

Christianity Clarified Volume 61

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Date: 01 December 2022

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[0 : 00] Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 1, The Seeming Logic of Replacement Theology, Part 1. Our previous Volume 60 introduced what is called Replacement Theology.

It is a concept that we of Christianity Clarified soundly reject. Yet, we can easily see how it must have been arrived at by those who lived back then as the first century would come to a close.

In fact, we agree that had we of today been in the position of those first century survivors of Jerusalem's destruction, we probably would have reached the same conclusion as they.

And that conclusion, so very logical in appearance, was that since Israel had repeatedly rejected the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and contributed to His death, God has thus rejected Israel from being His chosen people permanently.

But God has always had a faithful remnant who believed in Him, and if it was no longer the Jewish people, then who was it? Well, the answer seemed almost obvious.

[1 : 13] If God had, in fact, rejected the very people who rejected Him, who then would become His favored people, but those who did not reject Jesus, but believed in Him?

Enter the Christian Church. They would be the new people of God. Israel was out. The church was in. The church was in. Replacement theology became an almost automatic reality.

It was comprised of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles, and was growing dramatically in number, especially among Gentiles.

In fact, it will be Gentiles who would soon outnumber the Jews who had come to faith in Jesus.

Recall now, if you will, earlier, it was Jews exclusively who came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and for ten years after His resurrection, that was the case.

It was not until Cornelius in Acts chapter 10, coming to faith via Peter's special visit, that Gentiles even entered the picture. Their numbers increased in mid-Acts with the effects and the efforts of the Apostle Paul's travels and his mission trips.

[2 : 30] And by the time Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., Paul and Peter had both been executed by the Romans. The number of Gentiles that had by then come to faith greatly outnumbered Jews who nationally remained in a rejection mode as regards Jesus of Nazareth.

Every indication seemed to be in place that God was doing a new thing, and the old thing called Judaism was no longer in God's favor. Now, the new thing is called the Christian Church.

And in the plan and program of God, He is as finished with Israel as Israel had become finished with Him. And God affirmed that by allowing the temple and the beloved city of Jerusalem to be destroyed by pagan Roman idolaters.

And while this certainly was true, it was true only temporarily, but not permanently. And the difference between those concepts is monumental, as we shall see just ahead.

The idea of the Christian Church permanently replacing Israel as God's select people seemed logical, but was completely in error, as will be shown later. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 2.

[3 : 45] The Seeming Logic of Replacement Theology, Part 2. The previous segment concluded with a distinction made between the permanent rejection of Israel and their temporary rejection.

And the difference is monumental. And it was, and is, the conviction that God's rejection of Israel was permanent, that the entire concept of replacement theology is built upon, and remains so among the majority of the Christian community worldwide.

And even though we, in what we call this church age, or administration of the grace of God, reject that concept of replacement theology, we ought to admit that we can see how the early believers embraced that.

And it should be admitted that had we of today been there in that time and place, trying to interpret the circumstances, we too may have very well embraced the same conclusions of replacement theology as did they.

But if mankind has learned anything from his prodigious history, it is this. Things are not always as they seem. And for the Jewish people, things did seem to be over.

[5 : 00] After all, they're rejecting their Messiah and promoting his death, the rending of the veil in the Jewish temple when Jesus died, the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem by the Romans, just as Jesus predicted 40 years earlier, say.

Those were rather definitive events. They all had a pronounced flavor of finality to them. It must be agreed. In fact, one might well conclude that God's dealings with Israel were not only over, but deservedly so.

And after all, God's long-suffering did have a limit, and apparently Israel located it. Add to that the reality that while the numbers of Jews coming to faith in Jesus began declining near the 70 A.D. period, while the numbers of Gentiles was increasing dramatically, that only added to what appeared to be the case.

This new entity called the Christian Church had, in fact, seemed to have become the new chosen people of God. And the Jew that formerly occupied that position did so no longer.

Israel and the Jew are out. The Christian Church is in, and that's that. And it all appeared to be a logical, inevitable conclusion. So logical that it, as we have said, remains by far the majority position of those called Christians today, including both Roman Catholic and Protestant adherents.

[6 : 35] And while, as we admitted, we too may have erroneously reached the same conclusion as they, had we been in their time and place, yet there is one large, compelling reason why we should not have, and why they should not have as well.

And it is that which should have superseded all the events that appeared to be true in favor of the one key interpretive ingredient they overlooked.

And we will reveal it upcoming. It does and should transcend all human logic. Had they implemented this back then, the theology would have decidedly been different.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 3, Seeming Logic of Replacement Theology, Part 3. While fully admitting the telltale signs that existed from 70 A.D. onward seem to verify the conclusion of replacement theologians, we, in our previous segment, revealed there is one key ingredient that soundly repudiated what they overlooked back then, and still overlook today, is what Jesus chided the disciples about on the Emmaus Road following his resurrection in Luke 24.

Jesus said they were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had previously written about the Messiah. Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and then enter into his glory?

[8 : 22] The prophets clearly foretold, as we revealed in the previous Volume 60, that the Messiah would be rejected by Israel, and that despite their rejection of him, God would not reject them.

The authorities we appealed to were Moses in Genesis 12, 15 and 17, David in 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 89, Hosea in chapter 3, Jeremiah in chapter 31, Ezekiel in chapter 37, and the Apostle Paul in Romans chapters 9 through 11, and Ephesians chapter 3, only to cite a few of the many more available.

All of these passages, if interpreted the same way all the rest of Scripture is interpreted, the conclusion is inevitable. God has rejected His people Israel, but not forever.

