

Christianity Clarified Volume 55

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[0 : 00] Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 1, Messiah Jesus Seen as Scandalous and Moronic, Part 1. Shortly after his Damascus Road conversion to Jesus Christ as his Messiah and Savior, Saul of Tarsus, a Jewish Pharisee, would become committed to proclaiming the faith he earlier tried to destroy.

And as a Jew himself, Saul, who will become Paul the Apostle, was well familiar with opposition to Jesus. After all, he had been the leader of that opposition.

He knew full well the essence of the claims of the followers of Jesus, chiefest of which was their claim that, after the third day, Jesus was raised from the dead.

So how did Saul and his fellow Jewish countrymen regard this message preached by the followers of Jesus? He tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 when he describes the Jewish response to the whole issue of Jesus.

His being presented as Israel's Messiah was a stumbling block to them. The word in the original Greek is skandalon. The English word we get from that is scandal.

[1 : 14] And that is precisely how most of the Jews, particularly the ruling class, regarded the whole affair of Jesus the Nazarene. Just that. A sordid affair that was a national embarrassment to Israel.

After all, what else could you call it? For one to be proclaimed as Israel's long-sought, long-anticipated Messiah, to have his life ended in the shame and ignominy of crucifixion, reserved for the vilest of criminals?

Of course it was a scandal. To make matters worse, the followers of Jesus were not content to let the issue die with their leader. Oh no! They had to perpetuate the scandal with the utter ridiculous claim that he had risen from the dead.

It was nothing but a major embarrassment, a national scandal. And for more salt in the wounded psyche of national Israel, Jesus told his Roman judge Pontius Pilate that he was the king of the Jews.

And Pilate then even had the ridiculous claim emblazoned on the sign above Jesus when he was placed on the cross. Oh! How humiliating!

[2 : 31] How embarrassing! How scandalous! And no sooner had Israel thought they were putting the whole ugly, embarrassing thing behind them, thanks to the zealous efforts of Saul of Tarsus, who was rounding up the followers of Jesus and taking them out of circulation, another major scandal was in the making.

Even Saul himself had succumbed to the nonsensical claims that Jesus was the Messiah, crucified by Pilate and the Jews, and raised by God from the dead.

And then he went on to insist that he had actually seen Jesus after he was raised from the dead. Horror of horrors! How could Jews ever live this down?

A scandal of national proportions that has infected thousands of Jews who even fell for all of this phony messianic nonsense at our last national feast day of Pentecost.

Dear listener, can you see why Paul said the gospel of Christ was the scandal to the Jew? And more of the scandal lies ahead. In assessing how the substitutionary death of Christ as the Savior of the world came across to the Greeks of his day, Paul's conclusion was, they look upon it as utter foolishness.

[4 : 05] Even moronic would be the way it appears in the original Greek. The idea of a man who was not clever enough to avoid crucifixion is also supposed to be the Savior of the world?

Come on, that's crazy. Only a moron could believe something like that. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, that was precisely the response he got when he preached the gospel to many of the

Greeks of his day.

Nothing has changed. There are many today who regard salvation and eternal life coming through one who was crucified 2,000 years ago as simply being moronic.

Makes no sense at all. And it's no surprise. Paul is telling us we should expect that kind of response from some who hear the gospel. And then he tells us that while the good news, the gospel is moronic or foolishness to the Greeks of his day, to the Jews it was a scandal.

And the word used in English is stumbling block. The Greek word is skandalon, from which our English word scandal comes. And that's how many Jews then and today look upon the claim of Jesus of Nazareth, a Galilean Jew who was crucified, called the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world, and crucified as a criminal?

[5 : 36] The Messiah of Israel on a Roman cross? He is supposed to be the one spoken of by Moses and the prophets? How revolting.

How embarrassing for Israel to connect Jesus with them. How utterly turned off were the Jews to whom Paul himself, a Jew, preached the message of a crucified Savior.

Even today, many Jews respond to Jesus by saying, don't connect that man Jesus with us. To do so would scandalize Israel.

We want nothing to do with him. And it's easy to see how Jews of Paul's day and Jews today regard Jesus of Nazareth, a scandalous, sordid affair. The very idea of trying to connect that man as the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel is nothing short of a massive embarrassment to the whole nation of Jews everywhere.

Away with it. Away with that man Jesus. When the real Messiah of Israel comes, it will be in power and great glory, not in the humiliation of a crucifixion.

[6 : 46] Nothing short of a mockery and scandal. Well, their anticipation of a glorious coming is well founded. And it too is prophesied by the Jewish prophets.

But they are describing the second coming of the Messiah, not the first. And when the Messiah comes again, it will be to collect what he has paid for in his first coming. The redemption of his beloved nation of Israel who rejected him at his first coming.

Meanwhile, the crucified Savior's claim remains an embarrassment or scandal to Israel. But that will change when he comes again. In the past 2,000 years, millions of men and women, in hearing and understanding the gospel, have embraced the crucified, resurrected Jesus as their personal Savior. They appropriated the offer made to them with an act of their will. And they did so by acknowledging their sin and their reality that they could not save themselves through any religion they practiced or good deeds they hoped to have done.

Those who became Christians so believed and valued their relationship to God through Christ, they were willing to die a martyr's death rather than renounce their love for Jesus as their Savior.

[8 : 13] These will receive the martyr's crown and a personal, well-done, thou good and faithful servant. One would think this attitude would be that of all who heard the gospel.

Sadly, such is not the case. There are not only the gospel's rejectors, but some who even oppose the gospel and the great redemptive work on behalf of humanity that Christ alone undertook.

And none were so opposed to Jesus of Nazareth and his followers as the Jewish Pharisee Saul of Tarsus. His dramatic confrontation by the risen Lord Jesus on that road to Damascus remains the most significant conversion to Christ ever recorded.

All should be familiar with the account recorded in the book of Acts chapter 9. And then Paul later recounts his experience before a large group of his Jewish countrymen in Acts chapter 22, and again before King Agrippa in chapter 26.

But as Saul of Tarsus was opposed to all things involving Jesus Christ, so it is with some today. Some are Jews and some are Gentiles.

[9 : 28] And Paul could readily understand their rejection and opposition to all things about Jesus of Nazareth because he himself had shared in it. And consequently, his heart cried for them.

