

Christianity Clarified Volume 60

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[0 : 0 0] Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 1, Paul Appeals to Caesar. This very strategic book, called The Acts of the Apostles, ends with the Apostle Paul living in his own hired quarters under what we today would call house arrest.

Paul was chained at the wrist by a Roman soldier assigned to taking turns guarding him, all because of Paul's legal status under Roman law as a citizen. They were not only guarding him to prevent his escape, but were also protecting him to assure he would be able to present his case before Caesar as a citizen of Rome would be able to do.

Recall, if you will, it was in Acts chapter 28 that Festus, the Roman authority, will interview Paul to try to determine what should be done with him. Unable to decide, he asked Paul whether he was agreeable to be returned to Jerusalem and dare stand trial regarding the charges the Jews had brought against him.

Paul declined the offer. He knew how capable his fellow Jews were in stacking the deck against him with false witnesses and trumped-up charges. And now was the time to play his ace in the hole, if you will.

So to assure he would remain in Roman protective custody and kept from his countrymen intent on killing him, Paul invoked those dearly magic words that would change everything right there at his formal appearance before Festus, as recorded in Acts 25.

[1 : 3 2] And the words were, I appeal to Caesar. We may be sure this raised the eyebrows of Festus. It isn't likely he expected an answer like that.

But once those words were uttered from a real Roman citizen, Festus was unable to do anything but honor the appeal under Roman law. Paul's case had just been removed from the authority of Festus.

To refuse the demand of a Roman citizen to have his day in the court of the Roman emperor himself was completely unthinkable. Which is precisely why Festus replied, You have appealed to Caesar?

To Caesar you shall go. Paul's safety is now assured as a Roman. However, before he is put on a ship for Rome, he will spend two years there in Caesarea, lodged in prison.

When he is finally put on board a ship bound for Rome, he remains under close Roman guard. Including Paul and his Roman guards, there will be a total of 276 people on this ship that will encounter a horrendous storm at sea.

[2 : 4 2] And that will result in the ship being blown far off course and eventually breaking up on the shoals, the coast of the island of Malta. Three months will be spent on Malta.

Three months until passage is arranged on a large Egyptian cargo ship loaded with grain and bound for Rome. Paul and his Roman guards eventually land at Rome and he is able to obtain temporary living quarters while awaiting his appearance before Caesar.

Paul has experienced much delay in all this. The question, Is there any benefit to our plans being delayed? Yes, indeed.

Just ahead. Christianity Clarified Volume 60, Track 2 Disappointments Are His Appointments Having our plans and our schedules disrupted is part of living in this world.

There is so much over which we have no control. But for the believer, we need to be reminded that God really is in charge of it all. And a good way to avoid much frustration and confusion is to commit to memory a very simple axiom.

[4 : 02] And here it is. Disappointments are His appointments. An excellent biblical example of this has been related by the Apostle Paul in Philippians chapter 1.

Said he, Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Did you get that? Rather than fretting and stewing and having a big pity party because he was arrested and now confined, Paul tells the Philippians that the gospel has made strategic headway because of it.

After all, without these circumstances that no one in their right mind would ever opt for, Paul recognizes that God was doing something special through it all.

And by his arrest and confinement, he had gained access to a very strategic, influential element in the Roman army, nothing less than the praetorian guard itself.

[5 : 21] And who is the praetorian guard? Well, in Rome, they were personal bodyguards of the emperor or the equivalent of our U.S. Secret Service, protectors of the president.

This was, as Paul stated to the Philippians, an opportunity that never would have been available but for his arrest and imprisonment. Some very influential, well-placed Romans were exposed to the gospel that Paul no doubt explained to them.

What do you think the apostle Paul would have talked about when actually chained to a Roman soldier and a different one every few hours? Little wonder, he said, the cause of Christ had become well-known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else.

And you who are listening right now, please be advised that God never does anything and never permits anything without first taking everything into consideration.

It's part of the package that comes with Romans 8.28 and being a believer. And again, we encourage you to commit the simple truth to memory, disappointments are his appointments.

[6 : 38] And for the Christian, is that really true? You bet it is, especially when you don't see how it could possibly be true. Sad times, grieving times, adverse times, painful times, losses of health and wealth, no matter, no matter the disappointments.

For the believer in Christ, all disappointments are his appointments. He really does know what he is doing and why he is allowing it. We seldom do, but God always does and you can take that to the bank.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 3. Paul is in and out of danger. When Paul's own countrymen sought to kill him, he was rescued by Roman soldiers who arrived to quell the riot that had broken out over Paul in Acts 22.

They had surmised that Paul was the focus of the issue, so they placed him under arrest. The common way of interrogating a suspect was to scourge or whip him.

It had a very effective way of making a man talk. As they prepared to carry out the whipping, Paul spoke to the Roman centurion in charge and casually asked him, Tell me, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?

[8 : 00] The centurion then went to his commanding officer and told him, This man is a Roman. The commander approached Paul as they were preparing to lash him and asked, Tell me, Are you a Roman?

Paul said, Yes, I am. The commander said, So am I, and I paid plenty to obtain my Roman citizenship?

Paul replied, Well, I am a Roman citizen by birth. The commander then became very nervous because he had put Paul in chains.

Still, he had to resolve the issue as to what caused all the commotion about him. So he ordered Paul to be loosed from his chains, telling him he would be in protective custody but would have to meet on the morrow with the Jews who had raised such a ruckus because of him.

The Roman felt it his duty to get to the bottom of it all so he ordered the Jews to be present on the morrow and he would bring Paul under custody to face his accusers.

[9 : 04] Next day, he was making his case before the Jews with the Roman commander looking on. The scene soon became so volatile the commander feared for Paul's life.

