

Christianity Clarified Volume 56

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[0 : 00] Christianity Clarified, Volume 56, Track 1. Groundbreaking at Another Antioch, Part 2. There are absolutely monumental things occurring here in Acts 13 that will have repercussions for Jews and Gentiles forever.

And here are just a few of the things resulting from that first missionary journey. First, the good news of the Jewish Messiah having arrived, having been put to death and then having been raised from the dead, becomes their paramount message.

It still is, even to Jews today. And as most Jews of Paul's day rejected this message, so it is today. But he makes it very clear that this new message of the Jewish Messiah, crucified and raised from the dead, had to first be preached to the Jewish people.

This could not be more clear than is revealed in verse 46 of Acts 13. Here, we are told Paul and Barnabas not only revealed this, but did so boldly.

Did you get that? Boldly. It means not timidly, nor tentatively. It means with forcefulness, deliberateness, with confidence.

[1 : 16] No him hauling around. And what provided the basis for this great boldness? It was simply because they knew whereof they spoke.

They knew what they knew, and they knew that they knew. Nothing in any area of discourse enables a speaker to deliver a message more confidently than really knowing what he's talking about, and knowing that he knows what he's talking about.

They did, and it showed. After briefly recounting Israel's past and God's gracious provision for their forefathers, from the ancient time of Abraham and the Egyptian bondage and deliverance, Paul brought them right up to speed with the death and bodily resurrection of Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

What is more, Paul said, it is through this resurrected Messiah that forgiveness of sin becomes available, and available in a way that the law of Moses could not deliver.

Listen to this. Beginning with Acts 13.38, Paul said, Therefore, let it be known to you, brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through him everyone who believes is freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses.

[2 : 50] Wow! Paul, are you serious? Indeed, he was. So serious he would spend his life and give his life for the proclamation of this most monumental truth ever revealed to the human race.

And, says Paul, this forgiveness is available and extended to all people, not only Jews, but Gentiles also. Uh-oh. Do you see what's happening here? What is happening to the Jewish exclusivity that had been in place since God gave the law to Moses?

It's gone. Gone. The law of Moses is superseded by a crucified man? Impossible!

Well, was he teaching against the law of Moses, or was he not? More upcoming, important stuff.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 56, Track 2. Paul and the Law of Moses.

The main charge the Jews will level against the teaching of the Apostle Paul will follow him all through his ministry. And what was it? He was accused of teaching against the law of Moses.

[3 : 59] And for any Jew to do that was to qualify himself for execution. That was blasphemy of the worst sort. And the penalty for blasphemy was death. This is why the Jews in Acts 21 would say regarding Paul, This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the law.

And again in Acts 22, when Paul told his Jewish audience that God had sent him to the Gentiles, they responded by shouting, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live.

And the 23rd chapter following finds the Jewish opposition to Paul so vehement that more than 40 devout Jews swore an oath that they would not eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.

That is opposition with a capital O. But was their opposition truly justified? Or was it a case of ignorance run amok? Did Paul teach against the law of Moses?

It certainly looked like it. But he did no such thing. The problem was, once again, faulty assumptions ruled the day. Mob mentality and confusion mingled with misunderstanding derived from faulty assumptions simply took over.

[5 : 20] Nothing Paul could say would dissuade them. So why let him even say it? Kill him! The faulty assumptions of the first century Jews to whom Paul spoke remain in place to this present day.

Same old faulty assumptions embraced by every generation of Jews from the first century to the present. And the Jewish faulty assumptions are not owned by them alone.

No siree! Multitudes of Gentiles, you heard me, Gentiles, that is, non-Jews, labor under those same faulty assumptions as do the Jews when it comes to the law of Moses, synonymous with the covenant God established at Sinai after he led them out of Egypt.

That covenant, often referred to as the Mosaic Covenant because God gave it exclusively to Israel through Moses, continues to suffer from great misunderstanding from both Jews and Gentiles, simply because most believed then, and still believe today, that by obedience to the law of Moses set forth in Genesis through Deuteronomy, which of course includes the Ten Commandments, one becomes justified or accepted by God.

After all, wasn't that why God gave the law? Obey it, and he will accept you. Therefore, righteousness is obtained by keeping the law. Seems to make sense, doesn't it?

[6 : 44] But it is far off the mark. The proof was in the temporary nature of the law. Temporary? Wasn't the law of Moses as eternal as God who gave it?

Absolutely not. And the proof of that is up next, and it's very revealing. One simply cannot overemphasize this business of people, Jews and Gentiles, making faulty assumptions, and the consequences being so devastating.

It still is, and we will see up next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 56, Track 3. Faulty Assumptions About the Law.

There is no question the law God gave Israel through Moses was to be the modus operandi for the nation of Israel. Its governance and provisions covered every aspect of Jewish social and religious life.

The law of Moses spelled out everything the Jew needed to know and do. No doubt, it was largely due to the source of the law being God himself that the Jews automatically assumed the law through Moses was as lasting as the God from whom it came.

[7 : 58] But it wasn't. And that was and is a major faulty assumption of the Jews in Paul's day and to this very day. How can we be sure the law of Moses was never intended to be enforced permanently?

