

Christianity Clarified Volume 42

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[0 : 0 0] 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.

Divine and Human Partnering Much has been made of God's partnering with angels and humans. In no case was such partnering entered into by God from any sense of need.

God, being God, fully satisfies any need he might have from within his own person. The Almighty possesses a sense of utter self-sufficiency we mortals simply cannot comprehend.

We are left with no alternative to God and man's partnering, apart from his sovereign choice to create humans, as well as angels, and engage in a cooperative partnering with them.

Out of his grace and good pleasure, he partnered with men in the composition of the Bible. And while it was inspired and comes from God, it flowed through humans, where in the writing it picked up style, vocabulary, and personality.

[1 : 1 5] This gave us a book of divine and human making. But the Bible was not given us with a built-in interpretation. You may have explanatory footnotes on the pages of your Bible, but God didn't put them there, nor did he inspire them as he did the text itself.

And who is responsible for interpreting the Bible that God has inspired? We are. But does that not mean we mere humans will then arrive at a multitude of different interpretations from the passages we consider?

It most certainly does. It was noted earlier that all these differences account for the divisions among Christians as regards doctrinal conclusions. Doctrinal conclusions cannot be dismissed as unimportant.

In fact, doctrine is of enormous importance because people tend to establish norms and standards, formulate a lifestyle and personal agenda based on what they believe to be true, that is, on their doctrine.

And the doctrines we arrive at to be believed as binding upon the faithful are all due to how the Bible is interpreted. And what do all who interpret the Bible find themselves susceptible to?

[2 : 3 5] Faulty assumptions. Are any of us immune to formulating doctrine because of faulty assumptions? Absolutely not.

And, as we have emphasized, sincerity does not ensure our doctrinal conclusions to be accurate. Many are not accurate, but are still believed by multitudes, which automatically creates the divisions and denominations numbered in the hundreds today.

Let's also be reminded that a scant 500 years ago, the denominations prevalent today in nearly every continent did not even exist.

Each denomination, as it came into being, was the result of individual men or groups of men embracing an interpretation of Scripture that led them to emphasizing certain aspects of the Scriptures.

And, voila, here we are, utterly awash in different interpretations with attending emphases. And probably all of them were earnest and sincere in their task, but still vulnerable to faulty assumptions, as we shall see upcoming, and repeatedly so.

[3 : 47] Great Shoulders We Stand On Having tried to make it clear that the theological minds of centuries past were all susceptible to a misunderstanding of Scripture due to their faulty assumptions, it needs to be humbly acknowledged that the same is true of us moderns.

Faulty assumptions is not a doctrinal disease assigned only to the past, but plagues us today as well. It should also be admitted that had we lived those centuries ago, and wrestled with the texts of Scripture they did, under the handicaps they faced, we would likely have fared no better than they when it comes to avoiding those faulty assumptions of which we speak.

We today are far more advantaged than they. We can draw from all those collective minds of the past, many of whom were pure genius, and make comparisons they did not have the luxury of making.

True, they had the preaching and writings of previous and contemporary interpreters of Scripture, but surely not on the scale that we do. And they wrote and read by daylight and candlelight under primitive conditions.

Books were scarce and expensive, if available at all. But we today have the ease and convenience of drawing upon vast libraries containing the theological wisdom of the ages, and what is available today with the click of a computer button is truly indescribable.

[5 : 27] So, while we find fault with faulty assumptions from the past, we should humbly admit we also stand on the shoulders of those considered as the greatest, most fertile minds of history.

And we thank God for the early church fathers, the Justin Martyrs and Polycarps, Ignatiuses, Augustines, Ambrose, Aquinas, Wycliffe and Tyndale, Coverdale, Luther, Calvins, Whitfield, Wesley, Spurgeon, and the list goes on and on.

All of these functioned under far greater handicaps and often confronted opposition that even threatened and sometimes cost them their lives. Comparatively speaking, we have so much more to work with than they.

And among the greatest assets we have, besides the Scriptures themselves, are those minds and writings of the giants just mentioned. So then, why don't we simply tap into those stunning intellects of the past and let their interpretations suffice for us?

Well, we've already acknowledged their soaring intellects and erudition. What's the problem with that? Good question. And the problem is, which of those just names do we subscribe to?

[6 : 46] Because they often disagreed among themselves, reaching differing conclusions about the doctrinal understandings they arrived at. So, what is a body to do? We consider all their contributions, but we also recognize that none of their writings are inspired as Scripture.

One wag put it this way, I milk a lot of cows, but I churn my own butter. And that's what we will continue to do here on Christianity Clarified. So, come along and churn with us.

Our raw milk will be the Scriptures themselves and will draw upon the greats of the past for flavoring. Cheers! Revisiting Faulty Assumptions Part 1 Our present consideration of faulty assumptions is an issue always in play.

Faulty assumptions are possible anywhere information is dispensed, and that's anywhere at any time. For instance, we moderns are as subject to faulty assumptions as anyone else, ancient or modern.

An example may be the faulty assumption we are prone to make regarding the knowledge and understanding people had who actually walked and talked with our Lord during His earthly ministry 2,000 years ago.

[8 : 06] Our likely assumption is that those people, including His 12 disciples, surely knew more about the plan and program of God than do we today. After all, they lived, walked, and talked with our Lord for three years plus.

That would be a logical assumption to make, would it not? Of course it would. But in reality, it is a faulty assumption that the Scriptures themselves will reveal.

While it is true the 12 with Christ experienced and knew far more about their culture, surroundings, interpersonal connections, times, places, traditions, the language, and its nuances, and all the environment that accompanied their personal knowledge of Christ, of course they did, in a very personal and hands-on way.

But, did they have like knowledge of what we referred to as the plan and program of God? They certainly did not. And the Bible reveals that.

And why were they lacking in that knowledge? Simply because it had not been revealed to them at that time. Clearly, they had the personal experiential knowledge already mentioned.

