

Christianity Clarified Volume 68

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[0 : 00] Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 1. All humans are born spiritually, physically, intellectually impaired. The question to be addressed now on Christianity Clarified is, to what extent was the intellectual and spiritual fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve?

The answer appears obvious. Their fall and the consequences thereof were pervasive. There is no indication whatever that the fall was somehow limited, nor is there any indication that their offspring, including us at the present, somehow escaped that fall or its consequences.

Let's be reminded, the most significant consequence of the fall is that of our own physical death. Then, related to that are all the physical, emotional, psychological negatives leading up to that physical death.

They all add up to the undeniable scope of the fall being all-encompassing to our very being. Simply put, the fall of our first parents, the nature of which became part of their core being, was also fully transmitted to their offspring.

That then continues in transmission to all members of succeeding generations, including, of course, our own. In short, the entirety of the human race is impaired, compromised, defective in every part of our being.

[1 : 40] The billions of humanity, those past as well as those present, could produce only one person not impaired by the fall. His name was Jesus.

He derived His humanity not from His adopted father Joseph, nor from His birth mother Mary, but solely from the divinely implanted seed from God as expressed by the angel in Matthew chapter 1, telling Joseph that that which is conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary was of the Holy Spirit, not of or by man, but of God.

And that was precisely what allowed Jesus to bypass the normal human conception that was in every way impaired by the sin factor. It meant that Jesus had the necessary purity, qualifying Him to be the sinless sacrifice that He was.

There is not a hint that such was true of any other human. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews contrasted the sacrificial offering of Christ as far superior to that of animals, whereby he stated in chapter 9, For if by the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Did you hear that phrase? Without spot? In reference to the moral purity of Christ, blameless, sinless, without spot.

[3 : 17] That was it which qualified Him to be the sacrifice that God could and did accept. None but He is ever spoken thusly, and none but He could make that sacrifice needed on behalf of the entirety of humanity.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 2, Humans Are Born Impaired, Part 2 Because humans are born impaired, the previous segment described our Lord Jesus Christ as unimpaired in every way. Such was precisely what made His substitutionary death the acceptable sacrifice that it was. Among other consequences resulting from Christ's person was His total grasp of all the Scriptures had to reveal.

Is there any indication in the Bible that any other person ever possessed that grasp or knowledge? None whatever. Protestants do not claim to infallibly interpret the Bible, But that is precisely the claim Roman Catholics set forth.

It is based on the conclusion that the council of Catholic bishops presided over by the current Pope is endowed by God to render the interpretation of all Scripture with infallibility.

[4 : 49] Thus the Pope and his authority is seen as identical to that of Christ Himself. That is an audacious claim that Protestants reject, but it is very much insisted upon by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and is to be believed by Catholics.

It is derived from their conviction that the authority of Christ Himself and that of the Apostles is transmitted or conveyed to the current Pope and the Council of Bishops.

It is referred to as apostolic succession. It means the same authority, power, and prerogatives that existed for Christ and His apostles to exercise were passed on in succession from Peter and the Twelve to the current Pope and bishops of the Catholic Church.

Thus all interpretations, decisions, and pronouncements made by the Pope in his official capacity of *ex cathedra*, meaning from the chair of, and quoting from the official catechism of the Catholic Church and the imprimatur of Pope John Paul II on page 249, paragraph 862, here is what we read. Just as the office which the Lord confided to Peter alone as first of the apostles, destined to be transmitted to his successors, is a permanent one, so also endures the office which the apostles received of shepherding the Church, a charge destined to be exercised without interruption by the sacred order of bishops.

[6 : 27] Hence, the Church teaches that the bishops have, by divine institution, taken the place of the apostles as pastors of the Church, in such wise that whoever listens to them is listening to Christ, and whoever despises them despises Christ and him who sent Christ.

End quote. While it is not doubted that this Catholic position is held in good faith, it must also be admitted that many claims held in good faith later proved unworthy of being believed, no matter how sincerely they were held.

Protestants denied the claim of apostolic succession while Catholics affirm it. So, as has often been said, the issue is authority.

Always has been, always will be. And the issue of apostolic succession clearly reminds us of that. Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 3, Catholic and Protestant Authority, Part 1 Christianity Clarified has frequently referenced the subject of authority as critical by stating, Authority is the issue.

Always has been, always will be. Whatever one accepts as their ultimate authority will determine one's beliefs and actions. With Roman Catholics, the accepted authority is twofold.

[8 : 01] They are the Bible and tradition. Together, these comprise all that Catholics consider their ultimate authority for faith and practice. They accept all of the books of the Bible, as do Protestants, but also include books called the Apocrypha as part of the Old Testament.

Thus, the Bible shares equal authority with tradition. The governing body of the Roman Catholic Church is called the Magisterium, made up of several bishops plus the current Pope.

The Pope is regarded as superior in authority to the entire body of bishops. That is, his authority as Pope surpasses the authority of all of the bishops combined.

