

Christianity Clarified Volume 73

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[0 : 00] Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 1, Replacement Theology Reconsidered, Part 1. Replacement Theology, also called supersessionism, certainly has good reason for reconsidering that long-held position.

Catholics and most Protestants have to reckon with the 1948 re-establishment of the tiny state of Israel following the Holocaust of World War II.

Israel's national rebirth remains unparalleled among all the nations of the world, and so too with their victories over the multiple Arab nations surrounding them that were intent on squashing their rebirth.

No one can deny, not even the replacement folks, that something appears to be brewing internationally regarding the Jews and the recently recognized state of Israel.

In fact, so well is Israel established back in their land. In the year 2023, they celebrated their 75th anniversary.

[1 : 11] Not bad for an upstart of a tiny nation that no one thought could possibly survive. Even apart from that 1948 reality, Christianity Clarified has maintained the premise of Israel remaining the chosen people of God despite their estrangement as far back as the first century A.D.

And for those 300 or so years after the ascension of Christ back to heaven, nearly all Christians back then embraced the concept of Israel having maintained their special chosen status based on God's commitment to them as far back as Genesis 12 through 15 and other Old Testament passages.

And in the New Testament, it is chapter 9 through 11 of Paul's letter to the Romans that is particularly troublesome to those who insisted God's dealings with Israel had concluded permanently.

They see the Christian church to have taken Israel's place as God's chosen people. The Romans passage simply does not support that, but rather repudiates it in clear language.

With the rhetorical question asked by Paul in Romans chapter 11 where he utters, I say then, God has not rejected his people, has he?

[2 : 40] May it never be. For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

Well, it is true that Paul wrote that before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. And only a few years after he wrote that, there was another destruction by Rome in 135 A.D.

So one might argue that Paul wrote Romans prior to those destructions, and they surely would later cancel out what Paul said about Israel not being abandoned in Romans.

Yet, one must still reckon with the prophecy a thousand years before Paul spoke in 2 Samuel chapter 7, as it's a psalmist in Psalm 89, particularly verses 30 through 37.

No mistake about it, Israel is alive and well on planet Earth, and we haven't seen anything yet.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 2, Replacement Theology Reconsidered, Part 2.

[3 : 53] Christianity Clarified is recommending a valuable resource for serious students, whether as layfolk or pastors. It deals comprehensively, but still with brevity, that today's readers will appreciate.

It is entitled, How the Church Replaced Israel. The author, Michael J. Vlach, and his name is spelled V-L-A-C-H, capably covers the salient points of the issue in a readable style that is easily grasped by the average layperson.

The extensive bibliography he lists is impressive in its coverage of both the pros and cons of the issue. Today's pastors and students alike often avoid the more comprehensive volumes available because they do require much more time to absorb, and there is a growing number of busy readers

in that category.

So, for them, this 200-page paperback volume is a welcome addition. An example of Vlach's offering is given from pages 28 and 29, quoting now, three factors contributed to the acceptance of supersessionism in the early church.

Number one, the increasing Gentile composition of the early church. Number two, the church's perception of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and 135 A.D.

[5 : 34] And three, a hermeneutical approach that allowed the church to appropriate Israel's promises to itself. Together, these factors contributed to the belief that the church had permanently replaced Israel as God's people.

End quote. Later, Vlach recounts notable church fathers, including Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and even Augustine and Origen, who considered Israel's fall and replacement by the church to be temporary rather than permanent.

Each viewed a time of future blessing and restoration of Israel, which is, of course, on track with what has actually occurred, or at least beginning to occur with Israel being back in the land.

Despite these notables in church history, who saw Israel's fall as temporary with future reconciliation coming, such still does not appear to have taken hold among the laity of Roman Catholics or of most Protestants.

And for among the Catholics and Protestant clergy, there appears to be a noticeable silence regarding their earlier claims of being the permanent replacement for Israel, no longer being valid.

[7 : 05] So, is it or is it not valid? Is Israel the people of God? Or is it the Christian church that are the people of God?

If one contends it to be both, does that present a different kind of problem? Indeed, it does, as we shall see just ahead.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 3, Replacement Theology, Reconsidered, Part 3. The reestablishment of tiny Israel allows them to take their place among the nations of the world, and it has, quite frankly, thrown a proverbial monkey wrench in the long-held opinion of practically all of the world's religions, particularly among Catholics and most Protestants.

Why? Well, because for the past 1700 or so years, Israel has been regarded as permanently written off by God, who replaced the Jews with Christians as the new people of God.

Israel was pronounced dead by the nations and religions of Catholicism and then Protestantism. But apparently, the corpse never got the message.

[8 : 32] Because against all odds, Israel is reestablished and back in the land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That immediately begs the question, well, what now does that mean, insofar as the Catholics and Protestants claim that they, not Israel, are the true people of God?

Nobody is saying it, at least not publicly, but it is, in fact, an international embarrassment. Well, for starters, we have to admit, somebody is wrong.

Who can it be? While both the Old and New Testaments do indeed insist on the perpetuity of the nation of Israel, they provide nothing by way of recognizing a non-Jewish element displacing Israel.