[9 : 18] But we today have a much better understanding of what we call the plan and program of God than did they. However, could that be? Well, simply because today we have more information, as recorded in our completed canon of Scripture, that the contemporaries of Christ did not have.

It is surely a faulty assumption on our part here in the 21st century to say, Oh, surely they who walked and talked with Jesus obviously understood all those things.

And right there is your faulty assumption come alive. To make the point, it is we who have a completed Bible who know Christ was sent to earth for the express purpose of being the Savior of the world in accord with John 4 and verse 14.

The beloved disciple John wrote that and surely knew it to be true. But when did John know that? Did he know it when he saw Jesus dying on the cross?

Certainly not. John did not know it until after he was inspired to write of it well after the event. Not even Mary his mother knew or understood it until later.

[10 : 29] And in addition, absolutely none of them anticipated Christ's resurrection three days later. But wait! Did he not tell them that very thing when he recited about Jonah being in the great fish for three days and three nights?

And even so must the Son of Man be? Didn't they get that? No, they did not. In fact, the apostles were the first to disbelieve and deny his resurrection.

All based on faulty assumptions. More upcoming. Revisiting Faulty Assumptions Part 2
We are dealing with faulty assumptions we are all capable of making.

An untold confusion is created by people assuming certain things to be true when they are not true at all. Assuming them to be true and then acting upon that assumption can even be deadly.

How many times have drivers assumed they could easily beat the train at a railroad crossing? How many families assumed their loved one would return safely to them after the war, only to receive his remains in a flag-draped casket?

[11 : 45] How many other nations, along with the USA, assumed the accuracy of intelligence reports about stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction being present in Iraq?

Yet, after an invasion by a coalition of nations and a loss of blood and treasure on both sides, no WMDs were found.

No matter that all were sincerely convinced. Such sincerity counts for nothing when the information acted upon was untrue. And therein, as stated before, lies the oft-devastating results of faulty assumptions.

People act on those assumptions. John 13 tells us that when Judas was dismissed from the upper room to go complete his evil bargain with the chief priests, He was only going out to get more supplies needed for the Passover feast.

So they thought, says John in 13:29. But that was clearly a faulty assumption. And why did they assume that? Because they had inadequate information as to what was actually taking place right before their eyes.

[12 : 57] Of course, later, they would put it all together. Later, they would connect all the dots, and the Spirit of God would even inspire John to write it in his gospel with great understanding and clarity. But had the apostles known at the time Judas departed that he was going to complete the deal of betrayal, do you think for a moment they would have allowed Judas to leave that room?

True it was, Jesus knew precisely what was taking place when he even excused Judas with a, What thou doest, Judas, do quickly.

Just a few days earlier, when Christ neared Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he delivered a parable about a certain nobleman who was to go to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

Jesus gave this parable at this time because they were nearing Jerusalem, and the apostles thought that when Jesus arrived there, the kingdom of God was going to immediately appear.

And when Jesus told in the parable that the nobleman, who was of course Christ himself, would be going away, did they get it? Not at all. The last thing they were thinking was that crucifixion awaited their Lord.

[14 : 09] Only in hindsight, and inspired by the Holy Spirit to write accurately about the entire account, were they able to really put it all together. And prior to that, the twelve apostles, close as they were to their Lord, could only operate from a faulty assumption.

And only a completed canon of Scripture we enjoy today can deliver us from making the same kind of faulty assumptions they did. Let's pursue that.

Revisiting Faulty Assumptions Part 3 Everybody makes faulty assumptions, and doing so is part of the human limitations we all possess. Because of this, we have documented even those who were close to our Lord during His earthly ministry as having made some faulty assumptions.

The basis for making faulty assumptions is twofold. One, we make faulty assumptions because we do not have all the facts regarding an issue, and we draw our faulty conclusion based on incomplete information.

Or two, we do have the necessary information, but we misunderstand it. Either way, our end result and conclusion is not correct.

[15 : 25] Unfortunately, it may be held to be correct, and then becomes adopted among the faithful who consider it to be absolute truth. And sadly, this is the way much doctrine among professing Christians has been adopted.

This, as shown earlier on previous sessions of Christianity Clarified, is precisely how the 250 different denominations, conferences, synods, unions, associations, cults, and isms of every kind have come to be.

Each of them, without exception, arrived at their particular doctrinal statements based on their assumptions of what they believe to be true in accord with what the Bible teaches.

And some of their assumptions were based on solid truth, but there were others that were not. And these we identify as faulty assumptions, leading to wrong conclusions.

There are plenty of them to go around. 500 years ago, in 1517, Martin Luther broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, of which he was an Augustinian monk. And although such was not Luther's intention, eventually his followers established what would become the Lutheran Church.

[16 : 37] And not long after that, King Henry VIII made his break from Rome because the Pope would not grant him an annulment from his latest wife. This gave birth to the Church of England, or the Episcopal denomination.

Both Luther and King Henry brought theological baggage with them when they left the Catholic Church. And actually, the baggage they brought had been based on faulty assumptions made by the leaders of Rome much earlier.

So now, we have a mere transfer of faulty assumptions held by the parent organization that became doctrinal mainstays continued by the new separated group, Lutheran and Episcopal.

But it doesn't end there. Different brands of Lutheranism came into being. The Episcopal, or Church of England, spawned what would later become the Methodist Church. And it, in turn, gave rise to other branches of Wesleyanism, out of which developed the Nazarenes, the Church of God of different varieties.

Oh yes, don't forget the Presbyterians and other Reformed or Covenantal assemblies. And none of these mentioned even existed a mere 500 years ago.

[17 : 49] And nearly all their doctrinal differences that separate them lie at the base of, you guessed it, faulty assumptions, many of which will be revealed upcoming.

And no one benefits from all the doctrinal diversity but the adversary. And he loves it. Jesus said he was a liar from the beginning. Revisiting Faulty Assumptions Part 4 It has been freely admitted that none of us, including yours truly with Christianity Clarified, is immune from making faulty assumptions and then establishing a doctrinal position based on them.