And by Paul being a Roman citizen, he had to be protected. So he ordered his soldiers to go and take Paul physically away from the angry mob and quarter him in their barracks.

The text in Acts 23 then records, the Lord stood at Paul's side and told him, Paul, take courage. As you have witnessed to my cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.

Meanwhile, the angry mob of Jews from whom Paul had been rescued had a meeting and more than 40 of them swore an oath that they would neither eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They told the chief priests and elders about the oath that they had vowed and enlisted them to participate in an ambush of Paul.

And the plan was they were to go to the Roman commander and tell him they just want to investigate the matter about Paul more thoroughly. And then, when they bring Paul to the meeting, we will lie in wait before they get there and kill him.

[10 : 16] Little did they know, someone overheard the plan. It was Paul's nephew who heard of it and he entered the barracks where Paul was kept and told him. Then Paul sent him to tell the Roman commander about the plan who told the lad, say nothing about this to anyone.

And quietly, he called two junior officers to summon 70 cavalrymen and 200 infantry. We're moving out with Paul the Roman citizen at nine o'clock tonight.

Get him ready. Put Paul on a horse also. We're taking him to Felix, the governor at Caesarea. Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 4.

Paul Remains in Custody. When the protective Roman troops arrived at the city of Caesarea, Paul will appear before Felix, the Roman authority, and then before Festus, his replacement.

It was then that Paul formally invoked his privilege as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar himself. Shortly afterwards, King Agrippa arrives in Caesarea, and in conversation, Festus tells Agrippa about the intriguing Roman citizen they have in custody who had appealed to Caesar.

[11 : 31] Taken with curiosity about Paul, Agrippa tells Festus he would like to see this man. The next day, Paul is escorted into the presence of both Festus and Agrippa.

Having heard Paul explain himself, both Festus and Agrippa concluded Paul had done nothing that was deserving of death or even imprisonment. In fact, said they, had Paul not appealed to Caesar, he may very well have been set free.

As it was, a Roman citizen's appeal to Caesar was nothing to trifle with, and once set in motion as Paul's official appeal was, there was no withdrawing it.

To Caesar, Paul would go. But he would still be in Caesarea for two full years before being escorted by a Roman soldier and put on a ship bound for Rome.

While en route, a horrendous storm ensues and the ship is wrecked, having gone way off course and landed on the rocky coast of the island of Malta. There, Paul and his Roman guard, plus the other 274 people, would spend the three winter months before sailing for Rome on an Egyptian grain ship from Alexandria.

[12 : 42] Arriving in Rome, Paul was free to rent his own villa with the ever-present Roman soldier with him. He soon sent word inviting Jews who were living in Rome to come to his quarters for a meeting.

And upon their arrival, Paul would lay out everything, no doubt from his own persecution of Jesus' followers, the Damascus Road experience, and his commission from his ascended Lord.

Chapter 28 tells us, The Jews came to Paul in large numbers and were there from morning till evening. Paul took them to Moses and the prophets, explaining the things concerning Jesus.

And while some aligned themselves with his message, others did not. This considerable disagreement arose among them. And they began to leave in the evening when Paul delivered one more parting warning they would do well to heed.

And he quoted from what the Spirit of God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write nearly 800 years earlier from Acts chapter 28, saying, Go to this people and say, You will keep on hearing, but will not understand.

[13 : 52] And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive. For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn again.

And I should heal them. Let it be known to you, therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will also listen.

The last verse says that Paul was preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness unhindered. Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 5, The Book of Acts Ends.

After three decades of world-shaking events with consequences following that are still keenly felt around the world to this day, the Acts of the Apostles comes to a conclusion with its 28 chapters.

As its human writer, Dr. Luke, lays down his inspired pen, the Apostle Paul will reside in that rented villa for two years before being summoned to appear before Caesar.

[15 : 05] During that time, we can be assured, Paul made the most of every opportunity and eagerly welcomed all who came to him, apparently while enjoying considerable liberty despite that ever-present Roman guard.

While quartered there for those two years, Paul would write his letters to the Ephesians, the Philippians, those at Colossae, and Philemon. It is likely he was released after appearing before Caesar in 63 or 64 AD.

But soon after, persecution of the Jews and Christians would increase under Nero with a brutality never before known. This time, there will be no house arrest in a rented villa, but the dreaded Mamertine prison instead.

There, the great Apostle will be one more executed murder for the cause of Christ following the last of his letters, and that one would be his second to his young protege, Timothy.

Thus, the revolutionary history of 30 years filled with dramatic changes and transitions comes to a close. Very soon afterwards, the outbreak of the Jewish war against Rome will begin in 65 AD.

[16 : 22] It will continue until the Roman general Titus arrives in Jerusalem with 80,000 soldiers and then place the city under siege in April of 70 that would last until August when the Romans broke through.

The carnage that will follow that was unimaginable. The holdout in the desert at the elevated fortress of Masada would follow shortly thereafter when nearly 1,000 Jews would commit suicide rather than surrender to the Romans.

The practice of Judaism was no longer even possible. The city of Jerusalem was not only destroyed, but the temple as well, and with it, the holy places, the altar for sacrifice and ritual, all gone, and have remained gone to the present.

But Judaism being gone did not mean the Jew was gone. Far from it. One can easily see how these descendants of Abraham would become known throughout the world as the wandering Jew.

They will roam, settle, undergo persecution, roam some more, move, settle, face more isolation and persecution, and would continue into the present 21st century.

