

Christianity Clarified Volume 03

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 June 2018

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] What is Christianity really all about? Here in an ongoing effort to try and dispel some of the confusion is Marv Wiseman with another session of Christianity Clarified.

Until approximately 2,000 years ago, all that existed by way of written revelation from God was the Old Covenant or Old Testament.

As explained in an earlier session of Christianity Clarified, the Old Covenant was never referred to as such until after the New Covenant came into being.

It was the completion of the New that gave the Old its name. So prior to the law, the Jewish nation to whom the Old Testament or Old Covenant was given considered what we call the Old Covenant the entirety of God's written revelation.

This is one of the principal things separating Judaism from Christianity. The Jewish people, to this day, continue to reject the Christian New Testament and its message.

[1 : 14] They believe what we Christians call the Old Testament is in fact the entire Bible. While Christians look upon the New Covenant or the New Testament as the rest of the story that continues and completes the Old Covenant, the Jews see the Old alone as God's entire written revelation.

The Old Covenant or Old Testament as regards its structure and content is as follows. The first five books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Sometimes these are referred to as the Law or the Pentateuch or, with the Jewish name, the Torah. These are followed by the prophets, commonly designated as the former prophets consisting of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings.

Then come the latter prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all 12 of the minor prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Then come the writings made up of the Psalms, the Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and lastly, 1 and 2 Chronicles.

[2 : 37] There are other arrangements and breakdowns suggested by both Jewish and Christian scholars, but this is perhaps the oldest and most familiar. The number of books the Jews reckon to complete their Bible, which is our Old Testament, is 24.

The total for Christians is 39. This appears to be a discrepancy, but in reality it is not. The Jews combine several of the books that Christians separate.

This means the Jewish total of 24 books is the same in actual content as the Christian total of 39 books. Does this mean, then, the actual content of the Jewish Bible is identical to the actual content of the Christian Old Testament?

Precisely. As regards the two sections, the Old and the New, it has been well said that the New is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. Nearly 2,000 years ago, the New Testament, or New Covenant, came into being.

[3 : 51] Its principal language is Greek, the most common tongue of the first few centuries after Christ. The New Testament begins with the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The first three are very similar, yet each has a different emphasis concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ, the obvious and principal character of all four of the Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are sometimes called the Synoptic Gospels, because all three see many of the same things in the life of Christ, even though each is still different.

John, the fourth Gospel, is dramatically different, though it too focuses on the person and work of Christ. While Matthew dwells on the royalty and kingship of Christ, complete with his genealogical bloodline, Luke concentrates on the humanity of Jesus, appropriate to the pen of a doctor, the occupation of Luke, who penned it.

Mark emphasizes the servanthood aspect of Christ, who came, said Mark, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Arriving then at John's Gospel, everything changes.

[5 : 11] It is not the kingship of Christ, nor the humanity of Christ, nor the servanthood of Christ that is set forth. It is his deity, his being very God of very God, the divine Logos, who was in the beginning with God, and without whom nothing was made that was made.

So emphatically does Christ claim his oneness with the Father, that the Jews actually took up stones to stone him, believing he had made himself to be equal with God.

In point of fact, he did precisely that, and did not attempt to deny the charge before his accusers. These four dramatic Gospels, biographies of Christ, are followed with the Acts of the Apostles, a very critical and principal history book of the New Testament.

The Book of Acts is the vital bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. It recounts the strategic morphing of Jew and Gentile into one new body of Christ, a spiritual organism comprised of all believers in Christ, with this risen Christ as the ascended and glorified head.

The Church Epistles follow, as Paul wrote, to seven churches, plus personal letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Completing the New Testament are the general epistles of Hebrews, James, Peter, and John, and Jude, with the capstone depicting the risen, glorified Christ returning to earth to finish unsettled business in the second coming.

[6 : 55] Thus, the eternal state becomes the capstone of all God's dealings with man, commencing in the Old Testament and concluding in the New. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman.

On previous sessions of Christianity Clarified, consideration has been given to the inspiration of Scripture. We have discovered that it means God-breathed, as Paul wrote to Timothy.

We noted that this inspiration was verbal, that is, the very words of Scripture were inspired of God, and added to that is the concept that inspiration was plenary, meaning full or complete throughout the Word of God in both its testaments.

Today we focus on the illumination of Scripture. What precisely does this mean? It means the Scriptures, because they are inspired by God, possess within themselves, that is, within the actual text of Scripture, the ability to enlighten or illumine the reader.

This ability the Bible has to open or unfold itself to the reader is built into the very words as part of the dynamic of being inspired by God.

[8 : 20] In reality, one is illumined by reading any information. Even from your daily newspaper, you are enlightened merely by reading today's obituary column to see who passed on.

That, however, is merely information. Divine illumination has to do with the imparting of enlightenment and information about God Himself and the spiritual content He inspired in His Word.

It also appears that illumination from God's Word is related to the attitude or disposition of the one reading it.

A mind that is closed to the things of God will not likely receive much from His Word by reading it. God does not force enlightenment on those not wanting it.

Illumination from the Scripture is reserved for those who are open to it. An attitude of receptivity and a submissive spirit to God paves the way for divine illumination to occur.