We even illustrated the disciples of our Lord having done so. Why do people do this? Why do they make faulty assumptions? Well, it isn't done intentionally.

It's done sincerely and by honorable people. And it's very easy to do, even predictable to do it, simply because we do not have full knowledge of a given situation.

And had we all the information needed, we would reach a different and accurate conclusion rather than a conclusion based on faulty assumptions. The only one never making a faulty assumption about anything is the one who fully knows all the facts involved and knows them accurately.

[19 : 16] And we all know who that is. So, the rest of us, with our limited information, struggle with trying to reach accurate conclusions upon which sound doctrine can be built.

Meanwhile, over the past 2,000 years, faulty assumptions have flourished, and erroneous doctrine has been established and engraved in stone.

And, it is without apology, because it needs to be said and understood, the vast majority of doctrinal issues that divide us in Christendom are due to faulty assumptions mistakenly derived from a misinterpretation of various passages of Scripture.

And, upon these unfortunate doctrinal conclusions, whole denominations have been founded, fostered by the best of intentions of honorable and credible leaders.

And then, their followers, who obviously admired and respected those leaders, came on board, adopted their conclusions, and, voila, doctrine comes into being and is placed in a statement of faith.

[20 : 24] It's all a very natural and predictable process, nearly all of which began with their leaders making faulty assumptions as they reached their interpretation of various passages of Scripture.

We, today, have the best opportunity for avoiding faulty assumptions than they did who lived during the first century in the time of Christ. And that opportunity lies solely in our possession of a complete Bible, which they did not have.

This means, we have information the early disciples did not have. They had but bits and pieces that were not easy for them to put together so as to gain an accurate understanding.

But we, we have it all. A completed record of events that comes by inspiration from God. And it's hard to believe, but it is true, we have more to work with by way of information than did those who actually walked with Christ.

We have the luxury of comparing Scripture with Scripture and even seeing the connection between the book of Revelation and the book of Genesis. It's true. It doesn't prevent us from making faulty assumptions of our own, but it surely makes it easier to avoid them.

[21 : 38] And you will see more fully about this. Upcoming, it will be invaluable. Remembering the reality of truth If there is anything that comes to us with crystal clarity, it is the coexistence of truth and untruth.

Truth is that which corresponds to reality and untruth does not. Untruth is contrary to reality. It's also referred to as a lie. We have explained truth as possessing factual information, not hearsay, opinion, speculation, or assumption, but that which corresponds to reality and can be demonstrably proven to be so.

Truth is not determined by who believes it and who does not, nor by the number of those who believe it or do not. This is a concept that should not even need discussion due to its being so obvious.

But, sad to say, its being obvious seems to have been spent entirely on past generations. Today, there are moderns who imply or even insist we are creators of our own truth.

The position is sheer absurdity and smacks of an inane wish fulfillment that has no basis in reality. As obvious as the old philosophical maxims are, some still insist on ignoring or denying them.

[23 : 06] But doing so creates a pseudo-reality that cannot be lived out. Still, it is the kind of absurd nonsense that is a tenet of today's postmodernism.

And here are two age-old maxims that help us all live a life of reason. Number one, if *Ida May* is true, the opposite of *A* cannot be true, since that would be a contradiction.

It is obvious this is why the maxim is called the law of non-contradiction. As you look out your window, it is raining or it is not raining.

It cannot be both at the same time in the same place. Such would be an absurdity. If you ask me if it is raining or not, and I say, both, well, here is where the absurdity enters, and this is why no one can live a life of contradiction.

Postmoderns, in their political correctness that no one be described as wrong, simply abandon logic and common sense altogether, making their own reality.

[24 : 11] But make no mistake about it, it is an entirely different paradigm for analyzing information. And likewise, the law of the excluded middle, illustration number two, closely related to the law of non-contradiction, and it presents an either-or proposition in the same way the law of non-contradiction presents a true or false proposition.

One may believe that Christ rose from the dead, and another may not. Well, can we compromise here and say, let's go with the middle position? That way, neither is declared wrong.

The problem is, there is no middle. He did, or he did not. The middle is not only excluded, but attempting to embrace it is a study in futility. And most amazing of all is that there are those declared to be of superior intelligence who insist the law of excluded middle is tenable to them.

Surely, it's abandoning common sense and worshiping at the altar of political correctness. Please remember these two laws of logic as we continue engaging examples of faulty assumptions upon which many, sad to say, doctrines are built.

Recalling the Origin of Faulty Assumptions A faulty assumption is just as the term implies.

[25 : 32] It starts with someone hearing something or reading something they believe to be true, but it isn't true at all. It happens all the time and has gone on from the earliest of days. How early, you ask?

Well, how about Genesis 3? Hard to get much earlier than that. Mankind has been plagued by faulty assumptions ever since his existence. When Satan told Eve she would not surely die if she ate of the forbidden fruit, she assumed what he told her was true.

But it wasn't. It was a lie. She made a faulty assumption. Earlier, when God told them not to eat of that particular tree because if they did, they would die, did they also assume that to be true?

Well, it would appear so. But now, there are competing statements about that fruit. God's statement was that death would follow if it was eaten. Satan's statement was death would not follow if they ate of it.

But how could both be true since they were complete opposites? A contradiction. Deception. Clearly, contradictory concepts are on the table and they are you will die if you eat and you will not die if you eat.

[26 : 46] But you can't have it both ways. Eve must have known that and now she is confronted with a choice to eat or not to eat. That is the question.

How can she decide? What is it that might tip the scales to allow her to decide? How about deception? Satan throws that in the mix and an advantage was gained.

We are told in 1 Timothy 2 that Eve was deceived and that's another term for her having made a faulty assumption. Eve's decision appears to be an example of Romans 1 where the Apostle Paul speaks of early mankind changing the truth of God into a lie.

Satan told Eve that God had lied and they would not surely die. So God's truth was presented as a lie by Satan and Eve assigned truth to Satan and falsehood to God.