We are sure on the basis of what God himself said through his prophet in Jeremiah chapter 31 and repeated in Ezekiel 37 that God promises a new covenant for Israel expressly stating that it would not be like the old covenant established under Moses which Israel did not keep but broke repeatedly.

And the provision of a new covenant is also found in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 Corinthians 3, and Hebrews 8. But since Jews do not accept the New Testament as being the word of God they reject those passages.

But still, for any self-respecting Jew the references of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 37 should be adequate. Those of Paul's day made the same faulty assumptions that Jews make today.

It is assuming the law or covenant of Moses would abide forever. Christ identified this problem when he addressed the downcast disciples on the road to Emmaus just after his resurrection.

[9 : 20] Jesus chided them saying O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had written. For if they had believed all the prophets they would have discovered that it was spoken of the Messiah that he would be suffering many things before entering into his glory.

And so it is with the Jew then and today if he reads all the prophets have written he will read Jeremiah 31 with Ezekiel 37 and clearly see the old covenant was scheduled by God to be replaced with the new covenant.

It even explains the contrast between the two covenants. The problem was then and is now the Jews are so thoroughly fixated on the law of Moses they cannot imagine it being superseded. Tradition sometimes serves us well but sometimes it is a major impediment preventing us from seeing what really is true. And Christ himself criticized the Jews of his day saying they actually made the word of God of none effect by their traditions.

Does the Jew of today ever ask himself about the law of Moses its intent and purpose or what could possibly be problematic regarding the law if God was the one who gave it?

[10:41] Interesting answers are just ahead and whether you are Jewish or a Gentile question if what you now believe about the law of Moses is not true would you want to know it?

Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 4 The Purpose and Limit of the Law All can agree whether Jew or Gentile For a thing to be called a law it presumes to originate from someone and be intended for someone A law to be a law needs a law giver and a law keeper and therein lies the problem If the law giver is holy perfection personified then so must be the law he gives the law is a reflection of the character and holiness of the God who gave it So much for the law giver But what about the law keeper?

Uh oh now we have a problem because the law keeper is not like the law giver Jeremiah explains that quite clearly In chapter 31 he prophesied that the covenant God made with Israel when he brought them out of Egypt Israel broke In fact their greatest sin appeared to be their violation of the very first commandment as recorded in Exodus 20 and repeated in Deuteronomy chapter 5 that Israel was to have no other gods before him the only true God that brought them out of Egypt The sin was idolatry a gross violation to which repeated generations of Jews succumbed It was idolatry that became the principal complaint of most of the Jewish prophets and it was idolatry that led to the Babylonian invasion of Israel the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple followed by the 70 years of captivity in the land of Babylon Israel just didn't have it in them to be consistently obedient to the laws God gave through Moses this reality became the very basis for God promising the new covenant

The Jews were in perpetual violation of the old The dynamic and objective of the law was predicated upon the compliance of the law recipient that would also be in the best interest of the recipient and honoring to the law giver The law giver who gave it was holy but the subjects who received it were not and precisely here was where the system broke down and it was this moral breakdown this non-compliance of the law that necessitated the principle of sacrifice because the law required the soul that sins shall die that was the divine penalty for breaking God's law yet in God's grace he made provision for a substitute without the moral stain of sin to be acceptable in the place of the immoral stained sinner Animals have no moral guilt or capacity for sin Animals are not moral creatures but amoral or innocent if you will

God accepted the sacrifice of an innocent animal to atone for the sin of the guilty human Hence we have the innocent dying for the sins of the guilty But you may ask well where is the justice in that? [14:17] that is not just you're right it isn't it is grace even though God was not only pleased to accept the sacrificial innocent animal in the place of the guilty human who offered it it was not of sufficient value to take away the sin of the human but could only temporarily cover it needing to constantly provide an additional animal sacrifice stunning case this building here and we all need to grasp it just ahead Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 5 The Apostle Paul in Israel Part 1 Our brief consideration of Acts chapter 17 recounts one of many oppositions the Apostle Paul had to endure for preaching the gospel While his teaching from the Jewish scriptures persuaded many who heard him it also caused those who opposed him and what he taught to marshal their forces against him And here we are told a faction of Jews fueled by jealousy recruited from some ne'er-do-wells from the marketplace described as wicked men formed a mob and set the city in an uproar

Because their opponents could not refute the teaching Paul gave from the scriptures they schemed to silence Paul by making the issue political That would invite the local political government authorities into the fray and force them to also oppose Paul on serious political grounds So the accusation leveled against Paul and a local man named Jason whom Paul had won to Christ was that they were preaching another king besides Caesar That is they were declaring Jesus to be a king also And such was intended to incite the pagan Gentiles who governed the city to oppose Paul on political grounds It worked It was nothing more but a repeat of the strategy used by those who opposed Jesus when he stood at trial before Pontius Pilate several years earlier Remember?