They just don't. The typical solution to this international dilemma is heard from the usual world diplomats scurrying around the various national capitals throughout, saying, Well, it's a big world.

Diplomacy insists. They both are the chosen of God. And after all, aren't we all children of God anyway? End of problem. Oh, no you don't, Mr. International Smoothie of International Feathers.

[10 : 01] Well, no doubt it is true. Your short-sighted, well-meaning diplomacy will fly well among those who rewrite history and those who utterly ignore what the Bible says and promises.

Oh, yes, it'll play well with them, even though that approach may play well among most, even including Israel. What? Including Israel?

Yes, Israel. Even though she is back in the land, don't interpret that to mean all is well now between Israel and God, because it isn't.

But wait. Doesn't the rebirth of Israel, 1948, doesn't that mean God and Israel have kissed and made up? Oh, no.

Not by any means. There are age-old scores that must yet be settled between Israel and God before their good terms can be reestablished. They are the stuff of which the Jewish prophets spoke long ago.

[11 : 07] So, despite their being back in the land, they are not back in favor with God. And why they aren't is explained just ahead. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 4, Replacement

Theology Reconsidered, Part 4.

As referenced multiple times on Christianity Clarified, the Jewish people and their nation of Israel have been estranged from God for nearly 2,000 years.

Their rejection of their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, whom they continue to reject, created the estrangement between God and Israel.

It can't be called a divorce, because that speaks of finality. It can only be an estrangement, a separation.

God and the Jews are still not on speaking terms. Never mind the fact that God was obviously moved on their behalf in their war for independence in 1948, and the wars following, all of which Israel clearly should have lost, but instead won.

[12:26] And while that may look like the rift between God and the Jews is over, that would be much too premature. They are still not speaking.

Why do we say that? Well, for good reason. Number one, Israel, to our best knowledge, has never credited God with their victories, although nearly everyone but Israel sees their victories as a God thing.

But this whole picture is very complex. There are, of course, many Jews who do see Israel's comeback on the world scene as God working on their behalf.

But are you aware that only about 10% of the Jews living in Israel are willing to credit God for their survival?

90% of Israel's Jews openly describe themselves as being or as not being a religious Jew, the way they call themselves.

[13:37] Well, what are they then? If you aren't a religious Jew, what kind of a Jew could you be? Well, they consider themselves secular Jews.

Oh, yes, still Jews, but not observant. They don't attend synagogue, except for bar mitzvahs and funerals. They, at least many of them, keep Jewish holidays and celebrations, but they do so based on tradition, not out of spiritual convictions.

And this is 90% of the Jews in Israel. Does that sound like spiritual winds are blowing? Not at all. Far from it. Israel nationally has not at all come back to the God of their fathers.

Mark it well now. They shall. But as yet, they have not, nor do they seem at all concerned about it. And for many Jews, they go further than calling themselves secular, but some actually prefer a full-blown atheism.

Why so? It appears that most of them have arrived at that conclusion, did so in connection with the deaths of six million of their countrymen under the Nazi regime.

[14:52] Was that kind of seeming divine indifference going to win God very many friends among the Jews? Hardly. So let's pursue this.

We must, because it is too important to overlook, and so much lies ahead. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 5, God and Israel Remain Estranged.

The previous session of Christianity Clarified revealed the estrangement between God and Israel to be alive and well. Only about 10% of the Jewish population in Israel are actually practicing Judaism. 90% classify themselves as secular. I recall confronting some of them while we were in Israel many years ago about that status, only to hear them say, I am not a religious Jew.

And more and more of them feel that way. They remain Jewish in their ancestry, their ethnicity, and their traditions, but they are not practicing the religion of Judaism per se.

[16:04] But many, as noted, have actually embraced atheism as their only way of accounting for the Holocaust that murdered 6 million of their kinsmen, while God, who was supposed to be their God, seemed to ignore them by doing nothing to stop their brutal murders.

Thus, the estrangement that began centuries earlier has not been lessened, but if anything, increased. And to us Gentiles, as relative outsiders, Israel's inexplicable victories in all of their past conflicts with hostile Arab neighbors look to us much like God was involved in those victories.

Yet, today's Jews seem to be silent about any supposed divine intervention for them. And while they do not deny it, we know very little of any of them actually affirming it.

Further, as horrible as that World War II Holocaust was in eliminating one-third of all Jews in the world, more of the same is yet to come.

Their own prophets, one of whom was Jeremiah, speaks of an even worse Holocaust ahead when a full two-thirds of worldwide Jewry will be murdered.

[17:22] It's found in Jeremiah chapter 30. And Zechariah adds to the prophecy in chapter 13, stating, And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts in it shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left in it.

And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined and will test them as gold is tested. They shall call on my name and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people! And they shall say, The Lord is my God. And again, that's Zechariah chapter 13 and Jeremiah chapter 30. This is prophesying of tribulation content, of which the prophet Daniel also wrote in his 12th chapter.

The adversary, intent on the slaughter of all Jews, is none other than the Antichrist, the special emissary of Satan himself.

