

Christianity Clarified Volume 51

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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.

Considering the unthinkable, part one. And what might that be? Just what is that unthinkable thing we are asked to consider?

It is the possibility that we might actually be wrong about what we believe. What we believe about what? Well, about God, Christ, salvation, heaven, hell, life after death, eternal life, forgiveness, all those things.

Whatever your present position about these issues, are you willing to consider even the possibility you might be wrong? And should you regard that as impossible, well, does that mean you've never been wrong about anything before?

And what about me, your host on Christianity Clarified? Must I consider the possibility I might be wrong about the conclusions I reach and teach? Ha ha. All the time.

[1 : 15] All the time. We humans are all so very prone to making faulty assumptions about things, then drawing wrong conclusions about them, then acting upon those wrong conclusions, and even teaching them.

So we must constantly be on the outlook for error, and eager to find the truth with which to replace it. It's an unending process, and it is linked to our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.

The only antidote for correcting and making faulty assumptions that lead to wrong conclusions is the truth God has provided for us in His Word, and even then, it is subject to interpretation.

Despite the fact the Word of God is inerrant and infallible, we who interpret it are not. This reality is what necessitated the extensive series on the subject of hermeneutics, the art and science of interpreting the Bible that began on volume 26.

Now, in our considering even the possibility of being wrong, the first issue is addressed to any of the Jewish family who might be listening. Are you willing to even weigh the possibility you may be wrong about Jesus of Nazareth being the long-awaited promised Messiah of Israel?

[2 : 33] Could He be the one referred to in your own scriptures, the Tanakh? And if you are willing to consider that possibility and objectively weigh the evidence, you can congratulate yourself for your open-mindedness, which is truly an unusual virtue in today's world.

So, are you up to that? And, if it is truth we are really pursuing, you will be able to subject the evidence to your own scrutiny and examination.

You may just find yourself stepping into more light than you ever imagined possible. But, honestly now, why would any Jew, or Gentile, be unwilling to do that?

But many are unwilling, and why this is true, sad to say, is coming up next. It will be enlightening. Considering the Unthinkable, Part 2 The previous session concluded with a question, And the question was, Why would any Jew, or Gentile, even consider the possibility they might be wrong about Jesus of Nazareth being Israel's Messiah?

And three reasons immediately come to mind. Number one, many Jews refuse to even consider that possibility of being wrong about Jesus because they are so deeply entrenched in an anti-Jesus mood.

[4 : 13] They may be so biased against Jesus of Nazareth that their bias equals the anti-Semitic bias of some Gentiles toward Jews. Hmm. Extreme bias works both ways, doesn't it?

Secondly, an emotional factor can prevent one from even considering that possibility because family ties and loyalty to one's religious traditions are powerful and can prevent a serious-minded Jew or Gentile from even so much as thinking his position could be wrong.

The isolation and censure that could result from examining the Christian claims about Jesus of Nazareth could dissuade the average Jew so much he would refuse to even go there. And thirdly, Jews worldwide and for centuries have undergone horrendous, brutal, inhumane treatment. And much of this persecution has come from those who profess to be followers of Jesus. For any Jew to be persuaded about Jesus and to come over and join the ranks of their former prosecutors and persecutors is in their minds totally absurd.

[5 : 26] Now, for you listening to this who are Christians, can you blame the Jewish people for not giving the claims of Christianity any validity?

It is true that many, if not most, who persecuted Jews were not true Christians, but were merely labeled Christian. Yet, no doubt some were genuine Christians, but woefully ignorant. They persecuted Jews under the Christian name of the Roman Catholic Church, which was and is closely identified with what was called and is called Christianity.

And as far as Jews are concerned, the name Christian became inseparable from those who inflict great pain, sometimes even death, upon Jewish people just for their being Jews and refusing to convert to Christianity.

So whether truly Christian or not, their evil deeds were done in the name of Christ. Christ, understandably, having nothing to do with it.

[6 : 33] But so far as a Jew was concerned, they were all Christian and were all guilty of unspeakable cruelty toward the Jewish people. And now, the Jew is being asked to consider submitting to this Christ proclaimed by Christians and joining their ranks to be one of them?

Jews tend to think that is insane, away with even the thought, and who can blame them? If I were a Jew, I would likely feel the same way.

Don't even talk to me about the name of Jesus in light of all the cruelty his professed followers have heaped upon the Jews. Now, you pick up on this, especially you Christians.

This is important. Considering the Unthinkable, Part 3 In Considering the Unthinkable, any Jews who may be in our listening audience are asked to reconsider their opinion and estimation about Christianity.

Could it be, is it even possible, the historic anti-Jesus position taken by Jews could be wrong? And what led those Jews of the past and present to reject the claims Christians set forth regarding Jesus?

[7 : 48] Perhaps more than anything else, it was due to the brutal treatment of professing Christians toward the Jewish people. Undeniable cruelty has been too well documented regarding persecution heaped upon Jews by those claiming to be Christ's followers.

So how could that be justified? It can't. But what was the cause of it? What prompted professing Christians to brutalize the Jews simply for being Jews?

More than any other motivation, it was fueled by their embarrassing ignorance, which to today's Christians is painfully regrettable and embarrassing.

In blaming the Jews alone for the crucifixion of Christ, many Christians saw themselves as the self-appointed vessels of vengeance upon the Jewish people. Could their ignorance actually extend to viewing themselves as God's agents sent to punish the Jews?

Indeed it did. Never mind that the Scriptures insisted upon vengeance being the sole prerogative of God, they no doubt believed God was exercising that prerogative by using Christians to punish the Jews.

[9 : 04] Their ignorance was combined with an arrogance that allowed Christians to see themselves as morally, spiritually superior to Jews who alone were consistently charged with the death of Christ.

