



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 44  
Issue 1079

# Animals in God's Story ~ [Click here to listen to this article](#)

## Chapter 1: God Made Them Good

by — Steve Martin / Clyde Pilkington

### Key Points:

Animals were here first – and they were good.....9053  
Animals are souls, too.....9053

Joy was built into their design.....9053  
[They Belong in God's Eternal Story.....9055](#)



**B**efore there were people, there were animals.

Before Adam breathed, the world was alive – really alive. Birds filled the sky. Fish darted through rivers. Cattle grazed.

Lions stretched. All of it came straight from the mind and mouth of God. He didn't just make the earth functional. He filled it with life – rich, wild, wonderful life.

*God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds ... and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:25).*

Not just useful. Not just background noise. Good.

And here's what most people miss: animals aren't just biological organisms. They're *souls*. The Bible uses the same word – *nephesh* – for both animals and humans. That doesn't mean animals are little humans in disguise. It means that they are living souls, just like us. Different kinds, but made of the same breath. Formed with the same care. Valued by the same God.

### NOT ACCIDENTS: INTENTIONS

Animals weren't tossed into the world like spare parts. God poured Himself into their design.

The homing instinct of a sea turtle. The memory of an elephant. The quiet strength of an ox. None of it is random. Every creature is a handcrafted echo of divine creativity.



And He didn't make them just to survive. He made them to *delight*.

Why does your dog spin in circles when you walk in the door?

Why does your cat curl up on your chest when you're having a bad day?

Why does a baby goat hop around for no reason at all?

Because they were made not just for survival – but for joy. God's joy. And yours.

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## Bible Student's Notebook™

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 44, No. 1079 – July 21, 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 Sneidar*

## Bible Student's Notebook™

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

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

[bsn@studysshelf.com](mailto:bsn@studysshelf.com)

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

André Sneidar – Executive Editor

Associate Editors: J. Blake Botner, Chris Carnahan, James Fine, Rick Lemons, Steve Martin, De Trefethen, Mark Vogt, Austin Willis

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## PARTNERS IN THE GARDEN

When God placed humanity in the garden, He didn't drop us in solo. He surrounded us with fellow souls – animals of every shape and size. Genesis says that God brought them to Adam – not just to name, but to know.

We were meant to live side by side. Not as owners lording over property, but as fellow beings sharing a home.

Dominion was never about domination. It was about stewardship. Mutual flourishing.

Before sin, there was no fear between species. No blood. No fight to survive. Lions didn't hunt. Birds didn't flee. Everything breathed the same peace. And in that peace, people and animals walked together.

That was the original design. And God hasn't changed His mind.

## LOVE THAT MIRRORS HEAVEN

So, if you've ever loved an animal deeply – really loved them – you weren't being weird, or childish, or soft.

You were doing something holy.

You were loving a soul that God made. A soul that reflects His delight.

A soul that breathes the same breath of life you do.

And when that soul dies – when the collar sits empty or the pasture is quiet – the ache you feel is real. It should be. The bond was real.

But here's the comfort:

God doesn't throw away what He calls good. He doesn't forget what He breathes life into.

And He's not done writing the story of a single soul He's made. Not one.

## SO WE BEGIN HERE

Animals are living souls. They matter to God. And they were never meant to be lost.

Not in creation.

Not in death.

Not in eternity.

Because when God said, "It is very good," He meant all of it.

Even the part that purred.

Or barked.

Or neighed.

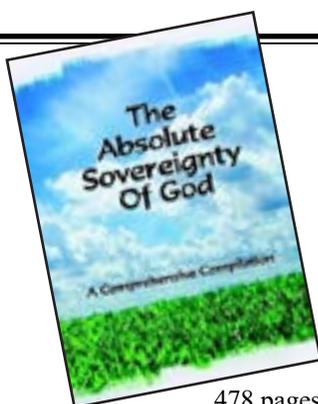
Or sang at dawn.

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### TOPICS:

Major: Animals; Creation; Love

Minor: Salvation of All; Soul



478 pages

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

## The Absolute Sovereignty of God (A Comprehensive Compilation)

This quintessential book victoriously celebrates and convincingly proclaims the absolute sovereignty of God. Sadly, religion has veiled the truth of the God of the Bible, making Him either an aloof deity, indifferent to the condition of the creation, or one who is at the worst cruel or at the least unloving and uncaring. Yet the loving Deity of Sacred Scripture always has had and will have sole and complete control over His entire creation. This ultimate collection of 100 works by 34 authors spans nearly 175 years. It is an extensive reference work that is essential for every library.