It's all there and much more in their own Jewish Bible. And of course, many Jews, if hearing this today, will simply dismiss it with a shrug as being, oh, so much of a fable.

[18:33] But wasn't it precisely because the Jews who were contemporaries to those prophets Jeremiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, who ignored their warnings back then also?

Hasn't so much persecution and brutality been heaped upon the Jews for multiple generations? It certainly has. One thinks that if there is anything we do not seem to learn from history, it's that we don't learn from history.

And the Jews are prime examples. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 6, Reviewing Israel's Checkered Past.

Historically, no nation on earth has enjoyed a relationship to the God of creation as have the Jewish people. It all began with their earthly ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then followed their sojourn in Egypt, where they eventually were reduced to being a nation of slaves under cruel Egyptian taskmasters.

To rescue them, God raised up Moses, who led them out of Egypt into freedom while destroying the entire army of Egyptian pursuers in the crossing of the Red Sea.

[19:53] Mount Sinai, then, was their official national birthplace. when they entered into a mutual contract by signing on to the terms that God established in the Ten Commandments and agreed to by Israel as the nation.

Essentially, the contract was that if Israel would be obedient to the God of their deliverance, He would protect them and provide for them.

It was the start of what would be a tenuous relationship, up and down, in and out, back and forth, God's favor spiced with divine bouts of punishment, deprivation, restoration, only repeat that following generations, so that nationally, Israel simply could not resist flirting with idolatry through being influenced by their pagan neighbors.

Yet, time after time, God would raise up fearless men who prophesied to the nation as they delivered dire warnings should Israel persist in her idolatrous ways.

Essentially, the warnings went unheeded and God was left to make good on the negative results of which the multiple prophets warned. And, God did so.

[21:16] This seesaw relationship between God and Israel would persist with elements of spiritual national revival and then consequent blessing only later to nationally slip back into the old ways of moral and spiritual corruption.

God allowed pagan neighbors to chasten Israel via the Philistines, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans that decimated Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D., just as Jesus the Messiah had prophesied.

All these national calamities would again surface with the false claims of Messiahship under Bar Kokhba in 134 A.D. And again, the pagan Romans would be God's whipping boy for Israel's punishment.

This seesaw relationship would be repeated over the ensuing centuries until the Israelites were scattered as vagabonds all over Europe and eventually to other parts of the globe.

Their estrangement from God would persist, but that God had not forgotten them even though they deserved to be forgotten was vividly demonstrated in May of 1948.

[22:39] Israel, with victories they never should have won, was back in the land once again. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 7, What Now for Replacement Theology, Part 1?

With Israel reestablished as a nation in 1948, it poses new questions for replacement theology. Israel's rebirth does not in itself refute the concept of replacement theology, but it certainly does

detract from its historical assumption about the Christian church replacing Israel as the chosen people of God.

As Vlach pointed out in his book mentioned earlier, quote, Has the church replaced Israel? On page 48, he states, Perspectives concerning supersessionism have been seriously affected by two 20th century developments.

the Holocaust and the establishment of the modern state of Israel. These events have pushed questions and issues concerning Israel and the church to the forefront of Christian theology. More than any other event, the Holocaust has been the most significant factor in the church's re-evaluation of supersessionism. Another author named Oaks asserts in his book titled Judaism and Christian Theology and I'm quoting, Christian reflections on the Jews and Judaism after the Holocaust have generated theological questions of fundamental significance.

[24 : 23] These questions include the following. 1. 1. What are Christians to make of the persistence of the Jewish people? 2. Is the church the new Israel?

3. What of Israel's sins? 4. What of Israel's land and state? End quote. And then author H.

N. Ritterbos in the book titled The Future of Israel states, The existence of Israel once again becomes a bone of contention, this time in a theoretical and theological sense.

Do the misery and suffering of Israel in the past and in the present prove that God's doom has rested and will rest upon her, as has been alleged time and again in so-called Christian theology? Or is Israel's lasting existence and in a way her invincibility God's finger in history, that Israel is the object of his special providence and the proof of her glorious future, the future that has been beheld and foretold by Israel's own seers and prophets?

[25 : 40] End quote. Lastly, author K. Sulin's work titled The God of Israel and Christian Theology is referenced on page 69, saying, Under the new conditions created by these events, Christian churches have begun to consider anew their relation to the God of Israel and the Israel of God in the light of the scriptures and the gospel about Jesus.

This includes revisiting the teaching of supersessionism after nearly 2,000 years. End quote.

Christianity Clarified urges all listeners to give special attention to these statements of pronounced significance.

Also, please be reminded that supersessionism is merely another term for replacement theology that we have used in the past and have been often utilized in previous sessions.

So, next up, what does the Catholic and Protestant churches do with this issue? Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 8, Israel's Future Restoration.

With Israel's return to their land and the defeat of all the surrounding hostile nations that tried to destroy them, they surprisingly not only survived, but thereafter thrived in their surviving.

[27 : 07] Recently, it was revealed again that tiny Israel, for centuries, described as a people without a land, not only regained and held their ancient homeland, but prospered in ways as unlikely as was their survival.