The prophets all reveal a glorious restoration for the nation of Israel. They will be set aside, as the prophets proclaim, and they will be restored to faith and the favor and blessing of God in the days to come, all in fulfillment of the covenantal promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. But replacement theologians, unable or unwilling to accept that at face value by allowing the words to mean what they say, insist the word Israel really means not Israel, but the Christian Church.

[9 : 49] And added to that, all the promises God originally made to Israel have been instead transferred to the Christian Church. They are forced to depart from the ordinary, customary, literal, and historical meaning of a word, and fashion a spiritualized interpretation of the words, instead of taking them to face value, as they do take all the remainder of the Bible.

It is indeed changing hermeneutical horses in the middle of the stream. And this is, without doubt, the greatest theological blunder of Christendom in all its history.

And it not only pervades Christianity, it remains solidly entrenched as the majority position. Is it held in good faith? Of course it is.

Does their replacement theology affect their personal salvation? Absolutely not. Those believed to be in error regarding the status of Israel are saved simply by believing on Jesus Christ. But it certainly does cause serious divisions in Christendom, as will become apparent later on. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 4, The Seeming Logic of Replacement Theology, Part 4. [11:03] There is an ongoing and profound need to explain and refute the majority position of replacement theology that has been in place among Roman Catholics as well as most Protestants for the past 2,000 years.

And the reason is both simple and critical. It is because the Jewish people are at the very heart of the issue, really, no matter whether you embrace replacement theology or deny it, it heavily involves the Jew.

That is, the biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the land God gave them identified throughout Scripture as the land of Canaan or Israel. If one accepts the concept of replacement theology, that God has permanently replaced Israel with the Christian church, that will affect your attitude toward the Jewish people and may very well impact your actions toward Jews as well.

The same is true of those who reject replacement theology. Their attitude and actions toward the Jew are also inevitably affected. No matter how you approach the issue, the Jew becomes the very pivotal issue of both positions.

And so far as the Bible is concerned, it is the Jew, the physical seed of Abraham, that remain as the recipient of God's unconditional promise. They are the catalyst for the eventual establishment of the kingdom of heaven brought to earth through the Messiah when he returns.

[12:32] The rejection of Jesus as Messiah by the first century Jewish establishment did not negate that. Replacement theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, believe that it did.

Their contention is, there is and can be but one people designated as the people of God. And originally, that one people was the nation of Israel.

But by their rejection of Jesus, they forfeited that official status. And now, the one people of God consists of those who do not reject Jesus but embrace Him, thus becoming the new one people of God in the organization of the Christian church.

They, in part, base their conclusion not only on the Jewish people rejecting Christ, but on the insistence there cannot be more than one people who are God's people.

For as once, it was the Jew and Judaism, but now, it is the Christian and Christianity. The official position taken here by Christianity Clarified is that there is indeed only one people of God, not two.

[13:38] And the one people of God consists of all who are in a right relationship with God, whether Jew or Gentile. It is they who constitute the one people of God.

And it matters not whether such is Jew or Gentile. Those not rightly related to God consist of all others, whether Jew or Gentile.

So, in this respect, we agree, there is but one people of God. They are those who are rightly related to Him, whether Jew or Gentile, whether related in Old Testament or related today.

Now, if you find yourself still somewhat confused, don't become discouraged. Hang on. More clarity is coming just ahead. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 5, The Seeming Logic of Replacement Theology, Part 5.

Are they Jews, Gentiles, Christians, Protestants, Catholics? Who are the people that constitute the people of God? Long story short, here it is.

[14:50] Please don't forget it. The people of God during any period of time in past history or today are the people who are rightly related to God and accepted by Him.

They are the people of God and the only people of God, no matter what you call them. And those who are not rightly related to God are not the people of God, no matter what you call them.

Let me say it again. The people of God during any period of time in past history or today are the people who are rightly related to God and accepted by Him.

They are the people of God and the only people of God, no matter what you call them. Those who are not rightly related to God are not the people of God, no matter what you call them.

During Old Testament times and into earlier New Testament, it was the Jewish nation practicing Judaism that constituted the covenant nation God established under Moses beginning in Exodus 19.

[15 : 49] What is called Judaism had its official beginning here. Israel, as a people, and physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the only ones involved in a covenant or contractual position with God.

The essence of this is clearly established again in Exodus 19. But the existence of the national connection to God did not mean all Jews personally, individually, or in a right relationship with God or accepted by Him as such.

In other words, being a Jew and enjoying the umbrella covering of Judaism did not automatically put one in a right relationship to God. The Apostle Paul referenced this in Romans chapter 9 when he said, They are not all Israel who are Israel, nor are they all children because they are descendants of Abraham.

Earlier in Romans 2, Paul stated, For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, not in the letter, but in the Spirit, whose praise is not from men but from God.

And clearly, Paul is saying there are Jews and then there are Jews. And some were merely Jews externally, which was worth nothing before God. True Jews were those whose heart was right before God.

[17 : 20] A right relationship with God is internal. And when Paul says, They are not all Israel who are Israel, he meant, There are those who are Jews only on the outside, but on the inside, where God reads the heart, they are not Jews at all.

Not in the true sense of what it really meant to be Jewish and rightly related to God. You see, Christianity suffers from the same spiritual malady today.

Is it not true that there are many Roman Catholics and Protestants who call themselves Christians because they are in the Church? Jews had their phony Jews and Protestants have their phony Protestants and Catholics have their phonies too.

My, my, my. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 6. People of God Prior to the Cross In the New Testament, there is a clear requirement for becoming vitally connected to God.

And it is reiterated in several places throughout. It is called the Gospel, or the Good News. And simply put, it is the revelation that anyone may become vitally connected to God through the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

[18 : 39] The Good News is that such an one need not fear God's wrath and justice because of sin. The reason being, Jesus died for our sin in our place, and we put our trust in His sacrificial death on our behalf.