As the Pope, he is considered to be the vicar, or earthly representation of Christ himself, thus exercising full authority in all matters of doctrine, faith, and practice, as if he himself were Christ on earth.

The Pope is superior, then, to the entire body of bishops in the same way that Christ, in his authority, was superior to all of his apostles. Thus, when the Pope speaks in the official capacity of his office, called *ex cathedra*, which is a Latin phrase meaning from the chair or the seat of, it is considered identical in authority to that of Christ himself speaking.

[9 : 26] The official pronouncements of the Pope are then not subject to debate or argument. Full obedience is required as one would obey as if it were Christ himself making it.

In other words, when the Pope speaks officially, Christ has spoken. And while Protestants consider that concept to be extreme and reject it, it remains the backbone of authority for the Roman Catholic Church.

And such makes our quote about authority stand out in big letters. Quote, The issue is authority. Always has been. Always will be. That authority principle also applies to the issue of interpretation. For Catholics, the interpretation of any passage of Scripture means exactly what the current Pope says it means. It is not to be debated nor questioned. Only accepted and obeyed.

After all, if it were Jesus Christ himself personally interpreting the passage, who would possibly be able to question it? And that is why the Pope is the unquestioned authority to be believed by the faithful.

[10:41] If his ruling appears contrary to what the Bible says, his ruling is then considered a legitimate and important, divinely inspired update needed due to changing times.

So, while to Protestants, the Bible is the singular and fixed authority, to Catholics, the Pope may counter that by providing his interpretation as a necessary change and update to address the need of changing times.

Thus, while Protestants see the Bible as fixed, the Roman Catholics see it as fluid. And, of course, both hold their positions in good faith. It is this issue that provides the central dynamic for the differences between Catholics and Protestants.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 4, Catholic and Protestant Authorities, Part 2. Care is here being exercised to relate the position of the Catholic Church to be that as stated by their own recognized authorities.

Only then can listeners know Rome's official position, rather than what someone, Christianity Clarified included, says what Rome's official position is.

[11:58] So, here is the official finding of the Pope's authority given in the volume titled Catechism of the Catholic Church, authored under the imprimatur of Pope John Paul II.

And in paragraphs 882 through 884, on page 252, the quote is given, The Pope, Bishop of Rome, and Peter's successor, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful.

For the Roman pontiff, by reason of his office as vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.

The college, or body, of bishops has no authority unless united with the Roman pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head. As such, this college has supreme and full authority over the universal church, but this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman pontiff.

The college of bishops exercises power over the universal church in a solemn manner in an ecumenical council, but there never is an ecumenical council which is not confirmed or at least recognized as such by Peter's successor.

[13:32] Those foregoing statements reiterate our previous segment that describe the current Pope as the very authority of Christ himself.

This means, as the Pope speaks from his official position, it is as that of Christ himself speaking through the Pope. As such, therefore, it is unthinkable that any Catholic should ignore or disobey his statements of doctrine, faith, and practice, for to do so is as disobeying Christ himself.

While Protestants find this hard to believe, Catholics are required to believe that. Yet, if this is taught from early childhood by those in authority over you, including your parents and priests, it is easy to see how and why it is embraced by loyal Catholics throughout their life, always remembering that to obey the Pope is to obey Christ himself.

Now, while not all Roman Catholics would consider themselves good Catholics, those who do will comply with all that comes from the Pope as coming from Christ himself.

Protestants could better understand this if they imagine themselves in the place of Roman Catholics from their earliest age. While that, of course, does not win over the Protestants by agreement, it should nonetheless aid in our understanding of their position.

[15:08] Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 5, Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions, Part 1. We are all, including Christianity Clarified, subject to making faulty assumptions.

This occurs when things we perceive in good faith to be true turn out to be not true at all. Because believing something does not make it true, no matter how sincerely it is believed.

It has been said we are all entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts.

None of us humans are exempt from making faulty assumptions.

We looked at several among the Jews and are now dealing with the faulty assumptions of Catholics to be followed with the faulty assumptions of Protestants. Has anyone escaped the hazard of faulty assumptions?

Nary a one. In fact, Protestants share many of the same faulty assumptions as do Catholics. We can only examine and re-examine our positions and we still might not discover our own faulty assumptions.

[16:26] Yet, if we do spot one and discard it, that adds to our understanding and contributes to our spiritual growth. A great part of Bible study consists of what we call connecting the dots.

And that's because everything in the Bible is connected to everything in the Bible. So, the Bible then becomes its own best interpreter.

That is, Scripture interprets Scripture and in doing so provides us with the most accurate, complete picture we can possibly have.

So, when we return to a passage in Matthew chapter 19 having earlier examined chapter 16, we can see how Catholics chose one of these as a key passage for their authority.

Jesus was approached by one identified as a rich young ruler who inquired about having eternal life. And when Jesus gave him the requirements demanded by the law of Moses, he said he had done all those things.