[17 : 44] After Jerusalem fell in 70 AD, what would become of the Jews and other Gentiles who had come the faith in Christ? Dramatic but erroneous and faulty assumptions would be reached that will impact Christianity even to this present day, and we shall see upcoming.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 6. Judaism Gone. Now what? The destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple and the Jewish temple with it remains one of the very most significant issues of all times.

The fact that so many do not realize that even today does not lessen its impact and importance. With the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, even though unrecognized as Israel's Messiah by the Jewish nation, did not mean it was unrecognized by God, His Father, who had sent Him.

It was Jesus as God's sinless, sacrificial Lamb who effectively ended the long-standing system of animal sacrifice by the Jews, even though the Jews didn't realize that.

Jesus Himself was the final and ultimate sacrifice that rendered the animal sacrificial system for Israel over. This is all clearly and powerfully explained in the letter to the Hebrews found in the New Testament, particularly in chapters 8-10.

[19 : 15] Actually, the whole of the book of Hebrews sets forth Christ as superior in every way to the provisions of the Old Covenant by offering Himself as the provider of the New Covenant.

As of His sacrificial death on Calvary, the old system established by Moses that was intended to be temporary from its beginning had come to an end with Christ's greater and final sacrifice.

This is why all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, record the tearing of the veil from top to bottom when Christ died on that cross.

The old was done, over, finished. The problem was, the Jews never recognized that and apparently ignored it. From the death of Jesus around 32 A.D., Jews continued their practice of Judaism as if nothing had changed.

But it had. And drastically so. The death of Jesus provided the basis for the New Covenant to be activated. And that was clear when Jesus stated as much the night before His death at the Last Supper.

[20 : 27] Taking the cup, He stated, This cup is the New Covenant in My blood. The significance of that was and is incalculable.

And God His Father seconded that motion by tearing the veil in the temple from top to bottom. But who among the Jews knew that, recognized that, or adjusted to that? Seemingly none.

For the old established practice of animal sacrifice and its rituals continued on as before. But in A.D. 70, even that ability would be forcefully taken from them with their beloved city and temple utterly destroyed by the Romans.

And then, even the possibility of Jewish traditional worship and sacrifice with them was gone. But by this time, that is 70 A.D., great numbers of Jews had come to faith in Jesus as Messiah and Savior.

And even many Gentiles as well had come to faith, particularly through the efforts of Paul, that former persecutor of Jews who had been called by the risen Christ to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

[21 : 34] How were all these to regard the destruction of the temple and all Jerusalem with it? This is a very key issue and it will be taken up just ahead.

Christianity Clarified Volume 60, Track 7 It's Over for Judaism One cannot imagine the anguish, the heartache, the pain, the incalculable confusion and despair that must have set in in the mind of the Jewish people over the destruction of Israel and their beloved temple.

How could this be? Where was God? Surely the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was so much greater than all the false gods of Rome. So why didn't the all-powerful God of Israel show up?

How could the God who delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptians via Moses and an abundance of miracles not also deliver His chosen people from the Romans? By 70 A.D., there were many Jews who had come to faith in Jesus as Israel's rejected Messiah.

And they could very well have had access to the writings of Luke's gospel by then and had read the prediction of Jesus when He wept over the city of Jerusalem just days before His crucifixion.

[22 : 56] It was Palm Sunday when the Savior paused over the city and uttered those dreadful words, speaking as He viewed the holy city below, saying, If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace, but now they have been hidden from your eyes.

For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you and surround you and hem you in on every side and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.

Jesus delivered that prophecy recorded by Luke just prior to His death on the cross, and 40 years later forward it would be precisely fulfilled by the Roman army.

Believers who were Jewish knew full well why Jerusalem was destroyed and the brutal massacre of their fellow countrymen took place. It was all about Jesus of Nazareth and the nation of Israel having rejected Him.

It was all about His continuing to be offered to Israel even after His resurrection by the twelve apostles and the ongoing national rejection. Indeed, believing Jews and Gentiles in the year of 70 A.D.

[24 : 23] must have understood quite well why Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. It was for the like reason it was all destroyed in 586 B.C.

by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar when thousands of Jews then were slain and others led to captivity in Babylon for 70 years.

It was then in 586 and again in 70 A.D. that God allowed pagan armies to overcome and defeat His own people. Their hardness of heart, their mere lip service to Him and their profound moral and spiritual corruption had simply exhausted the patience of their long-suffering God there in 70 A.D.

just as it had in 586 B.C. But this even more so for this involved God's and Israel's very own Messiah being rejected.

Judaism was now definitely over. But the Jews themselves far from over as we shall see upcoming. Christianity Clarified Volume 60 Track 8 Interpreting 70 A.D.

[25 : 38] Part 1 Because we have no written records between the time of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 A.D. and the end of the first century at 100 A.D.

We are largely in the dark as to what was happening by way of fallout from that destruction. That the city and the temple were leveled we know. And that nothing was left standing by the Romans except the western wall which to this day remains standing we know.

That the Jews were slaughtered with thousands sold into slavery we know. and that the Romans even renamed the city of Jerusalem with the Roman name called Capalatina we also know.

What we do not know among many other things was that what were any survivors both Jews and Gentiles thinking and concluding about it all?

And what were the Christians or Jews who were believers in Jesus making of it? How was the destruction and death of so many Jews by pagan Romans being interpreted?

[26 : 47] Admittedly what will be proposed here does not have chapter and verse to validate it. Nor as said before do we have any reliable written record that reveals people's thinking and conclusions between 70 and 100 A.D.

The 30 years it took to complete that tumultuous critical first century. So what is now proposed here is that we try as best we can to mentally transport ourselves back to those 30 years concluding that first century.

Let's try to imagine what we would have thought and keep in mind the things we did know as we try to arrive at what we might have concluded based on what we do know.