This can be called nothing less than what it is, Good News. And countless millions have and do avail themselves of that provision, and in doing so, become the people of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As such, they enjoy forgiveness from God, eternal life as an undeserved free gift, and a status that makes them identified as the people of God, a reality exclusively based upon the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and His substitutionary death on their behalf.

Jesus really did pay it all. And all this becomes quite clear in the New Testament that records the first coming of Christ to Bethlehem, His subsequent death and resurrection.

But, what about the people who lived before Christ? What about those of the 4,000 years plus, beginning with the first humans and the multitude of people before the flood, when all but eight souls were destroyed in that flood?

[20 : 10] Did they have a good news or gospel message by which they could become a people of God? And if so, what was it? And if not, why not?

Admittedly, this is not as clear as we would like. Certainly not anything near the clarity of the message in the New Testament. The simplicity of which is illustrated in the Apostle Paul telling the Philippian jailer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

And, rightly so, we call that, along with John 3, 16, the gospel in a nutshell. The good news in a nutshell.

But, what was the gospel in a nutshell for those who lived long before Christ came to present himself as Savior? We can only appeal to a number of passages that infer some provision was made.

And, it was a provision that required the grace of God apart from which no one could come into a right relation with God. Still, we are hard-pressed to define or express precisely what the good news

message to those before Christ might have sounded like.

[21 : 27] Listeners can draw their own conclusions after hearing the evidence revealed in our following segments here on Christianity Clarified. and we will begin at the beginning which automatically invokes the first humans and the original parents of us all.

Adam and Eve are in the garden. The disobedience and their fall is a reality and they, as creatures, are in big trouble with the Creator and their salvation is up next. Christianity Clarified Volume 61, Track 7, Adam and Eve Prior to the Cross, Part 1.

In Genesis 3, the account is given regarding Satan's successful deceiving of Eve, the mother of all humanity. Our father Adam joined her in their disobedience to what God had told them.

They then experienced something never known before, guilt. Guilt is the emotional sensation of having violated a fixed moral standard involving right and wrong, truth and error.

Their willful choice vacated their innocence, producing guilt. And guilt is the parent of fear, fear of discovery, fear of punishment, fear of consequences, and the sensation of just being wrong, no longer innocent.

[22 : 47] Their fear induced them to hide from God, an opposite response than what was previously enjoyed. And their loss of innocence, replaced by the sensation of guilt, also resulted in the need to cover their nakedness.

Their own human effort and desperation produced an arrangement of fig leaves to cover their nakedness. And why was this? In covering their nakedness, what body parts were they that they sought to hide?

And why those? We can only surmise that what defines nakedness today was the same thing that defined nakedness to Adam and Eve.

It was their genitalia, not their elbows, nor their feet, but their private parts. And we can only conclude that it was through these sexual organs that the now-known newly inherent sin nature was to be passed on to succeeding generations through the genitalia of male and females.

And that would change everything. Everything and everyone, including, of course, you and me.

What would be the Creator's response to these two creatures whom He endowed with a volition that they used to disobey Him?

[24 : 09] There must be a follow-through of the very penalty He had warned them against. The Genesis record reveals it to be physical pain in the birthing of her offspring and a desire to dominate her husband that would be met with failure and, subsequently, her husband's domination of her.

And to Adam, Adam, you must struggle with the ground to take your living from it. You will compete with thorns and thistles, and your food will be produced only through your laboring for it by the sweat of your brow.

And physically, you will return to the earth from which you were taken. the reality of death will commence an aging process in your physical body, and what you produced in the fig leaves to cover your nakedness is not adequate.

I will provide you with a covering that is satisfactory, even though temporary, and it will be a covering provided through a sacrificial animal of lesser value than yourself.

It does not bear the image of myself, the Creator, and thus cannot do all that needs to be done to pay for your sin. It will be a temporary solution until the permanent solution is provided.

[25 : 22] And, oh yes, one more thing, Adam, that you must do, says God, and that is coming next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 8, Adam and Eve, Prior to the Cross, Part 2.

The warning had been given, you are not to eat from the tree of knowledge in the middle of the garden. For in the day you eat thereof you will surely die. And then Satan entered the picture. He deceived Eve. Eve abandoned God's authority and opted instead for that of the deceiver. She then gave to her husband and he ate.

We know nothing of the kind or nature of this tree other than its being forbidden as the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In eating, something inexplicable something inexplicable occurred in the bodies and psyches of Adam and Eve.

An alteration of some sort occurred internally. It appears their God-centeredness has now become self-centeredness. Their original focus centered upon the Creator, but that has changed and their focus is now inward on themselves.

[26 : 38] From henceforth, Adam and Eve will vacillate between harmony and disharmony as husband and wife. And so, so will all who henceforth issue forth from them.

When God created Adam and Eve, they represented His highest form of creatures by bearing His own likeness and image. Clearly, it was an exalted position bestowed upon them including their being appointed the federal head of everything.

It is expressed in saying they were given dominion, that is, the ability to dominate and the responsibility to dominate all of God's creation on earth.

And now, a new dominator would arise. He would deceive and swindle our first parents who, in their innocence, were no match for Him. They had been accustomed to nothing but truth and were unprepared for the lie.

The adversary told them God was hiding something from them that they needed in order to be a well-rounded person. And it was the knowledge of good and evil.

[27 : 45] And God doesn't want you to have that. Perhaps He fears the competition because you would, you know, become as God, knowing good and evil. So they ate.

And sure enough, the text tells us their eyes were opened. Were they blind before? Well, of course not. It wasn't their physical eyes that were opened. It was their perception.

They now perceive both good and evil, whereas before it was good only. Also, the dominion God had given them has been forfeited to Satan through their disobedience.