[9 : 26] This is reflected in Isaiah 6, Matthew 13, Luke 8, John 12, and Acts 28. It simply sets forth the principle of divine illumination and the prerequisite for receiving enlightenment from God.

The principle is, closed minds need not apply. Christ said in Matthew 13 that spiritual truth, that is, information from God, is reserved only for fit candidates to receive it.

When asked by His disciples why He spoke to the multitudes in parables, He invoked this principle of conditional illumination. He told them His parables did two things.

They revealed or illumined truth to those who were open to it, and they concealed truth and hid it to those who were not open to it.

Everybody heard the same words as Jesus spoke those parables, but the truth of them was revealed only to those willing to receive it. Have you ever heard it said, the Bible can be made to say just about anything one wants it to say?

[10 : 49] It's all in how you interpret it. Well, that's true enough. And the Bible has suffered some of the most bizarre interpretations over the years that one could possibly imagine.

Everything from snake handling to proxy water baptism for dead people claims authority from the Bible. But are these things actually found in the Bible?

Yes, they are. Well then, shouldn't we be doing them, some would ask? And if not, why not? So very much confusion about interpreting the Bible could be dispelled if only people, and preachers in particular, would avail themselves of the greatest guide ever given for the interpretation of Scripture.

And precisely what might that be? That would be the rule given by Miles Coverdale in the year 1535, nearly 80 years before the King James Bible was issued.

Miles Coverdale was responsible for providing the first complete printed English Bible. It bore his name, the Coverdale Bible. Along with the printing of it in English, he provided these priceless words for interpreting the Bible.

[12 : 11] Here they are. Please listen up. Feel the andare Johannine.

time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after. How simple!

Yet how profound! If only today's Christians would seriously implement this advice in our teaching and preaching of the Bible, many divisions and differences that separate Christians would melt into oblivion.

One is hard-pressed to find a formula for interpreting the Bible that is more beneficial than this. And as one who has been a student of Scripture for over 50 years, nothing we have ever read or heard from any source has so dramatically impacted my study of Scripture and the conclusions reached more than this principle by Miles Coverdale.

If we believe the Bible to be planet Earth's greatest treasure, Miles Coverdale has been the greatest tool for mining the treasure. Yet, sadly, we find repeated looks of puzzlement on the faces of people we talk to about Miles Coverdale.

[13 : 42] This needs to be changed, and there's no better place to start than right here, right now. The Bible deserves the application of Miles Coverdale's rules to it for interpretation.

This is Marv Wiseman with Christianity Clarified. Once the issue of the Bible's authority is validated, there is likely no greater controversy among believers than how the Bible is to be interpreted.

Whole denominations of churches, sects, splits and splinters, mainline and cults have come into being and are known by their particular interpretation of a certain passage in the Bible.

And they all, diverse as they may be, have but one thing in common. Each is convinced that they and their group are right, and all the others are wrong. And each will staunchly appeal to chapter and verse of the Bible to vindicate their position.

What's wrong with this picture? Plenty. Somebody has to be wrong, especially where there are those who contradict each other. The problem is in figuring out who that is, and that's undertaking a very formidable task.

[15 : 04] Where, oh where to begin? Well, we would propose two suggestions for starters. Number one, commit to the concept that the Bible is intelligible.

That is, it is capable of being understood, and is in fact intended to be understood. God did not inspire the scriptures to confuse or befuddle us.

It is not a book of concealment, but a book of revealment. Secondly, approach the Bible from a literal, straightforward position. Take it at face value without trying to read hidden or esoteric meanings into it.

The Bible should be read to be comprehended in the same way any other item of literature is read, accepting, of course, that the Bible comes to us with the authority of God himself.

This does not mean, however, that the dynamics of reading and comprehension are different from other items of literature. They are not. Approach the Bible by taking it literally.

[16 : 13] This does not mean that we do not recognize figurative language, and thus take absolutely everything the Bible says literally, but that we approach it from a literal standpoint.

There are many things in the Bible that are obviously intended as figurative language. All the tools of literary composition are in the makeup of the Bible, including the richness of poetry, obvious hyperbole, or exaggeration for emphasis.

Figurative language is designed to convey color, emphasis, variety, not capable of being produced by mere literal language alone.

Yet, for the most part, the Bible makes very good sense when taken at face value, and in the vast majority of cases where it is not intended to be taken literally, that too is usually obvious.

A favorite maxim employed by many is, When the Bible makes good sense, seek no other sense. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman.

[17 : 35] We continue our consideration of what is arguably the most compelling evidence that our Bible truly is inspired of God Himself, and it is to be trusted.

This evidence is offered from two specific areas of fulfilled prophecy. The first has to do with those of general biblical names, places, and events that transpired concerning them.

These are events predicted in detail, well in advance of their fulfillment, that simply cannot be explained apart from the God who was pleased to reveal this information for recording into the Bible.

The second has to do with prophecies given in regard to the coming of the promised Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. Of these, in excess of 300, only a few of the most familiar will be noted, and will suffice to establish that their fulfillment is inexplicable, apart from the revelation given by God.