[17 : 38] Jesus then told him to liquidate all his assets and give the money from them to the poor and come and follow him. The young man went away sad because he didn't want to part with his wealth.

By the way, do you not see a radical difference here from what we would tell someone today if they ask how they may have eternal life? Of course, unfortunately, many do not.

The twelve apostles were listening in on that conversation between Jesus and that rich young ruler and after he departed they told Jesus they had already done that, that which he told the rich young ruler to do.

What then would they receive by way of reward? Jesus told them that they, the twelve, would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel when Jesus came into his kingdom.

The Roman Catholic interpretation, like most of the Protestants interpret that, is to mean that Jesus is now reigning in the kingdom and the twelve apostles are reigning with him judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[18 : 45] Reaching that conclusion requires not a literal interpretation of what Jesus said but a spiritual interpretation. And here is where the controversy arises. What?

How? Who? Oh my, the plot is thickening and we will try to thin it out ahead. Christianity Clarified Volume 68, Track 6, Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions Part 2.

In Matthew 19, Jesus had just told his twelve apostles that in the regeneration, when he, as the Son of Man, sits down on his throne of glory, the twelve apostles shall also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is rather straightforward language when one takes it at face value. But, Catholics and most Protestants do not take it literally.

Why not? Well, because it just does not seem to make sense. Taking it literally means the planet Earth has undergone regeneration or a radical renewal, that Jesus is alive on Earth and rules the world from his earthly throne, while the twelve apostles are also alive and well on Earth, ruling over the nation of Israel.

[20 : 00] Does anyone believe that? Well, you have to if you take it literally, that is, meaning exactly what it says, but, if, say you, and many others as well, that's ridiculous.

There is nothing like that going on or has ever gone on. But then, what can be done about the fact that Jesus said it and even promised it?

We can't just say Jesus was mistaken and didn't know what he was talking about, or worse, Jesus lied to them and was just stringing them along so they wouldn't leave him.

None of those are acceptable or consistent with the integrity and wisdom of Jesus, so there must be another answer. But, what could it be? Not to worry, because a faulty assumption is budding and will soon be in full bloom.

Men, who were well-educated and considered very intelligent by the mostly illiterate masses, came to the rescue with their good-faith faulty assumption.

[21 : 10] It was St. Augustine and another earlier learned scholar named Origen who provided the explanation that questioners back then have and still do have in the majority today.

Say they, those statements by Jesus was never intended to be understood literally, not actually, but spiritually or as an allegory. That means a thing doesn't mean what it seems to mean on the surface, but the meaning is deeper.

That is, you have to look beyond the literal meaning to get the hidden underlying and real meaning. And if you have no ability to do that, then you are confined to the literal, which of course obviously is not possible.

Because Jesus is not on earth, nor are the apostles, nor are they judging anyone, and who can say the earth has been regenerated? So by dismissing all of those as obviously incorrect and maintaining the integrity and intelligence of Jesus, it all has to be interpreted figuratively or allegorically.

And when you do, Jesus and his integrity are salvaged, and none of it actually happened in reality, but spiritually. If, of course, you are spiritual enough to get it.

[22 : 23] Otherwise, you are stuck with the literal. That makes no sense at all. And, the majority of Christendom began buying into this in the 4th century.

Catholics and most Protestants still do today. Folks, this is really critical stuff, and more of it is just ahead. Christianity Clarified Volume 68, Track 7, Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions Part 3.

We are, ever so briefly, considering a key passage, the interpretation of which has separated Christians for 1,700 years and still does.

And, as has often been noted on Christianity Clarified in the past, it's easy to see what the Bible says. Just read it. That's what it says.

But, what does it mean? Therein lies the rub, to quote the Bard. The meaning is the interpretation. The conclusions thereof have so far produced 1,500 different denominations, large and small, synods, councils, splits, splinters, cults, and isms.

[23 : 40] And there is only one conclusion that they all have in common. And what is that? It's the conviction of each that they are the only ones who are right and all of those other folks are wrong.

But, let's get back to our text in Matthew 19. Remember, how and why did the most astute thinkers of those early centuries, say, 100 to 400 A.D., arrive at their conclusions that set aside the literal for the spiritualizing of Matthew 19, the text in question?

Clearly, at least it appears clear, that the kingdom Jesus had promised had not arrived. He wasn't on a throne in Jerusalem, and the twelve apostles were not judging in Israel.

Jesus had gone back to heaven and all twelve of the apostles had died off. Jesus said he was coming again, but by the fourth century, when Augustine was alive, Jesus still hadn't shown up. What gives? Refusing to assign any failure on the part of Jesus to bring all of this to pass, there is something here that we weren't getting.

[24 : 55] What could it be? It isn't known whether they had think tanks back in those early centuries A.D., but there did have to be a lot of thinking and looking for explanations going on.