Consequently, the Creator's authority was abandoned and the creature's authority was adopted just like Romans 1 states it. They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

[27 : 55] And mankind has been making this substitution ever since. As stated before and repeatedly, the critical issue is authority, always has been, always will be.

What or whom we install as our authority determines what we believe and what we do about it. Simple as that. This Genesis 3 scenario, sad to say, provides us with the first example of a faulty assumption.

And while God conveys truth to inform and to warn, Satan uses deception to entice and falsify. Man's only hope is in turning a listening ear to God the Creator and a deaf ear to Satan the creature.

Nothing has changed to which the condition of our world bears unmistakable testimony. Thus, faulty assumptions continue to compete with the truth every day in every way, including doctrinally.

You'll see what we mean upcoming. A Faulty Assumption About the Prayer of Christ Part 1 One of the most common reasons why Christianity in general has embedded itself in certain doctrinal errors is due to people in authority having made faulty assumptions.

[29 : 16] And their faulty assumptions are then embraced by faithful followers and maintained literally throughout the centuries, extending to our present day. The result is things that were not true became firmly established as factual.

And the passing of time added to the faulty assumption cast the issue, whatever it was, in concrete. Our efforts on Christianity Clarified are now undertaking and identifying some of those faulty assumptions and their erroneous conclusions.

So, let's now get underway with what we label as a faulty assumption and it is found at the crucifixion account of Christ in Luke's Gospel chapter 23.

Luke alone records this particular saying of our Lord, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Jesus is clearly assigning ignorance to those responsible for his crucifixion.

Two distinct groups are involved and the likelihood is that he was referring to both. First, the Roman soldiers were acting in ignorance. They were a four-man execution squad who were simply carrying out the orders of their superiors.

[30 : 32] Secondly, the religious establishment headed by the Jewish high priest was responsible for bringing Jesus before the Roman authorities, intending him to be sentenced to death.

Where their ignorance was involved was in their not knowing he really was their Messiah sent from God whom they wanted executed. And this is supported by the apostle Peter in Acts chapter 3 as he addressed the multitude gathered over the healing of the man lame from his mother's womb.

Said Peter, And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers. The context clearly reveals that Peter and John are extending to Israel another opportunity to change their mind about the one whose crucifixion they had demanded.

The false assumption made by so many is that Israel's doom had then been sealed with their rejection of Christ and his crucifixion, but it clearly had not.

The prayer of Jesus that God would forgive them for what they were doing was answered. It's hard to imagine the prayer of the Son of God to his Father not being answered.

[31 : 43] To assume it was not, and that now Israel was permanently rejected by God has led many to believe the Jewish nation was now being replaced with another people altogether that would be known as the Christian Church.

Well, it was not and is not true, but false assumptions can take on a life of their own, and such is precisely what has happened with this false assumption which is merely one of many.

more details about this false assumption are upcoming, and they are eye-opening. Trust you will be here and join with us in the enlightenment to come.

It will be stunning, I assure you. Faulty Assumptions About the Prayer of Christ Part 2 For nearly 2,000 years, a false assumption made by influential people in positions of authority has prevailed even to this day.

And what was that false assumption? It was in assuming that the crucifixion of Jesus constituted Israel's final answer regarding the issue of whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah that God himself had sent to Israel.

[33 : 00] In their demand that Pilate crucify Jesus and Pilate's compliance, certainly there was every indication that such was indeed Israel's final answer as to their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah.

And one can easily see how this appeared to be the case. But be reminded of our Lord's Prayer request in Luke 23 that God would forgive those responsible. The evidence that God did so is forthcoming in the early chapters of the book of Acts.

Here, beginning as early as Acts 2 in the day of Pentecost, we find Peter and the 12 once again offering to the people of Israel this same Jesus whom they earlier rejected.

And not only here, but again in Acts 3, the offer continues to be extended only to be met with more rejection from the ruling establishment of Judaism.

Yet, the obvious point remains that God's gracious offer was continuing to be made to Israel. And this can only mean one thing. The divine door was not yet closed to Israel.

[34 : 08] Even after their demanding Christ's crucifixion, God was still extending His gracious offer to Israel and sought their repentance. And beginning with Acts 2 and the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, many falsely assumed that God had written Israel off with the earlier crucifixion, and that Acts 2 is the account of the beginning of an entirely new people to replace the disobedient nation of Israel with a different group called the Christian Church.

This was a huge, faulty assumption, an unjustified quantum leap. Yet, it was eventually arrived at and propagated by those in positions of influence and power and became accepted as fact.

This erroneous reality remains with us today called replacement theology. And to demonstrate how pervasive and powerful a faulty assumption can be, one need only look at the majority of Christendom embracing this faulty assumption as true.

In reality, this sad situation is riddled with one faulty assumption after another, none of which have any basis in fact. And here comes another. Please keep in mind the chronology between the crucifixion of Christ and the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

It's about 50 days. Less than two months later, things continued to be as Jewish as they could be. In Acts 2, with the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the multitude speaking in languages they had not learned, this additional faulty assumption was in assuming that this day of Pentecost was not what Peter said it was, but it was precisely what Peter said it was and not at all what many, especially early believers, assumed it to be.

[35 : 56] This plot is thickening and it is really something. Faulty Assumption About the Prayer of Christ Part 3 The dramatic event at the Jewish Feast of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 is familiar to most Christians.

In one way, it was a very ordinary day, if one can call a holiday or a holy day an ordinary day, but what was ordinary about it was the fact that it was an annual Jewish holiday that occurred every year given the name Feast of Weeks because it came after seven weeks or 49 days following the annual feast of Passover.

Then, on the 50th day, Pentecost arrived, and one can see the element of five or fifty in the first part of the word Pentecost, meaning five, P-E-N-T-E, and it was ordinary in that it came every year at this same time.