But if we say that fulfilled prophecy is inexplicable, how is it that the Bible's critics do not accept these fulfilled prophecies as having been given by God?

[18 : 44] Surely the Bible's detractors must offer some explanation for what we say has no explanation. If they are unexplainable, how do they, how can they explain them?

Actually, they do not explain them. They explain them away. Here is how they do that. When Bible believers offer fulfilled prophecies as miraculous, there being no other explanation, the critics respond by saying, Fulfilled prophecies?

A miracle? That can't be. They cannot be miraculous because miracles are clearly impossible. They are impossible because all that constitutes reality is that which we can observe, since we live in a closed system universe.

Because we do, nothing outside the universe can enter, which would clearly be contradictory to nature. Hence, the supernatural, including your fulfilled prophecies, cannot exist.

Can't happen. Didn't happen. So, by their so-called scientific pronouncement, they have simply defined miracles away, including fulfilled prophecy.

[19 : 57] You will have to decide for yourself the validity of such shenanigans. Without even examining the prophecies and their fulfillment, they merely dismiss the entirety of the matter based on their presuppositions.

One can hardly think of anything less scientific than that. A basic credo of real science is to evaluate the evidence and its claims, reveal its flaws if you can, and hold off on your conclusion until you have objectively weighed the evidence.

Real science follows the evidence wherever it may lead, letting the chips fall where they may. If the claims of Bible believers about the supernatural nature of fulfilled prophecy are false, any self-respecting scientist should be able to easily debunk them.

Instead, with a wave of the hand, they merely dismiss them as invalid, so sad, so unscientific. No consideration of the Bible, or the question of its authority and divine inspiration, would be complete without reference to what many consider its most convincing evidence of all.

This is a phenomenon in the Bible that defies any and all naturalistic explanations for it. Detractors of the Bible have denied it, dismissed it, or just pretend it isn't there.

[21 : 27] But it is there, or they are there, because they are multiple in their existence, and they just won't go away. We speak, of course, of the compelling and multiple occasions of fulfilled prophecies.

Prophecy has been accurately described as history written in advance. It is precisely that. Writing history in advance, well in advance, of its occurrence, and doing it with detailed accuracy, is not a problem for one who has already been there, and has already seen it unfold.

But who could that be? Only the one who is said to inhabit eternity. Only the one of whom it is said he calls things that are not as though they are.

This is the God of biblical prophecy. There is none other with this ability. The foretelling of events that are yet to transpire is standard operating procedure for one to whom the future is as clear as the past.

Seeing all things, past, present, and future, with equal clarity, he may, should he choose to do so, reveal certain of these things to his servant the prophets for their inclusion into the sacred record, the Bible.

[22 : 46] The actual fulfillment of what God revealed to the prophet may be near or very far away in the future as regards their actual fulfillment. They may also appear to be extremely unlikely to be fulfilled.

Yet they were, with stunning and uncanny accuracy. At times, the world has been abuzz with the so-called predictions of the future in the likes of Gene Dixon, Nostradamus, etc.

Some were overly impressed with a 44% accuracy rate of their predictions being realized. But what did that prove? It proved they were wrong 56% of the time.

And with God, he doesn't dabble in trivia about what celebrity will marry or divorce her husband in the coming year. The prophecies God reveals are those that shake nations and impact the world.

It has been well stated that the greatest reason we have for believing what the Bible predicts will come to pass is based upon those things predicted that have already come to pass.

[23 : 52] These we will briefly engage in subsequent sessions on Christianity Clarified. We will find them to be so compelling as to remove all doubt from the minds of reasonable people about the divine origin of the Bible.

There simply is no other answer that will suffice. Reasonable minds and hearts will have little choice but to gratefully acknowledge the presence of an all-knowing Creator behind these many prophecies fulfilled in such detail.

We have noted the first of two objections those opposing the Bible have offered in response to the Christian's claim about the fulfillment of prophecy requiring a supernatural source.

Objection number one declares the supernatural to be foreign to the closed system of the universe. Since our claim for the divine supernatural source being the only explanation for the fulfillment of prophecy they merely say the closed system of the universe prohibits that so it cannot have occurred.

Their presupposition declares there is no reality beyond the observable. Hence they have defined the supernatural and the fulfillment of what Christians call prophecy out of existence.

[25 : 17] In short, their explanation of biblical prophecy which we say is unexplainable is couldn't happen didn't happen end of argument.

You will have to decide for yourself just how scientific that presupposition is. The second objection is equally unconvincing. Their claim is that the utterances we take as prophetic were not prophetic at all.

They were historic. That's right, say they. The reason these so-called prophecies seem to have been fulfilled in such precise detail is that they were not writing of these things in advance at all but recorded them after they happened.

No wonder, say they, that what Christians call prophecies were so accurately realized they were describing the events after they happened not before they happened.

In short, they conclude the whole claim of fulfilled prophecies is in reality a scam. Precisely what the scammers stood to gain from this massive deception they have not said.

[26 : 28] But really now, isn't it quite a stretch to suggest that two dozen prophets, most of whom never lived at the same time and never knew each other, somehow engaged in a gigantic collusion or conspiracy, to deceive future readers into believing something they knew was not true.