He recalls how blinded he was before he came to Christ, and he thought just like they are thinking, and as many still do to this day.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, Paul the Apostle relates the attitude of some to the story and the account of the gospel when given to them. On the part of the Greeks, said Paul, some among them regard the gospel as foolishness.

That is, something only a fool would believe. And the word for foolishness in Greek is moria, from which our English word moron comes.

Some, said Paul, among the Greeks, are simply saying, those who believe that nonsense about the gospel of Jesus Christ are morons. Well, not exactly a compliment.

[10 : 32] There is no gratitude to God for the sacrificial death of His Son, only ridicule and rejection. And since Paul's day in the first century, there have always been a new crop of unbelievers in every generation who considers the precious gift of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, simply to be the stuff of morons.

But as the whole Bible testifies, what those call moronic, the Bible calls the wisdom of God. This is important to pursue, and we shall, just ahead.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 4, Messiah Jesus Seen as Scandalous and Moronic, Part 4. The previous segment revealed the response that some of Paul's day had given upon hearing the gospel of Christ.

He spoke of the reaction on the part of Greeks. After all, it was the Greeks to whom Paul was writing his first letter to the Corinthians, a major city he visited in Greece.

He also visited Athens and gave that stunning message on Mars Hill, recorded in Acts chapter 17. Athens was the center of intellectualism and philosophy of the ancient world.

[11 : 47] It was Greece that had produced the likes of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and other mental giants. Yet, with all their intellectual prowess, they had in the city of Athens numerous statues erected in several locations in honor of their supposed gods.

Here, the sophisticated intellectual Greeks, along with the Romans of the day, worshipped and made sacrifice to these imaginary deities.

It is truly remarkable that people of this intellectual caliber had the audacity to call Christianity moronic for their devotion to Jesus Christ, the Son of the only true God.

Who, indeed, were being truly moronic-like? As in Paul's day, so it is today. There are those who, upon hearing the incarnation of deity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and his subsequent death for sinful humanity, confidently pronounce it all to be foolishness.

That is precisely what the Bible says they would say. It is all just so much foolishness. How can they say that? Because to them, that is exactly how this good news gospel of God's grace sounds.

[13 : 11] Foolish. Moronic. These deluded souls are as far off the mark as were the ancient Greeks in the city of Athens when Paul was there. They, as well as the gospel rejecters of today, have no idea they reached their verdict of foolishness because they arrived at it by reasoning with a faulty, fallen intellect.

They are clueless that when our first parents rebelled against their Creator in Genesis chapter 3, they underwent a transformation. They became possessive of something God did not create in them.

They became rebels, sinners, with a different disposition than that of the innocence that God had created in them. Now, along with a fallen psyche and a fallen physical body and undergoing an immediate spiritual estrangement from God, even eventual physical disease and death, they also absorbed a fallen intellect.

From Adam and Eve and every generation of humans after them, including ours of today, all function not only with a fallen body, but with a fallen, damaged intellectual capacity as well.

And it is with our skewed intellects that we are able to reach some of the most bizarre and ridiculous conclusions about all kinds of issues, including the assessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ to be nothing but foolishness.

[14 : 42] Important stuff, this. Be sure you get into it, and it will explain ever so much. Yours for the listening, just ahead. Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 5.

A Brief History of Humanity, Part 1. The history of humanity may well be described as numerous significant events that opened and closed one epoch after another.

First, of course, was the creation of heaven and earth and the parents of all living, Adam and Eve.

Epic number two is referred to as the fall, the moral and spiritual failure and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve.

It resulted in the disposition God had created in them, which was a sphere of innocence, undergoing a transition that got underway with that new disposition.

It's called death, and it came in two forms, physical and spiritual. Because death, of whatever kind, refers to separation, Adam and Eve became spiritually and emotionally separated from God at the point of their disobedience.

[15 : 55] This resulted in guilt, which produced fear and revealed itself in their unsuccessful attempt to hide from their Creator. Despite their willful disobedience, God in His grace promised a remedy for the sin they introduced into the formerly very good creation.

That remedy would come in the form of one like them, a human, who would be the offspring of Eve. This one would be God's Redeemer, who, when He comes to earth, will address the problems of sin and death.

He will be known as the Messiah, or the one anointed by God for this special task. Meanwhile, Adam and Eve's offspring began to multiply profusely throughout the primitive earth with succeeding generations drifting further and further away from God.

Eventually, mankind degenerated to the extent God was no longer willing to tolerate. A judgment on the entirety of the human race had been decreed, whereby He would inundate the earth with a flood of water sufficient to end all life.

The only survivors would be a man named Noah, his wife, three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives, eight souls in all. The promise God had made to Eve about her descendant being the Messiah, Redeemer, was not forgotten.

[17 : 22] And that seed will be perpetuated through and by Noah's son, Shem. And eventually, as recorded in Genesis chapter 10, the line of Shem would produce an offspring of monumental importance.

And this would be Abraham, from whom Isaac would be born, from whom Jacob would be born, from whom his twelve sons, comprising the strategic twelve tribes of Israel, would come.

And the Genesis account continues with Israel, who at the time consisted only of seventy persons moving to Egypt in response to the severe famine in Israel.

And there, they remained for four hundred years, eventually in servitude to the Egyptians. And then, God raised up the man Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt back to their homeland in Canaan. And upon the deaths of Moses and Joshua, God raised up judges who would lead the nation in all things of importance as regards the relationship between God and His covenant people Israel.

[18 : 25] Eventually, Samuel would be the last and most significant in the line of judges. He would anoint Israel's first king, named Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 6. A Brief History of Humanity, Part 2. Samuel, the last judge to serve Israel, was instructed by God to anoint Saul as Israel's first king.

Saul was a man of few strengths and many weaknesses. In short, his reign was a disaster on nearly every level. And upon his death, David, the youngest son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah, was anointed king.

He brilliantly pacified the entire region, and for the first time in Israel's history, they dwelt in peace, only because David had succeeded in defeating all threatening neighbors.

David's military prowess elevated the status of Israel to new heights and prepared the way for his successor to the throne. That would be his son, Solomon.

[19 : 31] King Solomon would be as successful in peace as his father David had been in war. New heights never before imagined were reached through the wisdom and expertise of King Solomon.