Records reveal that although the Jews do not make up even one percent of the world's population, but are instead numbered as a paltry, one-tenth of one percent, yet they have succeeded in winning a staggering 20% of the coveted international Nobel Prizes among all the other nations of the world, and that while devoting 90% of their annual income to the defense of their national survival. people. The world, including Israel itself, has yet to explain that reality, nor do any of the stunned nations of the world have an explanation for it.

But Bible students have a perfectly reasonable explanation for it. Listen to how the Jewish prophet Hosea puts it in that telling third chapter of Hosea, stating, For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without an image, without an ephod, and without teraphim.

Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

[28 : 50] Hosea wrote that about 800 years before Jesus was born. Did you get that? Did you hear, And David their king?

Do you realize David the king had been dead over 200 years when Hosea wrote that? The latter days mentioned by Hosea means the latter days of this present world as we know it.

This is the coming kingdom content, the coming millennial reign after which Christ himself will return at Armageddon, incarcerate Satan in Revelation chapter 20, and establish his throne and

government of the entire world over which he will then rule with a rod of iron.

Say, You surely do not think this world is going to continue as it is, do you? Herein, Revelation 20, this is nearing the endgame.

One more human rebellion to go is described in Revelation 20, and then the eternal state is ushered in. This will be the actual realization of that endearing time that we remember hearing since we were children, and they lived happily ever after.

[30 : 19] For any, seeing this as improbable or even impossible, haven't you learned anything yet? Well, hold on, because you are, if you are in Christ, you are personally going to be in on all of this.

so the best is yet to come. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 9, Our Participation in the Second Coming True believers have been overheard to say, I don't get all that excited about stuff in prophecy.

After all, we won't even be around then, so why get involved in what won't occur until afterward dead and gone? Dead and gone? Well, if uttered by a true believer, we are sure they are sincere in their outlook, but dead and gone?

Oh, no, and far from it. Rather than being dead and gone, you are going to be alive and present, and very much so. In light of that, it will behoove you now to pay attention.

Yes, you heard right, alive and present, assuming of course you are a true believer, in which case you and I will be among the throng referenced in 1 Thessalonians 3, 2 Thessalonians 1, Zechariah chapter 14, and Jude 14, as those whom Christ will bring with him when he makes his second coming to earth, described in Revelation chapter 19.

[31 : 57] Some believe the mention of holy ones in the text refers to angels rather than humans. Both groups, angels and humans, can be called holy ones because both actually are such, since the term holy ones simply means separated ones, and both angels and humans qualify for that designation.

clearly angels are meant in Matthew 25 and 2 Thessalonians 1, where the original Greek uses the term angelos.

Both groups, humans and angels, are coming with Christ when he returns to earth in this climactic setting. After the rapture, when all believers will have been caught up to be with the Lord in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, we will attend the marriage ceremony of the Lamb, followed with the celebratory marriage supper of the Lamb, also in heaven.

We will have a place at the table. And there is something else Jesus said while on earth the first time. He told his apostles in John 14 that he would later receive them to himself so that where he is, they will be also.

And add to that what the apostle Paul stated in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, that when we meet the Lord in the air at the rapture, so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[33 : 37] These clear statements do not allow for any separation. Where Jesus is, we will be. And anyone who hasn't contemplated this is surely invited to do so just now.

In essence, it is simply promising and emphasizing that the major attraction, when all is said and done, and simply being in the presence of the Lord throughout the coming eternity.

And, no, the last thing you will ever need to be concerned about is being bored. Being bored while in the presence of the Creator is a concern you need never have.

You can count on two things for sure, lots of surprises and no disappointments, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. And, whatever you think that will be like, it will be a lot better than that.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 10. You are invited to the party. You are cordially invited to the party.

[34 : 43] And, you will not need to respond with the usual request of RSVP. Today, when we get an official invitation to attend a planned event, the notice may include the request for a response from you, letting the host know that you accept the invitation and plan to be there.

You will not get one of those invitations to this party, because if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, your presence is assumed and assured.

There were never any gala occasions with which to compare this. It is described in Revelation 19 and reads as follows, beginning in chapter 19.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.

And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, which is the righteous acts of the saints. Then, following the marriage ceremony, and He said to me, write, blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

[35 : 57] For us to say the description of this scene is otherworldly is an understatement, probably one of the greatest understatements ever made.

Verse 1 of this 19th chapter makes it clear that the scene described in heaven is in heaven, and that alone is enough to overwhelm us.

What that will be like, we can only imagine. No, we probably cannot imagine. It is unimaginable. It involves a setting that will be as ultimate as God wishes to make it, and that also is unimaginable. After all, we are speaking of the Creator of all things. The length of time involved for the marriage itself and the feast of celebration following the marriage is not revealed.

Obviously, neither the wedding or the feast will be hurried affairs, but will be as ultimate as everything else God will provide.

[37 : 00] The celebration will be the party of the universe. After this heavenly marriage and the banquet that follows, attention will be directed toward the unfinished business that yet remains on earth.