It's hugely taxing on one's ability to embrace such nonsense. Apart from its being devoid of logic, a brief investigation into secular history recorded in reputable encyclopedias clearly reveal the distance between the dates of the prophets' predictions and their fulfillment.

One can understand the desperation in trying to justify one's unbelief, but this is embarrassing. Calling prophecy history does not make it so. The prophetic record and its multitude of fulfillments stand firm.

Not only does the biblical record consistently verify them, but secular histories on every continent acknowledge them. A feeble attempt to explain away the myriad of fulfilled prophecies is far different and far less scientific than explaining them.

One can hardly imagine a less scientific approach than that. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. Detailed prophecies by inspired writers of Scripture, sometimes hundreds or even thousands of years prior to their fulfillment, remain one of the most compelling evidences for the Bible being the very Word of God.

[28 : 14] One of the most remarkable concerns the ancient city of Tyre on the Mediterranean coast in what was Phoenicia, but today is Lebanon. In chapter 26, Ezekiel recounts future events regarding Tyre.

They will be fulfilled in such detail one can understand how critics thought them to have been recorded after the fact and were historic rather than before the fact constituting a prophecy.

Seven specific things Ezekiel prophesied would befall Tyre in the coming years. The name of its conqueror would be Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Other nations besides Babylon would come against Tyre.

Tyre's surface would be scraped clean like the top of a rock. Fishermen would use that surface for spreading and tending their nets. Debris from the ruins of the city would be thrown into the sea and the city would never be rebuilt.

Three years after Ezekiel's prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar came, the same one who invaded Israel and carried them into captivity. He launched a brutal siege against Tyre that would last 13 years.

[29 : 28] When his army finally succeeded in breaking down the gates and entered the city, they found it nearly empty. Its inhabitants had quietly boarded small boats and left their coastal city to take up residence a half mile offshore on a small island they had begun to fortify against invasion.

Nebuchadnezzar was off the scene. Another formidable invader arrived. He was Alexander the Great. King of Greece. Alexander was at war with the Persians and feared that Tyre might ally with the Persians against him.

So he demanded that the island city be handed over for his own strategic use. They refused. So there was Alexander stuck on the shore with the people of Tyre a half mile offshore.

Alexander had no ships to put upon the island for invasion. There were no resources in the original abandoned city of Tyre. Nothing but rubble and ruins from the city after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it.

Of what use could a lot of ruins and rubble be? A lot. Ever the genius, Alexander commanded his men to scrape, literally scrape, all the rubble down to the bedrock and dump it into the sea.

[30 : 50] In so doing, they constructed with the fill a causeway or a mole protruding the half mile out to the island. It was 200 feet wide, allowing a huge concentration of his troops and equipment to make the crossing on the dispersed rubble.

The causeway exists to this present day and is a popular tourist attraction. Ezekiel 26, it's all there, just as Ezekiel prophesied.

Ezekiel 26, Prophecies given and later fulfilled, sometimes within a short period and others, hundreds or even thousands of years later, remain one of the very most compelling and convincing reasons for seeing Scripture for what it claims to be, the very Word of the living God.

Men have sought in vain for other explanations to account for the amazing detailed accuracy which accompany the multitude of prophecies. And believe me, they have tried.

The prophecies of Ezekiel that have already been fulfilled are the strongest rationale for believing those not yet fulfilled will be. But we are focusing only on those already fulfilled.

[32 : 11] The ancient city of Tyre in Ezekiel 26 had dramatic prophecies regarding its future destruction never to be rebuilt. A sister city of Tyre is the ancient sea coast town of Sidon, located just 24 miles north of Tyre and was also a prominent Phoenician stronghold.

In Ezekiel 28, the prophecy is made that cast a gloom over Sidon as it would have Tyre. But there were obvious and important differences between their future fates.

Tyre was said of Ezekiel to never be rebuilt. It wasn't. But Sidon is predicted to be rebuilt, but not without great bloodshed.

Listen to Ezekiel's prophecy in 26, verses 22 and 23. Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I shall be glorified in your midst.

Then they will know that I am the Lord when I execute judgments in her. And I shall manifest my holiness in her, for I shall send pestilence to her and blood to her streets.

[33 : 21] And the wounded will fall in her midst by the sword upon her on every side. Then they will know that I am the Lord. Unlike Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre in chapter 26, which predicted the utter destruction of the city, here Ezekiel says nothing about Sidon being destroyed, but much blood will flow in her streets, shed by swords on every side.

What happened? In 350 B.C., Sidon rebelled against the Persians to whom they had been paying tribute. The Persian army descended on the walled city and decimated its 40,000 inhabitants with their blood flowing freely in the city streets.

During the Crusades, Sidon was captured three different times by the Crusaders, three different times by Muslims. Each time, the blood flowed in the streets.

Even in relatively modern times of the 1840s, Sidon was bombarded by the naval fleets of England, France, and Turkey. More blood in the streets.

A thinking person needn't even have a fully open mind, but merely one that is slightly ajar to see that something of obvious supernatural significance must be behind all this.