The Apostle Paul, himself a Jew, confessed his own ignorance when persecuting fellow Jewish countrymen who believed Jesus to be their Messiah. It is indeed ironic, is it not, that the first to be persecuted for their faith in Jesus as Messiah were all Jews and their persecutors were Jews. Paul, earlier known as Saul of Tarsus, admitted his own ignorance in doing so in the first chapter of the first letter he wrote to Timothy. In the midst of all persecution, whether it was Jews persecuting Jews or Christians persecuting Jews, one thing was crystal clear.

neither had the authority or approval of Jesus. In fact, the persecution rationale was totally opposite that of Jesus who consistently spoke of love even to the extent of loving your enemies.

The message Jesus gave in Matthew 5 referred to as the Sermon on the Mount made it very clear what one's attitude toward others was to be and it included even those with whom you disagree. [10:26] The command to love them totally transcends any idea of persecuting them or does it? Upcoming is a stellar example of the twisted, warped kind of thinking that had been involved and it is something.

Reference has been made on past sessions of Christianity Clarified in regard to the principal consequences that resulted from the moral failure of our first parents in Genesis chapter 3. In addition to spiritual and physical death, another chief consequence was the fall and the injury of the human intellect. It is our skewed logic, our warped sense of reasoning that allows us to reach really far out and bizarre conclusions about a whole host of issues. For instance, the utterly stupid idea of worshipping dumb idols and multiple gods is but one of many of the bizarre conclusions. Another, sad to say, is what appeared to be perfectly logical in regards to loving your enemies.

How do you, as a Christian, express your love toward your enemies, be they Jews or Gentiles? How do you do that? Answer? You persecute them.

[11:51] What? Persecute them. Punish them for remaining Jews. Make life so miserable and costly for them, they will see the light and become converted to Christianity.

That's how you love them. After all, you're doing it for their own good. In eternity, when they are in heaven because Christian persecution prompted them to become Christians, they will thank you for hating them and abusing them.

Can you imagine a more perverted line of reasoning than that? It's an example of the oft-repeated observation that we have made.

A skewed or warped intellect is a principal consequence of the fallenness of our first parents and then passed on to every succeeding generation. All of humanity is saddled with a fallen intellect that allows us to arrive at very harebrained ideas that we seek to put into practice.

The very idea of coercing people to embrace a religious or political viewpoint is evil at its base. People are to be one to Christ via loving and kind persuasion, not by coercion or intimidation.

[13:06] An ancient maxim rings true, loud and clear, and is stated thusly, A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.

Under threats and intimidation, one may be forced to agree outwardly to a position forced upon him, but he has not changed his position inwardly. Thus, all that is obtained is outward compliance only, and it is usually accompanied with a large dose of resentment.

It is the heart and mind of people that needs to be one for Christ and it certainly cannot be done with persecution, intimidation, threats, or bribery.

Not only were professing Christians through the ages guilty of forcing Jews to convert to Christianity, which was then the Roman Catholic version of Christianity, but the same tactics are used even today by Islam.

Great numbers of people of other faiths have been forced to convert to Islam by reciting the Shahada under stress. Such tactics are pure folly and evil no matter who the proponents are.

[14:18] Warped thinking begets warped demands, part two. There must be no other rationale for Christians proclaiming the gospel to non-Christians than that of being obedient to Christ and loving the unconverted.

One can scarcely imagine a more unworthy method than that of coercing people to make a profession of faith. It was God's love that prompted Him to provide salvation for us, and it was Christ's love that made Him willing to be the instrument of it.

And to think this loving good news can then be proclaimed and motivated by anything other than love is total nonsense. The true believer in Christ must surely understand something about love to the extent that he must be driven by it in seeking to win the loss to Christ.

No lesser motive can be genuine nor can it enjoy the favor of our loving Savior. All Christians owe everyone at the absolute minimum kindness and consideration.

nor are we to extend such to them because we see them only as a possible convert. We owe love and kindness to all, whether they are friendly or hostile to our cause.

[15:41] And why? Because it's the way we are to treat our fellow human beings. It's the right thing to do. And it is through this they are able to see the love of Christ in us.

And whoever exhibited more love and compassion even to his detractors than Christ himself. The Apostle Peter in his first letter reminded us in chapter 2 that when Christ was reviled he did not revile in return.

When he suffered he did not threaten but committed himself to him who judges righteously. Plus, his monumental memorable statement from the cross he hung upon.

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. That must surely be admitted as the ultimate loving attitude toward fellow humans.

If such is objected to by some that such an expression as that is really not natural they are right. It is not natural. It is supernatural.

[16 : 47] After all, the love that enables us to love others is the very love of God himself that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit as referenced in Romans chapter 5 and this means we are able to love others with the love that God bestowed upon us as the wherewithal for loving others.

For Christians such is not to be seen as exceptional but rather the norm. Think of it. The supernatural is the norm for the believer particularly when it comes to our motivation of love in giving the gospel to others.

Only warp thinking can justify trying to coerce, intimidate, or threaten anyone to convert to Christianity. If anything, true Christians should not only refuse that method but we should offer sincere apology to anyone subjected to it including Jews as well as Gentiles.

It is an abominable way of thinking. A Challenging Opportunity for All Earlier sessions of Christianity Clarified were devoted to an examination of assumptions arrived at by Jewish people throughout history.

The principal issue was in their often overlooking what is provided within the confines of their own Bible called the Tanakh. We understand their unwillingness to accept the authority of the New Testament even though we believe them to be wrong in doing so but they surely owe serious investigation to their own scriptures they call the Tanakh.

[18 : 30] The contents of the Tanakh is described as the law, the prophets, and the writings and they are identical to what we Christians refer to as the Old Testament.

It would appear that one's intellectual integrity which requires following the evidence wherever it leads is at least compromised by their refusal to even consider evidence in the New Testament. If they adequately study the Old Testament their Tanakh they will find scores of references therein that ever so clearly convincingly depict the promise and coming of their long-awaited Jewish Messiah.