Paul the Apostle declares this in 2 Corinthians 4 when he identifies Satan as the God of this age who deceives the minds of people. And, oh yes, one more thing Adam and Eve must do.

They are being evicted from the garden and God tells them to make sure they do not return. He's putting two angelic beings stationed at the entrance to make sure they do not do so.

[28 : 47] It is now a whole new and different world you have brought upon yourselves and all your posterity. Yet, despite Adam and Eve's disobedience, God tempers his punishment with a promise of deliverance, not merely for them, but ultimately for the sin-weary world they've created.

It can only be and would have to be a promise of grace, and it is that, and it is up next. Christianity Clarified Volume 61, Track 9, Adam and Eve Before the Cross, Part 3.

Currently being considered is the provision God made for fallen humanity. It can only be described as an act of grace on the part of God toward us undeserving humans.

After all, that's what makes grace, grace. It is wholly undeserved, unearned on the part of man, but graciously bestowed on the part of God.

So, to Satan, and in the presence of Adam and Eve, God made a promise in Genesis 3. It was the promise of a remedy for sin given immediately upon its being needed.

[29 : 59] No sooner had human sin entered the picture through Adam and Eve, but what the Creator in grace promised a Redeemer from that sin. It will spell eternal life for humans who receive God's grace, but eternal doom for those who reject it, and for Satan the deceiver.

Later, in fact, some 4,000 years later, John will write in his Gospel, chapter 1, that the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

And the same John in his first letter reminds us in chapter 3 that the Son of God appeared that he might destroy the works of the devil. Satan's works consist of everything that opposes God, including the ruination of humanity and planet Earth.

Christ will restore both and will, in his second coming, appear for that very purpose. In his first coming, he appeared as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world by paying the ultimate price for it.

But when he comes the second time, it will be as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, arriving to collect on what he paid for in his first coming. Christ is the seed of the woman, referenced in Genesis 3.15.

[31 : 21] It was prophesied that he, Jesus, will suffer an injury inflicted by Satan through the striking of Christ's heel, a wound of lesser sorts that will be healed through his resurrection from the dead.

But as for Satan, it will be his head Christ will crush, signifying a mortal blow resulting in his final end in the lake of fire, described in Revelation 20, also written by the Apostle John.

And from the time Genesis records the demise of Satan until the appearance of Jesus at his first coming to Bethlehem, 4,000 years would elapse. And from Christ's first coming, another 2,000 years have lapsed.

The promise of his first coming was based on the grace of God in sending Jesus to redeem an undeserving humanity. In his second coming, he arrives to administer not grace, but judgment.

And all who will have spurned God's grace and mercy are left to his judgment. God's grace is demonstrated by the death of a sacrificial animal God provided to be a covering for Adam and Eve because he rejected the human provision of fig leaves and established the principle of the innocent dying in the place of the guilty.

[32 : 39] A clear expression of grace operative early on in the Genesis record. God's grace for Adam and Eve well before the arrival of Christ who would be our ultimate sacrifice all on the basis of grace.

Christianity Clarified Volume 61 Track 10 Noah Before the Cross A vivid description of what created humanity had degenerated into is recorded in the sad tale of Genesis 6.

For the human race at that time to have exhausted the long suffering of God is quite a concept. Could humanity have sunk to the level that God himself regarded them as unredeemable? That is precisely the picture given. But despite that God still has an obligation to his human creatures to provide a redeemer.

Remember? Remember his promise to Eve that her seed or offspring would be the ultimate salvation for humanity? But somebody would have to survive the awful flood calamity that would soon inundate the earth.

[33 : 49] Someone would. His name was Noah He and his wife plus his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives would be the sole survivors eight persons in all.

And of the three sons it would be Shem the firstborn who would continue the ancestral line from his father Noah. The genealogy given in Luke 4 traces the thousands of years following.

Eventually the direct bloodline from Shem would arrive would arrive at none other than Abraham then Isaac then Jacob then Judah one of Jacob's twelve sons that would comprise the twelve tribes of Israel.

Continuing further in direct succession we find Boaz the husband of Ruth fathering Obed who will father Jesse who will father none other than David the shepherd lad who becomes king of Israel thus beginning the Davidic dynasty.

Following further in the Luke genealogy and fast forwarding another thousand years we arrive at none other than Jesus of Nazareth. This constitutes our Lord's direct bloodline all the way from Noah who fathered Shem.

[35 : 06] And as the name Shem reveals he's the progenitor of the race of people referred to even today as Shemitic or the Semites.

and the most obvious branch of the Semites is the Jewish people. Those who oppose the Jew as did Adolf Hitler and others are referred to as anti-Semitic an ugly but real term nonetheless.

Again you find the genealogical line of Christ in Luke 3. Here it records the bloodline of Jesus all the way from Noah through David the king and a thousand years later to Jesus via his mother Mary. She also was a direct descendant of David the king through his son Nathan. And from his earthly mother Mary Jesus obtained his birthright of royalty.

In Matthew's genealogy located in chapter 1 Jesus obtains his throne rights from David the king through his son Solomon. Thus providing the precise fulfillment of the promise given to Mother Eve in Genesis 3 that her seed or offspring would be the redeemer who would deliver the crushing mortal blow to Satan referred to way back in Genesis 3.

[36 : 24] And God's promise began with Noah who found grace in the eyes of the Lord and would culminate in Jesus Christ the bearer of grace and truth. Truly remarkable content and it's all right here in the book.

Christianity Clarified volume 61 track 11 Abraham before the cross part 1 We continue exploring the presence and dynamic of God's grace before the substitutionary death of Christ that would result in God's grace being available to all.

The issue relates to what was the plan of personal salvation for anyone prior to the coming of Christ and his death that would provide the very basis for our salvation.