One, we know Jesus of Nazareth was declared to be Israel's Messiah but was not accepted as such by Israel. We know he was tried unjustly and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

We know he was raised from the dead after three days. We know he spent nearly six weeks among many witnesses after his resurrection. We know he ascended bodily back to heaven as witnessed by his apostles.

[27 : 57] We know he told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem and they would be endued with power from on high. We know at Pentecost the miracle of Jews having the language barrier removed so everyone could understand each other, particularly the message Peter gave explaining the prophet Joel had predicted what was then happening there at Pentecost.

And we know the apostles fervently continued preaching that Israel crucified their Messiah but God raised him from the dead after three days.

We know that persecution of Jews by Jews resulted from the unwillingness of the apostles to be silenced. And we know the kingdom preached by Jesus and the twelve remained a viable option for Israel to accept even after the initial rejection of Jesus by Israel.

Peter made that quite clear in Acts chapter 3. So, let's throw all of these knowns into the mix and see what was likely to be concluded just ahead.

Christianity Clarified Volume 60 Track 9 Interpreting 70 A.D. Part 2 Our previous segment easily identified ten well-known truths attested to by chapter and verse from the New Testament.

[29 : 25] There is yet one more known to be added to the ten that is extremely important and undeniable. We don't have chapter and verse for it, but we certainly know it is true.

And here it is. God in no way intervened to save Jerusalem or the Jews from horrible carnage and defeat. The Romans clearly had their way with the Jews, their beloved temple, and the city of Jerusalem.

It was almost as if the God of Israel did not even exist. No question about it, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob took a deliberate hands-off policy regarding His own beloved city, temple, and chosen people, Israel.

Whoever the survivors were, wherever they were, what did they make of it? Given the circumstances and the knowns that we listed previously, what do you think you might have made of it all had you been back there?

Here are some likely conclusions that come to mind, and you may well come up with others. First, God was really angry with the nation of Israel. Second, because Jerusalem did not know the time of her visitation with the arrival of the Messiah and their rejection of Him, the prophecy of Jesus that He gave in Luke 19 was fulfilled just as He said.

[30 : 51] No argument there. How about this is a possibility? Number three, because Israel clearly rejected God's own Son as Messiah, God in turn rejected Israel.

Sounds logical, does it not? But what about the many who did not reject Jesus, but instead believed in Him and even served Him and proclaimed Him, both Jews and Gentiles?

Clearly, they had not rejected Him, so it stands to reason that God had not rejected them, but they remained in God's good favor. In fact, as such, they continued to be the people of God, while the Jews that rejected Jesus were negative toward God.

And that God allowed Israel to be destroyed by the Romans was a fact simply not to be denied. The question now was whether God's distancing Himself from Israel was temporary or permanent.

Would Israel get their act together, repent and be reconciled to their God, or is what appeared to be a permanent divorce taking place, over and done?

[32 : 03] In which case, Israel is out permanently. And if Israel is out due to their sin and rejection of Jesus, who is it that then becomes the new people of God?

What about all those believing Jews and Gentiles who are called the Church? Are they not the logical recipients of the mantle the Jews have cast off? What other group could even remotely qualify as the heir apparent of the Jews and the new people of God?

With unbelieving Jews now cast off, it is believing Jews and Gentiles that have replaced Israel as the new people of God. And most Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, would embrace this as true.

They did back then and they do now. How and when they came to that is not clear, but we will look into it. Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 10, Replacement Theology Introduced We earlier revealed the new entity called the Christian Church to be the likely replacement for Israel as the new people of God.

It appeared that God's answer to Israel's rejection of Jesus simply caused Him to take His protective hand off Israel and allow them to be destroyed and scattered everywhere.

[33 : 25] And who could say they did not deserve it? They had rejected both God and His Son, and they in turn have been rejected. God has gotten Himself a new people made up of those who do believe Him and who have accepted God's Son as their Savior and Lord, and they are known as the Church.

On the surface, one is hard-pressed not to see the logic in this. It appears somewhat axiomatic, a kind of tit-for-tat between God and Israel.

Add to that the passing of several centuries when the Church will be growing in influence and power while succeeding generations of Jews undergo great adversity, rejection, persecution from Gentiles, and often death.

It appeared that as God took His hands off Israel and allowed Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed, His hands remain off the scattered Jews, allowing for their destruction and punishment, even centuries after A.D. 70.

It all seems to make good sense. So much so, in time, it became by far the majority position in all of Christendom, and continues to be so 1900 years later.

[34 : 45] Anyone who believed to the contrary must have been such a small and insignificant group as to be unrecognized. To say this was the position of conventional wisdom would be an understatement.

But could it possibly be? Could this majority position of which so many were so certain actually be one grand faulty assumption religion?

Indeed it was. And not only was it, but it still is. When it was concluded during the first few centuries after 70 A.D., its subsequent longevity has caused this faulty assumption called replacement theology to be etched in stone, as it were, for all the faithful to embrace.

Was it logical? Absolutely. Did the Jews deserve to lose their favored nation chosen people's status of God? Absolutely. It all made such good sense.

It is most likely that had we been in their place back then as Christians, we likely also would have made the very same faulty assumptions as they, and we would have reached the same faulty conclusions as they.

[35 : 58] It isn't that we of Christianity Clarified are so much smarter than those early Christians because we aren't smarter, and in some ways, no doubt less smart than they. But we today do have something they did not have early on which overrides and corrects everyone's faulty assumptions.

And what is that? It is the completed compilation or canon of the New Testament, and when it is in the mix, replacement theology simply cannot be sustained, and we will show you upcoming.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 11, Replacement Theology Contested, Part 1. Already admitted is what appears to be sound logic for the case of the Christian Church replacing the Jews and the nation of Israel as the new chosen people of God.