Pilate cared not at all about the religious arguments and differences of the Jews And he saw their opposition to Jesus as nothing more than that Just a bunch of fanatical Jews wrangling about their religious differences And because of that Pilate was ready to release Jesus And that's when the Jewish leadership played the politic card They said If you release Jesus you are no friend of Caesar Everyone who makes himself to be a king opposes Caesar Now be reminded of who Pilate was as Caesar's appointed representative and governor in Judea He was Rome's authority over these conquered people the Jews whose land they were now occupying And when Pilate used the occasion to get in a dig at the Jews whom he hated and who hated him he surely did it with sarcasm and tongue in cheek when he said Shall I crucify your king?

Probably with a smirk on his face But the clever Jews delivered their punchline We have no king but Caesar Pilate was effectively boxed in He'd played right into their hands The Jews never in a million years considered Caesar their king And Pilate knew it But it played well for the masses Pilate was bested and he knew that too Do you not see the same tactics employed today in public political rallies and discourses and settings?

Call your opponents racists, fascists homophobes haters of whatever The accusations need not have even an element of truth in them but that doesn't matter What matters is does it work?

[18:10] Is it effective? Does it silence the opposition? Does it convince any undecideds to oppose them as well? Never mind what's true That has nothing to do with it like was said Has anything changed?

Evil is alive and well on planet earth Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 6 The Apostle Paul in Israel Part 2 Please be advised the content now under consideration must be adequately understood in order to grasp the really big picture as to what literally everything is all about We are engaging that which constitutes a kind of showdown between the God of Israel and Israel itself This and future sessions of Christianity Clarified will explain the ongoing efforts of the Apostle Paul to persuade Israel about the merits and legitimacy of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah of Israel Likewise, the twelve apostles during this same first century period continue to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom which they and Jesus proclaimed to Israel before his crucifixion

The kingdom was announced to Israel before Christ's death as being at hand or very near After the death of Christ it was then announced as available for Israel to actually receive Peter the Apostle extended the offer to Israel at Pentecost in Acts 2 and followed up with the same message in chapter 3 Many of the average people responded and were baptized with John's baptism in acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah but true to form the leadership of Israel who would later stone Stephen to death was not accepting the message Instead they began a campaign of threats and persecution with Jews persecuting Jews as early as Acts chapter 4 and the chief persecutor was none other than Saul of Tarsus Be reminded this Saul will later be known as the Apostle Paul whose missionary journeys we are now following in this present volume 56 of Christianity Clarified It will be this Jew Paul the Apostle formerly Saul of Tarsus who will expose his broken heart when he says in Romans chapter 9 I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart for I could wish that I myself were accursed separated from Messiah for the sake of my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh and then again in chapter 10 Brethren my heart's desire and my prayer to God for Israel is for their salvation No one could so fully understand Israel's rejection of Jesus as Israel's Messiah as Paul the Apostle because he formerly led the charge against Jesus and his followers As Saul of Tarsus he was the persecutor and chief of Jews who believed Jesus to be the Messiah and by his own testimony he told Timothy that he, Paul was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor of my own Jewish countrymen who believed Jesus to be Israel's Messiah

Years later after his three missionary journeys he stands to tell his story in defense before the Jews by admitting I persecuted this way to the death binding and putting both men and women into prisons and even pursued them to Damascus to return them to Jerusalem to be punished well it is not a stretch to label Saul of Tarsus the original Gestapo agent and persecutor in chief of the Jewish people think of it a Jew persecuting Jews Christianity Clarified volume 56 track 7 Paul's opposition in Pisidia we are pursuing consideration of the Apostle Paul and his explanation of the law of Moses remember he told the synagogue audience of Jews in Antioch of Pisidia that Jesus the Messiah provided forgiveness and that through him they could be freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses that's in Acts chapter 13

[22 : 45] Paul made it clear that this freedom God offered through his Messiah was available to Gentiles as well as to Jews the Gentiles were elated to hear this the Jews not at all their concern was that Paul was teaching against the law of Moses but Paul's rationale for including the Gentiles was by quoting Isaiah 49 in which was written I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles that you should bring salvation to the ends of the earth in no uncertain way Paul could say that was exactly what he was doing and why he was there in Antioch the Gentiles were absolutely elated but the Jewish element was incited to opposition by influential Jewish women in the community their objections prevailed and they literally drove Paul and Barnabas out of the area this opposition would become a pattern that would follow

Paul wherever he preached to a Jewish audience and what would be the mantra the main objection the Jews would level against Paul he teaches against the law of Moses after all Paul did say did he not that forgiveness was available from Jesus who could free them from all things by which they could not be freed through the law of Moses indeed he did the problem was the Jewish audiences would usually not even hear him out allowing a cogent explanation of how Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's Messiah fulfilled the prophecies of the Jewish prophets most in Paul's Jewish audience suffered from a common human problem they were so deeply entrenched in their tradition they refused to even give another idea a hearing and that problem persists to this very day and not merely among Jews in every venue of public discourse there is that element whose minds are made up and don't want to be confused with things like facts it's a human condition born of both ignorance and arrogance and in each of Paul's audiences only a minority would even give him a fair hearing he would be met with opposition in nearly every area he preached the gospel and most of it would come from his fellow countrymen the Jews but let's recall the words of the risen Christ when he called