Revelation 19.11 describes the return of Christ from heaven, accompanied by all the guests at that former wedding and banquet.

The mission will be the confrontation with Christ alone as the combatant with all those participants from the former wedding and banquet as observers.

believers. Its description is next. It will be the sneak preview for all believers. Will you be among them?

You will be if you are a believer listening to this and, oh yes, ladies, don't concern yourself with what you will wear.

[38 : 06] That too will be provided and you will be beautiful, stunningly so. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 11, Putting the Future on Hold, Part 1.

The material we will be engaging is extremely important, critical, in fact, to the overall appreciation of the plan and program of God. The content will reveal precisely what is coming and why.

But as you might expect, the preciseness of the when leaves us dangling. But no doubt, as the time draws nearer, there will be those telltale symptoms revealing it all to be much closer.

Closer to what? Closer to the big wrap-up. There is an endgame, don't you know? Just because this present world has chalked up a history of thousands of years, you didn't think it is going to continue like this forever, did you?

There is an endgame, you know. The endgame, as we know it, is the bringing to a conclusion what we just concluded on the previous segments, if you were with us for those.

[39 : 25] They address the issues of what now for replacement theology, then Israel's future restoration, then our participation in the second coming, then you are invited to the party.

Humble apologies are hereby extended for jumping ahead of ourselves in the future chronological order of things coming, but the level of anticipation was too high to resist, so a peek behind the curtain was irresistible, and what was seen was just delivered as a sneak preview of what lies ahead.

Where are we now, or where were we? Oh, yes, under consideration is the age-old claim dating back 1700 or so years that due to their rejection of their Messiah, Jesus the Nazarene, the claim is that God in turn rejected Israel and all the blessings originally promised to Israel and the Jews have thus been withdrawn from them and instead transferred to the non-Jews or the Gentiles who did receive Jesus as their Savior.

They then became known as the Christian Church and still are. The principal recipients of that switch then became known as the Roman Catholic Church.

It would then split 700 years later in 1054 over unreconciled theological differences and the breakaway faction became and still is the Eastern Orthodox Church as headquartered in Constantinople, Turkey, while the original Westerners continued in Rome as the Roman Catholic Church.

[41 : 24] and then to muddy the historic and theological waters even further, there was yet another historic break away centuries later that must be taken into consideration and we shall upcoming.

You see, folks, all of this coagulates and comes together precisely as the plan and program of God is laid out, set forth in Scripture, which will become more and more apparent as we move along and the material develops.

Thank you so much for joining us today. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 12, Putting the Future on Hold Part 2 Putting all the future on hold is not something we prefer to do.

What we prefer to do is simply charge ahead with the breathtaking future events that prophecy reveals to be just up ahead. So, why not just do that?

Well, for one simple but important reason. We have made a commitment to clarify Christianity at the outset of this program over 1,400 sessions ago.

[42 : 45] Though Christianity Clarified is aired on several stations five days a week, we are persuaded only a small percentage of listeners are able to hear all five programs Monday through Friday.

Probably most who do are either homebound or shut-ins unable to be up and about or those in a home or work environment that automatically allows them to listen every day.

But even then, conversation with other folks, telephone calls and other responsibilities simply prevent many from listening and actually hearing five days a week.

We understand that. And in trying to factor all those contingencies into the mix, it is deemed advisable to slow the pace of new material in an effort to leave no one behind with the developing content.

And again, we plead the persuasion that repetition is the mother not only of invention, but also of understanding as well.

[43 : 54] So, we clarify and clarify and try to clarify some more. There is, after all, a method to our madness. So, thank you for understanding and thanks for your prayers.

The last segment, in case you didn't hear it, and if not, that makes my point, it was revealed that what morphed from Judaism around the second to fourth century into what became the Roman Catholic Church, continued on as such for several centuries with its headquarters in Rome, Italy, instead of Jerusalem, when functioning as Judaism.

In the year 1054 A.D., the Eastern faction of the Catholic Church headquartered in Constantinople, Turkey, broke away from its headquarters in Rome due to unresolved doctrinal issues, and they appointed their own pope or patriarch of the new Eastern Orthodox Church.

Along with their own bishops, the two maintain most of their doctrines in common, but the unresolved differences over which they separated will not be engaged here.

So after the parting of their ways in 1054 A.D., many years after the Church began in Rome, a second departure from the original Church in Rome would occur about five centuries later.

[45 : 26] While most are more familiar with this breakaway than they will be with the former Eastern Orthodox Church, this breakaway would be called the Protestant Church, and the year was 1517.

So get it down and we'll go on. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 13, Rome's Claim for Authority, Part 1.

Everything regarding Roman Catholicism hinges upon the singular issue of authority, its source, and its extent. Such is defined in the official catechism of the Catholic Church carrying the imprimatur, or the officiality of Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict, his successor.

Reading from paragraph 862 on page 249 is as follows. 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.

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.

[47 : 12] end quote. While those of all other faiths reject that claim of authority, it has been and remains the very baseline of the Catholic church.