Hence the name, Replacement Theology. A synonym for that is supersessionism, meaning the Christian Church has superseded Israel as the new singular people of God.

The Jew is out, and the Christian is in, permanently. And it makes perfectly good sense to everyone, except to Moses, the Jewish prophets, the Apostle Paul, and a dozen others whom God inspired to pen the Holy Scriptures, including Old and New Testaments.

[37 : 28] To get around the plain, straightforward meaning of the passages so many of these were inspired of God to write, one must engage in hermeneutical gymnastics to make the case that Israel does not mean Israel at all, but really means the Christian Church, nor does Judah mean Judah, but it also means the Christian Church.

There is no doubt the prevailing circumstances of the early centuries, say, A.D. 200 forward, surely pointed to the Church having replaced Israel.

Add to that the scholarship of a revered Church father named Origen in the 3rd century and that of the brilliant Augustine of the 4th century, and combining the dazzling erudition of both, why, the relatively illiterate masses exposed to that kind of scholarship were quick to get on board.

And, let us honestly admit that had we been there in that time and day and place, we probably would have been on board also. It would only be the passing of time and a completed canon of Scripture that would allow for an alternate and much more viable position to surface, and that position would embrace a consistent hermeneutic committed to a literal, grammatical, critical, cultural approach to the interpretation of all Scripture.

Only in that way can the Bible be allowed to speak its mind in a straightforward fashion. Nothing less can protect the reader or interpreter from the often fanciful imagination of men, and such is inevitable once you abandon the literal approach.

[39 : 13] While it is true, most of the evangelicals striped today that take the Bible seriously also take what is written at face value embracing the usually obvious literal intent.

Yet, when the content in question engages the sphere of prophecy, replacement theologians curiously change hermeneutical horses in the middle of the stream, opting for a figurative or allegorical meaning.

Some even consider the literal as the infantile, or superficial interpretation assigned to those who are too shallow of mind to obtain the so-called deeper meaning that is really there.

The problem, of course, among others, is whose or which deeper meaning different minds are we to follow? Departure from the literal, grammatical, critical, and cultural interpretation of the Bible is a study in futility.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 12, Moses and Replacement Theology Genesis chapter 12 and God's call of Abraham to be the human instrument through which all the world would eventually be blessed is a critical landmark of the whole Bible and of the entire creation.

[40 : 35] In Genesis 12 and reaffirmed in 15 and again in chapter 17 God established a covenant with Abraham that was clearly unconditional and that simply meant its terms and fulfillment were not to be determined by Abraham's ability to honor it but solely based on God's ability to honor it.

Such is powerfully illustrated in Genesis 15 when God condescended to ratifying the covenant in terms Abraham could understand. It was the way men made a covenant in Abraham's day and when the time came for God and Abraham to walk together through the prepared animal parts to ratify the covenant Abraham was fast asleep not able to walk with God through the animal parts leaving the representation of God alone as symbolized in that flaming torch to pass between the parts.

This was extremely significant. God himself was locking himself in to make good on the promise made to Abraham.

Abraham and his descendants will prove themselves unworthy on many occasions down through history of that covenant ever being fulfilled based on their behavior.

It is contingent solely on the behavior and integrity of God. Abraham and his descendants constitute the channel through which God will fulfill his covenant particularly through the coming and working of his Messiah.

[42 : 16] This is precisely what makes the Jew and the nation of Israel so very strategic. That all this will come to fruition through Abraham and his descendants is a major theme of all of Scripture particularly as it will focus on David the king and then 1,000 years later on David's greater son Jesus the Messiah.

The idea that this covenant and lineage will somehow bypass Israel and be transferred to a more deserving element namely the Christian church is clearly unimaginable and wholly unscriptural.

yet some have managed to do just that in the scheme that replaces Israel with the church. The Christian church has glorious blessings and benefits as well of its own and there is no need to disrupt the plain consistent theme of Israel and the covenants God made with them.

The church is not and never has been covenantal as is Israel. Israel. The raising up of Paul the apostle to go to the Gentiles is described as revealing not only an all new entity called the mystery but makes it quite clear it is not involved in the covenants at all.

They belong to Israel alone. The church being the product of mystery or secret clearly sets it apart from the specifics designed for Israel. The church as will be seen is destined for blessings of its own not to be minimized or omitted and later this will be shown.

[44 : 04] Christianity Clarified Volume 60 Track 13 David and Replacement Theology About a thousand years after Abraham with whom God established the Abrahamic covenant a direct descendant of Abraham's will arrive on the scene.

He will be David the lowly shepherd lad later to become king of Israel. 2 Samuel chapter 7 and Psalm 89 both spell out the dramatic covenant God will establish with David much as he did with Abraham, David's ancestor a millennia earlier.

Appropriately this will be called the Davidic covenant. David of the royal tribe of Judah will establish a dynasty, that is, an uninterrupted bloodline consisting of every monarch to follow as a direct descendant of David's.

One thousand years later, that dynasty and bloodline will end. The last direct descendant of David who completes and ends that bloodline is none other than Jesus the Messiah.

It is he who will come to Israel via Bethlehem when Herod is king of Judea. Herod did not belong on the throne at all.

[45 : 24] He was not even Jewish, but an Idumean, actually descended from Esau, not Jacob. Herod was on the throne because he was appointed by the Romans who had invaded and conquered Israel.

Little wonder that Herod was so troubled when approached by the Magi from the east inquiring about one who was to be born king of the Jews. And little wonder in his evil paranoia, Herod sought to eliminate the one he viewed as a potential competitor.