Ananias to visit Paul after his Damascus Road experience remember he was sitting there blind hadn't eaten or drank for three days and sent Ananias to him and he told Ananias regarding Paul I will show him how much he must suffer for my namesake and for Paul here at Pisidian Antioch the suffering was just beginning Christianity Clarified volume 56 track 8 why God's servants must suffer part 1 we've just reviewed the message God gave to Ananias when he sent him to lay his hands on Saul of Tarsus that he might regain his sight from that blinding experience he had on the road to Damascus he told Ananias that Paul will be shown how many things he must suffer for Christ's sake that certainly doesn't make any sense does it why would it be necessary to suffer for simply delivering a message that would be the very best news anyone could ever hear it was a message of grace mercy forgiveness peace eternal life and included as Paul said in Acts 13 that all who believe this wondrous message will be freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses why in the world would anyone bearing a message like that have to suffer merely for delivering it and does not God who supposedly has all power at his disposal does he not also have the ability to overcome the things that would cause his servant

Paul to suffer and why would not God why could not God merely run interference for Paul so he would have freedom to deliver this most wonderful message in an unhindered fashion after all it was the very best news anyone could hear how could those who hear it possibly oppose it how could they brutalize and persecute even to death those who brought this message of grace and goodness the reason is very simple yet very profound and it is all bound up in one word and the meaning thereof it is to be remembered that we explored the concept early on in Christianity Clarified volumes 8 and 9 however that was some time ago since currently this present volume is number 56 we made efforts then to explain the volition

God imparted to both angels and humans when he created them by volition it is meant that they were endowed with a will the power to comply with the will of their creator and also the ability not to comply thus rejecting the will of their creator by rebelling against it while God never created angels or humans as evil beings he did nonetheless create them with the capacity to make free moral choices to comply or not comply the first humans the Bible describes as Adam and Eve freely exercised their volition to disobey the command given them by God of course they had assistance from Satan the adversary who later will be identified as Satan who had himself already exercised his will in rejecting the authority of God and in Genesis 3

[29 : 17] Lucifer now a fallen or corrupted angel himself seeks to recruit humans to rebel as well he succeeded and the world has never been the same are we beginning to see why God's servants suffer more ahead Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 9 Why God's Servants Must Suffer Part 2

Paul and Silas were enjoying good success at Thessalonica when they proclaimed in the Jewish synagogue that Jesus was in fact the long-awaited Messiah of Israel verse 4 of chapter 17 says some were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women the Greeks mentioned were called God-fearers which meant they were Gentiles not Jews but even as Gentiles they had come to believe that the God of Israel was the only one and true

God not the multiple gods of the Greeks or Romans Cornelius the Roman army officer and centurion was a God-fearer in Acts chapter 10 God-fearers were welcome in the Jewish synagogue but the only way a Gentile could become more than a God-fearer was to become a proselyte of the Jews which would require them to be circumcised after the law of Moses then they could be recognized as a legitimate Jew not just a God-fearer one can understand one can understand the excitement of Gentile God-fearers by God by simply placing their faith in Jesus Christ without the necessity of circumcision in Acts 15 that entire chapter describes an important council of the Jews that declared believing Gentiles need not be circumcised that controversy would continue to rage on even after the verdict of the council at Jerusalem again many of the Jews were so deeply entrenched in the law of Moses they would not give the time of day to any teaching that did not comply with all the commandments to say that this entire period of the first century was one of religious confusion would be a great understatement Paul was not teaching against the Jewish law of Moses he was simply telling Israel that the law of Moses was indeed of God but that it had served its purpose which was temporary from the start he was telling them that Jesus the Messiah did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it that is to fully comply with the law as it was intended not merely by the letter of the law but in its spirit some of the Jews particularly among the Pharisees contented themselves only by the letter of the law while ignoring its spirit and intent this allowed them to construct all sorts of loopholes to evade what the law required Christ revealed their blatant hypocrisy in Matthew chapter 23 the opposition Paul received from his own Jewish countrymen was largely based upon their faulty assumptions nothing has changed during the past 2000 years most Jews of today are unwilling to even give the case for Jesus a hearing most flatly reject any idea of his being the Messiah upon the mere mention of his name little wonder the scriptures say that blindness in part has happened to Israel but thank God it is not blindness for the whole of Israel but only for a part Christianity Clarified volume 56 track 10 why God's servants must suffer part 3 there are three active components responsible for the world being as it is apart from understanding these and the role played by each you will never be able to understand why the world is as it is how it got this way where it is going and why most people have no idea about these issues and live their lives daily in a kind of questioning fog yet the Bible makes it very clear in its answer to all these issues answers which by the way are not available from any other source than from this book the Bible those three active components are persons first God the creator second angels the creatures and third humans also the creatures these three personal components each original rebels are in opposition to God humans who also rebelled against God due to satanic deception fell from cooperation with God to opposition to God all this divergence from the original creation has and still does produce conflict hostile conflict when Saul of Tarsus radically moved from the position of hatred and rejection toward Jesus of Nazareth to one of love and positive proclamation of him where does that put Saul's old crowd who previously cheered him on in his opposition to Jesus of course it now places them in opposition to Saul one of their former champions they now view Saul of Tarsus as a turncoat a traitor who has turned his back on all his