Yet, this particular Pentecost or Feast of Weeks was extraordinary because there had never been a Pentecost like this Pentecost. And, returning to the question posed at the conclusion of our previous session, we asked, if the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 was not the beginning of the Christian church, which most Christians believe to be the case, what was it?

Well, the answer could not be more obvious. What that day of Pentecost was, as recorded in Acts chapter 2, was exactly what Peter said it was. All that transpired in this special day of Pentecost, the loud noise of the rushing wind, the cloven-like tongues resembling fire that rested on each of them, and their supernatural ability to speak in languages they had never learned, which served an extremely practical purpose, all of those present were Jews.

[37 : 56] They were also from many different areas of the Mediterranean and spoke different languages. And, consequently, they were used to dealing with the language barrier in all of their discourses, but now, at this event, on this Pentecost, that barrier of language was removed with each able to hear in their very own language.

It's been described as a temporary reversal of the Tower of Babel, when the one language that was then spoken by all was divinely fragmented into several different languages.

So now, and again, if this experience in Acts 2 was not the beginning of the Christian church, what was it? It was precisely what the Apostle Peter said it was, and his explanation did not so much as even hint that it was the beginning of the Christian church.

With great clarity and no hesitation, Peter informed his exclusively Jewish audience, meeting in the Jewish temple site, while celebrating the Jewish feast of Passover, with fellow Jewish men, that these men are not drunken as you suppose, seeing it is only nine o'clock in the morning, but this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel.

And Peter was referencing what Joel had prophesied several hundred years earlier in the second chapter of his prophecy. It is upcoming and eye-opening.

[39 : 23] And this will go down in history as one of the most extensive and consequential faulty assumptions in the Christian church.

A faulty assumption about the prayer of Christ, part four. A difficulty should be acknowledged with the presenting of what we are calling faulty assumptions, and that difficulty is in their organization.

And what makes them so difficult is the fact that one faulty assumption often leads to another. A faulty assumption is often based on the faulty assumption that preceded it.

It is tantamount to a lie when one lie tends to beget another. Yet, a clear distinction needs to be made between lies and faulty assumptions.

A lie tends to be deliberate, and the one telling it knows it to be a lie. But a faulty assumption, while it is still error, is an unintentional error.

[40 : 31] We are not charging those who have gone before, some nearly 2,000 years earlier, with deliberately lying about their conclusions. They held and propagated their conclusions honestly and in good faith.

But, as we have so often learned, sincerity in the positions we put forth does not guarantee their validity. Also, as mentioned earlier, we should not judge our brethren and their faulty assumptions too harshly, for had we today lived when they did, and had we been limited to the information they had, we may well have fared no better than they with the conclusions we would have reached.

We too, would have no doubt come up with some faulty assumptions. So, we are richly blessed by living in a day when so much more understanding and information is available, provided by the sheer passing of time.

So, now at the present, we are dealing with what began as a very simple question. Yet, it is one that has taken on a life of its own, morphing into unavoidable related questions and answers that flow from it.

And the question was very simple, but its answer demands and opens more and more questions, hence the difficulty we mentioned in trying to organize material so closely interrelated.

[41 : 55] Recall, if you will, originally we asked, did the prayer of Jesus that he uttered from the cross asking the Father to forgive his executioners go unanswered or not? We took the position that it was answered, and that was based on two lines of reasoning.

Number one, it was unthinkable that the prayer from son to father would not have been answered, and in addition it is clear that it having been answered was demonstrated by Peter's extended invitation to Israel in Acts 2 and 3 for them to embrace the Messiah they had earlier rejected.

And this revealed that the opportunity for Israel to repent remained open. The invitation for Israel to do so could only mean such was possible.

The divine door for Israel was not closed but remained open, and Acts 2 and Pentecost had nothing to do with a new thing arriving as the Christian church, but with an old thing continuing in the gracious outstretched arm of God to a disobedient and rejecting nation of Israel.

Peter references Joel the prophet as he explains the meaning of the miraculous events on that day of Pentecost in Acts 2, and we will get there. It's upcoming next.

[43 : 15] A faulty assumption about the prayer of Christ, part 5. When the Jewish people who were present at the feast of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 were perplexed as to what was taking place, they floated the only answer they could come up with.

said they, These people are drunk. That explains it. But the apostle Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, knew exactly what was happening when he stood up with the eleven apostles and said, You men of Israel, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.

For these are not drunken, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it all has to do with the promise that God made to Israel.

This entire matter of the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 must be confined to the people and time for which Joel intended it. The people he is referencing were Jews, and the time involved is, as he stated, the last days that will precede the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Even a superficial study of prophecy will conclude the day of the Lord to be synonymous with the tribulation period or the time of Jacob's trouble referenced by Jeremiah in chapter 30. And while I said earlier, this entire matter is as Jewish as it can be, and Peter connects it with the last day, still, that was two thousand years ago when Peter quoted Joel.

[44 : 54] The prophecy continues to describe heavenly phenomena that still hasn't been fulfilled to this day. That included wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire, pillars of smoke, the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Those things never occurred in connection with Pentecost, nor have they occurred even to this present day. Well, was Peter mistaken? Not at all.

Recall that earlier in Acts 2, the apostles were together, and verse 4 makes it clear they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And for that to be true, and Peter mistakenly referring to Israel's prophecy with his interpretation, is not at all plausible.

No, no, no, no. Peter spoke the truth precisely as he was inspired to do. And he also connected the miraculous things that were happening to precede the day of the Lord, that is, the time of Israel's tribulation, which has not yet occurred, as also Christ spoke of it in Matthew chapter 24.

What these at Pentecost were experiencing was the very first elements of Joel's prophecy, not the entire prophecy, which as we said, is yet to come. Something in the then unfolding history of Israel was yet to occur, which would literally suspend Joel's prophecy, stop it suddenly from continuing on in fulfillment, that remains unrealized.

[46 : 28] And Peter was right. But his stubborn audience of Jews would remain in a mode of rejection as regards Jesus being Israel's Messiah sent by God.