Then if they could only bring themselves to do it they would find the precise fulfillment of those Old Testament prophecies vividly come to pass in the New Testament they feel compelled to reject. It is a situation of great sadness on the part of Christians because we personally know the amazing peace and joy that our Jewish friends deny themselves by their unwillingness to commit themselves to following the truth wherever it leads.

[19 : 42] But we should not be surprised at their rejection of the New Testament in light of their rejection regarding their own scriptures the Tanakh. They do have a history of ignoring or disregarding their own Bible through the centuries kind of like many Christians who profess Christ and yet disregard their own Bibles.

So while many Jews do revere their own scriptures with great honor and acceptance it is also sadly true that many perhaps even most Jews today relegate their own scriptures to the category of mythology.

Because this issue is of such great importance Christianity Clarified is compelled to elaborate on some of the more outstanding prophecies of the Old Testament that is in the Jewish Tanakh followed with a few of the related fulfillments found in the New Testament.

Besides being eye-opening to any Jews such will prove to be a confirmation and reinforcement for any Christians listening as well as any non-Christians. The subject is simply too monumental to pass over.

Our ongoing prayer is that the Spirit of God will take His Word and penetrate hearts and minds ready to follow truth and receive it wherever it may lead. And in doing that there is no way Jew or Gentile can possibly go wrong.

[21 : 08] We will begin engaging it just ahead. So, would you please come with us and we will do the good whether you are Jewish or a Gentile.

Why consider the Bible? Before engaging the Bible and examining its contents this question should first be asked. Why?

What is it that makes this book so special if indeed it is special? What is its origin? Who produced it? And why? Admittedly, there is no way one can do justice to this utterly remarkable and unique book.

Yet, with as much as in us is, an attempt will be made to cover its influence and purpose. No attempt will be made to prove its origin since that would require an extensive study in itself. And volumes have been written over past centuries that amply convey the origin of the Bible and scores of them are readily available today from public libraries and online electronically as well. [22 : 18] Our purpose here is to merely explain our rationale for turning to this book and embracing the content it includes as the very Word of God from God Himself.

Although the Bible has employed some 40 different human penmen to record its sacred pages during the space of some 1,500 years, yet it has but one divine author, that being the Spirit of God. Hence, we have a document containing the authority of the Creator God, but issued forth through human instruments. This divine and human combination contains human expression with individual vocabulary and stylistic nuances, but comes forth with the authority of its divine originator being God Himself.

He is the very being described in Genesis 1-1, declaring that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And indeed, we believe He did.

And He also used human beings to whom He gave that information to record in writing so humanity would have knowledge and a record of that creation, what ensued from it, and where and how it would all end.

[23 : 44] That is why we call the Bible God's Word, and that is why we assign ultimate authority to it. There are, of course, those who reject this concept entirely and insist upon other explanations for all that exists.

Their alternate explanations are found by the Judeo-Christian community to be far less satisfying and convincing than that just given. And this also compels us to revisit the issue of authority that was explained on earlier segments of Christianity Clarified.

Simply stated, it was that there are but three possible sources from whom we may derive information about anything, and we have searched in vain to find a fourth.

Upcoming is an explanation of those three sources from which we must all choose who our authority will be. Three possible sources include the following, the mind of man, the mind of the adversary Satan, or the mind of God himself.

And yes, of course, you get to choose your authority for yourself, and we shall see. Upcoming. The Three Sources of Authority, Part One When it is said the issue of authority is of paramount significance, here is what is meant.

[25 : 10] Whatever, or whomever, we accept as being our ultimate authority regarding all matters of life and living will determine our belief system, whatever that is.

We all hold opinions and convictions about all kinds of issues, whether mundane or critical matters involving even life and death. So, where did we get them?

What was the source we appealed to in determining what our opinion or conviction should be? And why do we believe what we believe?

It has been stated that only three possible sources exist from which we may obtain information, information about anything. only three.

And of the three, each must choose or does choose knowingly, or even unknowingly, the source from which our information comes. The first source of the three is by far the most common.

[26 : 15] It is simply the human mind. And while, of course, it includes our own mind and its powers of logic and reasoning, the human mind also includes those of others past and present.

There are and have been many very brilliant, capable people who have come and gone and left us with great benefits and contributions of all kinds for which we should be grateful.

All of these combined, plus your own personal mind, comprise the most common source for what we regard as authoritative information.

It is the human mind, our own personally, and the aggregate of all other minds that influence us and our thinking.

And since, as stated, this, the human mind, is by far and away the most common source, most appealed to for obtaining data, interpreting and acting upon it, there is then a biting question that must be asked about this most common source to which so many appeal, and that is, how reliable is it?

[27 : 28] The mind of man, whether our own or the collective minds of a multitude of others whom we regard as the best and brightest of humanity, begs the question, which of those best and brightest do we draw from?

And are there not major disagreements among these best and brightest that leave us in a quandary as to which to follow? Equally gifted, brilliant minds are miles apart regarding their position on issues of critical importance, so how are most of us with only an average IQ supposed to know which of these human geniuses to follow?

Answer if you can. And should you make your choice from among them, can there be any confidence you have chosen the right one to follow? And as regards your own mind, how infallible have you found it to be?

Hmm. More just ahead. The Three Sources of Authority, Part 2 The most common source most humans look to for information is, understandably, our own minds.

And we also tap into the human minds and thinkings of others whom we regard as having expertise and knowledge we don't have. Particularly is that true regarding medicine and doctors, legalities and lawyers, and so on.

[28 : 51] And these are all human minds, and the conclusions they reach about various issues, they reached from their human mind and other human minds. And while these human minds, including our own, constitute the most common source from which we derive and process information, there are two other sources to be considered.

And the first of these is, or should be, the least regarded and least appealed to of all. This is the mind and thinking of the adversary, whom the Bible calls Satan.

