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The Herald of His Grace

Presenting **every man** perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 42
Issue 1033

The "Happy" God

by — Johann Grobler

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Key Points:

Most of us grew up thinking God is angry.....8683
God is happy because He is in total control of everything.....8685

God's "wrath" arises from His love for man.8686
If God is happy, we can be too.8686

It was Willie who started first, I'm sure.

We sat in the second or third row from the front. The reverend was preaching earnestly. But Willie and I were trying our best not to laugh out loud. What for, I can't remember. Maybe it was someone in the row in front of us who fell asleep.



You might still get away with Jesus. He had more understanding of what it was like to be human, but God is like the school principal: strict, stern and stiff, with no time for funniness.

Much laughter leads to weeping, I heard so many times from older people and teachers. Subconsciously, I assumed that this "truth" probably came from the Bible as well.

We knew full well you weren't allowed to laugh in church. It is sacred territory. But if you're full of laughter (and you know you may not laugh), and you see your friend's shoulders shaking as he shuts his mouth with one hand, then it's hilarious. So, for I don't know how long, we sniggered on the pew.

When the service came to its end and we walked towards the exit, suddenly a firm hand appeared from the side, gripping my upper arm.

"Why were you laughing in church?" hissed an old gray lady with angry eyes.

"I laughed? No, I didn't laugh!" I lied. In the church, to make it worse.

"Watch it!" and she let me go.

I'm not sure if the reverend saw us, but I'm sure God did. He doesn't miss anything. I believed Willie and I were in big trouble. You don't play around with Him.

The view that God is harsh and angry comes from my childhood. I don't think it was ever taught explicitly, but it was more like an underlying mental picture woven into our culture.

After all, the first man messed up everything in the Garden of Eden and since then man has disappointed God, time after time. God had reason to wipe out all mankind with one sweep. They killed His Son. Satan has deceived people by and large, and virtually the whole world is godless and wicked. The vast majority are on their way to hell.

Yes, God has reason to be angry and frustrated. This

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 42, No. 1033 – August 19, 2024

Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unpropheesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);

- union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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was my thinking, for many years.

From my mid-twenties, God gradually lifted the veil for me and I could see that there was a side of God that I did not know.

In I Timothy 1:11 we read in most English translations,

... according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God ...

The Greek word translated “blessed” is *makarios*.¹ Vine’s Expository Dictionary describes it as “blessedness ... an ascription of blessing rather than a state.” It is related to *makarizo*,² “to pronounce happy ...”

The same Greek word occurs in what is known as the *Beatitudes* in Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20 where it is translated in some versions as “happy,”³ for example,

Happy are you who are poor ... (Matthew 5:3, CEB).

In Acts 26:2 Paul says,

I think myself happy [same Greek word], King Agrippa ...

In 1 Corinthians 7:40,

But she is happier [same Greek word] *if she remains as she is ...*

1. [Editor:] SEC, G3107.

2. [Editor:] SEC, G3106.

3. I.e., CV, YLT, REB, GNT, ALV, BBE.

The only English translations I know of that correctly translate the passage with “*the happy God*” are the *Concordant Version* and the *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible*.

Why do the translators hesitate to describe God as a “happy” God? I can only surmise that it’s because the concept of a “happy God” goes against their preconceived perception of Him.

God is a “happy God.” Why wouldn’t He be? Everything happens exactly according to His will. He is in total control of everything.

... Who works all things according to the counsel of His will ... (Ephesians 1:11).

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure ...” (Isaiah 46:10).

Yes, but you might ask, “What about the verse in Genesis 6 which says that God was sorry for making man?”

For us to understand more about God, God will sometimes reveal Himself in human terms. God, Who is invisible Spirit, will have Himself described as if He had hands and feet. This is a type of figure of speech known as *condescension*. So, in human terms, from man’s perspective, God *seems* sorry that He created human beings; but the fact is, it is not so (cf. Hebrews 2:5-8).

If the verse in Genesis 6 is to be taken literally, it would mean that God was mistaken. Man would then have turned out much worse than He foresaw.



58 pages

See [order form](#) under “Compilations.”

Paul’s Priestly Ministry (A Compilation)

Prior to the revelation of the present *Secret Administration* found in Ephesians and Colossians, Paul’s ministry was a *prophetic light* “to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:47) under the auspices of Israel (Isaiah 49:6), Paul himself “*acting as a priest*” (Romans 15:15-16, CV). During his earlier ministry, by his own admission, his teaching was limited to what “*the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 26:22), proclaiming “*the hope of Israel*” (Acts 28:20). This vital key is crucial to the proper understanding of the epistles which Paul wrote prior to Ephesians, letters which were “*out of an installment*” (I Corinthians 13:9-10, 12, CV).