And don't be misled by the 3,000 who did respond. That explanation is coming in our next session. A Faulty Assumption About the Prayer of Christ, Part 6 Our first faulty assumption continues to unfold in its many ramifications.

We describe this faulty assumption as being the mistaken notion that, since the Jewish people rejected Jesus as their Messiah, and were complicit in his crucifixion, that God had then, in turn, rejected Israel permanently.

Further, God transferred all the promises he had made earlier to Israel, from Israel to the Christian Church. Instead, and now, as of Acts 2, they, the Christian Church, has become the new Israel or the new chosen people.

The magnitude and persistence of this faulty assumption is simply astounding. It became and remains so pervasive it actually represents the majority position of Christendom to this day.

[47 : 45] It is also identified as replacement theology, meaning that the Christian Church has replaced Israel as the new chosen people of God. Sometimes goes by the name of supersessionism, meaning Israel has been superseded by Christianity.

And for many, especially Christians, that faulty assumption is reinforced by the great numbers of Christians, as opposed to the radically fewer numbers of Jews.

And this in itself is enough to validate that faulty assumption in the minds of many. Yet, clearly countermanning all that accompanies this false assumption is the undeniably clear statements of Scripture.

A mere cursory reading of Acts 2 and 3 regarding Peter's messages, which were delivered by his being filled with the Spirit of God, sees Peter continuing to plead with his Jewish brethren to repent and embrace Jesus, whom they earlier rejected as their Messiah.

This invitation could only mean the door of opportunity was still wide open to Israel. God was still available to them. If only they would repent and submit to the baptism of John, which they also earlier rejected.

[49 : 01] And in addition to the 3,000 who did do that at Pentecost in Acts 2, another figure of 5,000 is mentioned in chapter 4. And it isn't certain whether this made a total of 5,000 and included the original 3,000, or if this was 5,000 in addition to the original 3,000.

In either case, these thousands represented but a small percentage of the Jewish population there in Jerusalem. A very small percentage. In addition, a critical factor in all of this was the steadfast refusal of the Jewish hierarchy to even consider reversing themselves in their opinion of Jesus of Nazareth.

The ruling class headed by the high priest, the same who orchestrated the betrayal with Judas and who manipulated Pilate to crucify Jesus, held enormous sway and control over the masses.

These leaders would begin a vigorous campaign of persecution against their fellow Jews by beating and jailing many, beginning with the apostles. Be reminded that in the midst of all this, we have no record of even one non-Jewish person being involved.

This Pentecost is as entirely Jewish as it can be. And only by recognizing this exclusively Jewishness can we make sense of it all. A Faulty Assumption About Christ's Prayer, Part 7 In continuing to pursue what has been identified with a faulty assumption, stating that the Christian church had its beginning at the Jewish feast of Pentecost, several factors are offered that militate against that claim.

[50 : 45] We know Jews were present from 14 different areas of the Mediterranean basin, and they were there to fulfill the obligation incumbent upon all male Jews 20 years of age and upward, as required by the law of Moses.

Additional evidence that all of the 3,000 who responded to Peter's message were Jews is because no Gentiles were even allowed in the temple area. This feast, as well as the other feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, etc., were limited exclusively to Jewish participants.

Gentiles were simply not permitted to attend. These Jewish pilgrims from the 14 countries mentioned in verses 9 through 11, plus the hundreds of thousands of Jews already living in the land of Israel, would number many more than the 3,000 who believed and were baptized.

And then, too, we are told in verse 1 that the day of Pentecost had fully come. This means it was not on the evening prior to Pentecost, but at the beginning, that is, at the first day of the feast.

Without making some faulty assumptions of our own, it is likely that to be at an annual feast of this magnitude at its beginning would seem desirable.

[52 : 03] Additionally, with the time of the feast fully come, implying it was at the beginning or start of it, we are also told it was only nine o'clock in the morning, giving every indication that it had just officially begun.

The text tells us it was due to the sound of a rushing mighty wind that the coming of the Holy Spirit was announced. How could this noise not have attracted all within hearing distance to rush over to the source of that noise?

And then, with the gathering crowd, history has taught us that nothing gathers a crowd like a crowd. Everyone wants to know what's going on.

Verse 2 tells us the apostles were in the house when the Spirit descended with the attendant rushing mighty wind. There were many such lodgings and meeting houses or areas there on the Temple Mount and its surrounding courtyards.

But this one in particular was where all the noise and excitement was being produced and would naturally draw a large crowd in a very short time. It was this crowd Peter would address, and they could no longer be in a house.

[53 : 17] Peter and the apostles would have to have stepped outside the enclosed area of the house where they were to address the crowd that gathered. While we are not given the number of the people present, we are told of those present, three thousand responded positively to the message Peter preached and followed their commitment by submitting to John's baptism.

It is surely a faulty assumption to believe he addressed three thousand and three thousand believed and were baptized. While we are not told how many actually were present, we are told the size of the Temple Mount area where this occurred.

It was then and is now the equivalent of twenty-nine American-sized football fields. Faulty Assumption About Christ's Prayer Part 8 It is hoped that the many ramifications and consequences of a faulty assumption are being grasped.

Thus far, eight segments have followed the faulty assumption about the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ he uttered while on the cross. Recall, if you will, it was, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Jesus was clearly acknowledging the ignorance of those complicit in his crucifixion. The faulty assumption reached by so many is that his prayer was not answered, that God his Father did not forgive Israel, and they thus forfeited their covenantal relationship to God.

[54 : 49] Consequently, as the majority opinion states, God then in punishment of Israel for their rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah, transferred the favored position of Israel to a new group he began on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

This, say the majority of Christendom, marked the beginning of the Christian church. Coupled with that faulty assumption may be another faulty assumption.

Most believe when Christ said he would build his church in Matthew 16, that this in Acts 2 is that church, and that may be the case.

If so, bear in mind the word *ekklesia* simply means congregation or assembly. If Acts 2 is that church or assembly, and it is admitted this may be the case, it is an entirely Jewish assembly of believers.