And as frightful and negative as the devil is, he is a source of information from whom data and concepts are available. And despite the notion many people have as to his even existing, the Bible makes it quite clear he does, and he has a definite agenda.

The name Satan means adversary, and as such, he is adverse or opposed to everything God is about, including God's plan and purpose for humanity.

As God is the creator, Satan is the destroyer. And that's the meaning of another of his names in Revelation chapter 9, where he is also called Apollyon, which literally means destroyer.

[30 : 16] Christ confronted Satan in the wilderness temptation of 40 days shortly after his baptism. Jesus certainly knew the devil to be real, not merely some symbol of evil or a mythological being, as many suppose.

And in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, the apostle Paul calls Satan the god of this world. Peter, in his first epistle, chapter 5, likens the devil to a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

He is certainly not one from whom we want to receive information about anything. The devil is also described as a murderer and a liar from the beginning.

His principal tools are deception, denial, discouragement, destruction, and death. Call them, if you will, the devil's D's.

Still, he and his deceptive ways are a source of information, as our first mother Eve discovered the hard way. Eager and available as he is to a minority group called themselves Satanist or devil worshippers, one can conclude he is not at all a source of information to whom anyone should look for information or direction about anything.

[31 : 34] As a potential source, let Satan, the devil, go down in flames as he ultimately does in Revelation chapter 20. The Three Sources of Authority, Part 3.

Of the three possible sources we can appeal to as our authority, the first two have been briefly addressed. They were the mind of man, meaning our own personal minds, plus the collective minds of other humans past and present from whom we can obtain information.

And the second, undesirable, devious, deceptive, and destructive as he may be, he is still the source that will gladly dispense information to anyone foolish and desperate enough to receive it. And that second source is the devil, Satan himself, the arch enemy of God and man. But then, the third and final source from whom information can be obtained is our Creator, described as Lord and God, plus a number of other titles worthy of his person.

And as regards ultimate authority issues for any and all kinds of information, this Creator God ought to be mankind's first and ultimate go-to source.

[32 : 55] But, because he has not been such, and is not such today in the minds of most humans, we have the world we are now living in.

And at times, it becomes very ugly. Still, our Creator God has provided us with the only authoritative record of information that expresses his position on all issues he wishes us to know about himself, ourselves, and this world.

And it's called the Bible, the scriptures, the inspired written revelation provided for humanity. This is the third and only truly reliable source of information.

History is replete with the negative, predictable consequences humans have suffered because this third source of information was ignored or rejected.

Currently, humanity is following in their train, and we as they continue to reap the same sad and painful consequences as our ancestors. But it need not be so.

[34 : 00] And it is not so for those who recognize this third and ultimate source of authority, responding to it with gratitude and obedience. All that has been revealed to this point as regards this issue of possible sources of authority reinforce our oft-repeated mantra.

The issue is authority. Always has been, always will be. Don't ever forget that. And of the three sources, each of us must choose the one in which we place our confidence, whether it is the mind of man, primarily our own, but including also the corporate minds of other humans, the mind of Satan, which we would implore all to soundly reject.

Being confident, most of us understandably tend to regard our own personal mind as our principal authority. Yet, there are serious issues about this that should be addressed, and they will be upcoming.

They should give us great pause regarding all important issues of life and death and the meaning of it, and we will pursue it just ahead.

Three Sources of Authority, Part 4 Three possible sources are available to us that we can consult on any and all issues, whether they be great or small, important or unimportant.

[35 : 25] And they were identified as the human, the satanic, and the divine. And of the three, it is obvious that number one, the human, is utilized by us mere mortals far more than the satanic and the divine.

First of all, we humans tend to have great confidence in our own mind when it comes to formulating ideas, assessing data, reaching conclusions, choosing options, and so on. And should we recognize our own minds as being somehow deficient for giving us the best information on a given issue, we can always turn to a host of fellow human minds from the present or the past.

There are numerous experts, geniuses, and established authorities on a huge range of issues that we may consult as recognized authorities. So we are not left to the limitations of our own personal minds, but we have the collective best thinking of previous generations at our disposal.

These were men and women of towering intellectual giftedness. Many of them produced volumes of work detailing their findings and conclusions, and very often the names of Augustine and Einstein and Michelangelo and Da Vinci and Aristotle and Plato, Madame Curie, Louis Pasteur, John Locke, Tom Edison, names of people who really knew their business, whatever it was, and from whatever discipline they emerged as authorities.

They carried a lot of weight among those of us with considerably lesser minds, and they should.

The list of such notables fills volumes and are appealed to constantly.

[37 : 04] Still, as much as we are indebted to them and admire their keen intellects, there is a serious caveat that must be acknowledged. That is, we need to be aware that as great as those and other minds like them from multiple disciplines and fields of expertise through the past thousands of years, so very many of them were in complete disagreement with each other as to their rank and stature, even that being equal.

So we have brilliant minds in disagreement with other equally brilliant minds. And interestingly enough, they were often in sharp disagreement as regards really important issues like the origin and meaning of life and whether there is an afterlife and so on.

So the problem is, how can we determine which great intellect to follow? And what makes you think you are lined up with the one who was right about these great issues? And what issue would you deem to be of greater importance than these?

As much as we appeal to the towering intellects from the past and the present, what makes us think we are appealing to the right ones? Remember, there are others among us, just as smart as we are, who line up behind the authorities we have rejected from following.

You do see the problem, do you not? We all want to choose the right authority and feel confident in that. So how do we decide which of these brilliant human minds from the past or present to follow?

[38 : 28] And it isn't as if nothing were at stake. Everything is. So the issue remains authority. Always has been. Always will be.

The issue that remains authority. Authority and its upcoming. Three Sources of Authority Part 5 It is no coincidence the word authority, which is the concept we have been exploring, contains within it the word author, which of course relates to the idea of originator.

