



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 43
Issue 1068

Freedom from Sin: Embracing Sovereignty and Grace

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Based on the Freedom Journey Podcast

by — Clyde Pilkington and Steve Martin



Key Points:

Sin is not rebellion but "missing the mark."8965

[Our sins are not outside God's control: they are written into our lives.....8967](#)

[True freedom comes when we stop identifying with our failures.....8967](#)

[God uses the contrast of good and evil to humble us and teach grace.....8968](#)

T rue freedom doesn't come from trying harder, but from understanding the sovereignty of God and the nature of sin.

THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL

The concept of control is a comforting but deceptive notion. Human resolutions, no matter how well-intentioned, ultimately fail because they rely on personal strength and determination. God's sovereignty demonstrates that everything in life – successes, failures, and even our missteps – unfolds according to His plan. God is in charge of the story; He is the Conductor, the Captain, and the Author. Humanity is simply along for the ride, a ride that is both purposeful and transformative.

Rather than striving to fix ourselves through effort, there is peace in recognizing that we are not in control. Even the things that we view as failures or mistakes are part of a divine narrative written before we were born.

UNDERSTANDING SIN

The religious world often portrays sin as rebellion against God or deliberate disobedience, but this un-

derstanding is incomplete. In its simplest form, sin is "missing the mark." In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word often translated as "sin" is also used to describe something that falls short or misses its target. Sin is a failure to achieve the ideal, a falling short of perfection.

This definition removes much of the weight that religion places on sin. Instead of viewing sin as something that distances us from God, we can see it as an inevitable part of the human condition, woven into our existence by the Creator for a purpose.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND SIN

Romans 11:36 explains that everything comes out of God, operates through Him, and will ultimately return to Him. This includes our sins and failures. God, as the sovereign Author, has written every detail of our lives, including our misses, for a divine purpose.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Volume 43, No. 1068 – April 28, 2025

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 unprophesied, 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 saints 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 Sneider

Bible Student's Notebook™

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010 – Local: (814) 701-0063

bsn@studysshelf.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor-in-Chief

André Sneider – Executive Editor

Associate Editors: J. Blake Botner, Chris Carnahan, James Fine, Rick Lemons, Joe Marcello, Steve Martin, De Trefethen, Mark Vogt, Dean Wilkinson

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Understanding this truth allows us to see sin differently. It is not something we can overcome through effort or willpower because it is not entirely within our control. Instead, sin is part of a broader story authored by God to teach, refine and ultimately transform us. This knowledge frees us from the guilt and shame often associated with sin. If God is responsible for writing the story, then even our failures are not mistakes but purposeful parts of His plan.

JUSTIFICATION: A DIVINE ACT

Religious systems often depict justification as God forgiving sins in a way that feels almost magical – turning sinners into saints through some mystical transaction. In truth, justification means that God has accounted for everything, including our failures. These are not accidents or flaws in the plan, but integral parts of it.

Justification is not about us trying to make amends for our sins or hiding from our failures. It is about recognizing that God wrote them into the story for a reason, and they will one day be understood and set right.

FREEDOM FROM SHAME AND GUILT

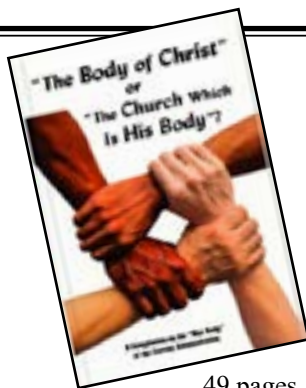
Traditional religious systems are often sin-centered, focusing on guilt, shame and self-effort to overcome failures. This focus creates a cycle of frustration and discouragement because sin, viewed through this lens, offers no escape. True freedom comes not from striving to fix ourselves but from understanding that our misses are not who we are. They are actions, but they do not define us.

There is no “sinful nature” within us. The acts we think of as shocking or wrong are not intrinsic to who we are; they are actions written into our lives by God. These failures serve a purpose, teaching us humility and dependence on Him.

THE DIVINE DRAMA

Life can be understood as a divine drama, with God as the playwright and humanity as the actors. Each person plays their part on the stage, following a pre-written script. While we may not always understand the purpose of our role, we can trust that it fits within a larger narrative aimed at reconciliation and restoration.

This perspective transforms how we view ourselves



49 pages

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

“The Body of Christ” or “The Church Which Is His Body”?

A Compilation on the “One Body” of the Current Administration

In the *Pentecost Administration*, during the Acts period, there were many *ecclesias*, in the plural – “*all the ecclesias*” (Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:33; II Corinthians 8:18; 11:28, CV). Each of these *ecclesias* were, in and of themselves “*the body of Christ*” – an integrated “*one body*,” while today in the *Secret Administration* there is but one single *ecclesia*, in the singular – “*the Ecclesia which is His Body*” (Ephesians 1:22-23, CV). This *ecclesia* is universal and not local. This *ecclesia* of the *Secret Administration* has no bearing whatsoever on locality, and is of necessity, the only “One Body” universal (Ephesians 4:4).