At that time the message became as it is now predicated upon Christ's death for man's sin that message is simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Paul uttered that to the Philippian jailer in Acts 16 and Christians have been preaching it to this very day. But what was the message of salvation before the death of Christ became the basis for it?

[37 : 35] That's the issue we are contending with here on Christianity clarified. We noted earlier about Noah finding grace in the eyes of the Lord that provided the basis for him and his family to

survive the flood.

That was about a thousand years after Adam and Eve were created. Fast forward another thousand years and you arrive at Abraham. Another thousand and David the king is born.

And in another thousand we arrive at Jesus born in Bethlehem. Thus, four thousand years passed from the time God made the promise of the seed of the woman in Genesis 3 to the time of fulfillment centered on Jesus.

So, humanity in general and the Jewish people in particular waited four thousand years before the promise was fulfilled in the arrival of their Messiah and the world's Savior, Jesus, the Son of God in his deity and the Son of Mary in his humanity.

Now, we have waited another two thousand years since his first coming in anticipation of his second coming. But, let's get back to the business at hand. And that is Abraham before the cross. [38 : 50] What would have been the message of salvation before the death of Christ? Remember, Christ's death became the basis for the gospel we preach. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

But why? Oh, because he died in your place for your sin. That gives us a simple but incredibly powerful message to preach and it's all about Jesus. But what about before Jesus?

What was the message of personal salvation then? Many will tell us that as we look back on the death of Christ for our provision of salvation, those who lived before that looked forward to the cross and the salvation Christ would provide through it.

We say, they look back on the cross in faith and those living prior to the cross as in all the Old Testament looked forward to the cross that would be a reality in the future.

Well, now on the surface that sounds like a rather neat and simple solution. But it is wholly unsatisfactory. And there is a very major flaw in saying those who lived before the cross nonetheless placed their faith in it as the provision to be realized in the future.

[40 : 04] And an explanation as to why that was not so and could not have been so is upcoming. I think you'll find it rather fascinating. Tune in for our next session together.

Christianity Clarified Volume 61 Track 12 Abraham Before the Cross Part 2 Our present goal on Christianity Clarified is to identify those who are referred to as the people of God.

Who are they? How did they become such? And if there are people of God does that not also require that there are people who are not? Logic would tell us this is so.

So which are you? If you are a person of God how did you become such? And if you are not what if anything can you do to become one?

And here is the key issue to be added. The Bible particularly in the New Testament emphasizes that people of God become such by acknowledging their sin and looking to Jesus Christ for forgiveness simply because He died for our sin in our place.

[41 : 13] He did not die for His He had none and He was the only one who was sinless and that made Him and Him alone eligible to be the substitute for us.

Christ died for your sin yours and mine and everyone else's whether you believe it or not He did and God's Word emphatically declares that.

But what about those who lived before Jesus was ever born? What about those 4,000 years previous to His birth in Bethlehem? The example that surfaces and one who lays claim to being a person of God is Abraham found way back in Genesis and after the time of Noah and the flood when humanity was about 2,000 years old.

A revealing text in Genesis 15 tells us that Abraham believed God. God revealed Himself to Abraham in a way that He does not reveal Himself today.

He made a face-to-face encounter with Abraham and gave him a promise and the promise was that God would give to Abraham and his wife Sarah a son and they were well past the years of childbearing.

[42 : 28] Added to that God then escorted Abraham outside his tent and told him Abraham take a look at the stars can you count them? Well that's how numerous your descendants will be.

Not only that Abraham but all this land will belong to you and your descendants for your possession. And verse 6 then records that Abraham believed in the Lord and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.

So what did he believe? He simply believed what God told him. He took God at His word and we are told that God counted Abraham's trust in him as or for righteousness.

In other words Abraham did not possess a righteousness that God could accept and neither do you nor do I nor does any other human being because no matter how righteous we may be it is not a perfect righteousness which is the only kind a perfect God can accept.

And not being able to accept Abraham's flawed righteousness he then accepted Abraham's trust or faith as a substitute for the righteousness he did not have. Thus this thrusts the basis for becoming a person of God upon God Himself rather than upon Abraham and it is called justification by faith.

[43 : 49] It's indescribably wonderful. Is this what you have? If not you can and we'll pursue that next. Christianity Clarified Volume 61 Track 13 Abraham Before the Cross Part 3 Those who are the people of God today are the same as those who like Abraham was a person of God in his day.

How did he become that? He simply believed God. In response to Abraham believing God God accepted that in place of the righteousness that Abraham did not have.

Thus Abraham came into a right relationship to God and was accepted as a person of God solely on the basis of believing what God told him.

It's called justification by faith or justified on the basis of believing. It means God declared Abraham to be positionally righteous and accepted him even though in himself he wasn't.

Justification by faith simply means Abraham was declared acceptable to God solely by believing. He received salvation or eternal life as a free gift from God.

[45 : 07] That's why it's called good news or the gospel. And while it is free it certainly was not cheap. It cost God and his son the dearest price that could ever be imagined.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Did you get that? Do you get that? Why would God do that? God used the perishing of Jesus so you need not perish.

Jesus was willing to give his life to pay for your sin that you need not pay for your own sin. Jesus balanced the moral scales of the universe for all of humanity from Adam forward.

In 2 Corinthians 5 the Apostle Paul reminds us that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. This is why he then goes on to plead a verse later for people to be reconciled to God as an individual because when Christ died for the sins of the entire world he threw open wide the way of access for us to come to God.

[46 : 23] So have you come? If not why not? It's free. Jesus paid it all and he invites you to receive the gift of eternal salvation he purchased for you.