This is a collection of eight important articles, by four authors: Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), Adlai Loudy (1893-1984), and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

However, it cannot be, because God is GOD and He can see everything ahead because He is the Author and in total control of what is happening.

What about the “wrath” of God, which we read about in the Bible, for example in Revelation? You might wonder how God can be “happy” when He is angry.

God’s “wrath” arises from His love for man. It is His indignation over sin and the pain it brings. In any case, it is only temporary, and it does not make Him an unhappy God, because even that is part of His Own counsel.

Joy is one of the fruits of God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Jesus is the embodiment and visible expression of God’s character (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3); and although He knew sorrow, He was a cheerful man Who mixed easily with sinners (Mark 2:15-16; Luke 7:34).

When He told His disciples, “*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full*” (John 15:11), they did not question Him or give Him a puzzled look.

If everything that exists comes from God (Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6), then this includes humor, laughter and the enjoyment of good things.

... God, Who gives us richly all things to enjoy
(I Timothy 6:17).

To everything there is a season ... a time to weep
and a time to **laugh** (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4).

In God’s presence there is no morbidity or despondency, but rather excitement and praise. David, a man after God’s own heart (I Samuel 13:14), wrote about what it is like to be in God’s presence:

*In Your presence is **fullness of joy**; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore* (Psalm 16:11).

If God is happy, we can be happy too.

Knowing that He manages everything and has it under control, that He is steering everything toward a perfect magnificent world without end, should fill us with joy and praise. The words of Nehemiah to Israel speak also to us:

*Do not sorrow, for the **joy of the Lord** is your strength* (Nehemiah 8:10). **BSN**

Johann Grobler, of South Africa, a practicing lawyer since 1978, has dedicated much of his life to learning the truth about God and His plan. He holds a master’s degree in theology from North-West University. For a time, he served as a part-time pastor. He now enjoys independent study and local fellowship with a few of God’s called-out ones. His writings are available on his website GodisGod.co.za, where every article is in English as well as in Afrikaans, an official language of South Africa. He is also the Coordinator of Curriculum Resources for *Bible Student’s Courses*.

See Grobler’s previous articles in the *Bible Student’s Notebook*:
– Did God Predestinate Everything that Happens? [BSN 1009](#);
– The Realization of God’s Presence, [BSN 1015](#);
– Does the Bible Teach that All Will Be Saved?, [BSN 1018](#);
– The “Wrath” of God, [BSN 1027](#).

TOPICS:

Major: Happiness; Happy; Joy; Laughter

Minor: Condescension; Religion; Sovereignty; Tradition



36 pages

God’s Purpose in Israel: Illustrated in History, Type and Prophecy

by — E.W. Bullinger

Starting with the call of Abraham, progressing through Jacob and his twelve sons, and continuing through the rest of the Old Testament and much of the New, Bullinger does an excellent job of tracing God’s Purpose in Israel. If the importance of a subject can be measured by the amount of space given to it by God in the Scriptures, then this is one of the most important. Indeed, in order to have a good overall understanding of the Bible we must have some appreciation of God’s Purpose in Israel.

See [order form](#) under “Bullinger.”

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God's Immanence

Bible Student's Courses

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

Course 1: GOD / Unit 5: The Attributes of God / Lesson 5: God's Immanence

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

... For in Him we live, and move, and have our being ... (Acts 17:28, IKJV).
... For in Him we are living and moving and are ... (CV).

Key Points:

God is not merely everywhere present, but actively **a part** of everything..... 8687

All of creation is connected in God. 8689
God is not far from everyone..... 8689

Closely connected with God's omnipresence is His immanence. Immanence is defined as,

that which is, present as a natural part of something (*Oxford Dictionary*).

living, remaining, or operating within; inherent ... [in] theology, present throughout the universe (*Collins Dictionary*).

Immanence is that attribute of God which is used to describe Him being *inherent, remaining and operating within everything*.

It is important that we do not confuse this word with a similar sounding one, *imminence*, which describes things that are impending, or about to occur.

The true God of Scripture is not only omnipresent, but He is immanent in all of His creation and Universe. He is not merely everywhere *present*, but actively **a part** of everything. He is all-encompassing

within His creation.

For out of Him, and through Him, and to Him is all ... (Romans 11:36, BSV).

Here is the simple, glorious truth of this verse in a nutshell:

- (1) All is *out* of God.
- (2) All is *through* God.
- (3) All is *to* God.