[35 : 27] Jewish brethren and gone over to the enemy now that makes Saul of Tarsus their former ally into their present enemy so what is to be done with this traitor kill him Acts chapter 22 expresses their sentiments regarding Saul who became Paul away with such a fellow from the earth for he should not be allowed to live the very next chapter tells of a vow made by the Jewish opposition that they would not eat or drink until they saw Paul dead and more than 40 of them agreed they would kill him now folks that's what you call opposition with a capital O it was only because the authorities who held Paul in custody were tipped off that they were able to avoid Paul's assassination does this not vividly explain why God's servants must suffer and it's all born out of ignorance fueled by arrogance faulty assumptions the enemy was eager to act upon them question why do

God's servants suffer why doesn't God run interference for them and protect them after all they are on God's side why does he allow his servants to suffer good question and some good answers lie ahead and by the way if what you now believe about these things is not true would you want to know it Christianity Clarified volume 56 track 11 why God's servants must suffer part 4 it is paradoxical that anyone would be opposed even persecuted at times simply because they were a bearer of good news yet that is a standard reality regarding those who proclaim the gospel why is this it makes no sense at all but to the contrary it makes perfect sense once you discover the components mentioned previously and the roles they play they actually set the stage for conflict and here is why we explain the three principal parties as being

God the creator angels the creatures and humans also creatures God the creator occupies the sphere of absolute holiness or moral perfection angels created by God who remained obedient are with him angels who rebelled are against him each acted out of the volition or will they were given all in all it simply boils down to the exercise of one's will whether in concert with the other components or in opposition this world is not the world God originally created that allowed him to pronounce it very good at the end of the creation week in Genesis chapter one with the free exercise of the wills God gave his creatures both angelic and human the potential for defiance was very real as was the potential for compliance the first response of both angels and humans was compliance with the creator that would change and the change would be drastic producing what would be known as a fallen creation with fallen creatures inhabiting it it would as a part of that fall impose negative conditions upon the human element that would be as serious as death such was the precise fulfillment of the warning they were given should they disobey the question then naturally surfaces why did God create angels and humans that way and the answer is another question what choice did he have to have created them without volition and the ability to exercise the freedom of their will would have necessitated their being mere puppets or robots to give creatures a volition or withhold volition so they would automatically comply appears to have been the only choices or at least the only choices we humans can grasp

God chose to endow angels and humans with the ability to make moral decisions in compliance or defiance of the creator we today continue to live with the consequences of that decision it is because compliance with God and defiance against God are both very active we have the world we are currently experiencing the result is automatic conflict and this is also why God's servants must suffer it is the fallenness of creation that virtually guarantees it Christianity Clarified volume 56 track 12 why God's servants must suffer part 5 the answer to why God's servants must suffer is profoundly simple and simply profound one can never understand why the world is as it is unless this concept is grasped it is absolutely key following the time of creation in

Genesis God pronounced it all as very good at the end of the creation week in Genesis 1 the very good condition would not last God would create angels and humans and impart to them a moral capacity to obey him or rebel against him eventually both angel and human would prefer following their own will rather than the creator's conflict was created sides were chosen violence followed and still does when those whomever they may choose to align themselves with God and do his bidding they are automatically opposed by those who want to do their own bidding not God's conflict is a result we call it a cosmic conflict because it is it is an ongoing war between good and evil and both sides employ the agency of angels and human beings when in

[42 : 12] Acts chapter 9 Saul of Tarsus was confronted on the Damascus road by the risen Christ Saul realized the necessity of changing sides he had been the persecutor of Jesus now he would be the proclaimer of Jesus a greater about face could not be imagined but now in addition to his becoming a proclaimer of Jesus he must also now become a recipient of the ill treatment and persecution he once dished out this is why God's servants must suffer God's servants suffer because they are believed to be on the wrong side by those who are on the other side the other side hasn't changed but Saul has he changed sides now that makes him a target by his former other side this is why God's servants must suffer

Jesus suffered for being on the right side and he underwent persecution and even death by those from the wrong side why should it be any different for the followers of Jesus it isn't when anyone becomes a believer in Jesus Christ and signs on with him you now potentially have a big bullseye painted on your back don't be surprised if the world starts shooting at you Jesus even warned about that he told his disciples in John 16 an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think he is offering service to God and in John 15 the same apostles heard him say don't be surprised if the

world hates you it hated me before it hated you are we beginning to see why God's servants must suffer important stuff and more is upcoming preachers and missionaries especially need to listen carefully so too the rest of us

Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 13 Why God's Servants Must Suffer Part 6 It certainly doesn't seem right by any standards why should anyone who loves God is loved by God who has an eternal life-giving message of love, grace, mercy, and peace all wrapped up into one glorious item of good news called the gospel Why pray tell me should one such as that with a message such as that have to experience suffering and perhaps persecution just for delivering it Here is why that works the way it does When God gave angels and humans volition it made them free moral agents able to use that will of volition to comply or rebel against the creator Lucifer Lucifer the chief angel rebelled and recruited the first humans to do likewise While the moral fall of angels was on a personal individual level the fall of angels was apparently both personal and corporate That is the fallenness our first parents experienced became part of their very being which meant they would pass on to their progeny everything they were in their makeup and constitution including the sin factor resulting in the death factor A consequence of the rebellion by both angels and humans was that they each became entirely self-centered They still are The basis for all conflict between human individuals is self-centeredness Very often for one to satisfy his demands for obtaining what he wishes he must infringe upon another and what he wishes This is simplified but it is the stuff of conflict between humans as individuals and even conflict between nations only on a larger scale This self-centeredness and the result thereof is also the principal factor in all marital disharmony

It's all about self-centeredness and which of the two selves will be triumphant It is a contest and it is also the destroyer of relationships On the universal scale it's the cosmic conflict Combatants are angels humans Satan as the head of angels and Christ as the head of humans At least the humans aligned with him These humans aligned with him are often on the receiving end of opposition [48 : 03] Christians Those who regard their relationship to Christ a serious matter should be advised don't ever look for a fair shake from this world It doesn't have it to give It's a fallen world we live in and it's presided over by a fallen angel called Satan The apostle Paul called Satan the god of this world in his second letter to the Corinthians If you are a believer surely you aren't expecting a fair shake from this world are you If you are wake up to reality Be reminded this world is not our home we're just passing through Jesus told his disciples he was sending them forth as sheep among wolves Our apostle tells us our citizenship is in heaven from which we look for our Lord Jesus Christ in Philippians chapter 3 That means heaven is our place of permanent residence and this world is something we are just passing through to get to that permanent residence

In this world Jesus said you will suffer tribulation expect it It is the norm and the natural product of a fallen world occupied by fallen residents presided over by a fallen angel Even though that is the case Jesus also said thankfully but be of good cheer I have overcome the world Well which is it suffering tribulation or being of good cheer It's both We hurt we suffer we endure pain and persecution but we know the end game we know the rest of the story and that is the basis for our good cheer He didn't tell us we would have no pain and no heart aches He told us we would we would have conflict opposition persecution is all that a wayward world has to offer because that's all it got the world the world the world desperately need our pity and the gospel the same gospel that lifted you by his grace out of a condemned world into the kingdom of his dear son it is this gospel of grace we are called to deliver to a sick and fallen world and there are times it will cost you to do so maybe a lot maybe even your life but don't you ever forget this one thing said

Paul who had a great deal of credibility and could speak from personal experience for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us by the way the question really ought to be asked here of each one listening to this content which side are you on do you know I have to tell you this if you don't know which side you are on you're likely on the wrong side that's because it is hard to be on the right side without knowing it an explanation is just ahead about how you can change sides and there's nothing more important that you could do Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 15 Changing Sides Part 1 It couldn't be plainer and it couldn't be more important that's because this matter called changing sides contains consequences that will extend into eternity that makes changing sides something you cannot afford to neglect the question was asked in the previous segment and it was which side are you on in the great cosmic conflict pitting the forces of good against those of evil the point was

made everyone is on one side or the other there are no neutrals it was also stated if you don't know which side you are on you are most likely on the wrong side how or why can we say that of course someone is saying to themselves right now oh

I'm not on the wrong side because I'm a good person in truth you can be on the wrong side and not even know that this is true of many maybe even most let me repeat that you can be on the wrong side of the conflict and not even know it but it's hard to be on the right side and not know it that's because you don't have to do anything to be on the wrong side because you were born on the wrong side we all were every last one of us but you do have to do something to be on the right side and you have either done it or you haven't it's because we were all born on the wrong side that we need to be born again we didn't have any say so over our being born we just were and we had nothing to say or do about it but we have plenty to do with our being born again that's because even though our will was not involved in our physical birth our will is very much involved in our spiritual birth this is what

Jesus was talking about when a very religious man called Nicodemus came to visit him in a private meeting recorded in John's Gospel chapter 3 Nicodemus a member in good standing in the religion of Judaism admitted something important to Jesus when he told him we know you are a man who has come from God because no one can do the miracles you have done unless God is with him one might think Jesus would have been flattered by this great confession from a mover and shaker in the Jewish community but he wasn't instead Jesus abruptly replied except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God well the logical question from Nicodemus was how can a man be born again born again he cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time the answer Jesus gave is well it's coming up next and it explains that and it also explains changing sides and it is so very important there aren't words to describe it but we'll try our best

[55 : 12] Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 16 Changing Sides Part 2 On the surface the statement you must be born again sounds like double talk some kind of religious gobbledygook well it sure must have sounded that way to Nicodemus when Jesus told him that preposterous really and he asked Jesus born again a man cannot enter his mother's womb and be born again can he whatever in the world was Jesus talking about we have a clue when Jesus said that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit okay so what does that mean well our natural physical birth as a baby belong to the flesh part of our being that's our body but that which is our spiritual part is not flesh or physical that's the part that needs to be born again that has nothing to do with entering your mother's womb it has everything to do with the spirit of