Upon his death, Rehoboam ascended to the throne. Being overly ambitious, Rehoboam's agenda as the new king promised to impose financial hardships on the people that they were unwilling to bear.

And as a result, ten of the twelve tribes that constituted the nation seceded from the Union. They established their own capital named Samaria, put their own king named Rehoboam on the throne, who of course was not from the royal tribe of Judah.

They ordained their own priests who were not of the legal tribe of Levi, and they built their own temple for worship. These ten tribes that pulled out of the Union would retain the name Israel, while the two remaining tribes would be designated Judah.

The other of the two being Benjamin, the smallest of all the tribes. This was approximately 930 years prior to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

[20 : 44] Both the northern ten tribes and the two in the south degenerated into massive corruption and idolatry, ignoring their rich heritage and forsaking the God who had called them and sustained

them.

God sent multiple prophets to both the northern and southern kingdoms, warning them that his judgment would surely visit them if they did not return to him.

They didn't, and he did. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians invaded and defeated the ten northern tribes, leading them into captivity as slaves.

And faring no better morally or spiritually than their northern brethren, 130 years later, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were invaded, and in 586 B.C., thousands were marched off to Babylon where they would serve in slavery for the famous 70-year period of Babylonian captivity.

And while in servitude there, the kingdom of Babylon was itself invaded and defeated by the Medes and the Persians who then became the dominant world power. It was then that the biblical book of Esther and its dramatic events would take place.

[21 : 59] The Jews were permitted to return to their homeland and rebuild with the efforts of Nehemiah. And another period of conflict would ensue under Greek domination until the death of Alexander the Great that would be followed by the rise of the Roman Empire.

And here, a new crisis develops regarding Israel's predicted Messiah just ahead. Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 7, A Brief History of Humanity, Part 3.

In our brief recount of history, the world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece have risen and fallen after having dominated Israel and all humanity throughout the Mediterranean basin.

Now, another has ascended that will outstrip them all, and that would be Rome. No nation had ever risen to the pinnacle of power and dominance on a broader geographical scale than Rome.

Following a succession of emperors who were regarded as gods and exercising total, often brutal, authority, the world had never seen anything like the achievements and glory of Rome.

[23 : 17] A worldwide renaissance was taking place in every sphere. Law, politics, government, art, architecture, all carried over from the Greeks who preceded them, reached unimagined accomplishments.

There was no quarter of the then-known world that Rome did not influence or control, including the tiny nation of Israel.

Israel was strategically located where three continents meet, and they soon became a Roman thoroughfare for legions of soldiers en route to and from Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Assigned to this particular outpost of Rome during our time of interest was the Roman loyalist named Pontius Pilate. Little did he know how dramatically his tour of duty would be impacted in his new station of Israel by a supposed Galilean peasant born about thirty years earlier.

It would be near the time Pilate was assigned to Judea by the Roman emperor Tiberius, that Jesus of Nazareth would begin his public ministry.

[24 : 36] For the Jewish population, the critical issue soon arose as to whether this Jesus of Nazareth could possibly be the long-awaited Messiah of Israel.

The prophets, beginning with Moses, had consistently written of one whom God would send to rescue and redeem Israel. Israeli commoners were fascinated by Jesus of Nazareth, this Galilean carpenter, who spoke like no one they had ever heard.

He preached everywhere, and recruited a dozen fellow Jews to assist him with the same message he was preaching, and even gave to them miraculous powers to effect physical healings of every sort.

But while the Jewish commoners embraced Jesus, his teachings and his miracles, he was not at all received by the leadership of Israel.

They regarded Jesus as a threat, a troublemaker, much as they saw his forerunner, John the Baptist. And following a highly controversial public ministry among the Jews, a conspiracy was hatched between Judas Iscariot, one of the original twelve apostles that Christ had chosen, and the ruling class of chief priests, Pharisees, and scribes.

[25 : 54] The end of the public ministry of the Galilean carpenter, many believed to be the Messiah, was at hand. Or was it? More ahead.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 8, Crucifixion and the Aftermath. It had become clear in the minds of the ruling establishment of Judaism that Jesus of Nazareth posed a real threat to their influence, position, and power.

And such is clearly stated in John 10 that tells us, Therefore, the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council and were saying, What are we doing?

For this man Jesus is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation. And then, verse 53 concludes with, So from that day on, they planned together to kill him.

Then and there, the decision was made. For the good of a nation and ourselves and the position we enjoy, Jesus has got to go. The only question remaining was how to go about it.

[27 : 05] And that would be solved by the unexpected help from none other than an intimate insider of Jesus himself, an apostle no less, Judas, one of the twelve. And soon, the opportune time would come when Jesus could be arrested by the temple police at a time and place away from public awareness.

Their goal required not merely the arrest of Jesus, but his death, because that alone would provide the only real solution. But as an occupied people, under the jurisdiction of the Roman government, the ability for the Jews to impose the death penalty on anyone, had been taken from them.

They had no recourse but to try and manipulate Pilate to do it for them. They would succeed. Pilate was outmaneuvered at every turn when he sought to spare the life of Jesus simply on the basis of Roman law.

But the Jewish elite establishment would have none of it. Neither they nor Pilate had any idea they were presiding over what would become the seminal event for the entire world and for all of human history.

Peter, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, explained what really occurred unbeknownst to the very ones who were carrying it out. In Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, Peter explained in reference to Jesus as he addressed the assembly of Jews, This man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death.

[28 : 48] And God raised him up again, putting an end to the agony of death since it was impossible for him to be held in its power. Those who instigated his death and carried it out were clearly and willfully responsible.

But what is often lost sight of is that Jesus was also delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. In addition, Jesus himself earlier declared it was for this very purpose that he came into the world, as he stated in John 12.

All these components came together to establish forever this event of six hours on a Roman cross to become the most significant event on behalf of the entire human race for all time.

It was then that he who knew no sin was made to be sin on behalf of the entirety of mankind. The world would never be the same.

It still isn't. And what is next is next. Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 9 Post-Resurrection Events No doubt No doubt the ruling establishment of the Jewish hierarchy considered themselves rid of their worst enemy, Jesus of Nazareth.

[30 : 06] They could not have been more wrong. His apostles, as Peter attested at Pentecost, declared Jesus not dead at all, but merely relocated.

