

[26 : 07] This is disclosed in Romans chapter 11 that says, spiritual blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.

The all Israel consists of the radically reduced number of believing Jews called the remnant during the 70th week of Daniel recorded in chapter 9.

The fullness of the Gentiles refers to the Jew and Gentile component of earth coming to faith and completing the spiritual body of Christ at which time the translation of saints to heaven will occur, according to 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

Unbelieving Jews and Gentiles remaining behind will undergo an unprecedented time of adversity from human and demonic sources.

Their chief source of persecution and tribulation will come from the Antichrist, energized by Satan himself. This is spoken of by Christ in Matthew chapter 24, describing a time never before seen in the world.

[27 : 16] Huge numbers in the billions, not millions, but billions, will die from starvation, disease, execution, and other means. A full two-thirds of the Jewish population of the world will die at the hands of the Antichrist, making the Holocaust of World War II that murdered six million seem small by comparison.

But this is all to do with the culmination of the cosmic conflict at the end time. Building up to that has been the brutal persecution of Jews from early centuries after Christ and continuing to the present in multiple parts of the earth.

Few, including even the Jews on the receiving end of persecution, have any idea who is principally behind it all. Ignorant, arrogant Gentiles are involved to be sure, but the supernatural element of the God of this world, Satan, is the most principal enemy of all.

And eye-opening contact lies just ahead. God, Jews, and the Devil, Part 7 In revealing the coming intense persecution of the Jews inflicted upon them by the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation, one ought not lose sight that persecution has been the lot of the Jewish people, beginning with the Egyptians to whom they were in bondage.

And although their adversity always appeared to come from other humans, the Bible makes it clear there was and is an evil mastermind behind it all.

[28 : 50] And, you guessed it, none other than Satan, the master adversary of all. And why the Jew? What makes the Jew such a target among all the people of the world?

The answer is found nowhere else but in the Scriptures. And the more Jews are persecuted, the more the Bible is vindicated in what it records about it all. The Jewish people have that proverbial bullseye target on their back for one basic reason.

They represent the chosen of God to whom God gave special information, provisions, and blessings, beginning with the miraculous exodus from Egypt under Moses.

Romans 9 succinctly states it, The Israelites are those to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the fathers, and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God.

Amen. Of no other people or nation can this be said. Amos chapter 3 tells us God is rebuking His chosen people by declaring to them, You only have I known of all the families of the earth.

[30 : 09] Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Principle there to which God refers is that of Luke 12, stating, To whom much is given, of him shall much be required.

No people on earth were ever given the promises and blessings God had given to Israel, beginning as a fledgling nation out of Egypt. And as related in the Romans 9 passage, Israel had information and provision utterly unknown by all other nations.

They, therefore, would be held to a stricter accountability than the pagan Gentiles. All of Israel's prophets God sent to them issued dire warnings of judgment to come if Israel did not repent and mend her ways.

Particularly irksome to Jehovah was Israel's worship of the heathen deities of their neighbors. God likened Israel as His wife to whom He had wedded Himself like a husband to provide for and protect and cherish.

And Israel's response was, like an adulterous wife, generation after generation. Scathing indictments were delivered by several of Israel's prophets, some of whom paid with their life for delivering unwanted messages.

[31 : 30] The Assyrians led the northern ten tribes into captivity. The Babylonians led the southern tribes into captivity and enslaved them for essentially the same reasons, gross unfaithfulness to their God, and God used their enemies to chasten them.

And the final straw was in 70 AD when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Jews were scattered and remained scattered throughout the world. But don't overlook that chief protagonist.

God, Jews, and the Devil, Part 8 As revealed in previous sessions of Christianity Clarified, we fallen humans do not need any help from Satan when it comes to being and doing evil.

We can manage that on our own quite apart from any input from the devil. Nevertheless, he remains the supreme personification of evil in the universe, and his hatred of the Creator has largely been responsible for the cosmic conflict we have been describing.