And then, one day, Origen, or someone like Origen, like Augustine, posed a solution.

Well, of course, that's what it had to be. Jesus did come back. But not in his body as before. He came back in the form of the Holy Spirit and was the power that was provided in Acts 2 at the Jewish Feast of Pentecost.

The earth was also regenerated, well, at least kind of, in the increased spirituality by more people coming to faith in Jesus. And Jesus is reigning!

Well, not on earth like he said, but actually from heaven, which is really even more significant. And the twelve apostles, though they had gone on, had transferred their divinely apostolic authority to those who succeeded them.

[26 : 04] And as for Israel being judged by the successes of the twelve original apostles, well, Israel had been replaced by the Christian church. Spiritually, of course.

And it all does fall into place. And all the while we were thinking those things were coming physically and literally, but what Jesus meant all the while was, it would just be spiritual, not real, not actual, not literal.

Well, the plot is continuing to thicken and we will continue to thin it. Coming up. Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 8, Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions, Part 4.

Currently, consideration for the differences not only separating Catholics from Protestants, but also separating Protestants from other Protestants is being considered. It requires consulting the critical discipline of hermeneutics, the art and science of biblical interpretation.

We engage the main areas of hermeneutics in Christianity Clarified previous volumes 26 through 40 consisting of about 300 separate segments. Catholics and Protestants generally agree the Bible is to be understood from a literal approach to what is written.

[27 : 21] That is, the passage under consideration is to be taken at face value. It simply means what it seems to mean. Except. Except?

Yes, except when the passage being considered refers to prophecy. Here, there is a serious parting of the ways. The Catholic approach, as well as most Protestants departs from the literal.

Here, they insist the literal meaning must be abandoned in favor of a non-literal, figurative, or allegorical interpretation. Simply put, this means nothing means what it seems to mean in the prophecy, but must rather give way to a figurative, hidden meaning that lies beyond what the text seems to be saying.

Such an approach requires a changing of hermeneutical horses in the middle of the stream. Consistency of interpretation is abandoned, and the meaning is now at the mercy of one's imagination.

When or how did this approach ever take place? For the first two or three hundred years after the ascension of Christ, this manner of interpretation was not embraced.

[28 : 48] As to why it was is due largely to a principal reason being Jesus having promised his return before he ascended back to heaven, but after two or three hundred years had passed and Jesus had still not shown up, they looked for some explanation.

The possibility that Jesus was lying, or that he was simply unable to make it back, could not even be considered, so there had to be another reason. What would that be?

Possibility number two. The fact that God allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed in 70 A.D. and then again in 134 A.D. surely signaled that God's former chosen people, the Jews, no longer were. It seemed clear to many who were to eventually become the Roman Catholic Church that God's new chosen people now consisted of the Christian Church.

And all of the prophecy portions in the Bible that promise blessing and world leadership for the Jews and the nation of Israel have instead been transferred to God's new chosen people called the Christian Church, later to be identified as the Roman Catholic Church.

[30 : 04] This is why and how the term replacement theology got its name. Israel is out permanently. The Church is in permanently.

And it is one of the greatest of faulty assumptions that still rules the day for the Catholics and most Protestants. It is also one of the most unfortunate that is a premier faulty assumption.

Much more later. Christianity Clarified Volume 68 Track 9 Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions Part 5 Recent sessions of Christianity Clarified revealed the great influence of early church theologians, particularly those of Origen of the 3rd century AD and St.

Augustine of the 4th century. Origen, whose name is spelled O-R-I-G-E-N, in contrast to the word Origen, O-R-I-G-I-N, which means the beginning of something.

Origen remains the church father of allegory, or the spiritualizing of Scripture. And this was a departure from the literal, normal, grammatical meaning of Scripture to a figurative meaning, which is determined entirely by the whim and imagination of whatever meaning the interpreter wishes to give it.

[31 : 29] But we must remember that God gave us the Bible for our understanding, not for our imagination, which, by the way, knows no bounds.

There must be the commitment to the position that the Bible has given us for our understanding and appreciation, and the God who gave us the Bible did so in order that we are not merely informed, but that we might be able to provide an intelligent response to what is written.

An intelligent response is impossible if we are devoid of understanding what the Scriptures say or mean. Words do mean things.

They are not provided to excite our imagination, but to elicit our response. Only when we have gained an understanding can our response be forthcoming.

Even if our response happens to be one of disobedience, it is at least a knowing, intelligent disobedience, that is, we know what it is we are disobeying.

[32 : 38] Our Creator also involves the consequences of disobedience or obedience based on our understanding. So in our ongoing effort to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, we must do what the Bereans did in Acts 17 when the Apostle Paul preached to them.

They searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul told them was verified by Scripture. Scripture was the authority and the only authority recognized.

Too many men have been tempted to turn to human authorities if what Scripture says is not palatable to them. Catholics and Protestants have been too willing to do this rather than confine their interpretations to the Bible.