He had risen from the dead and had not only shown himself to the twelve, but to five hundred brethren at one time. His post-resurrection ministry continued for nearly six weeks before ascending back to heaven, and right before the very eyes of the twelve, and then before he left, he imparted marching orders to his apostles to make him and his victory over death known to everyone, beginning in Jerusalem.

And that is precisely what we are doing, right here and now, before your very eyes and ears, Peter told them. The crowd was electrified because the text in Acts 2 says Peter's message went straight to their heart.

That means they got it. They got it to the extent they wanted to receive the water baptism or the ceremonial cleansing that testified to their change of heart. Three thousand Jews were baptized with John's baptism, just as many had been before the death of Jesus.

Far from being rid of Jesus, the threat to the Jewish establishment, the numbers of Jews that now identify with him is in the thousands. In addition, more miracles were being performed by the twelve apostles, and more and more Jews were believing the message of the twelve about Jesus being the Messiah and his resurrection from the dead.

[31 : 39] Peter followed up his Pentecostal message in Acts 2, continuing in chapter 3, And in essence, Peter told them right there in the temple that there were but two things that needed to be accomplished before God's kingdom would be established on earth, and that one of them had

already been accomplished, that which the prophets predicted that God's Messiah should suffer. God and Christ already fulfilled that part, Peter said. The second part deals with the response of Israel to that fact. That Israel is your part.

God did his part in providing his son. Your part is to embrace him by acknowledging you were wrong and changing your mind about Jesus, who he is, why he came, and what he accomplished. Israel, it's up to you. What is your response? And chapter 4 sadly records their response. Still holding official sway over the masses, the leadership confronted the twelve apostles and threatened them with prosecution if they continued to preach about Jesus and the resurrection. Dismissing their threats, the twelve exclaimed, They had no choice and no other intent but to go on proclaiming what they knew to be true, come what may.

[33 : 07] That is what we must do. Hence, the persecution of the followers of Jesus would begin. And it would be Jews persecuting Jews.

This marks a very dramatic and new situation arising to be explained upcoming. Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 10 The Kingdom Offer Remains Viable Previous programs of Christianity Clarified have addressed the issue under the title What Everything Is All About.

It is not an exaggeration nor sensationalism, although it certainly is in every way sensational. It is truly what everything is all about and it is the singular theme of the redemption, restoration, reclamation, and as Peter put it, times of refreshing in Acts chapter 3.

The oft-declared name of it all was first declared by John the Baptist when he began his ministry, recorded at the outset of all four of the Gospels. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. John the Baptist and his electrifying message to Israel was the first word heard from God in four hundred years, since Malachi laid down his pen and closed out the Old Testament.

[34 : 31] And how did he end it? He ends it in chapter 4 with a fiery description of the second coming of the Messiah. But before that, Malachi refers to the first coming of the Messiah in chapter 3.

There he prophesies that God's messenger will clear the way before the Messiah and announce his coming. When Malachi predicted that, nothing happened for four hundred years.

Silence from the God who reveals himself. Nothing. Four hundred years. Then, one day, a very unorthodox kind of man with a message never before heard arrives on the scene.

To say he is an odd sort of fellow is an understatement. He appeared to be a kind of loner, a man of no refinement in attire or diet.

But what he lacked in any of the required and expected conventions of the day, he more than made up for with the message he preached and the thundering authority with which he preached it.

[35 : 36] But more than that, what was electrifying in his message was the kingdom of heaven is at hand. All of Israel needs to repent of their sin and undergo the ceremonial cleansing of baptism.

Israel, said John, needs to prepare itself to receive the Messiah, the long-awaited one of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. He will bring God's rule and reign to the earth.

Messiah will redeem our broken and fallen world. He will restore and make new the earth and impose justice and righteousness in place of the evil and corruption.

Israel, needs to repent of sin, undergo moral cleansing and purification in preparation to receive this special one whom God will shortly send.

For the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's ready to break forth when the Messiah comes. And when he comes, he will begin getting things underway to that end.

[36 : 38] Thousands of Jews heard and believed John. What he spoke of had been longed for since God gave that promise about the seed of the woman in Genesis 3 over 4,000 years earlier.

And now, now, in their lifetime, this promise is to be fulfilled. Now, God is ready to send the long-awaited Messiah who will right the wrongs of the world, bring peace and righteousness, and the very rule of God in heaven will come to earth.

Of course, they were electrified. What loyal Jew wouldn't be. Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 11. A Brief Historical Account, Part 1.

John the Baptizer and Jesus were second cousins. John was six months older than Jesus, and when he reached the age of 30, he was inducted into the Jewish priesthood.

He had been engaged in ministry for about six months when Jesus arrived at John's baptism. He, too, was now 30 years of age and would also be inducted into the priesthood.

[37 : 44] His, however, would differ from John's in that John was after the order of Levi and Aaron, while Jesus would be baptized as a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

It was then that John would introduce Jesus to Israel as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. It also marked the official beginning of the public ministry of Jesus.

His message would be the same as John's had been preaching, and it consisted of proclaiming the kingdom of heaven being at hand. From Genesis 3 and the fall of humanity, God had promised to send a Redeemer, one who would redeem and restore a broken and ruined world.

And this Redeemer would be the offspring of a woman, but he would also possess deity with the power and the wisdom to restore the whole world. John the Baptist identified his second cousin Jesus of Nazareth to be that very one of whom Moses and the prophets spoke 4,000 years earlier. He was the Messiah, the anointed one of God, whose task was to bring that kingdom of heaven to earth. John and Jesus both preached that the same promised kingdom was now nearby, at hand, available for establishing.

[39 : 07] To validate his claim, Jesus performed many miracles, and they were to authenticate that he really was the Messiah and the fulfillment of what the prophets promised 4,000 years earlier.

Jesus, as Messiah and Redeemer of Israel, was to be embraced by the nation Israel as their Messiah. They, in return, were to be the spearhead nation or vanguard for bringing all the other nations under the banner of the kingdom of heaven that had come to earth.

Why this did not materialize was due to the official position of Israel toward Jesus as their Messiah, its being one of rejection, not acceptance.

While it is true, many Israelis did embrace Jesus as Messiah, yet the official verdict of Israel's leaders soundly rejected Jesus, much as they had rejected John the Baptist who introduced him to Israel as their Messiah in John chapter 1.