# When Grace Had a Fine Print

by — Steve Martin

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

## Key Points:

Religion taught us that some sins were forgivable, but not all..... 9056  
The pressure to avoid habitual sin created spiritual panic..... 9056

[Real grace doesn't flinch at intentional or repeated failure... 9057](#)  
[There is no "toast" clause in God's grace..... 9060](#)

I just had a flashback.

One of those memories that slips in uninvited – like a leaf blowing through a cracked window. I was young. Impressionable. Sitting in church, probably fidgeting while trying to look “spiritual,” my mind racing with questions I didn’t know I was allowed to ask.

And the message that day was crystal clear:

If you sinned without meaning to – if it just “happened” – you might be okay. If you died before you had a chance to repent, God might overlook it. Grace might stretch just far enough to cover an accident.

But if you planned it?

If you thought about it ahead of time, did it anyway, and *especially* if you made a habit of it? Then you were toast.

Premeditated sin was bad.

But habitual sin? That was next-level rebellion. It meant that you loved your sin. And loving your sin meant that God was probably done with you.

That sinking feeling hit me hard.

It wasn’t just fear of messing up. It was fear of the *wrong kind* of mess-up – one too intentional, too repeated, too ugly. It felt like God was more of an insurance adjuster than a Father, combing through my soul for fine print and disqualifiers.

Grace, it turned out, came with strings attached. Asterisks. Conditions.

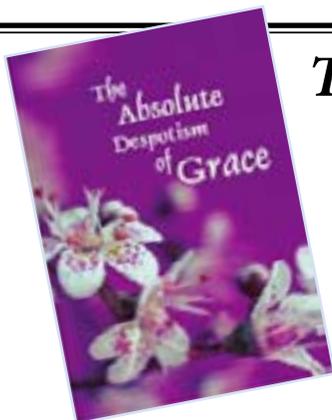
A line you could cross where mercy no longer applied.

## THE FEAR OF INTENTIONAL (AND REPEATED) SIN

The theology drilled into me was this:

Accidental sins were tolerable. God could understand a slip-up. But willful sins? Those were risky. And if you made a *pattern* out of it – if your sins started showing up like clockwork – then you weren’t just sinning anymore. You were hardening your heart. Playing with fire. Daring God to act.

It created this awful pressure to never repeat the same mistake. Fall once, repent.



## The Absolute Despotism of Grace

A Compilation

A Compilation of 25 chapters, by 16 authors, spanning over 135 years, expounding on the marvelous, powerful reign of God’s grace in our day.

146 pages

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Fall twice, be very sorry.  
Fall three times? You'd better panic.

We lived in fear. Fear of our thoughts. Fear of our impulses.

Fear that one too-intentional decision – or worse, the *same one again* – would lock the gates of heaven and light the match beneath our feet.

We became spiritual gymnasts, trying to outmaneuver judgment.

“Maybe if I confess fast enough ... maybe if I cry while I pray ... maybe if I die on a ‘good day’ ...”

It was madness. And it wasn't grace. Not the real kind.

### GRACE ISN'T SCARED OF INTENTIONS – OR PATTERNS

Here's what I've come to believe:

If grace doesn't cover the sins you *meant* to commit, and even the ones you keep returning to, then it's not grace at all.

Because let's be honest – aren't most of our sins intentional in some way? We lie to protect ourselves. We lash out when we feel trapped. We hide, pretend, overindulge, or check out – *knowing full well it's not the right thing*. And let's not pretend that we don't circle back to the same ones more than once.

If grace applied only to accidental or infrequent sins, none of us would stand a chance. And here's the wild truth: none of our sins surprise God.

Every thought, every failure, every habit you hate but can't seem to shake – it was all written into your story before you took your first breath. He wrote it all. Accounted for it all. And *still* chose you. Still calls you His. Still surrounds you with unstoppable, unshakable grace.

He doesn't say, “You crossed the line too many times.”

He says, “I knew you would. And I've already handled it.”

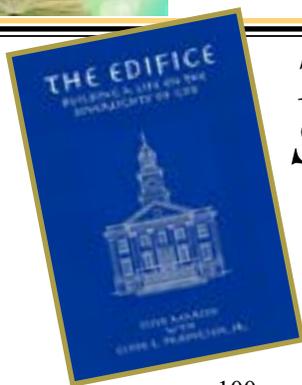
### THERE IS NO “TOAST” CLAUSE IN GOD'S GRACE

The cross wasn't Plan B. It was always *the* plan.