We do revere the Church Fathers and pour over their writings, but many of them disagreed with each other, and both Origen of the 3rd century and Augustine of the 4th are consistently appealed to to justify the positions taken by the early Church.

Christianity clarified attempts to make the case for the consistent literal grammatical approach to interpreting Scripture, insisting that words mean things.

[33 : 59] Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture because then and only then can a safe, intelligent, consistent hermeneutic be satisfied, while all else is at the mercy of human imagination, and really, we cannot afford that.

Christianity Clarified Volume 68 Track 10 The Anatomy of the Fallen Assumption Our explanation and consequences of faulty assumptions continues.

Our fallen world is the perpetual victim of faulty assumptions. We fallen creatures have been making them since Mother Eve's faulty assumption in Genesis chapter 3.

The faulty assumption is the dreaded offspring of the faulty interpretation that leads to a sincere but incorrect conclusion about the evidence.

The potential for doing this is automatic. Further, if the one who misunderstands the evidence is a person of learning and influence, their misunderstanding can still be very compelling even though wrong.

[35 : 14] After all, such an one is often deemed an expert whose findings and conclusions are unquestioned. How many times have we heard naive people say something like, well, if that's what so-and-so says and believes, that's good enough for me.

After all, he is the expert. But honestly, now, have we not heard of a highly credentialed expert to later have been proven flat-out wrong?

Someone said the definition of an expert when humorously put is, an expert is a has-been and a spurt is a drip under pressure.

Let's recall the expert medical community of years ago. The most learned and competent physicians available had been summoned to treat a very important high-profile patient.

And as the panel pooled their collective wisdom while huddled around the patient, they concluded the patient required the process of bloodletting. This was then the common medical procedure whereby a quantity of blood was withdrawn by deliberately bleeding the patient.

[36 : 33] But the patient grew worse. That then led the experts to conclude more blood should be taken. And the patient died. The patient had succumbed to the finest medical experts of the day.

It was 1799 when George Washington our first president was laid to rest. The incident can well be called the result of a faulty assumption on steroids.

And the fact that the best experts acted in collective good faith made no difference at all. Because the thing is what it is, whether we like it or not, or believe it or not.

We are all subject to acting on the good faith assumptions of those we trust with our own good faith. Let's face it.

Faulty assumptions are a forte of humanity. It's part of our fallen DNA. But just recognizing that should give us a leg up.

[37 : 43] That awareness plus the passing of time and new discoveries can allow us to scrap the faulty assumptions made in the past. Just think of how far our doctors have come from those who practice the expert healing arts on our nation's founder.

Now, where this subject is going applies to things spiritual, not merely physical, and you will see. Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 11, The Catholic Primary Faulty Assumption, Part 1.

It is called the Primary Faulty Assumption because it appears first in importance among all other faulty assumptions embraced by Catholic leaders dating back to the 4th or 5th century.

And of what did it consist? It was their faulty assumption that because the Bible was a divinely inspired infallible revelation, that also required a divinely inspired and infallible interpretation.

And who did they assume God enabled to provide that interpretation? They assumed it was the Roman Catholic Church alone that God had equipped and enabled to provide that interpretation.

[39 : 00] This is clearly spelled out in the official catechism of the Catholic Church in items 85-100 and read respectively, quoting, The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone.

Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

Added to that is the item 100 on page 35 that states, quote, the task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him, unquote.

In even plainer language, that means the Bible means what the magisterium says it means. They alone, who comprise the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, do in fact determine the proper meaning of Scripture.

While all Catholics are required to subscribe to that claim, non-Catholics do not. At the center of this controversy is the key passage cited in Catholic Authority more than any other for their exclusive claim for interpreting the Bible, and it is found in Matthew chapter 16.

[40 : 40] It should also be noted that there are serious problems found among the majority of the Protestants as well. But if that be so, and both Catholic and Protestant interpretations are in serious question, who then, whose interpretation, can be confidently and safely relied upon?

And the answer is, only the Bible itself. The Bible must be allowed to interpret itself. But how is that done? It is done only by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

This means the Bible is its own and only reliable interpreter. And because the Bible seldom speaks its whole mind in one place, all other passages dealing with a given subject must be noted and inserted into the mix of all others in order to get the complete picture that allows accurate conclusions to be drawn.

anything less will leave one with an incomplete picture drawn from excluding a part or parts that would contribute to the whole. This is precisely what gives rise to faulty assumptions that are so misleading to both Catholics and Protestants.

More will follow. Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 12, The Catholic Primary Faulty Assumption, Part 2.

[42 : 10] The preceding segment concluded that both Roman Catholic and Protestants have made faulty assumptions with their respective interpretations of the Bible.

Building on the conclusions they believe to be true, that led to their doctrinal positions that required all their faithful to endorse. Does this mean huge numbers of Catholic and Protestants have in fact been led astray in what their leaders have taught them for the past 2,000 years?