Although it has been ongoing from Genesis 3 to the present, much of this conflict has been under the surface, behind the scenes, out of plain sight so as to prevent Satan, the commander of the anti-God conflict, from being revealed.

[32 : 46] Satan's greatest ally is human ignorance and indifference, and we have so very much of that among us, some of whom even deny the existence of the devil as an actual person.

Because Satan cannot inflict anything upon the Creator himself, he is limited to going after those upon whom the Creator has showered his affection, and these would be the Jew and the Christian. And although these two are separated from each other, with one being a believer in Christ while the other, the Jew, is not, yet both are clearly the objects of God's love.

Such surely marks them as prime targets for Satan. Both have been and continue to be brutally persecuted in numerous regions throughout the world.

While Christians suffered persecution in the early centuries after Christ via the pagan Roman emperors, that all ceased with the edict of Emperor Constantine in 325 AD because it was then that Christianity was officially adopted as the state religion.

[33 : 55] As of then, it became hazardous to your health not to be a Christian. At the same time, it had become more perilous for Jews to remain Jews.

And it would not be long until Jews would be undergoing persecution via ostracism, confiscation of property, and sometimes loss of life simply for not abandoning Judaism in favor of Christianity.

Understandably, it was the attempt to force Jews to become baptized as Christians that made the person and cause of Christ even more odious and negative to the Jews.

Many came to hate the very name of Jesus because of the threats and demands of those who professed Christ as their Savior. The ignorance and arrogance of professing Christians who were trying to impose that brand of Christianity upon Jews or anyone else was simply appalling.

And it still is. So, what should be the attitude and demeanor of those who are Christians toward the Jewish people today? Have we no responsibility to the Jew?

[35 : 08] If not, are they somehow exempt from needing salvation? But if not, how are we as Christians to approach the Jewish people about a gospel that was created by one of their own?

And that's up next. Conflict between Jews and Christians Ignorance on the part of early Christians led to all kinds of abuses, including their attitude and treatment toward Jewish people.

And as much as we deplore their attitude, honesty compels us to admit that had we Christians today been where they were, when they were, we would likely have suffered from the same faulty assumptions as they.

It is not that Christians today are so much better than the Christians of the early centuries, not at all. The difference separating us from them is due simply to our having more revelation of truth from God's Word than what they had.

After all, the completed and accepted canon of Scripture was not even recognized until centuries, perhaps three or four centuries, after the death of Christ.

[36 : 17] It is this full complement of the Bible, which early Christians did not have, that makes so much difference between their understanding and ours of today.

One of the greatest misunderstandings of early believers had to do with the Christian attitude toward the Jews of their day. And for many Christians, it was an attitude of hatred and rejection of the Jewish people.

After all, they were the killers and rejecters of Jesus, weren't they? Didn't they make themselves pariahs among the rest of the world, particularly among those who had come to believe in Christ?

This being the case, what then do you think would have been the response of the Jewish people receiving that kind of treatment? Well, quite naturally, it would have been and was and is a mutual attitude of rejection toward Christians.

Jews had come to understandably even hate the name of Jesus because of the attitude and demands of those who believed in Jesus. Some professing Christians and their leaders actually went so far as to try and force Jews into Christianity by demanding they be publicly baptized into the Christian faith.

[37 : 35] And there were often severe consequences for those Jews who refused that, sometimes, even leading to their death. Nothing could have been less Christ-like than the way Jews were treated by many who called themselves Christians.

The rift and resentment of Jews toward Jesus and Christians only grew wider. So, what should have been the attitude of the early Christians toward the Jews who lived around them? How should they have tried to evangelize the Jew? And the answer is the same way they tried to evangelize everyone else, with genuine compassion and sympathy for anyone outside of Christ. The Jew needed salvation and forgiveness from God just like everyone else. Why they did not approach the Jewish people in that way was due to their having made faulty assumptions about the Jew and the extent of Christ's death for everyone, certainly including the Jews.