This is the *Divine Cycle* and is a bedrock truth often repeated by Paul our Apostle:

One God, the Father, out of Whom all is (I Corinthians 8:6, CV).

All is of God (I Corinthians 11:12; II Corinthians 5:18, CV).

(see **BSC**, page 8689)

The Pathway
of Faith



Vladimir Gelesnoff

80 pages

The Pathway of Faith

— Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921)

Studies from Genesis 12-50. This writing presents the spiritual careers of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. God's dealings with these four patriarchs are rich in lessons of permanent value. With exquisite, artless simplicity they demonstrate the frailty of our frame, accentuate the gentle forbearance, and illustrate the inexhaustible grace of our heavenly Father.

See [order form](#) under "Gelesnoff."

"In the Heavens"

En Tois Epouranios (Ephesians 1:3)

by — J.H. Evans, Bournemouth, England

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

These three words – “*in the Heavens*” – are of transcendent import. Accepting them in their plain meaning, a flood of light illuminates our mind, rejoicing our hearts. Their importance is shown by the fact that nowhere in the New Testament do they occur outside the Epistle to the Ephesians. They announce how changed is the position of the believer from what it was before Act 28, and from what it will be after “*the Church which is His Body*” is manifest up with Christ in Glory.

We are,

Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ.

How simple! How plain! How definite!

The little word “in” points to *the place* in which we are blessed. To be blessed “in the heavens” (*en tois epouranios*) there must be the realization, by faith, that in the purpose of God, we are linked together with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and exaltation. Only in this way may we become free to enter into the knowledge of our unity with Christ in Glory.

It is not merely heavenly *blessings*, for this is the portion of all of the spiritual seed of Abraham in the true Isaac: Christ. Five times do we find these words in Ephesians (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12); five being the number of grace.

The word “in” is found in connection with Heaven in many places, and its force here is through its relation to the other two terms. “The heavens” is met with in other places, but not with this “in” before it. We often come across the term *en tois ouranios*, which is quite different from “*en tois epouranios*.”

The peculiarity here in the Greek is a little prefix *epi-* which adds to the word “*heavens*” the meaning of “on,” “upon” or “over,” thus: *over-heavenly* — and this makes it more plain that *the place* is “*far above all the heavens*” (*huper ano panton ton ouranon*) where our glorified Head is (Ephesians 4:10).

If this can be seen, it goes a long way toward enabling us to grasp the truth of the mystery, and to understand the difference between the “*Bride*” and “*the Church which is His Body*.” One is heavenly and blessed with heavenly blessings, while the other is “*blessed with all spiritual blessings IN the heavens in Christ*.” It is *the place* where Christ is (1:20); it is *the place* where we are seated together in Christ (2:6). It is the inhabitants of *this place* who are learning God’s all-various wisdom through the church which He is now forming (3:10), and above whom we have our place with Christ (1:21). It is also the place where our warfare is carried on against wicked spirits (6:12). **BSN**

(edited)

— *Scripture Research*, Vol. 2, No. 9

TOPICS:

Major: Blessings; *En Tois Epouranios*; Ephesians; Heavenly Places

Minor: Calling; Ecclesia; Mystery

JOINTS & BANDS

A Fellowship Contact Site
saviorofall.wordpress.com

Are you looking for other believers with whom you can fellowship and study around the glorious truth that our Father is the “Savior of all men” (I Timothy 4:10)? If so, then this site is for you.

- (1) Go to saviorofall.wordpress.com
- (2) Choose your state on the right-hand side.
- (3) Add a post with your name and contact information.



BSN (continued from page 8687)

The One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11, CV).

One God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:6).

A true understanding of immanence will facilitate a spiritual disposition toward God and toward all of His creation, as well as all of the circumstances of life – all of them, without one single exception. All begins with God, operates completely through God, and ends perfectly back to and in God.

None of this is to be confused with the error of pantheism, that denies the personality of God, and where it is falsely imagined that "the universe is God." No! Divine Immanence is far greater than any pagan concepts. *All* of creation is connected, not *as* God, but *in* God, so that the ultimate goal is,

that God be All in all (I Corinthians 15:28, PNB).

Once there was *only* God, God being *all* that there was – *God All*.

The grand consummation of His magnificent plan (*Logos*) is that He will be – *God All in all*.