Precisely. Not only that, but as we earlier examined the faulty assumptions of Judaism in earlier volumes of Christianity Clarified, the same is true of them.

Has no one escaped the dreaded faulty assumption? No one. All mortals, whether Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or whatever else may be proposed, none are immune to thinking something is true when it is not true at all, however sincerely it may have been believed.

Christianity Clarified has stated frequently, All of us mortals have wrinkles in our doctrine and theology. And when we get to heaven, the wrinkles will get ironed out.

[43 : 30] Some of us will require more ironing than others, but no one is wrinkle-free other than the Lord Himself and His Word. Doctrinal wrinkles often go undiscovered for hundreds or thousands of years.

Remember our earlier sessions dealing with the intellectual and spiritual impairment of all humanity imposed by the fall? Our common impairment leads to our faulty assumptions that in turn lead to wrong beliefs that lead to wrong actions.

You do understand, don't you, that this is precisely why the world is as it is? It doesn't take rocket science to figure that out.

The only reliable remedy for this condition is not Catholic, not Protestant, nor Jewish. It's a God thing. And that brings us, as always, right back to the Bible, our only source, untarnished by faulty conclusions.

But wait, even that has to be interpreted, doesn't it? Indeed it does. And again, to quote the Bard, Therein lies the rub.

[44 : 44] Our only remedy lies in what the Bible says about itself in all its portions and positions. This means we must rely upon the Bible to tell us what the Bible means.

How do we do that? By doing what Jesus told his Jewish audience to do in John 5, search the Scriptures. And by what the Apostle Paul said in his Jewish audience in Acts 17, for which Paul

commended them because they didn't take Paul's word for their authority, but they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things spoken by Paul were true.

And why did they? Because the content was critical, very critical. And what made it critical? The authority behind it. The issue is authority.

Always has been, always will be. But we must return to that key text, critical to both Catholics and Protestants found in Matthew chapter 16, dynamite content, in its assertions, implications, and especially in its interpretations.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 68, Track 13, Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions, Part 3.

This current issue under consideration is another of great significance.

[46 : 05] Simply put, it is whether the church and kingdom Jesus said he would build, stating in Matthew 16, is presently in existence. Roman Catholics and most Protestants are persuaded that it is.

Others, including Christianity Clarified, are also persuaded that the kingdom and the church that accompanies it are yet future. There is but one kingdom of heaven, sometimes called the kingdom of God.

It was first preached by John the Baptist, then by Jesus and the twelve apostles. None of them declared the kingdom to have been established, but only to be near or at hand, ready to be launched when the requirements were met.

There were two such requirements. The first was for Jesus the Messiah to pay the purchase price required to buy back the earth that had been ruined by sin and forfeited to Satan the adversary of God.

Only Jesus, the Son of God, was eligible to pay that price due to his own sinless nature. And he did so when on the cross he exclaimed in a loud voice, Tetelestai, meaning, it is finished.

[47 : 19] Jesus thus declared the transaction completed, so that he who knew no sin had been made to be sin on our behalf, so that we might be declared righteous by God.

Needless to say, it was the most far-reaching event ever to take place. And that second requirement was the positive response of the nation of Israel to which Jesus came to embrace the first requirement of the substitutionary death of their long-awaited Messiah.

This they refused to do, causing the postponement of the promised kingdom that was mentioned in Matthew 16. The minority position views both the kingdom and the church that will accompany it as yet future, while awaiting the nation of Israel to fulfill the second requirement of embracing their Messiah rejected by their ancestors 2,000 years ago.

When that occurs, all predicted blessings of the kingdom will be fulfilled in a very literal and obvious way. In contrast, the majority position insists the predicted kingdom of Matthew 16 has already been established beginning at Pentecost and is being fulfilled in a spiritual way rather than literally.

Such requires the kingdom and its accompanying church to be present realities and not postponed for some future time. Catholicism believes it is that church that began in Acts 2 and continues to fulfill that role.

[48 : 58] Most Protestants agree and see that as their origin from which they later withdrew following Martin Luther and others. The tension between what was and is literal and physical contrasted with what is spiritual and immaterial remains a chief point of disagreement to this present day.

More explanations are forthcoming. It is imperative that we get a handle on this because it separates the two in a dynamic way that is otherwise impossible.

Christianity Clarified Volume 68 Track 14 Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions Part 4

Christianity Clarified seeks to explore and explain the consequences of changing the literal approach of interpretation to the figurative or allegorical when interpreting prophecy.

Such is exactly what Catholicism and most of Protestantism did around the 3rd and 4th century A.D. Leaders of that change were Origen in the 3rd century A.D.

and St. Augustine in the 4th century. Augustine's monumental work entitled The City of God declared this present world to be the realization of the kingdom of God established on planet Earth.

[50 : 31] Not in the literal and physical sense many had expected but rather in a spiritual immaterial way. Such of course required a radical departure from the usual approach of interpreting the Bible.