[34 : 42] Something, someone is. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. of all the biblical prophecies given in the Bible, and there are hundreds, none are of such great importance and none are more sublime or consequential than those that prophesy in great detail about our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are referred to as Messianic prophecies, and they are legion. The very first prophecy ever given regarding the coming of a Messiah, a Deliverer, a Savior, Redeemer, is given just as soon as a Redeemer was needed.

And when was that? In Genesis 3, immediately following the fall and failure of our first parents, Adam and Eve, the communion they had enjoyed with their Creator had been broken.

Their deliberate disobedience cast them into a state that God did not create. It was a state of separation from God due to their rebellion. Instead of merely casting them off, God promised a remedy for their ultimate restoration to His favor.

It's found in Genesis 3.15 and is referred to as the first announcement of the gospel, or good news. The good news consisted of a promise made to our first parents.

[36 : 08] The promise was that just as a moral fall and failure had come via man, so too a moral redemption and restoration would come via man, a man who would be an actual flesh and blood descendant of Adam and Eve.

This one would be the Redeemer, the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. The prophecy is admittedly not as clear as we would like, but when once its fulfillment was realized, it took on an unmistakable clarity.

Here is what God said to the serpent who tempted Eve in Genesis 3.15. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He shall crush you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. Seed refers to their descendants. The woman's descendant in particular would be none other than Jesus, the Messiah.

The serpent's seed would inflict a wound, that is, strike the heel of the Messiah when he comes, but it will not be a strike of finality. However, that inflicted by the Messiah upon the evil seed will be a mortal crushing blow to the head resulting in a final dispensing of him.

[37 : 27] From that prophecy onward, Adam and Eve's descendants, particularly through their descendant Noah and one of his sons, Shem, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, would eagerly await this promised Messiah.

Little did they know the predicted seed of the woman would not arrive on the scene for another 4,000 years, and when he would come, his arrival would be embraced by many and rejected by many.

Nonetheless, God made good on his promise concerning his Redeemer. Many more such promises will also be fulfilled, and many yet await fulfillment.

Genesis 3.15 is rightly established as the initial prophecy in the Bible. Its fulfillment in Jesus Christ is undeniable. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman.

of all the biblical prophecies given, none are more important as those referring to the coming promised Messiah.

[38 : 32] And of all the prophecies about the Messiah, probably none is so controversial as his being born of a virgin. To those who object by saying, come on, that just isn't possible, we would agree.

That's why it's called the miracle of the virgin birth, or to be more precise, the miracle of the virgin conception. The prophecy was given by Isaiah 700 years before its fulfillment.

It's found in 7.14. Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and she will call his name Emmanuel. Virgins just do not have babies.

There has to be a male donor, and when that occurs, virginity is forfeited. Technically, a virgin can conceive today through modern technology called in vitro fertilization when a male sperm is injected into the uterus mechanically.

But such procedures were not available 2,000 years ago, or for that matter, 200 years ago. The only way a woman could receive male sperm in Mary's day was the old-fashioned way.

[39 : 44] And Joseph, to whom Mary was engaged, knew he was not the donor. It really looked to him like Mary had been unfaithful to him, and he wanted out of the relationship.

Only the intervention of an angel, Gabriel, in fact, who had also made that splendid announcement to Mary, could persuade Joseph that Mary had remained chaste and faithful, and that this whole thing was of God's doing.

Go ahead and marry her, was the angel's encouragement. For that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

For it is he who will save his people from their sins. Did you get that? Call him Jesus. Jesus, or Yeshua, is the New Testament equivalent of Joshua, and it literally means Savior.

What other fitting name could he possibly have, since saving will be his principal business? He will say in Luke 19, regarding himself, For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

[40 : 54] And what was lost? The totality of humanity. That's what was lost. Christ came as Savior to redeem the lost, including you and me.

Had not Christ been conceived of a virgin, he would have been conceived as you and I were conceived, via a human male donor and contaminated with human sin, thus disqualifying him to save anyone.

But that was not how it was. God himself supplied that seed, supernatural seed, imbued with varied deity, and Mary provided his humanity through carrying and delivering him.

And behind it all, that wonderful and amazing prophecy of Isaiah had come to pass. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman.

By far and away, the most dramatic and significant birth announcement ever made was delivered by an angel named Gabriel. He spoke to the Virgin Mary in Luke 1 and revealed to her that she was not only to bear a son, but the Son.

[42 : 06] And this Son would not only be the Son of Man, but the Son of God as well. Not a Son of God, mind you, but the Son of God. It all must have been truly overwhelming to this teenage peasant girl from Nazareth.

Son of God? Son of God indeed! What precisely did that mean? It referred to another of several prophecies given about Christ hundreds of years before his birth.

In this case, it was a thousand years earlier when David the King was inspired to write what he did in Psalm 2. Speaking prophetically and messianically, David penned, I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord.

He said to me, Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee. This is what the angel Gabriel was referring to when he told Mary her child would be called the Son of God because he was the Son of God.

At the baptism of Jesus, the voice from heaven was heard, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And again, when Christ was transfigured before Peter, James, and John in the mount, the voice of the Father was heard from heaven again with the same message.

[43 : 25] In biblical language, when one is declared the Son of another, it means the Son reflects the character, quality, and sameness of the one he is the Son of.