Grace wasn't designed for the (see [GRACE](#), last page)



Check out a **NEW BOOK!**



100 pages

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## *The Edifice: Building a Life on the Sovereignty of God*

by — Steve Martin (with Clyde Pilkington)

This thought-provoking book challenges the notion of randomness in life, asserting that every moment is part of a divinely orchestrated plan. Centered on the foundational truth of God's absolute sovereignty, it reassures readers that their lives are not accidents, their failures do not define them, and their faith is not dependent on their own efforts.

Rather than advocating for spiritual self-improvement, *The Edifice* invites readers to recognize the solid structure already beneath them—crafted by God, the ultimate Architect. It explores deep theological concepts, such as God's dual will, the peace found in surrendering to His plan, and the liberating realization that life's script was never ours to control.

Designed for those weary of religious striving, the book offers a call to rest, reminding readers that faith is not about performance but about trust in the God who has been carrying them all along.



# It All Belongs to God

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

by — Darson Buckner

## Key Points:

God's absolute sovereignty includes everything – even our beliefs and brokenness ..... 9058

Every moment – even painful ones – has purpose in God's plan..... 9058

If God created all things, how can anything that He created be wrong or counterproductive to His purposes?

Can we, His creation, somehow feel that He made a mistake or didn't account for something?



If He wanted all of us to believe His grace *now*, we certainly would. He created a resistance to grace. If everyone believed in His Grace, wouldn't this life be like heaven? He created this administration of grace, and in His timing every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord "for the glory of God, the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

He is the Creator and Originator of everything we see, feel, taste hear and think, as well as everything we do not see, feel, taste, hear and think. All things imagined and not imagined, He created and did so for His purpose.

Every experience, every memory, every moment we have ever had or will have belongs to Him. He created them all and made them exactly the way HE wanted them.

We easily say we trust in God. We print it on our money: "In God We Trust." Yet, how can we say we trust in God without believing in His Absolute Sovereignty?

If you don't believe the way I believe, don't be upset with me. It's not my fault that we don't believe the same things. We all believe EXACTLY the way God wants us to believe. If He wanted you to believe differently, you would most definitely believe differently.

The good, the bad, the ugly – all belong to Him, and they all beautifully and perfectly are purposed for the one ultimate goal of fulfilling His Will.

Because of God's Plan, God's Will and His Christ, we are perfect. Perfectly made for His plans to fulfill His perfect purpose.

Why don't we believe in His grace?

That's why we can gladly rejoice in our pain, suffering, disappointment and grief. Knowing that His entire creation will be praising Him for His love, kindness, compassion and grace tells us that a judgement day awaits us when all wrongs will be made right – a judgement against sin and death and a judgement of love for every person who has ever been conceived.

As Revelation 4:11 so wonderfully states,

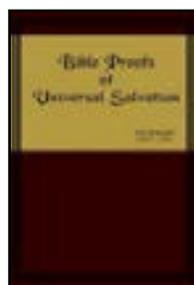
*You are worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created.*

BSN

## TOPICS:

Major: Creator; God; Originator; Sovereignty

Minor: Consummation; Suffering



## Bible Proofs of Universal Salvation

by — J.W. (John Wesley) Hanson

137 pages

This work presents Bible proof of universal salvation, containing the principle passages of Scripture that teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. The author attempts to present the prominent considerations that are contained in the Bible in support of the final redemption of all souls. See [order form](#) under "Hanson."



# Tidbits of Truth #83

“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)

## The Current Work of the Adversary

James is a Jewish book, so it is a delusion to think that today we simply resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

Father, as with ALL, is absolutely in control of the Adversary, and His work through him toward our spiritual growth and progress. Yes, the Adversary is being used to test believers in this dispensation toward the divine goal of strengthening us for our delegated responsibility in the celestial realm!

— Clyde Pilkington

## Carnal

The word “carnal” (Greek, *sarkikos*) in Paul’s letters often gets reduced in modern preaching to “worldly” or “sinful” – as in lust, greed or outward rebellion. But Paul’s use goes far beyond that. He’s not just talking about behavior; he’s talking about where your trust lies.

When Paul calls the Corinthians “carnal” (I Corinthians 3:1–3), he’s not blasting them for watching R-rated movies or listening to Roman pop music. He’s pointing out that they’re relying on human effort – on personality cults, divisions, status, ego – rather than on the Spirit.

In Romans 7-8, Paul contrasts the flesh with the Spirit. The flesh isn’t just sinning wildly; it’s the self-powered life – trying to do right, be holy, or earn God’s favor on your own terms. It’s the religious treadmill.