Thirty years later, Jesus of Nazareth will be introduced to Israel by John the Baptist when he baptizes Jesus as Israel's Messiah. His direct lineage from David the king, who ruled a thousand years earlier, is attested to even by the crowds who hailed his arrival in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

They cried out repeatedly, Hail to the Son of David, clearly recognizing his royal lineage. Though denied his throne at his first coming, he will not be denied it at his second.

His throne rights were not only his by blood lineage, they were his by purchase. When Jesus came the first time, he laid down his life as full payment for the purchase of earth and all of humanity by virtue of redemption.

[46 : 50] Redemption at the cost of his own life. And when he returns, he will collect on what he paid for at his first coming. For advocates of replacement theology, where or how can they possibly accommodate a picture like this?

Can anyone somehow spiritualize this and work the church into it in any wise? No. Nor is there any need to do so when we allow Israel to be Israel and the Jews to be the Jews.

The Davidic covenant, another of God's unconditional provision, answers only to Israel and her descendants being the key players and David's greater son being the central figure.

Hosea 3 tells us the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king in the last days. And when Hosea wrote that, David had been dead for nearly 300 years.

None of this answers to any possibility of replacement theology. Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 14. Jeremiah and Replacement Theology, Part 1.

[47 : 59] The prophet Jeremiah sets forth a divine reaffirmation of God's commitment to the nation of Israel. And he does so in the very clearest of terms using language that nearly defies misunderstanding.

Judge for yourself, if you will, the clarity of his language in chapter 31, verse 31. Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord.

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

And they shall not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more. Could anything be more straightforward? Is there any ambiguity here?

[49 : 20] The recipient parties of Israel and Judah are clearly identified. The former covenant established with their ancestors when God led them out of Egypt is clearly identified.

The terms of that covenant and Israel's violation of it are clearly identified, which also provided the necessity for there being a new covenant. And this new covenant that will be different from the old will be one that is not merely given to them, but will be placed within them, on their heart or in most being.

The result of this new covenant, Jeremiah records, is that all of Israel and Judah will know the Lord, all of them, from the least to the greatest, and their iniquity will be merely a thing of the past, for I will remember their sin no more.

The entire scenario is one of past failure on the part of Israel and one of future blessing to be realized through the forgiveness of Israel's God. To dismiss all these specifics so clearly addressed to the Jewish people Israel and transfer them instead to mean they are in reality not referring to Israel, but to the Christian church, strains the very fibers of reason and simplicity.

Neither does it satisfy to say that those who settle for this meaning Israel as its states are simply unable to get beyond the simple literal meaning to appreciate the real and deeper meaning being that of the Christian church.

[50 : 58] treating this and other prophetic scriptures in this manner leaves the door open to the imagination of the interpreter. When the literal meaning is rejected there is no limit to the creative and fanciful meanings it can be assigned to any and every text involving prophecy.

And a good maxim to follow in this and other passages needing interpretation are this, When the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense. such is highly, highly recommended.

Christianity Clarified Volume 60 Track 15 Jeremiah and Replacement Theology Part 2
There are many Old Testament passages that clearly set forth the eternal, unbreakable bond established between God and Israel.

Simply put, it means God by promise has locked himself into a unique covenant relationship with Israel. It had only to do with the chosenness of God and not the deservedness or faithfulness of Israel.

It is this that makes the covenant so special. It transcends the provisions of the typical covenant. This covenant could be violated by Israel and it would be repeatedly, but it could not be terminated.

[52 : 19] It could be suspended as it presently is, but it could not be canceled. In what appears to be an effort on the part of the prophet Jeremiah to show how ironclad that relationship is between Israel and their God, he sets forth the requirements that would be necessary for that connection to be severed, and it's found in the 31st chapter of the Jewish prophet Jeremiah.

But just how fixed, how inviolate was this new covenant that is promised? What follows can only be an explanation of how certain it is, of how absolutely confident the recipients of the covenant can be as regards God fulfilling it.

Listen and decide for yourself about how serious God is in guaranteeing it in Jeremiah 31, 35, reading, Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar.

The Lord of hosts is his name. If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me forever.

Thus says the Lord, If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the Lord.

[53 : 52] If the text is saying anything, and saying it with great emphasis, it is telling us the fixed order of the nation of Israel and God's covenant relationship with the Jewish people is as certain to survive as is the fixed order of the sun, moon, and stars in their place.

Well now, you can just determine for yourself how fixed are the sun, moon, and stars. And that's how fixed is the new covenant God has made with Israel.

And as far as Israel's disobedience negating that covenant, the inspired prophet includes those factors when he acknowledges Israel's iniquity and their sin with God, saying, I will forgive their iniquity and their sin, I will remember no more.

This all comes across as every effort being made to state as clearly and as confidently as possible that God will make good on all he has promised to Israel, and rather than it being due to Israel's faithfulness, it is due to God's faithfulness, despite the ongoing faithfulness of God's people Israel.

And then, even that will one day turn into faithfulness on the part of repentant and redeemed Israel. Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 16, Ezekiel and Replacement Theology One of the most dramatic, well-known visions in all the Bible is Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones in his 37th chapter.

[55 : 28] With the bones being very many and very dry. And in the vision, the breath of God activated the bones that took on flesh and came to life, comprising an exceedingly great number.

In the vision, God refers to them as, My people, in verse 12, 13, 23, and 27. Throughout Scripture, the phrase, My people, always refers to Israel without exception.

In verse 11, God revealed to Ezekiel the bones he saw that came to life are the whole house of Israel. No longer would there be the ten tribes of Israel separated from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Can we contemplate any scene more Jewish than this? Add one more very prominent Jew to the mix from verse 24, and who would that be?