Now, three years later, Jesus would arrive in Jerusalem just prior to his crucifixion. As he approached the city, he paused and actually wept over it, saying, How often I would have gathered you together as a hen does gather her chickens under her wings, but you would not.

[40 : 32] It was Israel's official rejection of Jesus as their Messiah that caused the whole promise and program of the coming kingdom of heaven to be held in abeyance.

That which was proclaimed as at hand was no longer at hand. Instead, it will be the death of the Messiah that will be at hand.

Christianity Clarified Volume 55, Track 12 A Brief Historical Recount, Part 2 When John the Baptist arrived on the scene, he began preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand, that is, very near, we might even say right around the corner.

That kingdom would be established by none other than the king, the Messiah, whom God would send to Israel to effect the redemption and restoration of the fallen, broken world.

What is more, John told the people that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the very one Moses and the prophets had predicted would come 4,000 years earlier.

[41 : 38] The response to the ordinary people of Israel was positive. They greatly enjoyed the teachings of Jesus and they certainly benefited from his many miracles.

Yet, the response from the leadership of Israel, the chief priests and the others of the ruling class was negative. They had rejected John the Baptist earlier and his message and now they were rejecting Jesus himself.

So threatened were they by his presence and teaching, they conspired with Judas Iscariot to assist in the arrest of Jesus. The arrest took place and Pilate, the Roman governor, was manipulated to issue an execution order for Jesus.

The rulers now could consider themselves free and clear of this threat to their position and authority. One cannot blame them for thinking their troubles with the Galilee and Carpenter were over.

After all, crucifixion contains built-in finality for anyone subjected to it. But they couldn't have been more wrong. Their worst nightmare was going to come back from that so-called finality by being raised from the dead.

[42 : 53] And for 40 days Jesus spent time with his apostles and others until they witnessed his physical departure from the earth via the ascension. But just before his departure, he instructed the twelve about their mission of proclamation.

They would boldly proclaim and continue preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But now, there was an addition to that message. It was now the resurrection of the Messiah.

Being threatened by the same establishment that instigated the crucifixion of Jesus, they were forbidden to speak anymore in his name, as recorded in Acts chapter 4.

But they boldly refused to comply and continued to make Jesus known. Several thousands of fellow Jews were listed among those who believed Jesus to be the Messiah whom God had raised from the dead.

And this resulted in a new wave of intense persecution of those Jews who believed. And it was Jews persecuting Jews. Non-Jews or Gentiles had not yet even entered the picture.

[43 : 59] In the midst of all this intense persecution was a young Pharisee by the name of Saul who came from the city of Tarsus. And Saul would distinguish himself as persecutor in chief of these fellow Jews who believed in Jesus as Messiah resurrected from the dead.

After all, the ruling establishment had already depicted followers of Jesus as nothing more than a cancer growing on Judaism. They must be neutralized or if necessary done away with.

And Saul of Tarsus would see to that. And of course it would all be in the name of God. Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 13 The Stoning of Stephen Acts chapter 7 is a pivotal event during the post-resurrection period of Jesus.

The twelve apostles would not suspend their preaching and the number of Jews who came to faith continued to grow. One such preacher was being extremely effective. His name was Stephen and every time the authorities confronted him in an effort to disprove his claims or answer Stephen's arguments, they simply could not do it.

Acts chapter 7 records they could not resist his arguments or his answers. Thus, they concluded they had but one recourse.

[45 : 26] Stephen had to be silenced. Their rationale was simple. When you cannot defeat an opponent and his arguments, eliminate him and his arguments will go away with him.

After all, it worked with Jesus, so they imagined. It would be a simple thing to do. For the right amount of money, men who were local ne'er-do-wells could be hired and were hired and bribed to say they had heard Stephen blaspheme God with their own ears.

These phony witnesses would then come to the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, and swear to that charge. Stephen would be arrested and interrogated. The witnesses, so-called, would testify. Stephen would be permitted to give his defense, which they had already planned to reject. They would then be pretending to deliberate in order to reach a verdict, which they had in fact already reached.

The guiltiest charged verdict would surprise no one, including Stephen. They then would forcefully escort Stephen to the stoning pit outside of town, where these elite, highly positioned, and respected leaders of Israel would rain down stones upon the body of Stephen until he breathed his last.

[46 : 47] End of problem. Or was it? They had underestimated a similar fantasy about Jesus, too. Witnessing this stoning of Stephen was the aforementioned chief persecutor, Saul of Tarsus.

The men physically lifting and throwing large stones at Stephen would need more physical flexibility and dexterity than their bulky robes would allow.

And as they disrobed from their heavy ankle-length outer garments, Stephen volunteered to be custodian of their robes and no doubt eager to do so. And then, with his own eyes, Stephen would witness nothing less than the murderous execution of a man everyone knew to be innocent.

One must seriously ask himself whether the execution of Stephen, at the very hands of the highest authority in Judaism, didn't convey another official answer of Israel to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth.

After all, in all of Israel there was no body of men who had greater authority over all things Jewish. The Sanhedrin consisted of 70 of Israel's movers and shakers and was presided over by none less than the high priest of Israel himself.

[48 : 03] You can't get more authoritative than that in Judaism. And in much the same way as it was with the trial and execution of Jesus, the fix was in. No doubt Saul of Tarsus returned all those outer robes to their respective owners perhaps even with congratulatory remarks like, Good job, men!

Well done! God must surely be pleased! Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 14 Saul the Zealous Persecutor One of the very most remarkable earth-shaking events of human history is recorded in the ninth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

It recounts the extraordinary experience of Saul of Tarsus while he was en route to Damascus, the capital of neighboring Syria. Word had come to Saul that numbers of Jews had been preaching and insisting Jesus the Nazarene was Israel's Messiah and that he had risen from the dead.

When the authorities began arresting them, some of their numbers escaped. The word was they had fled to the city of Damascus, about a hundred miles northeast of Jerusalem in the country of Syria.

Being the overzealous guardian for the purity of Judaism that he was, he saw those renegade Jews who were now far away from being brought to justice as having avoided it.

[49 : 27] But not for long. Saul went before the chief priest and offered his services. If they would give him official letters of introduction that would satisfy the authorities in Damascus, he would volunteer to lead a complement of Jewish police from the temple all the way to Damascus.