The quote just recited obviously intended to make the issue as clear as possible regarding their claim and to repeat, quote, 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. Because that claim appears to be so specific, there are many outside of the Catholic church when upon hearing the just stated quotation respond with, well, yes, but Catholics don't really believe that.

But you may be assured that they most definitely do believe that. one may ask any Catholic priest or instructed Catholic, and you will receive a like-emphatic confirmation.

As noted at the outset of this segment, everything hinges upon what one accepts as their ultimate authority for whatever they believe.

[48 : 45] And that is true not only for Roman Catholics, but as well for everyone else, whether religious or secular. This is precisely why Christianity Clarified has so often repeated the maxim, the issue is authority, always has been, always will be.

Never lose sight of that, and remind yourself of it often, because the implications surrounding it will surface more often than you think. Also, it applies not merely to religious matters, but to every premise that is set forth with the intent of people believing it.

The issue is authority, always has been, always will be. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 14, Rome's Claim for Its Authority, Part 2.

Volume 1 of The Theocratic Kingdom by Peters, Reasons on Page 662, regarding this common fallacy stating, and I quote, It is not surprising that the papacy should so tenaciously hold to the doctrine that the Church is the kingdom, since everything so distinctively popish depends upon it. For out of it proceeds the pope's supremacy, the vice-regent rule, the entire papal governmental machinery. It is the foundation upon which the superstructural pretensions are built.

[50 : 21] If this is removed, the hole falls. End quote. Early centuries, following the return of Christ to heaven, the Catholic Church began claiming it was not only the true Church, but it was as well the administrator of the kingdom that had come into being from the promise of Christ in Matthew chapter 16.

Thus, church and kingdom become synonymous, and though not established in a literal or physical sense, yet it was so spiritually.

However, there is no Scripture to support this concept. Next to the faulty assumptions the Catholic Church has embraced regarding apostolic succession and their supreme authority with it, the companion faulty assumption that sees the Church and the kingdom as one and the same has greatly added to their untenable conclusions.

We see the maxim played out again and again that a faulty assumption paves the way for other faulty assumptions to be added to it.

To be sure, the ubiquitous faulty assumption proven to be a curse for all of humanity. Sad to say, faulty assumptions made and acted upon in the sphere of spiritual matters can involve far more severe consequences of an eternal nature.

[51 : 59] McLean echoes that sentiment in stating the following found on page 329 of his book The Greatness of the Kingdom, quoting, The error of identifying the kingdom with the Church, followed by the logical attempt of certain ecclesiastical organizations to exercise during the present age a regal authority which belongs to the true Church in a future kingdom, has been the source of untold evil and disaster.

such authority and power could never be safely committed to sinful men, even though redeemed and members of the body of Christ.

To this lamentable fact we have the clear witness of nineteen centuries of Church history. End quote. The kingdom Christ will establish, as stated in Matthew 16, will certainly not be subject to the dark and often failing actions of what are called the current Church, whether it is labeled Roman Catholic or Protestant.

Neither can begin to measure up to the description of the Church that Christ assigns to them. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 15, Rome's Bases for Authority.

It can only be stated as an ongoing international embarrassment for the Roman Catholic Church. Periodic revolts against her authority that began in 1054 by the Eastern Orthodox in Constantinople would be followed nearly five years centuries later with Martin Luther and the Protestants, as they came to be called in 1517.

[53 : 58] That would be exacerbated by King Henry VIII in 1534, who left Rome and its demands for unquestioned obedience from the faithful.

Henry withdrew his entire nation of England from the Catholic Church and installed himself as the new head of the Church of England, also known as the Anglican Church or the Episcopal Church. That, too, as the others who challenged Rome centered around the issue of authority, who had it and how much did they have. The problem Rome had then is the same problem today, authority. Rome consistently maintained that her authority had a dual source, number one being the Bible, and number two of equal authority to the Bible was tradition.

Those tenets of the faith that were longstanding, which the Church had held for years. And it was this second element, tradition, that proved to be the bone of contention.

[55 : 09] It still does to all outside the Catholic Church. While most of the Christian constituency would see the Bible alone as the whole and final authority for faith and practice, the Catholic Church views tradition as co-equal to the Bible.

This results in giving the Church great flexibility in its doctrine and practices, which the Bible does not endorse. And it is a great convenience and necessity to the Church to possess this built-in flexibility so as to make whatever doctrine or practical adjustments that the Church deems necessary.

While the Bible is final and finished as the revelation from God, tradition has a built-in fluidity that allows for periodic changes, updates, modifications, or even deletions of elements previously embraced.

Then, who is it that recognizes those needs for change? That would be the Magisterium, consisting of the body of bishops of the Catholic Church as presided over by the head bishop, headquartered in Rome, namely, the current Pope.

Thus, the authority of the Catholic Church contains a built-in vehicle for whatever changes she deems necessary according to the demands of the times. Essentially, whatever Rome cannot justify on the basis of what the Bible says, she can justify on the basis of what tradition dictates.

[56 : 54] And there is no conflict or contradiction in the position of the Church because the final authority of the Pope heading the Magisterium is identical to the authority of God Himself.

So, as per usual, the issue is authority. Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 16. Our Authority for Love and Motivation.