But this they did and continue to do along with most of Protestantism who would bring that methodology with them even when Luther broke from Rome in the 1500s. And while leaving many of Rome's doctrines behind Luther still carried over much including the Roman Catholic method of interpreting prophecy.

One of its largest elements required the prophecies that formerly were interpreted to mean the nation Israel to now mean the Christian Church not Israel.

Such would be known as replacement theology that has been mentioned several times on Christianity Clarified. And it is so called because the Christian Church is now considered to be the replacement of the nation of Israel as the new people of God.

[51 : 40] All that God in Scripture had promised to the nation of Israel was viewed as permanently withdrawn from the Jews and granted to the more recent Christian Church.

The only alternative would be to interpret the return of Christ to have been literal. But that of course would have meant that Jesus still had not fulfilled His promise of returning.

But for those of the 3rd and 4th centuries still waiting for His return it became unacceptable to believe He still had not come after hundreds of years had passed.

Thus their only alternative for explaining His absence was to declare that He had returned in spirit at Pentecost and they misunderstood Him when they thought His return would be literal.

Hence the literal return of Jesus gave way to the spiritual return of Jesus which constituted a fulfillment. That also meant Jesus as well also established the kingdom of heaven here on earth spiritually that is and we are now living in that kingdom.

[52 : 53] In time this became the undisputed official position of the Catholic Church that would also be continued with Luther and on into most of Protestantism to this very day.

It then became and still is one of the most far-reaching faulty assumptions of church history and why it all is thus labeled a faulty assumption will be upcoming.

Christianity Clarified Volume 68 Track 15 Catholic and Protestant Faulty Assumptions Part 5 The very critical text of Matthew 16 has earlier been identified as Roman Catholicism's principal proof text for their origin and authority and it reads thusly with Jesus being quoted as follows beginning with verse 18 quote End quote It was earlier on Volume 64 Track 15 of Christianity Clarified that we read from the official Roman Catholic Catechism carrying the imprimatur of both Popes Benedict and John Paul VI as written in chapter 2 page 118 item 424 and I quote Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father we believe in Jesus and confess you are the Christ the Son of the Living God On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter Christ built his church end quote This clearly states it was the identity of Jesus being the Christ and the Son of the Living God that is the rock upon which he will build his church yet there is ambiguity that surfaces in chapter 2 page 155 and I quote Simon Peter holds the first place in the College of the Twelve Jesus entrusted a unique mission to him through a revelation from the Father Peter had confessed you are the Christ the Son of the Living God

Jesus then declared to him you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it Christ the Living Stone thus assures his church built on Peter a victory over the powers of death because of the faith he confessed Peter will remain the unshakable rock of the church unquote well the ambiguity is obvious the difference between the church being built upon the truth of Peter's confession and the church being built upon the person of Peter is truly great Christianity Clarified is inserting into the discussion several references from the Old Testament 3 from 2 Samuel and 13 from the Psalms namely chapters 18 28 31 42 62 71 78 89 92 94 and 95 all of which clearly identify

[56 : 39] God himself as being the rock be reminded how often Jesus quoted from the Old Testament during his three year earthly ministry when the New Testament had not yet been written we must ask ourselves how likely is it that while God is repeatedly called the rock as quoted the 18 times mentioned but all of a sudden Peter is the rock in reference here in Matthew 16 that's a valid question for Catholics and Protestants the difference between the two requires a quantum leap that logic and consistency simply cannot make Christianity Christianity Clarified volume 68 track 16 Catholic and Protestant faulty assumptions part 6 the previous session reinforced the principle of utilizing scripture to interpret scripture we noted multiple verses from the Old Testament notably three from 2 Samuel and 13 from the Psalms all of which clearly refer to

God as the rock of Israel and the rock in which David trusted by what possible rationale then can Peter in Matthew 16 be the rock upon which Jesus said he would build his church here is one of

many occasions where scripture sheds light upon itself so that one passage provides the key for understanding another now there is another need to invoke this same principle as we continue to deal with the Matthew 16 passage about the kingdom and the church Jesus said he would establish Peter along with the other apostles will be key parts in it despite it not being built upon Peter as the Catholic position insists besides identifying the rock as that of deity or God or Christ himself and his identity as Messiah there is also the need to establish when Jesus will build the church and when he will establish the kingdom

Catholics and Protestants alike succumbed to the pervasive faulty assumption that it was at Pentecost in Acts 2 where Peter delivered his powerful appeal to the Jews gathered in the temple that was just 10 days after Jesus told them to tarry in Jerusalem and they would be endued with power that happened at Pentecost as Acts 2 records also it looked very much like the fulfillment of what Jesus promised in the key passage of Matthew 16 about his building the church and giving Peter the keys to the kingdom over which the apostles would exercise authority but once again the ever threatening faulty assumption proved that things are often not as they seem calling once again upon the Bible to provide the necessary light gained by scripture interpreting scripture the faulty assumption as always made in good faith is revealed to be not as it seemed but if Pentecost in Acts 2 is not the church Jesus said he would build what was it oh it was a church all right it was an assembly of 3,000 who previously did not believe Jesus to be the