God entering you first let's explain what is meant by spirit and it does not mean anything religious it merely means immaterial that is not physical like our body still it is just as real as our body our spirit resides in our body as the unseen true self we really are we humans are not merely a physical body but we are made up of a body and a non physical spirit the body is what we are and appear to be outwardly and the spirit is what we are inwardly every human being has a human spirit not to be confused with the holy spirit even an atheist has a human spirit because it is a vital part of what makes us a human being it is our physical body plus our non physical spirit that makes up a human soul and the soul is the totality of our personhood genesis 2 7 says god formed adam from the dust of the ground which provided his body after physically making adam god breathed into the nostrils of adam and adam became a living soul that is a complete human god had infused adam with life an immaterial essence of his being that animated his human body it is this non physical part of our being called the human spirit that undergoes a dramatic change at the point of personal salvation it is god's holy spirit that engages our human spirit which is separated from god and makes it alive regenerated that is alive toward god whereas it was not before the result is we become a brand new person who appears the same on the outside but is radically new and alive to god on the inside this the bible calls the new birth or being born again and more about it is coming up just next christianity clarified volume 56 track 17 changing sides part three believe it or not accept it or not it's true because god says so we are talking about changing sides or to put it another way being born again as

Jesus mentioned to Nicodemus in john's gospel chapter three well what is that all about it's about the most important dramatic thing that could ever happen to a human being when you were born physically that's what Jesus referred to when he called it flesh he went on to say unless a man is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God he appears to liken the physical birth which is accompanied by water to the flesh or the body but the spiritual birth to the non part of

our being he as much as says so by telling us that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit in changing sides or being born again the body is not affected at all because the real you is not your body but your unseen non physical spirit this part of your being when you change sides is that which is made new regenerated made alive or as Jesus put it born again it's a brand new beginning for the real you it's actually passing from being dead toward God to being very much alive toward God whereas before our new birth experience we were separated from God spiritually dead but in changing sides and the experience of being born again we become alive toward God and not merely alive but with eternal life it's also called salvation regeneration passing from spiritual death to spiritual life it's called fully freely forgiven forever it's called being made a new creation in Christ and being born again although it does not involve our physical body it is every bit as real as our physical body despite its immateriality because you are more than your body your body is the housing or the physical apparatus you and I use to carry around our true inner self our human spirit and by the way that's where the problem lies it's not in our body but in our spirit that's why that's the part that needs the new birth that's the part that is regenerated or made alive toward God we change sides and move from spiritual death to spiritual life from spiritual darkness to spiritual light when we as an act of our will admit our sin that's confession repent of our sin that's changing our mind about our sin not trying to justify or excuse it and acknowledge that this is precisely why Jesus Christ came to this earth it was exclusively to die in our place thus paying the penalty for our sins so we could be forgiven that's the whole reason for the manger at Bethlehem the cross at Calvary and the empty tomb on resurrection day if you get in line with that you my friend have changed sides and if you do that you'll know it [62 : 43] Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 18 Changing Sides Part 4 The Gospel of John Chapter 3 Verses 16 to 18 read For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world but that the world through Him might be saved He who believes in Him is not judged He who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God When the text says to believe in or on Christ it does not mean merely to believe such a person as Christ existed even the devil believes that To believe in or on Christ has to do with placing your trust or confidence in Him to have done for you what you could never do for yourself that is to make yourself acceptable to God

Jesus did that by paying the penalty for your sin in your place that makes Him your Savior but only if you accept Him or put your confidence in Him to that end because Jesus will not be the Savior of anyone who doesn't want Him but only for those who do listen to John chapter 5 and verse 24 Jesus is speaking and He says truly truly I say to you he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life now that's a curious expression passed out of death into life well we all know what it means to pass out of life into death and likely we all know people who have that's physical life being spoken of but Jesus is speaking of spiritual life not physical in our physical life we relate to other humans who also have physical life but to pass out of death into life refers to our relationship to God and if we have not been born again as Jesus said in

John chapter 3 we remain dead spiritually in our relationship to God but when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior it is then the broken connection with God is replaced with an all new connection and we become alive to God with a brand new life that's why Jesus called it being born again while our physical body does not change our inner spiritual person does change dramatically beginning beginning with an infusion of God himself in the person of the Holy Spirit and it is God's spirit that comes in and upon our human spirit regenerating or giving it a whole new life and that results in a new attitude new interest a new agenda new goals etc little wonder it's called being born again starting life all over again with the change having been wrought by God himself is this true of you if so you have been born again if not you are yet in your sin remaining separated from God and why would anyone remain spiritually dead when they can have the eternal life only God can give believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 19 Changing Sides Part 5 One was heard to object to this concept of changing sides with an element of fear they said it seemed so foreign to them they looked upon it as some giant leap of faith into the dark far from it coming to faith in the person of Jesus Christ is far better described as a step into the light it was Jesus himself who made the bold declaration in John's Gospel chapter 8 when he said in

speaking of himself I am the light of the world he who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life what pray tell me are we to make of a man who says something like that I am the light of the world well just who did Jesus think he was he knew full well who he was the question is do you know who he is one thing is certain he either spoke the truth and claimed to be the source of light for the world both literal and figurative or he was simply an egomaniac suffering from delusions of grandeur but