We'll pursue this with an important reminder upcoming. God, the Jews, and the Devil, Part 10.

[38 : 52] It has been stated that the treatment of professing Christians toward the Jewish people in the early centuries after Christ's death was nothing short of abominable.

They persecuted, maligned, and even tortured and put some Jews to death, all based upon those ever so present faulty assumptions. The faulty assumptions in particular that early Christians made was that it was exclusively the Jewish people who were responsible for the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

Therefore, they should be punished for having done so. Give the Jews an opportunity to redeem themselves by being baptized in the Christian church or if refusing to do so, then make their life as miserable as possible to pay for their crime.

And some even believed it was their Christian responsibility to punish the Jews and that God was surely pleased for their having done so. Another faulty assumption, one after another.

And do you see how easily one faulty assumption begets another and the next thing you know you are drowning in faulty assumptions. As pointed out earlier, the real danger of faulty assumptions is that people act on them, often with disastrous results, as is this very case between early Christians and the Jews.

[40 : 14] But still, weren't the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus? Well, of course they were. But, the faulty assumption lay in the idea that it was the Jew alone who was responsible.

And that was far, far off the mark. Why? Because also culpable, also very much responsible along with the Jews, was Pontius Pilate, the Roman Gentile, as well as the four Roman soldiers who comprised the execution squad.

Add to them none other than God the Father of Jesus, because it was he who gave his Son for the sins of the world. It was he who delivered up his own Son for our offenses, he who so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

And add to that the Son himself who was willing to be given as the sin payment for all humanity. He it was who said of himself, No man takes my life from me.

I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. Add to Jesus himself the Holy Spirit, of whom it was said that Christ was offered up to God through the Eternal Spirit.

[41 : 28] All members of the triune God were involved in the predetermined death of Jesus on that cross. But we cannot stop there. We cannot leave out you.

Yes, that's right, you and me. We were responsible for the death of Christ being necessary and accomplished because it was your sin and mine, along with all the rest of the world, our individual and corporate sin of humanity that placed Christ on that cross.

And all the aforementioned parties contributed to the death of Christ. So to us today, it is ever so clear that all were involved because we have the full revelation of Scripture those early Christians did not have.

Contributors to Jesus' death. Having identified eight different parties who were complicit in the death of Jesus on Mount Calvary, they consisted of one, Judas, who betrayed Jesus to the Jewish authorities, two, Caiaphas and Annas, the Jewish high priest, three, Pontius Pilate, who gave the official order of execution, and four, the Roman soldiers who physically placed Jesus on the cross, five, God the Father of Jesus, who gave His only Son to be the sacrifice for the sins of humanity, the Son, Jesus Himself, number six, who offered Himself without spot to God, having willingly gone to that cross, plus seven, the eternal Spirit of God through whom Jesus was offered, and last of all, but not least, eight, you and I were guilty, complicit in the need for Jesus being on that cross.

There it is, all rather plainly laid out in Scripture. Judas, the chief priest, Pilate, the soldiers, Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19, God His Father in Matthew 26 and John 3, Jesus Himself as the willing sacrifice in John 10, the Holy Spirit through whom Jesus was offered in Hebrews 9, and again, Jesus was said to have paid the sin debt for you and me and all the rest of the world, as in John 3, 1 Corinthians 15, Acts 13, Romans 5, and Ephesians 2, on and on in numerous references, too many to mention.

[43 : 49] Now, we today, because of the frequent declaration of Scripture we've just shared, know full well why Jesus was on that cross and who all was responsible for His being there.

But do you think those who saw Him on that cross understood exactly why He was there? Most assuredly, they did not. And this included the twelve apostles of Christ and even Jesus' own mother.

Mary, no doubt, overcome with grief at seeing her son on that cross, had no idea what was really taking place. She did not know her son was actually being made sin in paying the price for the entirety of humanity, and that He was undergoing a kind of horrible separation from His Father while on that cross.