The author of anything refers to the person who began it. Whether it's a book, an idea, as in an invention, or some other matter.

The author of whatever it is, is also the authority regarding it. In other words, the author of anything knows that thing better than anyone else.

In dealing with the really important issues such as the origin, meaning, and destiny of human life, it's futile trying to choose which human authority and their philosophy to follow when there is so much disagreement among them.

[39 : 41] Which of those brilliant thinkers do you follow? The answer is, none of them. Because none of them knows all that needs to be known regarding these all-important issues mentioned.

And for certain, none of them was the author or originator behind life, purpose, meaning, value, destiny, and death. Oh, to be sure, those other human authorities may have been a lot smarter than those of us with average intelligence, but so what?

None of them qualify as an authority or originator. So with what or with whom does that leave us? It leaves us with the only one who is the originator, the only true authority there is.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He is the author of the book called the Bible, And he alone is the only real authority regarding everything.

But if God is rejected as the authority, then to whom do you go for answers that really matter? No one is left but ourselves and other humans.

[40 : 53] Ultimately, you are thrust right back upon the dilemma of which to follow. And if you settle on yourself as your own authority, and you can do that, even while knowing others a lot more intelligent than you disagree with you, then it would merely mean that you have a super ego in which you place supreme confidence.

So along that line, have you ever discovered yourself to be wrong about anything? But these are all issues about which you better not be wrong.

Life, purpose, and especially destiny are all supremely important. The consequences of whatever conclusion you reach about these is absolutely stunning.

One may be right about a whole lot of issues. But if one is wrong about these ultimate issues, it doesn't matter what you may have gotten right.

This is why the only safe thing to do is to cast our lot with the creator, originator, author of it all, and look to him for the only authoritative answers you can count on. And he has graciously provided those answers in this remarkable book called the Bible, and in it, he is set forth as creator, originator, and author.

[42 : 12] Who he is and what he has revealed is all that matters. And we need to hop to it. Believing all the prophets had written, part one.

In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24, we recall a conversation Jesus had shortly after his resurrection with two of his downcast disciples on the road to Emmaus.

In it, Jesus revealed a serious error among the Jewish community. Actually, it's also a common error, repeated by Protestants and Catholics as well.

And what was that error? Well, let's let Jesus explain it for himself. He said, That was their problem. They did not believe all that the prophets had spoken. They believed only part. And what part? Well, just the glory part. There were two parts of vital information that the prophets said would be true of Israel's Messiah when he came.

[43 : 24] But of those two comings of Messiah, the one accompanied with glory and majesty became the one dwelt upon by the Jews to the near exclusion of the other. Thus, as Jesus said, they were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken.

Understandably, but still mistakenly, they focused only upon the events accompanying his second coming, while largely ignoring the references given by the prophets of Messiah's first coming. His first is characterized as a harmless baby born in obscure Bethlehem. His role would major on being a suffering servant, who would bear the sins of the entire world as a sacrificial lamb of God. But his role in his second coming is utterly unlike the first. When he appears the second time, he will not be the lamb, but as the lion of the tribe of Judah, and he will be anything but harmless. His power and authority will be overwhelming. The collective armies of the entire world, as led by the Antichrist, will prove no match for this second coming conquering Messiah of Israel. [44 : 39] And in this coming, Messiah will return to collect on what he purchased in his first coming. Sadly, the Jews missed, discounted, or ignored the promises of his first coming, and were caught up with all the Messiah would do as prophesied in his second coming.

It also became easier for them to do that, because the second coming of the Messiah is actually prophesied much more frequently and more dramatically than his first. The Jews were looking for a second coming type of Messiah instead of a first coming type of Messiah. In his first coming to Bethlehem as a babe, he was a far cry removed from a second coming Messiah. Little wonder, so many in Israel could not, would not consider Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah spoken of by the prophets.

Again, had they given diligence to all that the prophets had written instead of only part, and that the part that most appealed to them, such was the basis for Jesus rebuking Israel in general, and those disciples on the road to Emmaus that he encountered in Luke 24.

It remains a fallacy for Israel and the Jewish people to this very day. More ahead. Believing All the Prophets Wrote Part 2 The Jewish prophets spoke clearly and often of the coming of the promised Messiah, and there was no doubt about what he would do when he came.

[46 : 10] But Jesus did not do those things when he appeared. The prophets declared the Messiah would put down all opposition and elevate Israel to be head of all the nations of the world.

Jesus certainly did not do that, but instead died a horrible death on a Roman cross. In the Jewish mind, that did not compute with the coming of Israel's Messiah.

But it surely did compute with the coming of the Messiah the Jews did not expect, namely, the first of his two comings. One part referred to the suffering of the Messiah, and the other referred to his glory.

Extreme opposites, to be sure. So which part of the two did the Jews believe? Just the glory part, not the suffering part. And this caused them to reach an erroneous view of the Messiah when he came.

It was really quite easy to do, but the problem was, in doing so, a large part of what the Messiah was to experience was completely overlooked. And that was the suffering part.

[47 : 16] So, what do the old prophets reveal in the Old Testament? Both parts, and both are vital, essential to Messiah's mission and purpose.

Messiah's suffering was connected to his death on the cross, where he died for the sins of the world. And his glory was connected to his second coming, when he will appear in power and majesty.

The contrast between the two could not be greater. Still, in trying to understand why the Jews were fixated on the glory and largely ignored the suffering part, one can see how and why it was easy for them to do that.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of two comings of the Messiah, not merely one. And that concept in itself was foreign to the thinking of the Jews. They perceived of there being but one coming of the Messiah, which would be in power and great glory.

And when he came, he would defeat immediately all of Israel's enemies, establish the kingdom of God upon earth, install Israel as the world leader, with Messiah sitting on the throne of David, and Israel's monarchy would rule the entire world from Jerusalem.