It was he who knew no sin who died for all us sinners so that we may become made the righteousness of God in and through Christ. Don't you see why this is why it's called good news? It's on this basis that God accepts us. The bad news is that all have sinned and stand condemned before a holy God and the good news is that God demonstrated his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

And when you appropriate that personally act upon it as an expression of your will God responds by accepting cleansing forgiving making you one of his own and you decide to receive Christ as your savior in the very same way you decide everything else with your will and you reject with your will as well.

The difference between your receiving him or continuing to reject him is yours. What will you do with this one called Jesus who loved you and proved it by dying for you?

[47 : 40] What? Christianity Clarified Volume 61 Track 14 None Looked Forward to the Cross Part 1 An attempt has been made to show the stark differences between the beliefs of those who lived before Christ came and died in his first advent as opposed to what is now believed after he came.

The gospel or good news is very clear and available to be appropriated after Jesus died for the sins of the world. But what was believed prior to the time he came and accomplished that?

The standard answer given by many insists that those who lived before the cross of Christ simply looked forward to the cross and the provision Christ would make.

But in contrast to those, we look back to the cross and are able to see clearly what Christ did and provided for us. So, we look back to the history of the cross while those earlier looked forward to the future reality of the cross.

Well, that does sound like a neat solution, but it simply does not suffice. While it is true, the Old Testament does clearly prophesy when Messiah comes, he would in fact come as the Lamb of God to die in the place of guilty sinners.

[49 : 09] Earlier, it was seen how clearly Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and other prophetic passages predict that. But that does not mean the Jews believed it.

They merely believed that when this promised Messiah came, he would establish the kingdom of God on earth and rule and reign in righteousness. But you may be sure they did not believe what would give him the right to do that.

And that would be his dying a sacrificial death upon a cross and paying for the world that he would redeem and eventually reign over.

True, there were a few isolated rabbis who did assign Isaiah 53 to the coming Messiah, but they were very few and far between. And St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 that the very idea of Jesus being the Messiah and dying on the cross was a stumbling block to Israel.

In fact, most Jews who lived then, when they saw the crucifixion of Jesus, to them that was proof positive he could not have been the Messiah, for God would never allow such an end to befall the chosen one that he sent to earth.

[50 : 24] But the scriptures reveal that such was in fact the very reason for his coming. And shortly after his resurrection, Jesus confronted two of his disciples on the Emmaus road in Luke 24, but they did not know it was Jesus.

And in conversing with them, he admonished them, calling them foolish and slow of heart, slow to believe all that the prophets had written. Jesus said, Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?

Well, they had indeed read about the prophecies regarding the Messiah's glory, and had obviously ignored the portions that spoke of Messiah's sufferings. And yet there is another reason why the Old Testament believers did not anticipate his crucifixion.

And this being the case, it will not do so to simply say they looked in faith forward to the cross, and that's up next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 15.

None looked forward to the cross, Part 2. A common belief exists among many Christians today that as we look back to the death of Christ and put our faith in what Jesus accomplished there, those who lived in Old Testament times before the cross looked forward to that and the belief that Christ would die for the sins in the future.

[51 : 50] But the Gospels reveal quite clearly that not even the apostles of Christ believed that for a moment. And even after Jesus told them plainly that such would happen to him when they got to Jerusalem, they still didn't believe it.

Such advance information given them by Christ is clearly found in Matthew chapter 16. The apostle Peter even went so far as to rebuke Jesus for saying he would be handed over for crucifixion and also included the fact of his resurrection following the third day.

It didn't even faze Peter. He adamantly refused to believe it. Could anyone possibly think Peter was looking forward to the cross?

Can you imagine for a moment that Mary, the mother of Jesus, looked forward in faith to the cross on which her son would die? Could she have comforted herself when looking at her son enduring unspeakable agony by thinking, it's terrible that Jesus has to endure this, but in just three days he will rise from the dead and be alive again?

Well, such thoughts were far removed from the exquisite pain that this mother was feeling. She and other followers of Jesus had no idea he was actually suffering and dying as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the entire human race, past, present, and future.

[53 : 27] As far as the witnesses were concerned, the whole affair simply marked the final end of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and the possibility of his being alive again after three days never entered their mind.

Why do you suppose the clear statements Jesus made about his coming crucifixion in Jerusalem simply did not register with his followers? Well, first, it was simply unthinkable that Jesus could come to that, and Peter said so.

In addition, it is often overlooked what is recorded about this same scenario in Luke chapter 18 that sheds much light on the issue, and Dr. Luke is the only gospel of the four that records it.

The text says, right after Jesus spelled out what he would suffer, verse 34 tells us, the disciples understood none of these things, and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

Jesus said it, but they just didn't get it. It never registered with them. They no doubt heard the words, but concluded that the words could not possibly mean what they seemed to say, but they did.

[54 : 39] And it would be later, actually after his resurrection, they would recall that that was exactly what he said, and it all came back to them after the fact that he did say that, right before the fact.

And the entire issue provided even more credibility than what was already in place. Their recall, his telling them, is found in Luke 24 and verse 8, and they then remembered his words before the fact. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 16, Humanity Before the Cross of Christ. The vast majority of scripture revelation that was key content in the Old Testament focused almost entirely on the Jew and the nation of Israel.

To these exclusively, God gave the law of Moses and the information needed to be rightly related to himself. At the heart of it all was the sacrificial system to be conducted through the priestly tribe of Levi.

Where did that leave those not Jewish? Outside. very outside. The commonality among the Gentiles was found in their idolatry, superstition, and every kind of paganism one could imagine.

[55 : 58] And they constituted 99% of the world's population. It appeared to be these of whom the Apostle Paul was speaking in Acts 17 when delivering his message on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece.

And of them, Paul said, God winked at their ignorance. Others translated winked by using the word overlooked.