And we are certain they had no idea at all He would be raised from the dead three days later. But now, years later, after all these things are spelled out in Scripture, all one need do is read it, and one can grasp all these matters which were not understood by them, even though they were the actual witnesses of the event.

During the interim, between the death of Jesus and the recording of the details and explanation of who all was really responsible for His death, who was it that was charged almost exclusively for the death of Jesus?

[45 : 13] The Jews, the Jews, the Jews. But weren't the Jews guilty? Well, of course they were, but no more so than all the rest of the world, including all of the principal individuals mentioned, and don't forget you and me.

More fallout from this lies ahead. It is stunning stuff. Stunning. Confusion breeds faulty assumptions.

It is hoped you can follow the material presented now because of its importance and potential for misunderstanding. It's also an effort to avoid, if possible, making our own faulty assumptions, which is really easy to do.

Now, Satan, the adversary, needs to get back in the picture, partly because he never really left it. His initial appearance in the New Testament was with the temptation accounts at the onset of Jesus' public ministry just before John the Baptist introduced Jesus to Israel as their Messiah. That's in John chapter 1. In John 13, we are told that Satan entered into Judas, obviously leading him to meet with the high priest and conclude that agreement to hand over Jesus for those 30 pieces of silver.

[46 : 32] And there can surely be no doubt as to Satan's presence and activity prior to the crucifixion. And it appears certain Satan did not know at all how the cross and Christ's death upon it would backfire on him.

In fact, he may well have thought the crucifixion of Jesus would simply be the end of Jesus as a threat. And absolutely no one, including the disciples, anticipated Christ rising from the dead. Hence, most likely that Satan didn't either. Three days later, Satan would encounter his worst nightmare when Christ came back from the dead. But, he will actually have a nightmare even worse than that at the second coming of Christ.

Because it is then Satan will undergo incarceration in the bottomless pit according to Revelation chapter 20. The point needing to be made here is to realize all the confusion that was obviously rampant concerning the death of Christ and exactly who was responsible for it.

As mentioned earlier, we today, with a complete record available to us in the Bible, can rather easily connect the dots and gain a full and accurate picture. But that certainly was not true of those in that first two or three centuries after Christ left and descended back to heaven.

[47 : 52] Confusion was rampant, as connecting bits and pieces of it all were not available. The partial pieces of evidence quite naturally resulted in confusion and wrong conclusions being reached surrounding the death of Christ and what all or who all was behind it.

Wrong conclusions go hand in hand with faulty assumptions being made. And, when faulty assumptions are made, they soon take on a life of their own and are adopted as solid fact.

Then, upon that supposed solid fact, doctrinal positions are taken and soon find their way into statements of faith recorded by the faithful followers of different religious bodies.

This very dynamic was what resulted in the numerous denominations and their individual distinctives that exist to this very day. Doctrinal positions, adopted by various groups, whether they were true or not, became so etched in stone that they are regarded as sacred as Scripture itself.

Thus, the divisiveness between Christian denominations continues to this day. Faulty Assumptions Breed Persecution, Part 1 The first three chapters of the book of Acts focus on the resurrection of Christ and the proclamation of that miracle, particularly by the twelve apostles.

[49 : 19] Because of the number of Jews accepting their message and being added to their number, the Jewish establishment of high priests and Sadducees viewed the apostles as a threat to their influence and authority.

In chapter 4, they issued a solemn threat to the apostles demanding they stop speaking about Jesus and the resurrection. Peter in the twelve said they could not and would not stop speaking about what they all knew to be true.

The apostles, making good on their word to continue speaking about Christ, were then summoned again by the same authorities. There would be physical beatings administered this time.

Thus, the earliest persecution of believing Jews came from none other than their own fellow Jews. It is somewhat ironic that the Jewish people, who for centuries would suffer persecution throughout the world, would first of all be persecuted by other Jews.