In the case of Jesus Christ, to call him the Son of God means he is what his Father is. Barnabas in the book of Acts is called the Son of Consolation because he was a very consoling and encouraging person.

James and John, sons of Zebedee, are called sons of thunder, no doubt because their demeanor or disposition reminded all of the raucous, booming nature of thunder.

And so too, Judas is called the Son of Perdition because that was what he was about. The Jews full well understood the implications of Jesus referring to himself as the Son of God.

Said they, as they took up stones to stone Jesus, We are not going to stone you for any work you did, but because you have blasphemed God. You, Jesus, calling yourself the Son of God, are making yourself to be the same as God.

[44 : 33] Why didn't Jesus move to explain himself, telling them they had misunderstood? Surely Jesus never claimed to be equal to God, so he ought to have corrected them.

But he didn't, because he was. The Old Testament prophesied it, and the New revealed and declared it repeatedly, That holy thing that shall be born of you will be called the Son of God, precisely because he is the Son of God.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman in Springfield, Ohio. Christology is a theological term used in reference to the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Christology. Anyone who is the least familiar with Christology and its importance will surely recognize how very key to Christology is Abraham.

Abraham the patriarch, Abraham the friend of God and the only person who was ever called that. Abraham the great-grandfather of the men who headed the twelve tribes of Israel.

[45 : 48] Abraham and Sarah produced Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah produced Jacob. Jacob and Leah and Rachel and Bilhah and Zilpah produced the twelve sons, each a progenitor of the tribe of Israel.

This is why, to be a true Israelite, one's ancestry must include not only Abraham but Isaac as well. And not only Abraham and Isaac but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Only with all three and one's direct ancestry can he be said to be an Israelite. When Abraham's wife was still childless and he had gone into Hagar to produce Ishmael, Abraham thought he, Ishmael, would be the son of promise, that is, the one to carry on the line that would eventually produce the Messiah.

But God dispelled that notion, saying, Through Isaac your seed will be called, or your descendants will be named. Ishmael and his mother Hagar went out on their own, and Ishmael, again, according to prophecy, became himself the father of another twelve tribes described in Genesis 25.

These twelve tribes from Ishmael are today's Arab population. Arabs and Israelis, both from one common father Abraham, but with different mothers, Sarah and Hagar.

[47 : 13] This meant Isaac and Ishmael were half-brothers. They were contentious then, and everyone knows how contentious their ancestors, today's Israelis and Arabs are, even as we speak.

That such was prophesied of the Messiah that he would be a direct descendant from the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is all spelled out in Genesis 12, 21, and 22.

The fulfillment of these wonderful prophecies are revealed with great clarity in the detailed genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3. In Romans, Paul reminds us that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers.

This great epistle of Romans opens with Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his son who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.

It is all so very clear and so precise that thinking minds must stand in awe of it, even as they embrace it.

[48 : 29] For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman in Springfield, Ohio. The following episode of Genesis 3 Thousands of years ago, 4,000 to be precise, it was prophesied in Genesis 3 that the coming Redeemer would be the seed or descendant of the woman Eve, and he was born of the Virgin Mary, her virginity also being prophesied 700 years in advance.

His direct ancestry would include Noah and one of Noah's sons, Shem. From Shem, the Messianic line would continue and run through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Of Jacob's 12 sons, it was prophesied that the fourthborn, Judah, would be the direct ancestor of the Messiah. Judah was the line of royalty, the ruling tribe.

Christ the Messiah would clearly come through Judah. Yet, there was another biological necessity before Christ would be born, and it would be one to surface from that same tribe of Judah.

He would be nearly a thousand years after Judah and nearly a thousand years before Jesus. Think of him as sandwiched between Judah and Jesus.

[49 : 54] His name was David the King. We all know him as the shepherd lad who slew Goliath and did battle with the Philistines. David was a key figure in the prophecies concerning the coming of the promised Messiah.

A fascinating passage is found in Matthew 22 on one of the several occasions that Christ tangled with the Pharisees. The text reads, Now, while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What do you think about the Christ?

Whose son is he? They said to him, The son of David. He said to them, Then how does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I put thine enemies beneath thy feet.

If David then calls him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask him another question.

No doubt this was a passage that was mystifying to the Jews. And it is mystifying to the Jews of our present day. But the mystery is solved, and gloriously so, for the readers of the New Testament.

[51 : 16] How indeed could David's son also be David's Lord? It just doesn't seem to make sense. Oh, but it does. It makes perfect sense. It also makes perfect, predictable sense.

In his eternal personage as the very Lord of Lords and King of Kings, he who would come after David was also before David. He was David's preexistent Lord before David was ever born.

He is the eternal Lord. When one understands the theanthropic nature of Jesus the Messiah, the solution is simple. Christ in his humanity was David's son.

Christ in his deity was David's Lord. Look at all the fulfillments in both genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3. The Old Testament prophet Micah lived and prophesied about 500 years before Jesus was born.

Numerous other prophets revealed different things about the Messiah who was to come, but Micah even prophesied the name of the town, Bethlehem, in which he would be born.