Our oft-repeated maxim once again comes to the fore. The issue is authority. Always has been.

Always will be. Do you realize this was the issue even prior to Genesis 1-1?

Authority was the issue resulting from God having created the angels before humans were created. God's authority as Creator was challenged by a creature, Lucifer.

Authority was the issue when Lucifer, chiefest of created beings, successfully recruited one-third of all the other angels to follow Him in rebellion.

[58 : 07] In rebellion to what or to whom? In rebellion to authority, God's authority. Our first parents faced the same issue, the authority of the creature and his prohibition as opposed to the authority of Satan and his enticement.

Conflict never would have been possible had God dispensed with volition. In doing so, He could have created angels and humans without wills.

Everyone would be pre-programmed to obey the Creator because independent wills would not even exist. Hence, no conflict, no rebellion, no free will.

In fact, no wills at all. Only automatic compliance. Oh yes, one more thing. No such thing as love either.

Because you can't have love if you have no capacity to do so or not do so. To love is to choose to love. It is the voluntary nature of love that makes it what it is.

[59 : 20] And we need a will, a volition, in order to be able to do that. That is why love can be commanded, as in, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

And husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. And there abides faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

And God so loved the world. And on and on. Love cannot be commanded unless there is the ability for it to do so, to comply or defy.

This makes love something we choose to do as an act of our will, rather than something we have to do because we have no choice.

And fear. Fear is not a worthy motive for loving. It is for slavery, but not for loving. An intelligent love, a mature love, loves out of a free will to love, not out of a fear if we don't love.

[60 : 33] 1 John 4 tells us, there is no fear in love, but perfect love, or a mature love, casts out fear. So, do we love God and love our church because we choose to, or because we are afraid not to?

And if the latter is that, is that genuine love? It's a provocative question for Catholics and Protestants. Do we attend church because we want to, or because we are afraid not to? Good questions we should all ask ourselves seriously. Remember, the kind of love that is real is the love that doesn't have to, but chooses to. That's the kind of love that casts out fear.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 17, The Second Break from Rome One of the more stunning events in the history of Christendom since the first century A.D.

was that which followed the breakaway from Rome in 1054. The previous segment of Christianity Clarified revealed that to be known as the Eastern Orthodox Church, with its headquarters in Constantinople, Turkey.

[61 : 49] There were multiple issues that divided them, but none so central as that of the absolute authority that was claimed by the church in Rome as headed by Pope Leo IX.

It was the first major breakaway and occurred in 1054. The second would come in 1517 due to the position and efforts of the German Roman Catholic monk named Martin Luther.

Luther became incensed with Rome's practices involving the corruption of various segments of the church, but none so concerned him as the church selling indulgences to its members in order to raise funds for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Church authority promised time reduced spent in purgatory after one died. Their time would be reduced for having purchased an indulgence as authorized by Pope Leo IX.

But for Luther, that was the last straw. Yet he had no interest or intent in leaving the Catholic Church to which he had been seriously committed.

[63 : 14] Luther's intent was to induce the church to recognize its need for reform and make the changes that would provide for it a better credibility.

But, as the church had long since been on record claiming divine infallibility in all its doctrine that it claimed for itself, it was hardly in a position to institute any changes or need to reform.

How or why could or should the church that claimed to be administered by the personal stand-in for Christ himself in the person of the current Pope possibly admit to the need for change, especially changes that were intended to address supposed corruption?

So, the temperature between the parties continued to rise. The conflict soon would become irreversible.

Luther refused to change his position or recant, and the church was in the position where it felt it could not and would not. As a result, Luther was excommunicated as the leader of the protesters, who would become known later as Protestants.

[64 : 39] Luther's boldness and successes were not to be ignored, but would in fact embolden others to resist the authority and the demands of Rome as well.

To be sure, the 16th century would provide lots of consternation for the Pope of Rome, whomever he might be at the time. And another revolt lies ahead, and it's up next.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 18, The Third Break from Rome The Church of Rome continued to be challenged over the issue of authority.

That Rome had religious authority, was not questioned. The issue was, to what degree was that authority? Rome insisted its authority was absolute.

That required unquestioned obedience be granted to the Pope in the same way and to the same degree it was to be granted to Jesus Christ himself. Such idea was based on Rome's insistence regarding the issue of apostolic succession.

[65 : 50] That required obedience to the current Pope as obedience would be expected from Christ himself, because in reality, the Pope was as Christ on earth.

The schism in 1054 challenged that and ended up separating the Eastern Catholic Church from the Western Catholic Church at Rome, establishing its own center of authority, installing their own equivalent of a Pope they would call the Patriarch in Constantinople, Turkey.

Almost 500 years later, the controversy of authority would surface again. The Roman Catholic monk, Martin Luther, was greatly agitated over the Church selling indulgences.

Roman Catholics, who then purchased an indulgence from the Church, would get their time spent in purgatory reduced, allowing them to enter heaven earlier than they would have without the indulgence.

Luther's controversy with the Church raged on and eventually ended in Luther being excommunicated from the Church. That, according to Catholic doctrine, effectively consigned Lutheran to hell since there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church.