But David the king. And where was David when Ezekiel wrote his prophecy? He had died 400 years earlier. The prophecy could not be clearer.

- [56 : 35] Israel is prophesied in the passage as having ceased existence as a nation. Their status as being dead nationally is pictured with all the skeletons in the vision, and bones being very dry suggests they have been dead nationally for a very long time.

Their death as a nation is explained in verses 23 and 24, because God says, Israel acted treacherously against me, and I hid my face from them.

I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness, and according to their transgressions, I dealt with them, and I hid my face from them, says the Lord.

But their sin and its divine punishment will be reversed, not only to the land from which they were exiled, but to the God with whom they acted treacherously.

God says in verse 29, I will not hide my face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out my spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.

- [57 : 47] Well, after all this, one is very hard-pressed to see how the replacement theologians can possibly transfer what is described here and make its fulfillment somehow realized in the Christian church.

The Christian church does have and will have blessings of its own, but these blessings, these prophecies, belong exclusively to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They are as Jewish as Jesus himself. And as to the argument that the Jews literally sinned away, they're deserving to have a position with God, we would ask, when did they ever deserve it?

And here, their sin is fully recognized and just as fully forgiven with God saying so in verse 25. Now I shall restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel.

In this scene, the Christian church is nowhere to be found. Replacement theology remains an untenable position to be sure.

- [58 : 54] Christianity Clarified Volume 60, Track 17, Paul and Replacement Theology Part 1. The first eight chapters of the Apostle Paul's writing to the church at Rome is without parallel regarding Christian doctrine and theology.

In no uncertain terms, he declares both Jews and Gentiles as equals in their sin and alienation from a holy God. In chapter 3, he informs us that the righteousness of God is available to sinners by way of their placing their faith in Jesus Christ because there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, the reason being, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

He follows in chapter 5 by asserting the cardinal truth of both Jews and Gentiles being declared justified or righteous by God solely on the basis of believing.

Believing what? By believing in the reality of our own personal sin that alienated us all from God, and then by believing that Jesus Christ paid the full penalty of our sin, thus making us acceptable to God merely on the basis of believing.

This is the ultimate in good news. It is the gospel. In making this case, and making it so strongly for both Jews and Gentiles, it then became the defining element of Christianity as regards how man, again, whether Jew or Gentile, is declared by God to be forgiven and acceptable to Him.

- [60 : 39] It is justification by faith, and faith alone, apart from any works of the law or any do-goodism on the part of man. His conclusion, then, in chapter 8 is, Therefore, there is now no condemnation or judgment awaiting the believing Jew or Gentile who is in or who has placed their faith and trust in Christ Jesus who paid their penalty.

This is utterly revolutionary content that Paul tells us had been hidden or tucked away in the heart of God, not to be known or revealed to man until disclosed to Him to proclaim as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Please, read all about it in Ephesians, chapter 3. In light of this, one can only wonder, then, because of this new good news of faith alone for both Jews and Gentiles, what about all those covenants and promises God made in the past to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David.

Removing all doubt as to God making good on them, he opens Romans 9 by acknowledging that to Israel alone belongs the adoption of sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and the promises.

Oh, yes, the promises. What happened to them? Replacement Theology asserts they were all withdrawn from Israel and are transferred to the Christian church. But don't stop reading here.

[62 : 12] Paul's conclusion to all that will follow in chapter 11. Take heart, O Israel. God has not forgotten. It is ahead and glorious with the opening of chapter 11.

And then we shall see. Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 18, Paul and Replacement Theology, Part 2.

Having just declared the earth-shaking truth of justification by faith alone in those first eight chapters of Romans, automatic questions then arise as to what now is the status of the Jew, God's chosen people?

In anticipation of this question, Paul begins his answer with a penetrating rhetorical question. It's as if he knows what his readers are thinking and wondering after having read his first eight chapters, then focusing on Israel in chapter 9 and arriving at his conclusion as he wraps up the subject in chapter 11, saying, I say then, God has not rejected his people, has he?

Meganoido, or God forbid, may it never be. It is the strongest adversity in the Greek language. Perish the thought. God has not rejected his people.

[63 : 33] And we today would be remiss if we did not inject the idea, even though his people have rejected him. Paul declares his own Jewishness as proof positive of that, and his ongoing explanation concludes in 11.25 and is so very telling as he says, I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And thus all Israel will be saved, just as it is written. The Deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.

And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins. This is all at the conclusion of the seven-year tribulation period when Christ returns as depicted in Matthew 24 and Revelation 19.

Then, said Paul, all Israel will be saved. But it needs to be noted that all Israel at this time will consist only of the remaining faithful of Israel called the remnant, who will be survivors of the great tribulation period following the efforts of the Antichrist to eliminate all Jews.

And he will succeed by killing two-thirds of the world's Jewry during what Jeremiah calls the time of Jacob's trouble in chapter 30. This remnant will have repented of their sin and will mourn over their ancestors having rejected and disowned their Messiah.

[65 : 15] Zechariah speaks of this and attributes it to that remnant of Jews in Zechariah 12 and 10. They will then constitute the all Israel that will be saved, spoken of by Paul in Romans 11.

And they will be believing Jews. There will also be Gentiles who will have survived the tribulation period despite the billions of humanity that will not.

Still, these are not to be confused with the remnant of Israel who are Jews exclusively. There is simply no way that a responsible and consistent interpretation of Scripture will allow for these to be anyone other than who Jeremiah and Zechariah say they are.

They are Jews, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, just as God always makes good on His promise. God has not cast away His people.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 19 Faulty Assumptions of Replacement Theology
From a purely human standpoint, replacement theology makes very good sense.