It would have been an exclusively Jewish congregation that began forming in Acts chapter 2. And it would also indicate Christ's prayer for their forgiveness was answered.

[56 : 03] And the 3,000 who believed and were baptized was proof positive of God's forgiveness. However, as we shall see in upcoming segments, the issue of the meaning of church comes into play.

A faulty assumption is that the word church means the same thing wherever employed in the Bible. While it is true, it does always mean congregation, assembly, or called out ones.

Yet each must be rightly divided as to which church it is, as indicated by the context. In the context of Acts 2, none were present but Jews only.

Such would indicate an entirely Jewish assembly or congregation. Was this in Acts 2 the church to which Christ referred when he said he would build his church?

Possibly so. Yet, too much is assumed with the use of the word church in the King James Version as it appears in verse 47, because the word church is not there in the original Greek.

[57 : 08] It only says the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. The faulty assumption also arises by equating this Jewish assembly with the church which is Christ's body.

That will be an issue of rightly dividing upcoming. And you will see how very important it is. Six different meanings of church.

Church. If ever there was an example of how necessary it is to apply the principle of right division as referred to by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2.15, it is in the use of the word church.

It's used in six different settings and must be rightly divided. Why? Because they are different. The one thing they have in common is they are all a group, an assembly of sorts, a congregated group of people, but there the similarity ends.

In Matthew 16, Christ uses the word church when he says he will build his church. That's the first. In Acts 2, the church to which Christ referred in Matthew 16 may be the fulfillment of it, but it is exclusively Jewish.

[58 : 21] That's the second. In Acts 7, the third usage is found when Stephen refers to the congregation of Israel out of Egypt as a church, as translated in the King James Version.

And in Acts 19, the fourth usage is found with an unruly assembly of pagan unbelievers who were worshipers of the Greek goddess Diana, and it's called in the original Greek of all things, the church, an *ecclesia*.

The Apostle Paul nearly always uses the word church in his several letters sent to various geographical assemblies that he called a church. And that's the fifth meaning.

And the sixth use of the word church is different still. It is referred to as a mystery, not to be confused with the others, but rightly divided from them because it is different from them.

This church is, in fact, invisible. What does that mean? How can a church be a church and yet invisible? It's because it is made up of the spirits of human beings whose spirit, like yours and mine, are invisible.

[59 : 31] And while we all have a visible physical body, we do not have a visible spirit, but an immaterial part of our being that is not physical, but spiritual.

And all who are believers in Jesus Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, are placed into this spiritual union called the church, the body of Christ.

We are members of his body, and Christ himself is the head of his spiritual body called the church. That's the sixth usage of the word church. Do you not readily see the enormous difference between these churches and all the other entities that are also called a church, as mentioned earlier?

Bear in mind, the only alternative to rightly dividing these churches is to wrongly mix them, which is precisely what Christendom has done for centuries.

While the use of the word church is easily distinguished from the church in the wilderness and the church or the unruly mob in Acts 19, it is not nearly as distinguishable from the Jewish or Pentecostal assembly of believers in Acts 2.

[60 : 37] We know they must be separated because the one in Acts 2 was clearly predicted by Joel, and the assembly or church which is Christ's body was not predicted, promised at all, prior to its origin being revealed by Paul.

No wonder it is called a mystery in Ephesians 3. You would do well to read it, please. Reinforcing Right Division It is sincerely hoped that you, the listener, is at least beginning to see the essential importance of rightly dividing the word of truth.

It is, in fact, the only thing that can deliver us from the plethora of faulty assumptions. And while it's very simple and logical, it's also very profound and essential.

When the scriptures are rightly divided, as in 2 Timothy 2.15, it allows the entire Bible to come together and make sense as never before.

For all too many believers, the Bible is regarded as overwhelming and confusing. And, if you do not make the distinctions required by rightly dividing, it is.

[61 : 51] And I found it to be so as a new Christian in 1956. Currently, in these present sessions of Christianity Clarified, we are exploring the differences between the entities called church.

First, there is the church in the wilderness at Acts 7.38, clearly referring to the congregation of Israel. Second, there is the church Christ said he would build in Matthew 16 that might, and I emphasize might, have its fulfillment in Acts 2.

And third, as a holy Jewish congregation of 3,000 who repented and were baptized with John's baptism. There is the unruly mob of pagans that caused such a commotion in Acts 19 as the fourth group, who are called, at least in the Greek original, a church.

There are churches which are comprised of believers in a given area that meet together for worship, and there are too many of those to enumerate, but Paul addressed at least seven or eight of these individual congregations, and they constitute the fifth usage of the word church that is very different from the previous four usages of the word.

And there is that which is referred to as the body church, of which Christ himself is the head. It's sometimes referred to as the universal or invisible church.

[63 : 18] It's universal in that it is comprised of all believers everywhere who are by faith in Christ, and therefore members of his body, of which he is the head. And it is called the invisible church because it is comprised of the human spirits of all believers.

Our spirit is intangible, immaterial, and invisible. No one has ever seen another person's spirit. But its invisible nature does not negate its objective reality.

Your spirit, not your body, is that which has been redeemed at salvation and then became an invisible part of the invisible body of Christ called the church. We get the best understanding of this glorious concept from Ephesians and Colossians.

This all has to do with the expression the Apostle Paul uses repeatedly, just two words, in Christ. Read Paul's epistles and see how many times he uses, in Christ, or its equivalent.

This body church, ironically enough, is not a physical body, but a spiritual organism. And every believer is a part of this body, of which Christ is the spiritual head.

[64 : 36] Two Distinctions of the Body Church, Part 1 While there may be numerous other distinctions regarding the body church, there are two that stand out as most dramatic.

And the first is that the body church, never mentioned by anyone but Paul, had never been prophesied, predicted, or promised in the Old Testament.