There, he would locate the escapees, round them up, and bring them back to Jerusalem in shackles. Eager to take him up on his offer and probably congratulating him for volunteering, the necessary paperwork was processed.

And soon, Saul and the complement of men with him headed for Damascus. Having been on the road for days as they neared the city, everything changed.

A blinding light from heaven bathed a company with a brilliance that exceeded anything anyone had experienced from the sun. So brilliant, in fact, it rendered Saul completely blind and he would have to be led by the hand into the city of Damascus.

The voice that accompanied the light was that of Jesus himself. Stunned beyond belief, there was no denying the reality of what was happening.

[50 : 40] After all, those with Saul also were dazzled by the same light and heard the voice of someone speaking from heaven, although they could not understand what the voice was saying.

But Saul could. The message was personal, just for him. Being led to Damascus, quarters were secured for Saul at the house of a man named Judah, residing on a street called Straight.

Saul remained there traumatized. He could not eat nor drink for three full days, nor did he want to. Processing over and over again what had happened just before they got to Damascus, he slowly came to grips with the reality of it all.

It actually happened. He had not imagined it. It really was Jesus of Nazareth. He really was alive.

Again and again, Saul replayed the incident in his mind, but it always came out the same way.

It was real. It actually did happen. It really was Jesus. The implications were simply staggering. That all being undeniably true, despite his not wanting it to be true, portended enormous consequences, none of which he came to Damascus to carry out.

[51 : 57] From here on, nothing would be the same for Saul of Tarsus, or for the rest of the world. Okay, Saul, where do you go from here?

We'll see up next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 55, Track 15, Saul Confronts the Unthinkable. Picture the scene, if you will.

There sits Saul of Tarsus, persecutor-in-chief of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. He is in the home of a man named Judah. Saul is blind as a bat, still in shock from what he experienced en route to Damascus.

Time and again, he mentally replayed the whole affair, asking himself if it was real. Maybe he had imagined the whole thing. Maybe it was just a bad dream.

No, a bad nightmare. But no matter how he tried to replay it or explain it, the answer always came out the same. It was real. It really was Jesus.

[52 : 56] He really was alive. The resurrection claimed by his followers that I came here to arrest really happened? And what about the implications of all of this?

If that is all true, what does that make me? It makes me wrong. All wrong. It means the followers of Jesus, whom I'd already imprisoned and came here to imprison more, it means they're right.

It means the chief priests, the guardians of Israel's purity and religion, were all wrong. And they're still wrong. I can't believe it. But I can't deny it.

And Stephen. Oh no, Stephen. Stephen, whose stoning I actually enjoyed. Stephen was right. Stephen was innocent.

Murdered by the most respected religious group in Judaism. They were wrong. They're still wrong. And they don't even know it. Just like I was wrong and didn't know it either.

[53 : 59] I actually thought I was doing God a service. I was striking a blow for the purity of the faith of Judaism. Wrong! Wrong!

Wrong! How could I have been so wrong? How could the followers of Jesus be so right? No wonder the man didn't eat or drink for three days.

He couldn't. His psyche was paralyzed, traumatized. He was just plain out of it. And you can be sure he didn't sleep much either. And whenever he awakened from dozing, there it was all over again.

Replayed in vivid detail with the end result always the same. It was real. It actually happened. To end the longest 72 hours of Saul's entire life, God dispatched a servant called Ananias to go to the home of one Judah living in the street called Straight.

Lay his hands upon Saul so that he could receive his sight. Reluctant to do so, Ananias told God the reputation of Saul of Tarsus was known all over.

[55 : 03] This man was brutal and was greatly feared by all the followers of Jesus. Surely, surely you don't want me to search out that Saul. And assuring Ananias that he quite well knew what he was doing and that, yes, it was that Saul of Tarsus who was now a different Saul.

Yet, with trepidation, obediently, Ananias located Saul and explained why he was there. And he did lay hands on Saul and he received his sight and was baptized in the name of the one he sought to destroy.

Little did anyone know this was the birthing of a new era for the world that had begun with Christ at Calvary.

Christianity Clarified Volume 55, Track 16, An Unlikely World Changer. Could it be that a man dying on a cross could change the world?

It did not look like it at the time, but changed the world it did. And it began at Calvary outside Jerusalem when Jesus of Nazareth who knew no sin was made to be sin for the entire world.

[56 : 16] The Jews who did believe in Jesus to be the Messiah of Israel began with his twelve apostles he had chosen. And through their preaching and miracles of Jesus, thousands were added to their number.

And it didn't stop with his death. It actually increased due to his resurrection. In early Acts, the believers numbered in the thousands and would continue to grow.

Yet, they were all Jews. After all, Jesus was a Jew, not a Gentile. In fact, it would be nearly ten years after the resurrection of Jesus that any Gentile would come to believe in him.

In fact, Saul had only fellow Jews to persecute, and he eagerly set about the sordid business of doing so. It was soon after he himself was converted to the resurrected Christ that he went into the synagogue at Damascus, but for an entirely different purpose than that for which he had come there when he left Jerusalem.

Originally, he would be going into the synagogue to identify those Jews he was seeking. They were the ones who had fled arrest in Jerusalem.

[57 : 26] And Paul had come to take them prisoner, returning them to Jerusalem. Friday evening, he does go into the synagogue, but when he is invited to the platform as a guest speaker, he began to tell them, Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, and he, Saul, had been entirely wrong in opposing him.

Can you imagine the disbelief of those in that synagogue? Were they hearing things? Saul of Tarsus, with his reputation of brutality toward all the followers of Jesus, is now one of them?

Can that be? Yes, it not only could be, it was. All those former negative energies owned by Saul of Tarsus had virtually overnight become positive, no-holds-barred commitment to the person and the faith he once sought to destroy.

As a brand-new believer in Jesus, he caused a real stir. In fact, Saul was raising such a ruckus, the local anti-Jesus Jews decided to do him in, and it was only because his new-found friends, fellow believers, looked out for him that he survived.

They put Saul in one of those huge woven commercial baskets and led him down over the wall at night so as to avoid the usual gate by which people normally left Damascus.

[59 : 00] And leaving Damascus, he then was led to Arabia, where he would receive additional revelations personally from the risen Christ. This is recounted in Galatians chapter 1.