The Apostle went on to say, that's the way God looked at them then. But now, said Paul, now as I'm speaking to you, that has all changed.

Now, God commands all men everywhere to repent. Does he mean God did not require all men to repent before? And if so, what does he mean by that?

But now. But now. But now because of what? Maybe we should say because of who. And the who of whom he speaks is none other than Jesus Christ and the payment he made on that cross.

[57 : 02] And because of that, Paul then reminded the Greek philosophers that God has appointed Christ his son to be the one who will judge the world in righteousness and that this Christ is he whom God raised from the dead.

So whatever the state of the world was before, which God winked at or overlooked or cut some slack for, whatever that term meant for the Gentiles, it's no longer the case, said Paul.

His but now powerfully contrasts with the previous times of ignorance. No more. But now.

Recognizes, insists, in fact, there is something new afoot that has changed everything and you need to get with the program.

In fact, Paul inferred that, but now is precisely why I am here. God has raised me up and sent me forth as the apostle to the Gentiles to tell you things are no longer as they once were with God.

Now, after the cross, everything has changed from what it was before. God now holds all men, not just Jews, but Gentiles as well to an entirely different standard.

[58 : 10] And it's all because of Calvary, what happened there, and to whom it happened. God made His Son Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin, and then died for it, so that that payment for all sin could be made in full.

God, having been satisfied with the substitutionary payment made by His only begotten Son, He then raised Him from the dead. And this, said Paul, is the but now of which I speak.

And God is going to judge the world on the basis of this singular event. It was true 2,000 years ago when Paul said it, and it remains true today. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 17, The Cross of Christ Changed Everything.

Under present consideration is the status or plight of humanity prior to the time Christ came and provided the gospel or remedy for human sin. And in the monumental letter Paul wrote to the Romans, he reveals the heart of the issue and the very reason for his being appointed the apostle to the Gentiles and his reason for his missionary trips.

He relates in chapter 1 that he will come to Rome to preach the gospel or good news of God. And he tells them he is not ashamed or embarrassed by the gospel and he tells them why he isn't.

[59 : 35] Because it is the very power of God that is wrapped up in the good news. And then he relates to them that it is in this gospel that the righteousness of God is revealed.

Now we must get a handle on this. Paul is saying that Jesus died on the cross because in that God's righteousness is set forth.

How so? God's righteousness is revealed in that it took the sacrifice of the sinless son of God to satisfy it. And any rejecting that revealed their lack of understanding God's holiness.

In the death of Christ God was propitiated, that is satisfied. That's what it took to save us. This means the righteous indignation of the utterly holy God was satisfied or assuaged because Christ paid in full the penalty that was due the human race.

And such enabled God to save all who come to him through that substitutionary death of Christ. Jesus died on the cross because that was what it took.

[60 : 50] Apart from that, man would have no possibility of acceptance by a holy God. And herein lies our principal problem. It's our inability to even comprehend holiness absolute.

But the scriptures declare it throughout. God's holiness is his apartness, his separateness, his purity and righteousness innate to his person and character.

Men consistently dismiss or deny this great gulf of holiness that separates the creature from the creator. But it is a gulf, a gap, a difference separating the finite from the infinite.

And it is immeasurable. And that is how far sinful man is removed from God. And there is absolutely nothing fallen man can do about it. That's why Jesus came.

To do something about it. And what was the alternative had he not come and done something about it? We would simply die in our sin. But not die merely a physical death, which we still do, but to die a spiritual death that would demand our eternal separation as sinners from the God who is infinitely holy.

[62 : 08] And do you realize that in Christ you are made positionally righteous before God because the payment in full Christ made for your sin has been placed to your account and you now stand forgiven, uncondemned, and acceptable to God as much as Christ himself.

Wow. No wonder it's called good news. Christianity Clarified, volume 61, track 18. Misunderstanding the Cross.

It was apparent that even the apostles chosen by our Lord failed to understand what the cross and the death of Christ upon it would actually entail.

In fact, they rejected even the idea of Jesus being subjected to death on the cross when it was, in reality, no more than mere days away. They likewise failed to understand his prediction of his resurrection and what is more, when his resurrection was reported to the apostles by the women who saw Jesus alive, it was these same apostles who were the first ones to deny his resurrection. How's that for their being unaware? And these who traveled with Jesus for three years should have been the first to believe when in actuality they were the earliest not to believe.

[63 : 34] It was not merely a misunderstanding of the cross but included also a misunderstanding of his resurrection. Later, following the ascension of Christ in Acts chapter 1, we find the apostles in the temple to celebrate the feast of Pentecost described in Acts 2.

Recall, if you will, Pentecost was a mere seven weeks after Jesus' crucifixion. And when Peter stood up to preach that powerful sermon in Acts 2, it is important to note not only what he said, but what he did not say.

He did not say what most Christians thought he said. He did not preach the gospel to his fellow Jews and exhort them to put their faith in Jesus as the one who died for their sin, although that is what most Christians thought Peter did.

But a simple reading of the text reveals that Peter simply charged the Jewish audience with a responsibility for the death of Jesus. And Peter admitted God's part by saying, Jesus was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

But there was no mention here at Pentecost of the substitutionary death of Christ for the sins of humanity. An understanding of that, which would become the very core of the gospel, would not be grasped until later.

[64 : 56] The issue then, in its entirety, centered upon whether Jesus was in fact Israel's Messiah whom they crucified. It was the same issue that was so controversial before his crucifixion and now remains the same even after both his death and resurrection.

Our problem, faced by all too many Christians, is our tendency to read into Scripture an understanding that was not there. And it is a common fallacy we are all guilty of making frequently.

We are too eager to read our present-day understanding into a given text and assume that because we have this understanding, surely those who lived then and experienced Christ personally also had it.