How do we know that? Simply because, searching the Old Testament, you won't find it. And in addition, because Paul tells us this in the plainest of language possible, in Ephesians chapter 3, beginning with verse 3, saying, If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

Do you not see the stark contrast between this information about the church which is Christ's body, not having been made known to anyone previous to Paul? And the experience of Acts 2, clearly having been prophesied hundreds of years earlier and quoted by Peter, saying, This is that spoken of by the prophet Joel.

But wait! Paul stated in Ephesians 3 that this information about the body church had not been made known earlier, but was kept secret in the mind and heart of God, while Peter tells his Pentecostal audience of Jews in Acts 2 that what they were experiencing with languages spoken that had not been learned was what the prophet Joel was prophesying in chapter 3.

[66 : 38] Well, which is it? Was it revealed earlier, as Joel stated? Or was it never revealed before until God revealed it to Paul the apostle to the Gentiles?

One cannot have it both ways. And this is the very thing, the very kind of thing, that skeptics crow about when they charge the Bible with contradictions. The solution is simple.

When the principle of right division is applied, these, the Acts 2 Pentecostal incident predicted by Joel, and the concept of the body church never predicted by anyone, are two different entities.

The former in Joel was predicted and planned all along, and began to get underway in Acts 2. And we say began, because it was short-circuited by Israel's continued rejection of her Messiah, while the latter, even though obviously planned in the mind of God, was reserved and never prophesied or promised before, but spontaneously sprang forth as a complete surprise to everyone.

No notice, no warning, no promises, just a major, Wow! What is this? This is the mystery come to fruition.

[67 : 55] This is the body of Christ, seeming coming into being out of nowhere. More upcoming. Get in on this. Two distinctions of the body church, part two.

The first distinctions of the body church was given on our previous segment of Christianity Clarified. And why is it called the body church? Simply to distinguish it from the other five churches mentioned earlier.

But even more importantly, it is called the body church because Paul, to whom it was first revealed, stated in Ephesians 3.6, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body.

And again, he states in chapter 4, there is one body and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

In verse 12, he reminds us that gifted men are given to the church for the edifying of the body of Christ. Well, what body is this body of Christ?

[69 : 02] Well, it certainly is not Christ's physical body. It is a body comprised of believers joined together through faith in Christ. It is Christ's spiritual body, to which every believer belongs, and Christ is the spiritual head.

In chapter 5, we read that Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. This body is the corporate entity of all who are in Christ, and in verse 30, we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

And the use of the term body, here and in 1 Corinthians 12, is a literary tool, an analogy, that assigns all believers as being different parts of the body, in order to illustrate the oneness of the saints in Christ.

In Colossians 1, Paul tells us his sufferings were for Christ's body's sake, which is the church. And the second greatest distinction about this mystery called the body of Christ is its composition.

It is an entity made up of Jews and Gentiles together, and that was a bombshell of the first century. This concept of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, all being on an equal footing in the body of Christ, was so radical, it was immediately repudiated, denied, rejected, ridiculed, and met with every other negative connotation you can give it.

[70 : 36] Because the Jew, from his inception as such, back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were to be, if anything, separate from the Gentiles, designated as a peculiar people, different, apart from Gentiles, as stipulated through the law of Moses.

And now, Paul is saying that is all passe, because God is doing something never before even imagined, that Jew and Gentiles should be brothers and sisters, members of this same new entity called the body of Christ?

Impossible! Crazy! This cannot be! But it was, and remains so. And this bears such a powerful reality of the unifying energy that is resident in the person and work of Jesus the Messiah.

Only he could break down this age-old barrier that separated Jews from Gentiles, and he did exactly that. And what is more, he is still doing it today.

This is the body church of which we are members by faith in Christ. A preview of upcoming volume 43. We have scarcely scratched the surface in our exploration of those erroneous, faulty assumptions that have had a doctrinal, emotional, traditional, and ongoing impact on the Christian faith.

[71 : 59] And as we explore more of these faulty assumptions, it will become obvious as to why there are so many differences among those called Christians. While many of these faulty assumptions provided the basis for doctrinal conclusions in the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism has not escaped.

We will reveal the faulty assumptions rampant in Protestants as well. And we can do this in a way the early church could not, simply because we have an increased perspective they didn't have, merely by virtue of our having a history.

But, greater than that, we have a completed revolution in the Bible, being a finished and final product that the early church fathers did not have.

We have the luxury of the totality of revelation, allowing us to compare Scripture with Scripture in a way our earlier brothers in Christ could not.

So, in deference to them, we freely admit, as we have before, that, had we lived when they did, under the circumstances, limitations, and handicaps they did, we probably would have fared no better than they, and would most likely have made some of the same faulty assumptions as they.

[73 : 29] So, for the most part, these early interpreters of Scripture, who even though making their faulty assumptions that produced erroneous doctrines, were still operating in good faith and sincerely believed in the accuracy of their conclusions, there being, at least for the most part, men of integrity, intellectually superior to most, and most likely true believers in Christ.

Of course, there were always some motivated by a personal agenda. I'm sure there were some charlatans and some phonies back then, just as there are today. In upcoming segments of Christianity Clarified, it is anticipated that you, the listener, will be able, with our 2020 hindsight, be able to see and understand how both Catholics and Protestants, going back to the second and third centuries for Catholics, and to the 1500s for Protestants, how they reached their faulty conclusions.

Conclusions that were eventually installed as doctrine and still held as valid today. And herein, as mentioned earlier, is the explanation of how and why we have the 250 different denominations, councils, synods, conferences, etc., far removed from one another, separated by their differences in doctrine.

And, from what did those differences arise? From the faulty assumptions frequently made by Catholics and Protestants years gone by.

Much will be forthcoming in Christianity Clarified, Volume 43. You may request it free of charge by contacting the Grace Bible Church.

[75 : 24] Pertinent information is on the face of this CD, Volume 42. This is Pastor Marv Wiseman at Grace Bible Church on behalf of the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund, thanking you for listening and learning with us.

May the Lord richly bless you.