This “*One Body*” of Ephesians and Colossians (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15) is the *Post-Acts* “church,” of which Christ *alone* is Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:24; 2:19). This is the *only Ecclesia* of the *Secret Administration*.

This short compilation has works from three authors: Tom L. Ballinger, G.J. Pauptit (1889-1962), and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

and others. Our actions, both good and bad, are not entirely our own. They are part of a greater story that includes successes, failures and everything in between. This knowledge allows us to step away from guilt and judgment, embracing grace and peace instead.

THE PURPOSE OF SIN AND RESTORATION

Why would a loving God include sin and failure in His plan? The answer lies in the concept of *contrast*. By experiencing good and evil, humanity is being taught invaluable lessons about life, dependence and grace. As Solomon wrote, God has given humanity experiences with both good and evil to humble us.

The ultimate purpose of sin is not condemnation but restoration. God's judgment is not about punishment but about setting things right. Every broken system – governments, communities, relationships, and even creation itself – will one day be restored to perfection. This is the end game: a world reconciled to God, where everything that was broken is made whole.

LIVING IN FREEDOM

True freedom from sin does not come from try-

ing harder to avoid sin or striving for perfection. It comes from understanding that God has written *every* aspect of our lives, including our misses, into His divine plan. Our actions, no matter how flawed they seem, are part of a greater purpose that we may not fully understand in this life.

Freedom from sin is about shifting our focus from ourselves to God. When we fixate on sin, we live in shame, guilt and frustration. But when we focus on God's sovereignty, love and grace, we find peace and contentment. This freedom allows us to live without the weight of guilt and the endless striving for perfection. It reminds us that we are perfectly imperfect now, but one day, we will be perfectly perfect in Him.

By embracing the truth of God's sovereignty and grace, we can find freedom – not only from sin but from the burdens of guilt, shame and self-effort. In this freedom, we can rest, knowing that everything is unfolding exactly as it should, according to His perfect plan. **BSN**

Topics:

Major: Freedom; Relax; Sin; Sovereignty

Minor: Contrast; Justification; Reconciliation; Restoration



Announcing!

The Freedom Journey Podcast
with Steve Martin & Clyde Pilkington

Stepping into the Liberty that We Already Have!

Current Releases: (click the titles to follow the links)

- | | |
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| 1. Introduction: The Path to Freedom – Leaving Religion Behind | 5. Where Did Nationalism Come From? (Freedom Snapshots) |
| 2. Asceticism and “Things Above”: Colossians 3:23 | 6. Where Did Christianity Come From? (Freedom Snapshots) |
| 3. Why Pray: Isn't God Already Calling All the Shots? | 7. Freedom from Most of the Scriptures! (Freedom Snapshots) |
| 4. Christian Nationalism: Is It Possible to Live a Quiet and Peaceful Life? | 8. Freedom from Regret, Shame & Guilt |
| | 9. Freedom in the Middle of Evil & Suffering |

Are Children Born with a Sin Nature?

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

by — Steve Martin

Key Point:

Children are NOT born with an evil nature. 8969
Religious Parenting Can Lead to Harm. 8969

[Reconsidering Children's Behavior Through Empathy. 8970](#)
[God's Sovereignty Replaces Fear-Based Parenting. 8970](#)

I've recently read A.E. Knoch's book *The Exposé of the Two Natures*.¹ It's a short read and you need to read it yourself, but here's a short synopsis.

Knoch says that we are *not* born with an evil nature, but in reality, are born with a good nature. The problem of sin is not our nature. Our nature knows what we should do. The problem of sin is our lack of vitality and strength not to sin.

This lack of power is a result of the fact that we are dying. We are born with deficiencies and begin the dying process the day that we are born.

Recently, I've been thinking about this topic and how it relates to children. As a great grandfather, I've become more appreciative of a child's innocence and beauty. I don't know about you, but the religious system in which I was raised considered children to have evil and rebellious hearts, and we needed to beat the rebellion out of them. We were taught that this sweet little child had a strong will that needed to be broken by any method necessary.

1. [Exposé of the "Two Natures,"](#) A.E. Knoch, (on the [order form](#) under "Knoch")

So, when a child disobeyed, cried or whined, they needed to be spanked until the will was broken. This often ended up in abuse as frustrated parents felt pressure to compel their child to fall in line.

Children were to be seen and not heard. They were to be models of good behavior. Spare the rod, spoil the child. Nothing showed a model family like children meekly responding and obeying their parents. Parents who had wayward children were looked down on as being parenting failures.