[52 : 30] The name in Hebrew means house of bread. How fitting for the one who will be described as the bread of God who came down from heaven to give life to the world.

And how fitting that this Messiah redeemer, who would be a direct descendant of David the king, born a thousand years after David, should also be born where his ancestor King David was born, Bethlehem.

The angels announced those familiar words recited every Christmas. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord.

From the outset, it would not appear that Mary, pregnant with Jesus, would give birth in Bethlehem, as they lived in Nazareth, several miles to the north of Bethlehem.

Yet in the providence of God, Caesar Augustus had issued his decree for the taking of a new census to determine the tax revenues, and everyone had to register in the place of their origin.

[53 : 33] So, off to Bethlehem they must go, because Joseph and Mary were of the house or lineage of David. And did not the prophet Micah say it should be so?

And Rome could be unforgiving and demanding whenever her revenue base was a concern. Bethlehem, the tiny town of David where Jesus would be born shortly upon their arrival.

But Micah, in his incredible prophecy that pinpointed the location of Messiah's birth, had something else equally startening to prophesy. Listen to it, please.

Micah 5.2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.

Did you hear that? Did you get it? Messiah's birthplace, identified in itself, is stunning, but Micah isn't finished. This one to be born in Bethlehem is also revealed to be the one who inhabits eternity.

[54 : 42] This one began his life as a man in Bethlehem, but he who came to the manger of Bethlehem stepped out of the glory in which he had existed from eternity past, whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.

What are the statistical probabilities of Micah merely guessing at these events? The numbers produced by the mathematical probability are followed by so many zeros it's unpronounceable.

So, are these things true? If not, what possible explanation for them can there be? This from Micah is but one of hundreds, all of which point to the unavoidable conclusion for a supernatural prophecy so exquisitely fulfilled.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. If King David did not write Psalm 118, a contemporary of David's did.

What Psalm 118 speaks of was not to be fulfilled until a thousand years later. If you leave it in the time and place of the Psalms, it admittedly is very obscure.

[55 : 57] In fact, downright puzzling. Here is what it says, Psalm 118, verse 22. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

Well, what does that mean? And whatever could this enigmatic expression have to do with the coming Messiah? Frankly, we are at a loss to comprehend it until, that is, the Messiah arrives on the scene.

Its fulfillment gives lucid understanding to this prophecy that could not be understood by the Jews. Matthew 21 sheds profuse rays of light on what the psalmist said a thousand years earlier.

Christ himself referred to it and pointed to himself as the fulfillment of it. But what is this about a stone? The context makes it clear that the stone in question is rooted in the idea of a building stone.

Virtually every building in Israel was made of stone, limestone in particular, and stone masonry was a common occupation. Stones, or huge building blocks, were cut out of the nearby quarry by the masons.

[57 : 06] The law of Moses would not allow the stones to be chiseled or prepared at the job site of the temple that Herod then had under construction. The stones had to be individually measured and cut to specifications at the quarry, then transported to the temple building site.

Upon its arrival at the site, it would be thoroughly measured and checked over by a priest acting as a job foreman. If because of an error in calculation or size, the priest did not find the stone to be what was supposed to be, in measurement or appearance, he would stamp it rejected, unacceptable to be placed as a stone into the building.

Do you see this? It is exactly what Christ is saying about the treatment he received from the officials in charge of examining the stones sent to them. Christ was saying, the religious establishment, the builders, examined me, their Messiah, and pronounced me unacceptable, rejected.

Clearly, Jesus of Nazareth, though he was Israel's long-awaited Messiah, was not accepted as such when he showed up in fulfillment of so many prophecies.

This is merely one more of them. Yet, despite their pronouncement of Jesus as being unacceptable, he was nonetheless far more than merely one more stone.

[58 : 30] He was the cornerstone. The most important and critical of all stones in the building. While Jesus of Nazareth did not measure up to the estimation of what the religious establishment thought the Messiah should be, he superbly measured up to his father's standards.

And one day, Israel will recognize the one they rejected and will embrace him. The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner.

The stone which the builders rejected, the prophecy of Zechariah is dated somewhere between 500 and 525 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem.

With pinpoint accuracy, Zechariah details an important experience that Christ will fulfill precisely as Zechariah predicted it hundreds of years earlier. To date, no one has ever offered any reasonable explanation for the prophecy other than what it seems to be predicting and its subsequent fulfillment.

Here is what Zechariah said in 9.9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy king cometh unto thee.

[59 : 48] He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass. There it is. And here Christ was, 500 years later, approaching Jerusalem.

And on what is he sitting? The foal of an ass, a young donkey on which no one had ever before sat. The occasion was what we celebrate as Palm Sunday, so-called because of the palm branches people had strewn in the pathway of Jesus as he made his entry into Jerusalem.

Could anything have been more dramatic? Some in the crowd thought Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to take over. That's why they shouted, Hosanna!

Hosanna! To the Son of David! Well, what did that mean? Hosanna in Hebrew means save now, deliver now, rescue now.

What? Save, deliver, rescue, who, from what? Save, deliver, rescue the Jewish people of Israel from the hated Romans who had conquered them and now dominated and occupied the Jews' beloved Holy Land.