We are not told how long he was in Arabia before returning again to the city of Damascus. Saul's preparation for conveying a world-changing message was now well underway.

Christianity Clarified volume 55 tract 17 from Persecutor to Proclaimer. It had to have been downright suspicious and controversial. Saul of Tarsus had become a believer in Jesus of Nazareth?

But who could possibly believe that? Saul had such an embedded reputation for being so militantly anti-Jesus, the faithful were unwilling to believe that Saul had actually been converted.

They were too accustomed to hiding from this man. Now they were expected to embrace him as one of their own? That was just not going to happen. But there was one man who was putting together everything he had heard about Saul and actually became convinced that Saul was for real. [60 : 15] Despite the fear and distrust that Saul had generated for years, a disciple by the name of Barnabas took Saul under his wing and brought him right to the apostles, told them how Saul had boldly proclaimed the name of Jesus in the synagogue at Damascus.

And when Saul preached Jesus was the Messiah and had indeed risen from the dead and no doubt recounted to people his Damascus Road experience, another death sentence on him was hatched by Greek-speaking Jews who believed Saul to be nothing more than a traitor, a traitor to Judaism who needs to be silenced.

Saul wasn't merely preaching about Jesus. He was doing so boldly, the text says. There were no ifs, ands, or buts in the message Saul was preaching regarding Jesus.

It was an in-your-face message delivered with such passion and compelling arguments there was no resisting him. Soon it no doubt sounded like another Stephen situation, remember?

The text told us in Acts chapter 7 that Stephen too spoke out boldly in the name of Jesus. And when those who heard him could not cope with the wisdom and convincing arguments he posed, they simply decided to do away with him.

[61 : 35] And they did. Now, another man by the name of Saul who had actually witnessed that stoning of Stephen stands in the very position of Stephen under a sentence of death.

It's an old story and it goes on in our present day. The principle is simple and very effective. When you cannot refute a man's arguments and reasoning don't let him speak. Silence him!

And if he won't be silenced then eliminate him. It's the thinking of weak-minded men with no moral scruples and we have them today just as believers had to contend with them in the first century.

Now, as regards Saul the word got out. Fellow believers went to him and told him, Saul, you have really become a hot item and the word on the street is that you are a marked man.

They will kill you, Saul. We've got to get you out of town while there is still time. So a group of fellow believers escort Saul some 80 miles to the port city of Caesarea where they put him on a ship headed for Saul's hometown back to Tarsus.

[62 : 46] Practically nothing more is heard of Saul of Tarsus nor do we know anything of what he did or how he fared in his old hometown. But the world had only begun to hear from this man Saul and why is just ahead.

Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 18 Groundbreaking Gentile News With Saul safely returned to his hometown of Tarsus the apostle Peter is engaged in another truly groundbreaking situation in the town of Joppa on the coast.

A Roman army officer by the name of Cornelius surfaces in Acts chapter 10 and here we are told that even though he was a Gentile he had become a believer that there was but one God and that he was the God worshipped by the Jews.

Cornelius was garrisoned in the town of Caesarea up the coast from Joppa when an angel appeared to him telling him God had heard his prayer. Cornelius was instructed to send men down to Joppa and locate the house of Simon the tanner.

There a man by the name of Peter was lodging. Peter would receive them and accompany them back to Cornelius. God prepared Peter to do just that when he gave him a mysterious vision of all kinds of animals gathered together instead of their usual separation of clean and unclean or animals accepted for food and sacrifice commingled with unclean animals that were not.

[64 : 24] Little did Peter understand these animals he saw three times in the vision actually represented people and not merely people but Jewish people mixed with Gentile people.

He would soon understand that when he arrived at the house of Cornelius he found an entire house full of Gentiles gathered with Cornelius and awaiting Peter's arrival.

Terrribly uncomfortable to be in the presence of Gentiles as he was he nonetheless told Cornelius about Jesus of Nazareth his death and resurrection.

It was obvious this was the information Cornelius was seeking and to verify the entire matter the Spirit of God descended upon these Gentiles and they spoke in languages they did not know in the same way the Jews did on the day of Pentecost.

But these were Gentiles not Jews. Now the clean and unclean animals Peter saw in that vision began to make sense.

[65 : 28] God was eliminating the age-old barrier between Jews and Gentiles and was using Peter to do it. This introduced a whole new dynamic into the first century events that were already earth-shaking beginning with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

And when Peter's Jewish brethren back in Jerusalem got wind that Peter had gone into a Gentile residence and even ate with them he was called on the carpet and criticized.

Peter related the entire affair and told them the Spirit of God descended upon those Gentiles in the house of Cornelius just as he had upon us at Pentecost. Shocked as they were they had no choice but to acknowledge that God was granting repentance and life to Gentiles just as he had been doing for Jews.

Still for many it would be a hard sell because strict separation between Jew and Gentiles had been in place for centuries. This indeed introduced an entirely new dimension to the already tumultuous first century.

Could it be? That an entirely new order previously unthought of was entering the scene? Precisely. And it would be shaking the earth even more.

[66 : 42] So much for Peter. Now, where is Saul and what is he doing? We will find him upcoming. Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 19 Barnabas and Saul reunite.

Acts 10 tells us that Jews who believed in Jesus were still under serious threat from the fallout of the stoning of Stephen in Acts chapter 7. The heat was still on.

In addition to Jews who fled to Damascus that Saul had pursued, others scattered all over the area just to survive. Some made their way to Antioch in Syria and they took the message about Jesus and his resurrection with them, preaching it not only to Jews but to Greeks also.

Chapter 11 tells us the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number of Greeks or Gentiles had turned to the Lord. Proof positive that the incident with Peter and Cornelius was only the beginning of calling in non-Jews as well as Jews.

But to many of the Jewish establishment it was still unimaginable. Perhaps they thought the situation with Peter and Cornelius was an anomaly, just a fluke.

[68 : 00] But it was far from a fluke. It was eventually to be recognized as the new norm. Still somewhat perplexed by it all, the Jewish believers in Jerusalem upon hearing great numbers of Gentiles were also coming to faith, sent Barnabas to Antioch in Syria to check this out and see what was really going on.

And when he got to Antioch sure enough he discovered it to be as they had heard. Barnabas himself was also instrumental in even more Gentiles than coming to faith.