I was caught up in this like everyone else in our group. Years ago, I repented to my children for my parental failures. They graciously forgave me, realizing the religious system we were part of.

So now, looking back as a great grandfather, how do I see parenting differently? Here are some things that I've been considering.

- Do you think that a child's natural instincts are always sinful, or could they simply be expressions of frustration, confusion, or a need for attention?
- If children are born with a good nature, as Knoch



83 pages

God's Plan for Man – A Journey of Surprises

A condensed adaptation of Adlai Loudy's classic work, *God's Eonian Purpose*.

by — Kenneth Joyce

"This book will delight you as you read of God's purpose for all mankind. Written in clear and simple language, it traces the purpose of God from earliest revelation to its fulfillment in the reconciliation of all to God in righteousness." — Andrew Maclarty, *Grace & Truth* See [order form](#) under "Loudy."

suggests, how should this affect the way we discipline and guide them?

- How does the idea that we are born with deficiencies and begin the dying process from birth shape your understanding of children's behavior?

- In what ways might we misunderstand a child's behavior if we assume that they are innately rebellious or evil?

- How does the belief that children are born with a sin nature impact the parent-child relationship, particularly in religious families?

- **Could more empathy and understanding in parenting reduce the need for harsh discipline?**

- How does viewing children as inherently good align with my experience as a great-grandfather and your observations of your own children and grandchildren?

- What role does compassion play in correcting or guiding a child's behavior?

- How do societal and religious expectations of parenting differ from what children may truly need?

I'm still thinking about all of this. I don't have an article prepared on how you should be doing your parenting. I just believe that religion has taken us down the wrong path and we seriously need to reconsider our parenting methods. I do see in my children and

others that they have taken a more wholistic approach to parenting, and that gives me hope.

I remember being at a birthday party and there was this sweet little girl about two years old walking, being really cute. I overheard one guy say to another, "she may be cute, but her heart is desperately wicked and her will needs to be broken." The other guy replied, "yea, she will have to walk down to the altar like everyone else."

At the time, I didn't know why, but that just didn't seem right to me. If we see our cute little babies as little demons the minute they are born, it is no wonder that we spanked them as little babies when they needed to be hugged and reassured.

Another factor that plays into this is "hell." If we think we need to keep our children from going to hell, desperate measures are required. Once we understand the absolute sovereignty of God, we can trust that God has a plan for this child, and whatever it is, it will be marvelous and beautiful in the end.

I don't know the answers. I just know there is something really wrong with Christianity's child-rearing methods. They have everything else wrong. Why wouldn't they be wrong about this as well. **BSN**

[Note:] Here is a book that I've found helpful:

– *Jesus, the Gentle Parent: Gentle Christian Parenting*, L.R. Knost, Little Hearts Books (2014)

TOPICS:

Major: Child Training; Children Two Natures

Minor: Sovereignty



Is Hell Eternal?

What Has God Revealed?

by — Adlai Loudy (1893-1984)

This message was originally researched and compiled in 1928 on behalf of many heart-appealing requests from earnest Bible readers and students throughout the states, Canada, and other countries who were unspeakably disturbed, distressed and sorrowfully perplexed concerning "the never-failing love of God" and "eternal Hell and torment" teachings of the churches! Consequently, this study offers the most careful, painstaking investigation, checking, testing, trying and proving of every word, phrase and statement

of the inspired Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that earnest readers may read with assurance of faith that all has been conformed faithfully and soundly to God's Inspired Word of Truth.



Tidbits of Truth #79

“Tidbits” is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

I suppose that all who do biblical research wish at times that they could set forth fragmentary and unfinished ideas in printed form without people thinking that a final and definitive conclusion has now been chiseled into imperishable granite which shall stand forever as the final word on the subject dealt with. Any such conclusion will be far from correct. — Otis Sellers (1901-1992)

Manifestation in the Super-Heavens

[To R.H.:] Yes, our hope is the manifestation with Christ in the Super-Heavens! Until the Consummation, the lot of all humanity is death. We will follow our Lord into death, but thankfully, we will also follow Him in resurrection, ascension, glorification and then manifestation with Him in the Super-Heavens.

Members of His Body will die off continually until we are all gone. All hopes of Scripture are contingent on resurrection. And even though we must all die, the perception of our manifestation together with Christ could still happen at any time, for we are certainly subject to death at any moment. And regardless of the earthy lapse of time between our personal death and our joint-manifestation, for us – our perception of it – it will be instantaneous.

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

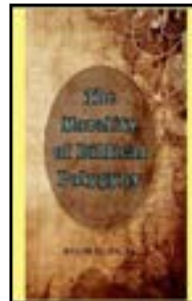
Paul's Early & Later Ministries Are NOT the Same

Paul's early ministry and his later ministry were NOT the same. This is why we are admonished to correctly partition the word of truth - in order that we are ONLY walking in the truth of this present dispensation of the SECRET, our marching orders and truth are recorded in Ephesians and Colossians.