The performance trap. The grace-less grind of trying to sanctify yourself.

So, yes – being “carnal” can absolutely mean trying to please God from the wrong source. It’s not just about “bad behavior.” It’s about misplaced dependence.

And Paul’s remedy isn’t “try harder.” It’s: walk in the Spirit (Romans 8:4–5). Live from the inside out, not the outside in. Let grace do the heavy lifting.

That flips the whole thing on its head. Carnality isn’t rebellion – it’s self-reliance. And freedom isn’t rule-keeping – it’s Spirit-trusting. **BSN**

— Steve Martin

### TOPICS:

**Major:** [*The Current Work of the Adversary*]: Adversary; James, Book of [*Carnal*] Carnal



## *The Tracts of Joseph E. Kirk*

by — Joseph E. Kirk (1903-1974)

94 pages

(See [order form](#) under “Kirk.”)

Kirk was gifted at condensing Scripture truths into short understandable presentations. This is a collection of his widely circulated tracts. They are great learning tools of truth.

**GRACE** (continued from page 9057)

cautious, the careful, or the mostly-good. It was forged for the repeat offenders, the stubborn, the stuck, the planners and backsliders and prodigals who keep coming back with mud on their shoes.

But it's also for the cautious and careful – the ones trying hard to do everything right, who still lie awake at night wondering if they've done enough, repented enough, believed enough.

Grace doesn't discriminate. It wraps around the rebels and the rule-followers alike, because all of us are equally in need, and equally embraced.

**There is no clause in God's grace that says, "If you did it on purpose – or too many times – it doesn't count."**

There is only this:

*Where sin abounded, grace super-abounded*  
(Romans 5:20).

**THE FREEDOM OF NO FINE PRINT**

You are not safe because you avoid intentional sin.

You are not damned because you struggle with habitual sin.

You are safe because *God is good*, and *grace is real*, and *Jesus already took care of it all*.

So, if someone told you that your premeditated or repeated failures put you outside of God's reach, here's your reminder:

There's no sin too intentional for grace. No pattern too ingrained.

No failure too frequent. No shame too deep.

You are not toast. You are beloved. And grace?

It's unconditional.

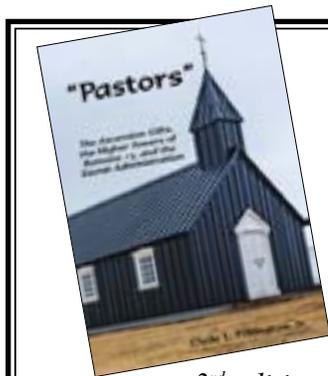
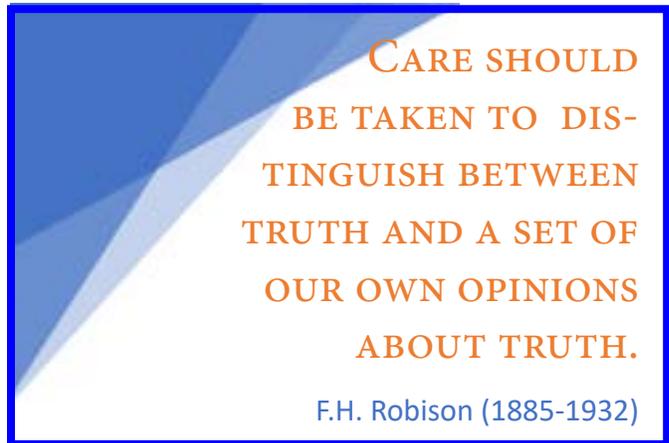
Even when you meant it. Even when you keep doing it.

Even when you're not sure you'll stop. That's what makes it grace. **BSN**

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Grace; Love

**Minor:** Fear; Freedom; Sin



3<sup>rd</sup> edition  
76 pages

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

***"Pastors" – The Ascension Gifts, the Higher Powers of Romans 13, and the Secret Administration***

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The modern role of "pastor" is not founded on Scripture, but instead is an institutional fabrication of Protestantism. The Ascension Gifts of Ephesians 4 were prophetically a part of Israel's Old Testament promises. The "higher powers" of Romans 13 were not a reference to civil authorities, but rather the spiritual rulers over the Acts-period churches. Since Acts 28 (the dispensational boundary line) the "powers that be" have been withdrawn. Under the current Secret Administration, all of these "gifts" are inoperative. The One Body has no flesh-and-blood rulers. We are to be submissive only to our Head: the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him alone do we owe our allegiance.