In fact, for the first eight or ten years after the death and resurrection of Christ, it was the Jewish people alone who were involved in the controversy that surrounded the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

[50 : 32] There were Jews who were the persecuted and Jews who were doing the persecuting, but Gentiles were not involved in either. In Acts chapter 7, the public stoning of Stephen was carried out by the same body of Jewish officials that earlier threatened and beat the apostles for their preaching.

At that public execution, a young Jew by the name of Saul witnessed the entire event, giving his voice and approval to what was taking place.

Saul, like the Jewish leaders who were executing Stephen, were convinced that Stephen and other Jews who were proclaiming Christ's resurrection were nothing more than a cancer that was growing on Judaism.

And as such, it needed to be cut out of the Jewish community and such would surely enjoy the approval of God for doing so. In fact, one is reminded of the statement made by Jesus to his disciples in the upper room the very night before his arrest and subsequent trial and execution. It was then Jesus told them in John 16 that the time is coming that whoever kills you will think he is doing God a service. This was precisely fulfilled in Acts chapter 5 and onward as Jews who believed in Jesus were persecuted, imprisoned, and executed by other Jews who did not believe Jesus to have been the Messiah of Israel.

[52 : 06] Among all the Jews who would earn the reputation of being the most aggressive in this pursuit and persecution of other Jews would be none other than Saul of Tarsus. His mere name no doubt struck fear in the heart and mind of believing Jews everywhere.

Could Saul of Tarsus be called the chief of the Jewish Gestapo? He would have worn that title well as Saul of Tarsus. Faulty Assumptions Breed Persecution Part 2 It has been observed in past segments of Christianity Clarified that the real regrettable danger of people making faulty assumptions is that they often act on them, sometimes with disastrous results.

And such was the case with Saul of Tarsus. His wrong assumptions were multiple. First, he assumed the claims made about Jesus of Nazareth being the long-promised, long-awaited Messiah of Israel simply were not true.

But they were. Second, he assumed the claims about his rising from the dead were also not true.

But they were. Third, Saul assumed the Jewish leadership that condemned Jesus and Stephen certainly knew what they were doing and were acting responsibly in doing so.

But they weren't. Fourth, Saul assumed it was a praiseworthy thing to obtain official letters from the Jewish establishment to pursue Jews who had fled from Israel by leaving the country.

[53 : 36] They had gone to Damascus in the foreign land of Syria. Saul assumed it would be the honorable thing to volunteer for the job of pursuing them and bringing them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

But it wasn't. It was a perfect example of how acting on one's faulty assumptions works. But again, Saul's assumptions, which he no doubt held in good faith, were completely wrong.

Later, writing as Paul the Apostle rather than Saul of Tarsus, he lamented to Timothy in chapter 1 of his first letter that he had persecuted the church out of ignorance and unbelief.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus while operating under faulty assumptions remains the most dramatic of all historic encounters with the ascended Christ. Here, a powerful positive surfaced despite Saul's ignorance, unbelief, and faulty assumptions that produced all his wrongful attitudes and actions.

And for the remainder of his life, Paul the Apostle will have numerous occasions to publicly explain how his faulty assumptions about Christ led him to do things completely contrary to God's will, all the while convinced he was right.

[54 : 55] This may well be the crowning example of how people may do very serious wrongs and all the while convinced they are absolutely right to do so. As mentioned earlier, sincerity and acting in good faith is no guarantee the actions are right or good.

They may well not be as in the life of Saul of Tarsus. And does this not give us pause to stop and ask ourselves some serious questions? Are we counting on our being sincere and acting in good faith to justify whatever it is we believe about these great issues?

Or, do we have the sure word of God to validate our beliefs and attitudes and actions as regards spiritual matters? These are issues about which one cannot afford to be wrong.