They did not. Certainly, they would come to understand the scope and significance of the death of Christ for the entire world, but they most certainly didn't have it at the Pentecost event in Acts chapter 2.

There, the issue remained as it was before his crucifixion. Was Jesus indeed the Messiah of Israel or was he not? Was he the one promised by Moses and the prophets or was he not?

[66 : 07] That was the issue before and after the cross. Christianity Clarified volume 61, track 19. Grasping the Meaning of the Cross.

The true meaning of the Cross of Christ, the real significance of it all is best expressed by the Apostle Paul as he describes it to the Corinthians in the 15th chapter.

Paul even prefaces his statement by calling it of first importance. That makes it crucial, primary, and key to it all.

And in addition to calling it of first importance, he also makes it clear that he himself had embraced this truth. Listen to Paul's declaration as he stated it. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.

And there we have it as clearly and succinctly as it can be expressed, as it must be. And the reason it must be clear is because it is of first importance.

[67 : 22] This truth, this disclosure must take precedence over everything else regarding what is called the Christian faith. Omit this one central of first importance truth, and whatever you have left is not Christianity.

This cardinal issue is all about the principle of substitution. It harkens all the way back to the sacrificial system inaugurated in the Old Testament as early as Genesis 3.

And there, it is recorded that God covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve with the skins of animals. Where did those come from? Those skins came from the animals that God had slain. Here, the principle of sacrifice, an atonement for sin, was first introduced. Why? What was that all about? It was about sin and disobedience toward the Creator on the part of the creatures, Adam and Eve.

The sin or infraction must have consequences, or justice and righteousness cannot be maintained. It is as simple as right and wrong. And as simple as right and wrong are, there are those today convinced that each of us determine for ourselves what is right or wrong.

[68 : 39] And this, of course, has produced the moral relativism so prominent today that it has had disastrous results for society. Contrary to that, it was an elaborate morality that was in place in Genesis 3, recognizing that the violation of a moral standard must suffer consequences.

But with Adam and Eve, it was an innocent animal that suffered the consequences. This is substitutionary atonement in its purest sense.

The innocent paid the price for the guilty. And you need not look for justice here, because justice requires the guilty pay the price themselves, which is, of course, death. But it is grace that comes forward to pay the penalty, and the innocent dies for the guilty.

This concept became embedded in Judaism with their God-ordained animal sacrificial system. And it was intended to acclimate Israel to the whole concept of substitution.

And it will be Jesus of Nazareth, described by John the Baptist, as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, who would constitute the ultimate and final sacrifice for the sin of the entire world.

[69 : 53] To grasp this is to grasp the meaning of the cross. There is none other. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, track 20, Making the Gospel Paramount.

Embracing the two previous segments titled, Misunderstanding the Cross and Grasping the Meaning of the Cross, we are well on our way to seeing why this segment is rightfully labeled, Making the Cross Paramount.

No one was called of God to do that like the Apostle Paul. It is safe to say, it is as though Paul had a fiddle, and on it was just one string, and it was what he played constantly.

Well, let him tell you about it in his own words to the Corinthians as he wrote his first letter addressing them, saying, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him

crucified.

Did you get that? Paul is saying, I determined, that is, I made up my mind that this is the core message.

[71 : 00] This gospel, or good news of Christ's death on the cross, is the most vital, critical, farthest, deepest, reaching truth the world has ever heard. So much so, that a personal appropriation and embracing of this truth results in a radical change of one's life on this earth, and a radical change of destiny in the world to come.

So, how important is that? It also made Paul proclaim, I am not ashamed, embarrassed, or put off by the gospel of Christ, because it is the very power of God resulting in the salvation of everyone who believes it.

And did you get that? Do you get that? This being the case, can we not see how this was job one for the Apostle Paul?

For the task, he said, he is ready to spend and be spent, even unto death, for the great calling of proclaiming this good news, this glorious gospel.

And in his last letter to Timothy, Paul implored Timothy to remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even unto prison as a criminal.

[72 : 23] For this reason, I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, and with it eternal glory. Here is that gospel that outshines all other possible causes.

Compared to this gospel, this good news regarding Jesus Christ, who he is, who sent him, why he came, what he did, and why it matters so very much, nothing else compares with this.

Now, to you listening at the present, 2,000 years after Paul expressed this evaluation of the gospel, has it ever been replaced with another?

With anything? Have you any competitor that would vie for a more important position that could possibly displace this gospel?

If Paul were here, his likely response would be, Meganoito. That's Greek for God forbid.

[73 : 30] This is making the gospel paramount, its only rightful position. Christianity Clarified, Volume 61, Track 21.

A preview of Volume 62, Upcoming. Critical and explanatory issues surrounding personal salvation and relating to God will be explored.

Personally speaking, there are no issues more critical for every human being. Different important questions about relating to God and precisely what is involved in easily understood terms are explained.

Perhaps every one of us, at one time or another, have wondered about these issues and whether there are answers that are even available. There are, but they are to be found only in the Bible. Actually, that is precisely what we should expect, given the person of God the Creator who inspired the Bible and the reasons He did so. Following the comprehensive treatment of connecting with God, we then undertake the issues surrounding how Judaism began to reveal itself in a carryover way into what would eventually become Christianity.

[74 : 46] And it all had its start in Judaism. The very earliest manifestation of this new system of belief and worship would reflect many carryover elements from Judaism.

The similarity of at least some of the practices of Judaism will become obvious in the Christianity that will early on be identified with Roman Catholicism.

It is all a fascinating and very revealing period of time, involving several centuries of development and change. And, as is always the case, the history involved is the only explanation as to how and why we got to where we are today.

So, this is Pastor Marv Wiseman and the good folks at Grace Bible Church wishing you God's blessing and good listening.