[61 : 03] This was their expectation of the Messiah. And now Jesus of Nazareth is coming to Jerusalem to do that very thing. But Jesus had a different agenda, a far different agenda.

He knew what awaited him. It's why he wept profusely before he arrived in town. As he neared the city, he beheld it, saying, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I would have gathered you together as a hen gathers her chicks, but you would not.

If you only knew the things that belonged to your peace, if only you knew that this is your day of visitation, but now these things are hidden before your eyes.

Tragic. This was not, as it is often called, the triumphal entry. It was a tearful entry. The crowds that thronged his pathway saw it as triumphal, victorious, and indeed it would be triumphant, but the triumph would be in the victory Christ would achieve over sin, as he who knew no sin was made to be sin in our place.

Not the kind of triumph Jerusalem expected, but precisely the kind of triumph the whole world needed. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman in Springfield, Ohio.

[62 : 27] Perhaps nothing was so unbelievable and unacceptable to the Jewish people who longed for the coming of their promised Messiah as was the necessity of his death.

After all, the Messiah, when he would finally come, was destined to rule and subjugate the enemies of Israel. The possibility, or worse still, the necessity of the death of this one simply did not compute in the mind of any Jew.

It still doesn't, but it should. It should because the very purpose of his coming was to die, to die for the sins of the entire humanity that had been plunged into the death cycle from Genesis 3 onward.

Few prophecies in the Old Testament speak so very clearly about the mission of the Messiah as did those that predicted his death. It is part of what the New Testament calls the mystery of Christ, that being that out of his death would come life.

His death would balance the scales of divine justice. As in Adam, all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Isaiah in chapter 53 sets forth one of the clearest of all Messianic passages.

[63 : 51] Many Jews, upon hearing the prophecy of Isaiah 53, assume it is from the Christian New Testament, which they, of course, do not accept. But it isn't. It's right out of their Hebrew Bible.

Their prophet, Isaiah, speaking of their Messiah, Yeshua HaMashiach. Listen to it. Verses 3, 4, and 5. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And like one from whom men hide their face, he was despised, and we did not esteem him. Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried.

Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

The chastening for our well-being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed. Of whom is the prophet speaking?

[64 : 54] He speaks of the Messiah and what he would experience when he would come 700 years future from the time Isaiah wrote that. Add to Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, 34, 38, 68, 69, 109, Zechariah 11, and 13, plus others too numerous to mention.

All these Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in the first advent of Jesus Christ with such stunning accuracy so as to defy any other explanation, any other explanation short of it all being carried out of the greatest single event in all human history, orchestrated by the very God of Heaven in concert with his Trinitarian Constitution.

It was the Father who sent the Son to die, and the Son was offered through the Eternal Spirit. It's the very heartbeat of Messianic prophecy. prophecy.

Prophesying of the death of Israel's Messiah was tragic beyond words. The realization that when the long-awaited Messiah was to come, he would meet with all the brutality and injustice that was prophesied.

And as bad and evil as it was, there was only one thing that could have made his death even worse than it was. What could that be? That there would be no resurrection for him after his death.

[66 : 30] That would have compounded the tragedy into unthinkable proportions, because it is only because he lives that we too shall live. Our resurrection is inseparably connected to and dependent utterly upon his resurrection.

And that there will be a future resurrection for all is echoed throughout the Old Testament. Job spoke confidently of it, as did so many of the Old Testament writers.

Yet there is one passage that so vividly speaks of the prophetic promise that the Messiah would be resurrected, and of course his resurrection presupposes and necessitates his death.

And again we turn to the Psalms in Psalms 16, verse 8 through 10. I have set the Lord continually before me, because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. My flesh also will dwell securely, for thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol, neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to undergo decay.

[67 : 38] For years this passage was utterly mystifying to millions, particularly of Jews. The mystery was due to the fact that David the psalmist was recognized as the writer.

Yet, what could he possibly mean by what he said? Was he the Holy One of whom he spoke? And how could he say that he, David, would not see bodily corruption and decay upon his death?

A mystery indeed, and one not solved until Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the third day. Peter declared the matter so well in his Pentecostal message in Acts chapter 2, when he spoke about the person of Christ.

Catch the electricity as Peter explained what the Spirit of God revealed to him in Acts chapter 2 and verse 29. Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day.

And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he, David, looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades nor did his flesh suffer decay.

[68 : 59] This Jesus, God raised up again to which we all are witnesses. David the psalmist was not speaking of himself. He was speaking of his son who would come a thousand years later as David's greater son, the Messiah.

And now, for the first time, it all makes sense. And brethren, we are so grateful that it does. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman.

We have no illusions about thorough treatment of subjects surrounding the authority of the Bible, despite the 60 previous sessions we have devoted to it.

While not nearly exhaustive, we trust the previous 60 segments were enlightening to the extent you have a greater understanding of the importance of the Bible and have an increased confidence in its origin and validity.

The Bible can be and should be trusted. Future sessions on our next compact disc of 20 segments will address issues surrounding the character and nature of God, paying particular attention to the concept of the Trinitarian nature of the deity and his attending attributes.

[70 : 26] Please join us and let's learn together. So great is our God. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman thanking you for listening.