Great confidence and comfort are realized but only when we have the clear affirmation of God's word that our beliefs and actions are in compliance with the scriptures and not based on all too often faulty assumptions.

from persecutor to persecuted It was a quantum leap to be sure how utterly radical it was for the chief persecutor of Jews to become the chief one persecuted by the Jews and such was precisely the experience of Saul of Tarsus who was to become Paul the Apostle.

[56 : 24] The earlier venomous hatred that contaminated Saul of Tarsus' soul in opposition to Jesus of Nazareth was gone replaced with an unfathomable love toward his new master and savior.

In fact this new love even extended to his own Jewish countrymen who had seen him as a traitor to Judaism. Paul could well identify and sympathize with his Jewish countrymen in their blindness and unbelief because that was precisely where he was before that Damascus Road encounter with the risen ascended and glorified Christ.

And now he who had been honored as the chief persecutor of those who believed in Jesus had become in effect the chief recipient of persecution from the same Jews that earlier applauded him for his aggressiveness toward the followers of Jesus.

The Jew of that first century will need to become very accustomed to the concept of persecution because in very short order it will become standard operating procedure toward all things Jewish. And why so? Why did it or does it today have to be this way? It has already been revealed numerous times faulty assumptions so many made them so many times and then they acted upon them and voila the fires of persecution are kindled and through the centuries they were and are stoked and restoked.

[57 : 55] Each time Jews are vilified, slandered, dispossessed of property and at times brutally put to death and for what? For being Jews.

That was quite enough. More than enough. Gentiles have been involved in persecuting the Jewish people through the past nearly 2,000 years and particularly those identified with the Christian faith. The early church that called itself Roman Catholic charged the Jews with the murder of Christ sometimes labeled deicide meaning the murder of God God himself because Christians saw Jesus as deity by being the Son of God.

Never mind the fact that the Jews who were living at the time of Christ had all died off it was the Jews at the present time who were their descendants and they too should pay the price for Christ's death.

This attitude and the consequences flowing from it on the part of those calling themselves Christians would vacillate between periods of inquisition and red-hot persecution to a cooling off and decrease in persecution only to be reheated and flare up again and again and soon the Jew would be referred to as the wandering Jew.

[59 : 10] Persecution had driven them from one country that would not tolerate them to another country that would often for a limited time until things anti-Semitic would heat up again and once

more the Jew would be on the road to God only knows where.

This became the pattern for all things Jewish and in some areas it still is. Persecution Became the Norm Part 1 Identified in our previous segment was the anti-Jewish faction that arose from organized religion the largest and most influential being the Roman Catholic Church.

They believed themselves to be God's new chosen people selected to replace the original ones God chose as the Jews. This was a gross faulty assumption on the part of the Catholic Church but it did take hold and continues to this day.

Many leaders of the early church actually believed part of their obligation to God was to punish and disenfranchise the Jews in any way they could. Such would be the ongoing suffering they should endure for their being held responsible for the death of Christ.

Earlier segments of Christianity Clarified revealed the eight different categories of those who contributed to the death of Christ besides the Jews who were involved but in addition to Jewish persecution coming from professing Christians it also came from the non-religious public at large.

[60 : 38] Even though many in the mass of humanity were not connected officially with the church nevertheless they picked up on the negative attitudes of the church toward the Jewish people. The masses tended toward great gullibility much as they do today.

Many took every opportunity to plunder and persecute Jewish people however and whenever they could and feeling quite justified in doing so. After all weren't the Jews the Christ killers?

Never mind the fact that many of the Gentiles were not really in the Catholic Church they still were heavily influenced by it. And Jews were blamed for the bubonic plague accused of poisoning the public wells slandered and accused of any crime committed that needed perpetrators that made the Jew prime among the usual suspects.

The fantasy that perhaps exceeded all of the charges ever leveled against the Jews was the infamous blood libel. It was claimed that the Jews murdered and used the blood of a Christian child to make their special bread used in the annual Jewish Passover service.