If you are interested in growing in truth – it would benefit you greatly to understand the ministry taking place during the Acts era while the barrier wall was UP – separating the Circumcision from the Un-

circumcision, and the ministry that is NOW taking place with the wall DOWN to ALL peoples - NO distinctions, NO separations.

— De L. Trefethen



The Morality of Biblical Polygyny

by — William F. Luck, Sr.

28 pages (see [order form](#) under “Other Authors”)

This is an amazing, courageous, contemporary work. William Luck is the son of Moody Bible Institute's Dr. G. Coleman Luck, Sr., Chairman of the Department of Theology, and a capable biblical scholar in his own right.

“God didn't ask me my opinion about the issue. He expected me to represent His. I've tried. If you can prove I'm mistaken, I'll be the first to thank you. But I'm not holding my breath in the meanwhile.” – the Author, from the Introduction

“To date [over twenty years after its original publication], I find the arguments ‘pro’ quite superior to those ‘con.’” – the Author, from the Conclusion

- The Background
- Laws That Imply the Moral Propriety of Polygyny
- Passages That Appear To Prohibit Polygyny
- The Association of Polygyny with Other Evils
- Alleged Prohibitions of Polygyny
- The Implications of “Adultery” in the “Vice Lists”
- Questions Concerning the Possibility of Moral Polygyny

“The Body of Christ” and “the Snatching Away”

[To J.K.:] “*The Body of Christ*,” a figure of speech which is used only twice in Scripture as a metaphor (I Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12), is a reference to the individual local assemblies (synagogues) of the Acts period, rather than “*the Ecclesia which is His Body*” of the Secret Administration. We must take special care that we do not mix the metaphors of Scripture.

The “snatching away” of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 belongs to the metaphor – “*the Body of Christ*,” and Christendom is not a part of this metaphor – nor is anyone else alive today. The “*One Body*” (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15) of the Secret Administration (Ephesians 3:9) has as its hope, the manifestation with Christ in Glory (Colossians 3:4), before “*the Day of Christ*,” which is a far different thing than the “snatching away” teaching of “*the Day of the Lord*” found in Thessalonians (I 5:2; II 2:2). The difference is one of some 700 years.¹

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

- For more on these themes, see these books:
 - “*The Body of Christ*” or “*The Church Which Is His Body*”? (A *Compilation on the “One Body” of the Current Administration*, Bible Student’s Press, (on the [order form](#) under “Compilations”).
 - *The Out-Resurrection (A Compilation on the Prior-Expectation of the Secret Administration)*, Bible Student’s Press, (on the [order form](#) under “Compilations”).
 - *Ephesians and Colossians (Scripture for the Present Administration)*, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student’s Press (on the [order form](#) under “Pilkington”).
 - *Rightly Dividing Israel’s Prophetic Kingdom – With Special Emphasis on The Overlooked Pre-Millennial “Kingdom of the Heavens” (A Comprehensive Compilation)*, Bible Student’s Press, (on the [order form](#) under “Compilations”).

“Rewards” Belong to Israel, and Are Contrary to Absolute Grace

“Rewards” imply an “earning.” “Rewards” indeed will be given at *the Dais/Judgement Seat of Christ* for those entering the future Kingdom; but we *already* have “*every spiritual blessing among the celestials*” (Ephesians 1:3) being in the One Body of the Secret Administration (Ephesians 4:4; 3:9).²

— James D. Fine **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major [*Manifestation in the Super-Heavens*:] Manifestation [*Paul’s Early & Later Ministries Are NOT the Same*:] Rightly Dividing [“*The Body of Christ*” and “*the Snatching Away*”:] Rapture; One Body [“*Rewards*” *Belong to Israel, and are Contrary to Absolute Grace*:] Rewards

- [Editor:]** The law operated on the *if/then principle*. It was a performance-based system, with one’s actions receiving a corresponding result (positive or negative), whereas absolute grace gives us *everything up front*, without the slightest consideration of performance or merit.

The Greek word translated “reward” and “wages” – μισθός (*misthos*, G3408), is remarkably absent in Ephesians or Colossians. We’re already chosen and destined “*to be joint enjoyers of an allotment, and a joint body, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel*” (Ephesians 3:6), without any performance on our part. This life is simply preparing us for what we already have. – CLP

I WAS GOING TO
COMPLAIN. THEN I
REMEMBERED HE IS THE
SOURCE OF ALL THINGS,
EVEN MY DISAPPOINTMENTS.

Thomas Watson (1620- 1686)



60 pages

Ultimate Liberation: Beyond Forgiveness (The Justification from and of Sin)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Many people labor under a heavy weight of guilt and shame. The answer is to be found only in the total provision that God Himself has already provided!

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