[48 : 29] Well, did Jesus of Nazareth do that? Of course not. Ergo, Jesus of Nazareth was disqualified from being considered as the Messiah of Israel by the Jews of his day, and he remains such by present-day Jews as well.

Well, can you not readily see how the Jewish generation contemporary to Jesus believed him to be simply disqualified?

He did not meet the criteria they had in mind, and it was because they focused on what the prophets said about Messiah's second coming, assuming they spoke of his one and only coming. And they were indeed slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. This is truly enlightening content. And more of it is to come next.

The Controversial Messiah, Part 1 Every generation of humans has been subject to making erroneous assumptions regarding the events that transpired during their period of history.

[49 : 43] And faulty assumptions, though erroneous, once in place and adopted by the faithful of whatever group, becomes, as it were, etched in stone, never to be discarded or altered.

And this is the lot of every religious group, including Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and on and on the list goes, to encompass everyone.

And it is also true of the Jewish. And the Jewish in particular comprises the scope of our present study, with those of the Catholic and Protestant and their faulty assumptions to follow.

But for the present Jews, nothing was more critical than the person of the Messiah, the anointed one of God. Everything Jewish hinges on the identity of this long-awaited one God promised to send.

Jews, since the first century, insist that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah, while Christians believe he was. Jews maintain they are still waiting for Messiah to come, while Christians believe he has already come, has returned to heaven, and is expected to return to earth for his second coming.

[51 : 02] Each group, of course, believes themselves to be right, and the other group to be wrong. One thing is absolutely certain, both cannot be right, because the two positions are contradictory.

And, of course, both insist the scriptures support their position and not that of the others. So, there is to this day a Jewish interpretation of scripture regarding the Messiah, and a Christian interpretation.

And those Christians who adhere to theirs are far greater in number than are the Jews with theirs. But Christians, being so much greater in number, does not prove them correct.

The majority has often been wrong, as in Noah's day. He and his family constituted the tiniest minority imaginable, eight individuals, against the entire world.

But who was right? Still, they were not right because they were the minority. They were right because they were right, and because they were God's minority.

[52 : 06] Right and wrong are not determined by taking a poll, but by its correspondence to truth and reality. So, as regards the correct identity of the Messiah, Israel should take no comfort from holding the minority position, nor should Christians take any comfort for holding the majority position.

All available evidence should be examined before conclusion is reached. And such is precisely what Jesus faulted his Jewish countrymen for failing to do by not considering all that the prophets had written concerning himself.

But to that, the Jews respond that Jesus, not believed to be their Messiah, could not therefore be relied upon for his assessment of the situation. So, the standoff continues, as it has for 2,000 years. And how likely is it that Christianity, clarified, will resolve it? Ha ha, not likely. But in examining the evidence, if even one person, Jew or Gentile, is enlightened, it is eminently worthwhile.

The Controversial Jesus, Part 2 Numerous passages in the Old Testament the Jewish people refer to as the Tanakh are provided for our examination as regards the coming, person, and work of the promised Messiah.

[53 : 27] When Jesus chided the two disciples on the Emmaus Road just after his resurrection, he faulted them for their failure to believe all that the prophets had written. For they, said Jesus, spoke of him.

That's in the New Testament, chapter 24, Gospel of Luke. But that is a portion the Jews do not accept as being God's Word. They believe their Tanakh, which is, to the Christian, the Old Testament, and it consists of the law, the prophets, and the writings.

It comprises the totality of God's revelation so far as Jews are concerned. While Christians look to our New Testament as the fulfillment and completion of the Old, we cannot use it in our arguments to support Jesus as the Messiah to the Jewish people simply because they do not accept it as the Word of God.

So there is no question that in it, that is, in the New Testament, Jesus is unmistakably presented as Israel's true Messiah and the Savior of the world.

So, what is crystal clear to the Christian community is unacceptable to the Jewish community. And there is no reason to question the good faith or sincerity of either group.

[54 : 46] But we also know that believing something in good faith does not make it true. So, what is the solution? We will examine the numerous passages of the Old Testament, that is, the Jewish Tanakh, giving the Christian interpretation thereof as well as the Jewish view and let the chips fall where they may.

Jews, Christians, and non-Christians can make up their own mind. And when we turn to the New Testament where we believe fulfillment of the Old regarding Jesus is found, Christians will regard it as proof positive while Jews will have to convince themselves it is merely coincidental.

Still, as mentioned before, there is no possibility that both are right because they are contradictory positions. Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Messiah promised by Moses and the prophets.

He who already came, suffered and died as the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world, was resurrected three days after his death, dwelt on earth for 40 days afterwards and ascended back to heaven, or he was none of those things and not Israel's Messiah.

It's an either-or situation and all will have to decide when the evidence is considered. And what about bias? After all, this study is called Christianity Clarified.

[56 : 10] Are we biased regarding our findings? Of course we are. Are any Jews who may be listening biased? Of course. Being a Jew automatically makes one biased toward Judaism and being Christian makes one biased toward Christianity and it's dishonest and not helpful to say, oh, I'm completely objective and I have no bias at all.

Nonsense. So the bottom line is, whose bias is the best bias to be biased with? And you'll have to decide for yourself what's at stake. What's at stake?

Only everything as regards your eternal destiny and that of millions of others. The Controversial Jesus Part 3 Genesis 3.15 records the earliest reference of a coming Messiah and Redeemer.

Redemption was promised precisely when the need for it arose, which was right after the disobedience and fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. No sooner had sin entered the picture but what God in His grace promised a Redeemer.

And in speaking to Satan, who presented himself as a serpent in his successful tempting of her first parents, God said to him, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed, that is, your offspring and her offspring.

[57 : 39] Enmity means a state of war between future generations of the children of the devil and the children of God. The war goes on right now in numerous ways of conflict all over the world.