No evidence of such a crime was ever produced or even needed. All that was necessary was the accusation. It again establishes the devastating reality that a matter need not be true.

[62 : 02] It only needs to be assumed and believed to be true. And that is then all too often what is acted upon. The Jew has been on the receiving end of this kind of unjust and irresponsible treatment by Gentile masses over the past nearly 2,000 years.

And even today when people should know better Gentile ignorance and arrogance continue to show up in different parts of the globe again perpetrated by a so-called enlightened generation that proves it is every bit as gullible as the ancients they make fun of.

And the beat goes on. And those getting the beating continues to be that wandering Jew. But whatever happened to the devil?

Well, he's up next. The Unseen Powerful Enemy Part 1 Reference was made on an earlier segment of Christianity Clarified that the vigorous defense given here on behalf of the Jewish people is likely coming from another Jew, right?

Well, isn't the name Wiseman Jewish? Well, yes, it is, depending on how you spell it. But no, your speaker here on Christianity Clarified is not Jewish, not even close.

[63 : 30] My biological father was named Stevens, not Wiseman, as was my adoptive father. And he was not Jewish either. Stevens is about as English as you can get, with a tad of Irish, French, and Scots thrown in to my varied ancestry.

So, while I am not even part Jewish, I am a student of the Bible and of history, and anyone who is cannot be anti-Semitic unless he has bought into the faulty assumptions.

And then, anything is possible to be believed and acted upon. So, warming now to our subject of the devil, it is only to be said that he is here and he never left.

His game plan has always included operating under the radar. He cannot afford to be exposed. And Satan is so slick in his operations that most of those who are his principal targets don't even know it.

But many Jews today not only reject the idea of a personal devil, they even reject the idea of a personal God. And this, of course, makes them a target like no one else while they are all the while living in spiritual oblivion.

[64 : 42] That's most of the modern Jews. And Satan knows the Jew is critical, strategic to the plan and program of God being realized. So he has used his demonic minions and gullible, ignorant

humans inspired by him to do his bidding while he himself remains undercover and out of sight.

The Apostle Paul cautioned the Ephesians in chapter 6 that they may be able to stand against the wiles or the methods of the devil.

And he tells the Corinthians in chapter 2 of his second letter, we are not ignorant of Satan's devices, that is, Satan's purposes and schemes.

And he is about just one thing. It is defeating the objective, the plan and program of God, which is what everything is all about.

And that is the restoration, reclaiming, redeeming of planet Earth from its state of fallenness via the first atom. How? By the last atom, who bought and paid for the planet and its inhabitants while he hung on that cross of Calvary.

[65 : 56] That last atom was and is Jesus, a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jesus said, Salvation is of the Jew in John chapter 4. An irony of ironies, it is the Jew that doesn't understand or believe this.

But, many of us Christians do, and we're not even Jews. The Unseen Powerful Enemy, Part 2 Satan the adversary is both.

He is unseen, and he is powerful. So far as we know, the last time he appeared as visible to anyone was when he tempted our Lord during that 40-day ordeal in the Judean wilderness.

It is essential that he not blow his cover, for were he to do so, there would be much less chance for his success. And what is it about which Satan hopes to be successful?

[66 : 58] It is to maintain the mastery of this present world over which he tricked Adam and Eve into surrendering. Paul the Apostle called him the God of this age in 2 Corinthians 4.

Isaiah chapter 14 records the infamous I wills of Lucifer, who in his disobedience to God and subsequent fall became known as the adversary Satan.

But in order for him to accomplish his agenda, Lucifer, also known as Satan, will have to depose the Creator. And the Creator has no fear about being deposed by one of his creatures.

And although only a creature, Satan's ego and pride are insufferable, far exceeding even that of us humans. God's ultimate plan for planet Earth is to restore, redeem, and completely reconcile the world from its fallenness and ruin back to himself.