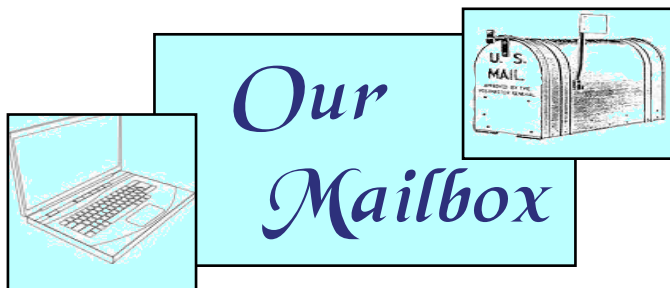
A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) wrote, under the heading "The Divine Immanence,"

God is inherent in all His handiwork, so He cannot be far from anyone. As Paul told the Athenians in his memorable keynote sermon on the Areopagus,

in Him we are living and moving and are (Acts 17:28). **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Divine Cycle; God; God, Attributes of; Immanence
Minor: Consummation



Memories of Fritz Peterson

[Note from Bob Evelyn:] Thanks for including Fritz Peterson's obituary and article in [BSN 1027](#). I was so saddened to hear of his death, though I knew he had been battling Alzheimer's.

I had opportunity to talk with Fritz a number of times by phone, and in person when he came to the Bible conference we hosted in Lexington, KY some years back. He gifted me with an old autographed baseball card of himself that I will always treasure. Fritz and Susan also came through Lexington another time and took Jill and I out for pizza – a great time of fellowship I will always remember with fondness.

Fritz was such a likeable guy. I kidded him after

reading his Mickey Mantle book, "Did you guys ever practice? It seems you spent most of your time pranking one another."

I looked at my "Fritz" folder and see that I have saved 237 email exchanges with Fritz between May 2008 and July 2018. They brought back some great memories. Following is the first note I ever received from him.

May 17, 2008

Dear Bob,

I enjoyed your book *At the End of the Ages*. I didn't want it to stop.

I've read 25-30 books about Universalism in the last 2 years and can't believe the majority of people and pastors, priests, ministers, etc. still believe in an eternal hell!

I am writing a book myself in the near future and calling it *Mickey Mantle is Going to Heaven*.

I played with the Yankees for 8½ years in the

60's and 70's. I was on the team with Mickey for 3 years. Mickey retired after the 1968 season. I started in 1966.

With the publicity surrounding my marriage situation in 1973, I feel there will be a large platform to spread the "full" story about God's unending love, etc. ...

Would you mind if I quoted you several times from your book in my upcoming book(s)?

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Fritz Peterson

There are not many concerned about the things of God ... People are just plain indifferent to Christ in general. ... I really enjoyed the teachings and testimonies on YouTube. ... I've had the CV since 1986, and have always found it a great study tool. – PA

[BSN 1006:] I liked the clarification that "What Is Gain?" points us back to the grand plan of everything being perfect in Christ when He visibly rules from Heaven, and the overarching "gain" that that will be for all of creation. Wonderful perspective that is so different from the callousing focus on self that

dominates religion. Also, Mark Vogt's "One God" article from the *Bible Students Course* is excellent and thought provoking.

WOW, every time Ballinger ["Our Manifestation with Christ in Glory: That Which Immediately Precedes Christ's Day"], Sellers, and many more, write about the Premillennial Kingdom of Christ, it just makes so much sense. It fits. Once you get it, it is amazing how much they say in just a few short paragraphs. Thank you for digging out these wonderful resources! – IN

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: Peterson, Fritz

DISPENSATIONAL
TRUTH REPRESENTS
THAT WHICH IS TRUE
AT ONE TIME BUT NOT
NECESSARILY TRUE FOR
ALL TIME.

CHARLES H. WELCH (1880-1967)



100 pages

See [order form](#) under
"Pilkington."

Suffering: God's Forgotten Gift

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Two gifts given to the believer are mentioned by Paul in Philippians 1:29. The first is "to believe on Him." This is a glorious gift. Every believer has been given this gift from God. Those who possess it may not even fully recognize it as a gift from Him, but indeed faith is God's wonderful gift to us. Faith is a rich gift from God, but there is also another gift from God to the believer, mentioned by Paul in Philippians 1:29, that is equally as glorious. The second gift is "also to suffer for His sake." This, too, is a glorious gift. Every believer has been given this gift from God as well, but those who possess it often do not fully recognize it for what it is. Indeed, suffering for His sake similarly is God's wonderful gift to us. Paul teaches us to embrace this second gift as well as we do the first!

"After over 40 years of seriously searching the Scriptures with the aid of writings from men of many varied walks, no literature has so profoundly changed my life as this book. It needs to be in the hands of every believer!" – LA

"It is rare to find someone who even mentions the topic of suffering, but you wrote an entire book on it, which I highly recommend to everyone!" – Facebook

"After being surprised by a very unexpected and major surgery for stage III cancer, your book on Suffering was most welcome, putting a lot of things in perspective." – WI