Jesus was and is the real deal or the world's greatest con man ever you can choose what you believe him to be but you cannot choose both nor can you choose neither and we should all understand that to make no positive choice at all is to make a negative choice automatically the only alternative to accepting is rejecting this is why there are no neutrals concerning God's son as he himself said it he who is not with me is against me my dear friends if you are not with Jesus Christ if you have not stepped into the light you need to change sides and you can do that right now Christ loved you and died for you and he will meet you and save you whoever you are wherever you are in a simple deliberate act of your will you can tell

[68 : 53] God you acknowledge your sin and your separation from him that you understand God loves you and sent his son to earth to die for you and that Jesus so agreed and loved you so that he was willing to do it he made the way open so you could change sides and come from spiritual death into spiritual life and spiritual darkness into spiritual light if Jesus Christ is who he claimed to be there is nothing in this entire world that matters more than your being rightly related to him you you merely admit your sin and your inability to do anything about it and put your trust and reliance in Jesus who did something about it and for those who believe that that's too easy we agree it is easy very easy because Jesus already did the hard part he paid for your sin so you wouldn't have to the good news is

God in Christ did the very most he least that you could do just believe on him who died for you this is precisely why it's called good news and it's the best good news everywhere for all people for all time Christianity Clarified volume 56 track 20 changing sides part six we continue our focus upon the ever important topic of changing sides one can never make a more important decision that encompasses this present life and even more importantly the eternal life to come any who have made that decision are welcome and urged to contact me if you want further information just drop me a note or email me at the address given shortly and please be prepared to jot it down and know you are not required or even expected to send a financial gift your having made the decision to accept

Jesus Christ as your savior is in itself the greatest gift you could give us just relating that to us you're letting us know if your decision would be greatly encouraging and would allow us to rejoice with with you and those who have made that decision need only tell us I have changed sides and would like more information about what I have done and where I go from here and we will promptly respond with free literature and information that will help you get off to a good start in your new found spiritual life as a result of your changing sides as a brand new believer in Christ one is described in the Bible as a newborn babe spiritually and the first thing any newborn needs whether as a physical birth or a spiritual birth is nourishment following birth a hunger will automatically follow and there is an abundance of spiritual milk and meat that will enable the new

Christian to begin an incredible growth of spiritual awakening what lies in sure for the new Christian is absolutely amazing and this is because as stated in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 therefore if anyone is in Christ they are a new creation the old things have passed away behold new things have come we will help you know and appreciate those new things and they are glorious beyond description and when you contact us remember there is nothing for you to give or pledge nothing to join nothing to promise not now and not later here is our mailing address if you wish to write us and I will give our email address as well for regular mail just write to Christianity Clarified Box 321 Northampton Ohio online go to our webpage at gracebiblespringfield.com there you will also see our email address and you will see a free listing of hundreds of available studies both from over 1,000 segments of

Christianity Clarified on more than 50 CD volumes as well as regular Sunday messages delivered here at Grace Bible Church oh yes one more thing should should you want a personal contact I would be delighted to speak with you all you need do is send me your telephone number and the best time of day to call you and I will do it gladly this is Pastor Marv Wiseman may the Lord richly bless you he has me Christianity Clarified Volume 56 Track 21 Preview of Upcoming Volume 57

Due to the importance of the subject matter coupled with its eternal consequences Volume 57 Upcoming will be more fully revealing and explain the issue of personal salvation the goal is to anticipate questions many people are likely to have and provide answers to them from various passages of scripture this is no time or place for personal opinion yours mine or anyone else's and it is no place for churchianity religious ceremony or human morality lastly it is no place to answer the question as to how good do you have to be in order for God to accept you the reason being the question itself is off the mark way off the mark and here is why it is it is a common fallacy call it a faulty assumption if you will and the faulty assumption is regarding our salvation or becoming acceptable to

[75 : 12] God or obtaining eternal life forgiveness or however one wishes to couch it the faulty assumption is in believing it to be a matter of quantitative righteousness or how good do I have to be to find acceptance with God how many good deeds or good points do I have to rack up so as to make it with the almighty sounds like a perfectly logical question doesn't it sure it does but it's a question born out of a faulty assumption a huge faulty assumption under which most humans actually operate you will see clearly from scripture how utterly off the mark the question is and why there is no peace or assurance even possible for one who assumes God requires a certain quantity of righteousness to be accepted of him after all can you imagine deriving comfort and assurance from a question mark well

God has not provided a question mark he's provided an exclamation mark but it has to be preceded by the right content so it isn't quantity of righteousness at all but quality of righteousness and the full explanation thereof is covered in upcoming volume 57 of Christianity Clarified this is Pastor Marv Wiseman from Grace Bible Church and the good folks there thanking you for listening looking forward to joining us again however you know and we may are we in