[67 : 17] This would mark the beginning of what would become, and still is, the Lutheran Church. That all came to a head in 1517.

This controversy had hardly cooled down before an additional iron was added to the fire in Roman Catholic England, the present king of which was Henry VIII.

Henry's affection for the ladies created irreconcilable differences with the Church to which he had been devoted. He had applied to the Church for an annulment from his present wife so he could marry another.

Pope Clement VII refused to grant the annulment and the conflict intensified. Eventually, the Pope excommunicated Henry, which left him, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, without the possibility of salvation.

In response, as the royal head of England, King Henry withdrew the entire nation, which was then officially Roman Catholic, from the Church. Next, he issued the official royal decree called the Act of Succession in 1534 and had himself installed as the head of what was then named the Church of England, also known as the Anglican Church, sometimes called the Episcopal Church.

[68 : 46] Once again, the thorny issue of power surfaced, reminding us of that dictum. The issue is authority. It always has been and always will be.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 73, Track 19, The Literality of the Kingdom of Heaven. The very first proposition made by Peters in his monumental work, The Theocratic Kingdom, states, and I quote, The Kingdom of God is a subject of vital importance.

End quote. He supports his opening with eight attendant observations to his proposition. In a similar vein, Pentecost, in his book titled Thy Kingdom Come, introduces the subject with this, quoting, The great theme of God's kingdom program can be found throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

It is the theme that unifies all of Scripture. Likewise, Bauman, in his opening chapter of The Kingdom of God Visualize, states, on the very flyleaf of his book, quote, A new government will be established in the future that will be just as real as any existing now.

Its territory will be definite with certain people as its citizens and with selected administrators to help in its rule. It will be the most important government in the world, the best that has ever existed, and it will last forever.

[70 : 22] It will be the kingdom of Jesus Christ. End quote. As we of Christianity clarified continue the pursuit of this great, all-encompassing subject of the kingdom of heaven, at times called the kingdom of God, there are two outstanding factors about it that need not only to be identified, but also emphasized upon every opportunity.

Right now is such an opportunity. The first of those factors is the literality of the kingdom. When Christ establishes it, it will be as literal and as physical as all else existing in our present world. Dramatically changed, but still very literal, actual, and physical. The major reason for its literality is due to the very literality of this present world.

This literal world we now live in has undergone a very real and literal moral fall and corruption, literal rebellion, imposing a literal ruin, and a literal death of its inhabitants.

All of the foregoing can only be served by a literal, physical correction. Any attempt to reduce the kingdom to something else in the form of an esoteric, non-physical reality labeled spiritual or allegorical simply will not do.

[72 : 04] Such flies in the face of all that correction and redemption require. The ruin has been literal, physical, and material, and only a corrective addressing those losses can satisfy the requirements and demands of this fallen world and its inhabitants.

To be sure, the residents of the past millennia anticipated nothing less than the world they knew to be wonderfully restored and renewed from its fallenness, which is precisely what Jesus Christ will do when He comes again to collect on the world He paid for in His first coming.

Christianity Clarified Volume 73 Track 20 The Futurity of the Kingdom of Heaven The previous segment emphasized the literality of the Kingdom of Heaven that Christ will establish on this earth when arriving for His second coming.

This segment is devoted to its futurity. Attempts to identify our present world with that of the Kingdom of Heaven having already arrived, but only in a spiritual or figurative manner flies in the face of everything we see in this world and in everything that has been seen from the first century onward.

Nor is it at all satisfying to suggest that Roman Catholic and Protestant Church leaders with their efforts called a spiritual approach claim that we are continuing to live in the spiritual kingdom of Heaven that was begun 2,000 years ago at the Jewish Feast of Pentecost described in the book of Acts chapter 2.

[74 : 01] Efforts were made several sessions ago to explain how that erroneous idea was reached by good faith efforts as far back as the 3rd century A.D.

And we explained how that had we of Christianity clarified lived back then and witnessed the situation which they did back then we probably would have reached the same erroneous conclusions as they and we would have then been just as wrong as they.

This present world does not begin to qualify for being the kingdom of Heaven established on our Earth not spiritually not literally not physically and most definitely not morally that the kingdom of Heaven will be a reality that is just as real as our present world only restored under the kingship of Jesus Christ is certain but that this in which we now live is not that world is equally as certain and attempts to make this present world the fulfillment promised and anticipated throughout Scripture and thousands of years since the fall in Genesis 3 are woefully lacking and those both of Catholic and Protestant persuasion that try to make this present world into the kingdom of Heaven come to Earth only spiritually spiritually so rather than literally so have yet to even explain what they mean by such a claim the passage of time and world events since the first century speak of nothing in a so-called spiritual way but volumes in need of redemption and restoration that cannot be provided by Catholicism nor provided by Protestantism nor provided by Judaism or any other ism no matter how good the intentions only the literal future presence of Jesus

Christ is up to that task Jesus is coming again that's future and it will really be Him not spiritually but literally even so come Lord Jesus is our prayer God