The text says the seed of the woman that both Jews and Christians believe to be the Messiah will be assaulted by descendants akin to Satan with what is described as a bruise or wound of his heel. But in turn, Satan will suffer a crushing of his head. The wounds differ in the degree of seriousness. The head versus the heel. Many believe among Jews and Gentiles that the Messiah will suffer a temporal wound depicted by the bruised heel, while Satan will suffer a permanent and mortal blow to the crushing of his head.

The temporal wound, Christians believe, applies to the three days in the tomb, but with a resurrection that will follow. There will be no such resurrection for Satan.

Thus, the ultimate victory will be that of the seed of the woman whom both Jews and Christians believe to be the Messiah. Of course, it needs to be understood.

[58 : 59] We speak in terms of generalities. By that, it is meant that there are Jews and Christians who do not embrace this interpretation at all, but see things very differently.

Still, what is being presented does represent the vast majority opinion of both Jews and Christians. So, both are, in the main, in agreement with the interpretation just given.

But where the disagreement lies, as expected, is whether this Messiah person referred to as the seed of the woman speaks of Jesus of Nazareth and whether he is the Messiah spoken of in Genesis 3.15.

Christians believe he is, and Jews believe the seed of the woman to be the Messiah also. However, they do not believe that it was Jesus of Nazareth, but the Messiah who has not yet come and is still awaited by the Jews.

It is possible, of course, that both Christians and Jews are mistaken about the interpretation given, which is the majority position of both groups. And while, conceivably, both could be wrong, there is no way that both can be right.

[60 : 11] We are thrust once again upon the either-or principle. With both believing it references the Messiah, it must either have reference to Jesus as that messianic seed of the woman, or it does not.

There is no way Jesus can be the Messiah and not be the Messiah. It's contradictory and nonsensical. And what is at stake? Everything. The Controversial Jesus, Part 4 There are a number of Jews, particularly of late, that have voiced positive opinions about Jesus of Nazareth that leaves Christians bewildered.

Some Jews have been heard to say that while they do not see Jesus as their Messiah, they nonetheless regard Him a valid moral teacher. We can only wonder how any Jew could have that opinion given the claims Jesus made about Himself, and repeatedly so.

Traditionally, the historic position of many Jews from the first century to the present has been one of abject scorn and rejection of even the name Jesus. Some Jews, past and present, will not even use His name and refer to Him only as that man.

Their negative position toward Jesus is due to their belief that it was because of Jesus and Christians embracing Him that the Jewish people have suffered so much persecution through the centuries.

[61 : 38] Already mentioned was the terrible ignorance and arrogance, brutality, on the part of professing Christians that was largely responsible for Jewish persecution. such was covered in volumes 46 through 50 of Christianity Clarified.

No question, the great majority of Jews today still see Jesus not as their friend and certainly not as their Messiah. Still, what about those who say they see nothing negative about Jesus and that they recognize His moral teaching influence?

These Jews are those that Christians find perplexing because the claims Jesus made about Himself are startling. They position Him as the ultimate truth-teller or the ultimate liar.

There is no in-between. Either Jesus deliberately lied in presenting Himself as Israel's Messiah or He was self-deceived in believing He was.

In neither of those two possibilities could He seriously be called a great moral teacher or a rabbi worthy of a hearing. His being either a liar or a lunatic would surely not qualify Him as a competent exemplary model to be followed.

[62 : 56] Only a third possibility exists which Jews in all of history for the past 2,000 years have soundly rejected and that is Jesus was precisely who He claimed to be.

But that is without question completely unacceptable to the Jewish people. So you can see, can you not, why Christians are perplexed about Jews calling Jesus a worthy rabbi and moral teacher?

The man Jesus had to be a fake Messiah, not the real thing. He had to be an outright liar who knew He was lying and was nothing more than a religious con man. Or He was a self-deceived, psychotic kind of person who truly but wrongly believed Himself to be sent as the Son of God.

Or, He was who He claimed to be, God in the flesh, as described throughout the New Testament.

Author Josh McDow called the issue a trilemma, three possibilities, not only two, as in a dilemma, and it's found in his highly recommended book, Evidence That Demands a Verdict.

All would do well, Jews included, to obtain a copy of this insightful publication. An important question revisited.

[64 : 11] Once again, there is a need to pose that serious question. In fact, it is a question that ought to permeate our intellect, assuming, of course, the reality of having an honest intellect.

And the question is, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it? One can only hope that each of us would answer, well, yes, of course.

And if it is asked, what I believe about what? Well, about matters of great importance in particular, you know, the really big issues of life and death.

I mean, where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? What is life all about, anyway? These are the questions we should focus on. So why don't we?

Well, probably more thought is given to those issues at a funeral than at any other venue. Because it's hard to deny that something has ended. Something of great significance, because there in that casket lies the body of someone once here, but now gone.

[65 : 18] The body remains, but it is undeniably vacant and unresponsive to all stimuli. Why were they even here? Why am I?

Is something about them still alive somewhere? Somewhere? Where? Is there a where after death? Who is God if there is one?

What is he about and why? And if there isn't, then how did all this stuff come about? So, if what you believe about these issues and more is not true, would you want to know it?

And if so, what would be the benefit from knowing it? Then and only then can you do something about it, because you can't do anything about what you do not know except remain ignorant.

But life is too short to spend it that way. But many do. And why? Largely because it is suspected that it's due to the many distractions that present themselves to us from every direction all day long.

[66 : 24] The demands of our job, the care of our families, the daily responsibilities, the occupation with trivia and the mundane. And while these all have some legitimacy about them and may determine our level of responsibility and proficiency, yet, they all have one very dangerous element about them, and that is, they are all temporal, passing, fleeting away, they won't stay, and neither will we.

And the question is asked, how is it we devote much time and thought, serious time and thought, to that two-week vacation upcoming, that time from which we fully plan to return, yet give little or no thought to the greater trip we will take from which we will not return?