[66 : 26] Faulty assumptions always appear to make good sense. This is why they are so easily made and adopted by us all. And let's be very candid. None of us, including yours truly, is exempt from making faulty assumptions, sometimes with far-reaching negative consequences.

Early Roman Catholic beginnings, birthed from its original parent of Judaism, was automatically positioned to make a host of faulty assumptions that would define its theology and practices to this very day.

One can easily see, now with our hindsight, how easy it was for them to make them. And, as we admitted earlier, had we of today been in the time and place they were when they drew their wrong conclusions based on faulty assumptions, we probably would have made the same ones ourselves.

And it is out of faulty assumptions made by early Roman Catholics that early Protestant Reformers who came from the Roman Catholics made their own set of faulty assumptions.

These became as etched in stone by the Protestants in their doctrinal statements of faith as were those of the Catholics. And we are not done yet. Protestants, true to form in our humanity, you guessed it, we followed suit, faulty assumptions have provided an ongoing curse that has beset humanity from Genesis chapter 3 onward to our present day.

[68 : 05] And any who deny that or who refuse to see the tendency and danger of making faulty assumptions have just made another. And as stated earlier, replacement theology is one of the greater theological faulty assumptions that has negatively impacted religious truth seekers all throughout history.

Roman Catholics were not exempt from making them, Protestant Reformers were not exempt from making them, nor are present-day denominational and non-denominational entities are not exempt from making them.

Compounding this issue is the tendency of each of those to insist that while it is true of other religious bodies, it is not true of ours, each believes they got their doctrines straight from the top, devoid of any impurities or untruths, which is, of course, another grand, faulty assumption.

In all of what is generally described as Christendom, which includes Roman Catholic and Protestant, both have been so dominated by faulty assumptions that replacement theology was and is a predictable and seemingly logical, to say nothing, of a biblical approach to take.

They took it. And it continues to prevail today based on good faith and convictions. Good faith and conviction are necessary, commendable, essential components, but they provide no guarantee for accurate conclusions, nor do they guarantee we will not reach faulty assumptions.

[69 : 54] Christianity Clarified, Volume 60, Track 20, Giving the Jew What is His Due When the Jew is given his due based on human reasoning, replacement theology is arrived at as the only possible position.

This makes the fate and future of the Jew to be meritorious, an issue of deservedness. And, on the grounds of just desserts, there is no way to maintain the position of favor and chosenness originally bestowed upon the Jew.

Because of his historic and repeated rebellion against his Creator that culminated in the crucifixion of their own heaven-sent Messiah, the Jew has exhausted the long-suffering of God and has got to go.

Thus, the Jew is out permanently, and the Christian Church is in. In a nutshell, that is replacement theology.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that whereas the Jew has become unworthy through his behavior, the Christian has somehow become worthy through his behavior.

[71 : 03] The Jew is dismissed due to his unbelief and disobedience, but the Christian is accepted due to his belief and obedience. But, where is there room for the grace of God in either of those?

Where is there room for the inviolate covenants God made with the undeserving Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David? These and their descendants did not become undeserving.

They always were and remain undeserving. That is the true position of the Jew. It is also the true position of the Gentile, whether Christian or pagan.

The text of Romans 11 finds Paul the Apostle quoting from the Jewish prophet Isaiah, who stated, From the standpoint of the gospel, the Jews are enemies for your sake.

But from the standpoint of God's choice, the Jews are beloved for the sake of the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

[72 : 22] Paul then states the grand conclusion, For God has shut up all, that is, Jews and Gentiles, in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! As regards the perpetuity, the permanence of the Jews, the text affirms that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.

The Jew must be given His due because of the integrity of God, not because of the deservedness of the Jew. Recall, if you will, the Jewish prophet Jeremiah likening the permanence and perpetuity of the Jew to the permanence of the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens.

It's found in Jeremiah 31. Replacement theology cannot be sustained, but must be seen for what it is, a faulty assumption, and the Christian church is in no way diminished, for she has inviolate blessings and benefits of her own, and they too are procured solely through the grace of God alone, as is also true of the Jew.

Thus, replacement theology is not only unsustainable, theologically it is unnecessary. Christianity Clarified Volume 60, Track 21 Preview of Upcoming Volume 61 Volume 61 of Christianity Clarified is just ahead.

[73 : 53] Issues under scrutiny will be the earliest beginnings of what will eventually become the Roman Catholic Church. And what will become obvious is the ever-present faulty assumptions that have beset humanity from Genesis 3 to the present day.

Principally, we will be focusing on the time period beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. Then, on into the 1st and 2nd centuries, we will see how early doctrinal positions were drawn and implemented.

And for listeners who are Jewish, Roman Catholic, or Protestant, or those who are none of the above, you will find it all to be very enlightening. We will see how we got to where we are and major dots will be connected.

Never forget, the only explanation and understanding of the present is inseparably linked to our past. It is the only way of accurately assessing the present.

History is the story of how we got to where we are and why. Major players and events will bring many things to light. And for those dear souls who say they do not understand why things are the way they are, well, you will begin to see with a new perspective.

[75 : 18] Key to it all, of course, remains what the only authority that means anything has to offer. That is the book, our Bible, and the consistent hermeneutic that we will employ to discern its meaning.

So, volume 61 of Christianity Clarified promises to be an exciting journey into understanding our present world. So, you are most welcome to come with us and make your own assessment of it all.

This is Pastor Marv Wiseman and the kind and gracious folks at Grace Bible Church saying, thank you so much for being a part of our ongoing explorations.

May the Lord's choicest blessings and understanding be yours.