He no doubt reminded himself about Saul of Tarsus telling him that God had called him to be the apostle to the Gentiles. But Saul was still back in his hometown of Tarsus when he had fled to escape fellow Jews in Jerusalem who had planned to kill him.

We don't know how long he was in Tarsus but we do know that his friend Barnabas who was the only one to believe in him after his conversion knew where he was.

We must assume Barnabas no doubt concluded Saul Saul Saul has got to get in on this this is right down his alley Gentiles left and right are coming to faith and Saul is the apostle to the Gentiles I've got to find him leaving Antioch in Syria to find Saul in his hometown of Tarsus in Cilicia Barnabas recounted what all God was doing among Gentiles in Antioch they returned there to resume ministering among the Gentiles after all there were a lot more Gentiles in Syria than there were in Israel little wonder the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch while engaged there in the ongoing ministry it was then the spirit of God made clear that Barnabas and Saul were to set sail to reach Jews and Gentiles all over the Mediterranean basin and the first missionary journey of Barnabas and Saul would be groundbreaking in many ways needs to be kept in mind that it was not until a full 15 to 17 years after his

[70 : 12] Damascus road conversion that the first of three missionary journeys would take place and putting it mildly there would be earth changing with far reaching consequences to this present

day but it will come with a price doesn't everything done for Christ come with a price just ahead Christianity Clarified Volume 55 Track 20 Groundbreaking at another Antioch Barnabas and Saul having departed from Antioch in Syria on their first missionary journey arrive at another city also called Antioch but located in Pisidia far to the west of the Antioch in Syria from which they started in attending the local synagogue they were invited as guests to address the congregation it was Paul who then recounted the history of the Jews from the time they left Egypt through the period of Samuel and the judges to the enthronement of

David the king Paul then fast forwarded Israel's history to John the Baptist who had introduced Jesus of Nazareth to the people of Israel and identified him as the Messiah so long awaited instead of Israel receiving Jesus as Messiah the ruling leadership rejected him and demanded his crucifixion but God raised him from the dead in fulfillment of the prophecy given a thousand years earlier by David in Psalms 2 and 16 it is also here at this Antioch in Pisidia that Saul's name changed he hereafter will be referred to as Paul but by far the most significant element of this first of Paul's journeys is the content of his message in addressing his Jewish brethren in this synagogue he concluded his brief history lesson of Israel by bringing them right up to date that actually revealed the reason for his and

Barnabas's even being present for this supposedly routine synagogue service but there was surely nothing routine about this it was here Paul proclaimed the unheard of truth that not only had God made Jesus the Messiah rise from the dead but that it was through this crucified one that we receive forgiveness of sins and that by him that is by Christ all who believe in him are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses that was a crystal clear previously unheard of concept and it was labeled the gospel the good news it struck that first century synagogue crowd like a thunderclap all of this belongs to the incredible 13th chapter of Acts but prior to this bold declaration about justification through

Christ the extent of the message was limited to Christ being the Messiah sent from God and his resurrection from the dead Peter at Pentecost had explained how Israel was guilty of Messiah's death he also related that Jesus was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God but still no one had connected the cruel death of Christ as substitutionary a sacrifice for the benefit of bearing the guilt and punishment of others this was new content and it obviously struck both Jew and Gentile in a brand new way previously Israel had been deeply entrenched in animals sacrificed to atone for humans could Christ's death possibly be the grand finale of that indeed it was and here it is just the beginning how could this concept not have been on one of the many revelations Paul was receiving from the risen

Christ oh it was to be sure it was and many more are to follow read Romans 3 through 5 Christianity Clarified volume 55 track 21 a preview of upcoming volume 56 to describe the first century A.D. [74 : 38] as chaotic and confusing is an understatement for sure and why is this it's because of what is taking place in Israel and the Mediterranean between the time of the death and resurrection of Christ around 30 to 33 A.D.

until the close of the first century that is usually referred to as 100 A.D. or about 70 years after the death of Christ already considered in this 55th volume was the dramatic Damascus Road conversion of Saul of Tarsus many believe this man to have lived the second most important life of anyone ever born lived namely that of Jesus the Nazarene God's only son and Israel's Messiah the entire book of Acts consists of 28 chapters and can be read word for word in about an hour or less yet the events described in those 28 chapters took a full 30 years to transpire and nearly all the confusion that surfaces in this book focuses upon the person of Jesus

Christ the controversy that swirled about him was whether Jesus of Nazareth was the one prophesied by Moses and the prophets who clearly predicted that such a one would come to Israel and that he would be God's anointed the anointed simply means God's chosen or appointed or selected one to authenticate his claims of being the Messiah Jesus performed many miracles the reality of which were indisputed despite his miracles and teachings Israel remained divided while the Jewish commoners embraced him as God sent one the ruling establishment largely rejected Jesus and his claims and they were the Jewish scribes Sadducees Pharisees chief priests and high priests that saw Jesus of Nazareth as unsuitable to be

Israel's Messiah and sought to rid the nation of him thinking that his death ended the threat his resurrection three days later merely provided more confidence and boldness on the part of the Messiah's apostles and others who believed in him for nearly ten years after Christ's ascension to

heaven the number of Jews believing Jesus to be Israel's Messiah grew dramatically but still were limited to Jews alone it would not be until Acts 10 approximately an entire decade later when the first non-Jew was reported to come to faith in Jesus he was a Gentile and a Roman army officer named Cornelius this caused quite a stir simply because Cornelius was a Jew volume 56 upcoming will cover the ongoing conflict over the person of

Christ the increase of the Gentiles coming to Christ and the decrease of Jews coming to Christ slowly but surely history records the setting aside of Israel as referenced in Romans chapters 9 10 and 11 and the increasing numbers of Gentiles being added to what will become the Christian church we will see how many of the features of Judaism were actually going to be adopted into what would become Christianity so very much lies ahead by way of understanding and appreciation for the history of it all never forget that history is the only explanation of how we got where we are and why it is as it is ignore history and you remain in the dark and who wants to do that when so much light is available so thank you so much for being part of our ongoing effort to clarify

[79 : 02] Christianity this is Pastor Marv Wiseman and the good folks at Grace Bible Church saying may God richly bless you he has us ■■■■ may God may God you may God you may God may God mistakes may God Bürger mening may God may God may God may God may God may God may God may God non may God may God may God may God