Messiah but who had changed their mind by hearing and responding to Peter's message these were all Jews in their entirety they then followed their repentance by submitting to John's baptism but what about the church and the kingdom of Matthew 16 when and where did it start it hasn't the kingdom and that church that will be in it is yet to come it remains a key component for the future but does not exist at the present once again when we allow scripture to interpret scripture faulty assumptions will be exposed as the passage provides clarity more ahead coming up christianity clarifying volume 68 track 18 revisiting the purpose of miracles part 1 it is imperative to put in perspective the miracles of Jesus while he was on earth for the three plus years of public ministry he made it clear when he stated in Matthew 12 earlier in chapter 11 John the Baptist was in prison and sent men to ask Jesus whether he was the one who was to come or should they be looking for someone else it was John himself who earlier introduced Jesus as Messiah to Israel in Matthew 3 but now John being in prison appears to have some doubts Jesus responded to his query by reciting his many miracles they were intended to validate the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah it is critical that the miracles be understood both those performed by Jesus and those by the twelve apostles whom he also empowered to perform them they were all key ingredients of the message of the kingdom they were preaching because of sin that came with the fall of our first parents all kinds of negatives entered into humanity including disease that eventually led to death which had become an abnormality to the original creation Jesus in his miracles exercised supernatural power over all the abnormalities brought on by sin they included not only power over disease and death but even over nature and accompanying weather of earth and sea these were all samples or tastes of what would be realized when the kingdom was fully in place and operating in the miracles Jesus was telling Israel this was the way the world will be when the kingdom is established the important distinction needs to be made between the sampling of kingdom conditions as opposed to the complete establishment of the kingdom earlier we likened the miracles to foothills compared to what the fully established kingdom would be the miracles by Jesus and the twelve to whom he gave authority all served the same purpose it was to show Israel that this one called Jesus of Nazareth was indeed their Messiah and when Israel embraces him as such what was then just a taste of the kingdom to come by way of the miracles would then develop into a worldwide reality what had originally been a beautiful creation free of disease and death but had turned ugly due to sin would be restored to the original unfallen state be reminded Jesus said if I cast out demons by the finger of God then the kingdom of God has come unto you and Luke 17 when he told the Pharisees the kingdom of God is in your midst meaning of course in his own person and power that he manifested in his miracles the miracles of Jesus were his most persuasive evidence behind his claims of Messiahship christianity clarified volume 68 track 19 revisiting the purpose of miracles part two even a superficial reading of the four gospels reveals without question the importance of the kingdom of God also called the kingdom of heaven the term in context is revealed to be expressed in what is commonly called the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6 our Lord offered it as a model or basic expression of speaking to God containing several key concerns by the one praying only a few verses earlier Jesus had denounced the practice of rote mechanical prayers indicating that while men ought always to pray

they should not merely say prayers as if prayer is a magical incantation or that there is value in reciting prayers what is more accurately described as the lord's prayer is found in john's gospel chapter 17 a key phrase in matthew 7 is for god's kingdom that is in heaven to come to earth if it does then the will of god will be done on earth as it is in heaven there it is the prayer implies that god's will is not now being done on earth as it is in heaven that is precisely what is wrong on earth from the time of its fall in genesis 3 to the present earth as jesus revealed it in john's gospel chapter 12 14 and 16 is ruled by the prince of this world to be none other than satan satan in league with morally fallen mankind resulted in making this world as it is as well the apostle paul affirms the same in second corinthians chapter 4 where he assigns satan to be the one who blinds the minds of men preventing them from seeing things as they truly are but when earth is taken back from the devil who deceived our first parents into forfeiting their dominion of it it will then become the kingdom of heaven established on earth god's will rather than satan's will then be done meanwhile humanity struggles in a world that is not god's will having become subject to evil disease corruption and ultimately death jesus came to reverse all that with the installation of the kingdom of heaven on earth his miracles were demonstrations of his ability to right the wrongs of earth and he revealed that ability on those god had established as the lead nation for the entire process that was tiny israel jesus also delegated and empowered his twelve apostles to do likewise as they went forth announcing to israel that the promised kingdom was at hand right around a corner the miracle jesus and the twelve performed were samples bona fide exhibits that validated the message they preached about the coming kingdom and it was all to be realized by israel nationally embracing jesus of

[68 : 11] nazareth as their messiah they would then lead the rest of the world in the regeneration of earth and the miracles were proof positive jesus could do it the miracles gave the nation every reason to get on board but while thousands of jews did the nation as a whole particularly its government did not so the offer of the kingdom was not canceled but it was postponed and today we continue to live in that postponement more explanation is forthcoming