Jesus, the Messiah, the last Adam, will return in his second coming in Revelation chapter 19 and Matthew's gospel chapter 24 to establish that very reality.

[68 : 10] It is what everything is all about. And it is referred to as the kingdom of heaven being established on earth wherein righteousness will prevail.

This is the kingdom John the Baptist announced as being very near when he introduced Jesus to Israel as their long-awaited Messiah. Satan and evil will be out of commission as Christ will rule the earth with a rod of iron.

He is described in 1 Corinthians 15 as the last Adam and he will succeed where the first Adam failed. All of this redemption was to be accomplished by the Redeemer Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Messiah, and by virtue of the promises that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Unconditional promises as yet unfulfilled. But that kingdom which was prophesied did not become a reality because of the obstinance of Israel and their official rejection of their king.

But this still remains God's plan and Satan knows it and he also knows it is the Jew through whom he will accomplish this. And this is why the Jewish people have that proverbial bullseye on their back even if they don't know it or believe it because they are strategic and essential to the plan of God.

[69 : 40] For the most part Jews as well as Gentiles are completely clueless about all this. But for the Bible we would be also. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman.

A preview of upcoming volume 50.

The subject matter at hand is so very broad expansive and important that we have no illusions of doing it justice not even close.

Yet it is our goal to at least shed some light of understanding upon hearers who may not have known these things being presented. As referenced several times the content under consideration past and future on Christianity Clarified is found exclusively in the Bible.

Upcoming because as said earlier additional consideration will be given to the seed of Abraham Isaac and Jacob simply because they the Jews are so strategic and critical to the plan God has

devised for the restoration and future of planet Earth.

[71 : 01] And in the same way Hitler tried to eliminate the Jew from Europe Satan will do likewise intending to eliminate the Jew entirely from the Earth. He will succeed in doing so by the persecution and murder of two-thirds of the Jews living throughout the Earth during this coming end time.

Hitler eliminated one-third or roughly six million Jews from Europe alone in the 1930s and 40s with the brutality of the Holocaust.

And in the next volume 50 of Christianity Clarified a review of the reasons why Jews do not now see and understand this even though they are the principles of it will be revealed.

There are some commonalities here that Jews will have with Gentiles in the Great Tribulation of that which Jesus mentioned in Matthew chapter 24 but there are also matters completely peculiar to the Jewish people.

Be reminded please this all began with the commitment made by God in Genesis 3 15 as regards the seed of the woman which was of course our mother Eve that that seed would eventually come through Noah his son Shem and then directly descend upon Abraham Isaac and Jacob continuing through several generations and arriving at David the king then culminating 1000 years later in David's greater son Yeshua Mashiach Jesus the son of God in his deity and the son of Mary in his humanity Satan the adversary is apparently privy to all this as he goes about his nefarious business of confusing blinding and deceiving

[73 : 10] John tells us in the first epistle of John chapter 5 that the whole world lies in wickedness and the word lieth conveys the idea that the world is stretched out and comfortable lying in the lap of evil this of course is precisely why Christians are not to be in step with the world and while we are in the world we are not to be of the world and the difference is between day and night Satan in his minions know how to entice the worldlings and he is so good at it they never even know they were deceived until it's too late in addition to the skewed or warped intellect with which we are all saddled due to our parents the Jew appears to have an additional barrier the apostle

Paul informs us in Romans chapter 11 that a spiritual blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has been achieved so the natural human deficiency of our intellect that belongs to all of humanity from the fall plus that of Israel's special blindness of Romans chapter 11 plus the blindness of the mind imposed by Satan in 2nd Corinthians 4 these all contribute to the Jews misunderstanding and failure to see Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah the Jews like so many Gentiles have their faulty assumptions that lead them astray more details about all this will unfold in our upcoming volume 50 of Christianity Clarified once again this is Pastor Marv Wiseman from Grace Bible Church here in

Springfield Ohio saying thank you so very much for being such an important part of our ongoing study may God richly bless you