How and why do we do that? Because we are distracted. We misplace our priorities. We may be stirred a little at that funeral mention, but it will soon be out of sight and out of mind.

It's time now to think about what's really important, like, what will we have for dinner tonight? Or what's on TV? See what I mean? So, if what you now believe about all of this important stuff, that trip with no return, is not true, would you want to know it?

And would anything about Jesus be included? Who really is this one? What of that important question?

[67 : 48] The previous segment of Christianity Clarified posed an important question. For some listeners, it may be the most important question, the answer to which could even put them on a path to eternal life.

And it is fully realized what that sounds like to some listening with a skeptical mind. Sounds like an exaggeration, doesn't it? But it isn't. And why will become obvious later, hopefully even to the skeptic.

The question was, if whatever you now believe about the great issues of life, origin, death, purpose, and meaning, is not true, would you want to know it?

For any who would say, no, we can only echo the words of the Apostle Paul, who said, he who would be ignorant, let him be ignorant still.

1 Corinthians 14. And that's coupled with what the Apostle Peter stated in his second letter, chapter 3, that some are willingly ignorant. Now, there is a lot that can be done to enlighten one who is ignorant but doesn't want to be.

[68 : 55] But precious little can be accomplished for one who is ignorant and chooses to remain that way. And to the question, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it?

These are they who would answer, no. Tragic, but it's their decision and God gave them the wherewithal to answer that way with the volition he granted them.

Perchance something, by God's grace, will enter their life, causing them to turn positive. The question, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it, does presuppose a very important concept and it is simply this.

truth does exist and is knowable. Many may now be responding with, well, of course, who doesn't know that? Well, you'd be surprised.

There are some well-recognized intellects out there who insist objective truth does not even exist. Pontius Pilate expressed his disdain 2,000 years ago for truth when Jesus was before him and issued that churlish statement, what is truth?

[69 : 59] It remains large in the annals of history. While there are so many voices out there all claiming to be the truth but are completely contradictory, many listeners despair of ever really knowing truth or whether it even actually exists.

Maybe they think truth is only a personal subjective thing such as you have your truth and I have mine. It's a popular position that many take today. It's called subjectivity and, of course, it is a

companion to moral relativism that has inundated our culture with disastrous results. It is complete nonsense but it appeals to the masses today and it's especially attractive because no one has to be wrong. Isn't that nice? We are all diverse holding mutually contradictory conclusions about great issues yet none of us need be wrong because truth is personal and it's to each his own because you have your truth and I have mine and neither of us need be wrong. This kind of dribble permeates today's world. So, how do we know there is such a thing as objective truth? Truth designed to be believed by all across the board and it's in our next session of Christianity Clarified.

You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. A preview of upcoming volume 52.

[71 : 37] One of the very most critical realities that has existed almost from the beginning of time is the presence of objective truth. It is a concept that many in today's world have rejected preferring the umbrellas of pluralism and moral relativism.

Relativism is a deadly belief system that actually removes people from any central overarching authority and replaces it with I'm okay you're okay we're all okay.

In a day when God forbid no one need be offended by being told they are wrong about anything it's very appealing to many especially among youth.

Who doesn't want to be their own authority regarding right and wrong? Actually it's the proliferation of a view that is in complete conformity to the fallen human race to which we all belong.

Implementing this as a valid belief system effectively eliminates all efforts of missions or evangelism. Because if everyone is fine with whatever they believe and no one's belief no matter what it is including even atheism is equally valid and on the level plane with everything else then there is no basis for spiritual conversions from anything to anything.

[73 : 07] Why seek to convert anyone from anything since whatever it is they now embrace is true for them and equally as valid as to what anyone else believes about anything.

Little wonder then that evangelism and missions both foreign and local have fallen on such hard times. And this kind of thinking is increasing in popularity.

Christians who proclaim that anyone needs to be saved are looked upon simply as judgmental and intolerant of other beliefs and lacking in compassion.

We are viewed as enemies of inclusivism. Well, such ought not surprise us because it's simply the world being the world.

We have no reason to expect anything but fallen thinking coming from a fallen world. It is what they do because it is what they are.

[74 : 10] And, remember, it is what we Christians were also when we lived previously outside of Christ and his salvation. So, in upcoming volume 52, we will begin with what we believe to be irrefutable logic that objective truth not only exists but it is not possible to fully function in the real world without it.

A very simple concept will be presented that effectively destroys the concept of moral relativism. In pursuing the earlier question, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it? It too will be engaged as he who is the truth is brought forward. Irrefutable evidence will be provided that ties the Old Testament prophecies to the equally irrefutable claims that the prophecies found their fulfillment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Such a conclusion, of course, is anathema to many Jewish people who may have already convinced themselves this is not so. And of those Jewish people who might be listening, they will have no problem seeing how the evidence supports their view that Jesus was not the Messiah, provided they are willing to examine the evidence.

While any Christian listening will have no problem seeing how the evidence does support his view that Jesus was and is the Messiah.

[75 : 47] But wait a minute, they can't both be right. This is true. So it's all about the evidence and the interpretation each gives to it.

So, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it, will be very much front and center in Christianity Clarified Volume 52 Upcoming.

If anyone is unwilling to even consider the evidence, our prayer is that the Spirit of God would convict them of that. Actually, one would think great personal satisfaction stands to be achieved.

Whatever view one holds regarding Jesus of Nazareth, being or not being the Messiah sent from God can be strengthened or weakened in the mind of the one upon hearing the evidence. But the evidence must be heard before an intelligent verdict can be reached by either side. Utterly fascinating stuff lies ahead, no matter your present position.

[76 : 58] So the question is and remains, if what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it? This is Pastor Marv Wiseman thanking you for being a part of our studios audience.

Thank you so much for being there and learning along with us. May the Lord richly bless you. M
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