



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 44
Issue 1081

Animals in God's Story, Chapter 2: Created for Companionship

by — Steve Martin & Clyde Pilkington

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Key Points:

[Our pet's Behavior Reflects God's Design for Connection.9069](#)
[Companion Animals Are Grace in a Broken World.9071](#)

[They Teach Us About Divine Love.9071](#)
[Their Loss Is Deep Because Their Love Was Real.9071](#)



Some animals were made to live with us.

Not just out there in the wild – but right here. In our homes. On our laps. By our side when the world falls apart. From the very beginning, God designed certain creatures not just to survive near

humans, but to *belong* with us.

Dogs and cats weren't human inventions. They're divine ones. And they weren't accidents. They were **INTENTIONS**.

WIRED TO BE NEAR

It's no coincidence that dogs wag their tails when they see us or that cats curl up in our laps like it's the safest place in the world. These aren't random behaviors. They're signs of something deeper – **God's design for connection**.

Animals that make good companions – especially dogs and cats – aren't just biologically compatible. They're relationally tuned in. Scientists call it tameness. Low reactivity. Docility. But if you ask me, it's grace.

These creatures are naturally social. They've been wired through generations of domestication – yes – but first by the hand of a God Who knew that we'd

need more than food and shelter. We'd need presence. Loyalty. Love that doesn't give up when we're at our worst.

NOT ACCIDENTS – INTENTIONS

God didn't toss animals into the world as background props. He handcrafted each one. Gave them instincts. Personalities. Quirks.

From the sea turtle's homing sense to the ox's quiet strength to the way a puppy melts in your arms – **this is intentional design**. And dogs and cats? They were made to come close.

They were made not just for survival, but for **delight**.

Why does your dog spin in circles when you come home?

(continued on page 9071)

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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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™

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Why does your cat nuzzle your cheek with her head?

They breathe. They feel. They bond.

Why does it feel like your pet *knows* when something's wrong?

And when they look at us with those wide, trusting eyes, something in us responds. Because they're not just "pets." They're soul-bearers. Living, breathing evidence that we were never meant to go through life alone.

Because they weren't just made for ecosystems or food chains. They were made for **you**.

COMPANIONS IN A BROKEN WORLD

After the fall, God could have withdrawn. Instead, He gave us glimpses of Eden – soft echoes of what used to be. One of those echoes is the bond we share with certain animals.

Your pet doesn't fix your pain. But they sit with it. They don't explain your grief. But they feel it. They're there when the tears fall, when the room goes quiet, when you need someone who won't give advice – but just stay.

That's no small thing.

In a world of broken relationships, unpredictable losses, and spiritual loneliness – sometimes a wagging tail or a warm purr feels like grace in motion.

And maybe it is.

SOUL-TO-SOUL

In the Bible, animals are called *nephesh chayah* – living souls. Just like humans.

That doesn't mean that they're the same as us. But it does mean that they matter.

DESIGNED TO REFLECT

Some theologians call them "companions." Some scientists say "commensals."¹ I just call them **gifts**.

Because in their quiet, patient way, dogs and cats teach us how to love. They model loyalty. Presence. Forgiveness. They're little shadows of what God is always doing: staying near. Speaking comfort without words.

And when we love them back – when we scratch behind their ears or whisper "good boy" or "you're safe" – maybe we're doing something holy.

Maybe we're participating in a deeper kind of affection. The kind that starts with the Creator.

WHEN THEY'RE GONE

That's why the grief hits so hard when we lose them.

It's not "just an animal." It's a loss of presence. Of connection. Of love given and received without strings.

(see [ANIMALS](#), page 9074)

1. (Of two different species of plant or animal) living in close association, such that one species benefits without harming the other. – *Collins Dictionary*

One that eats at the same table. – *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*



328 pages

The Rich Man and Lazarus

The Ultimate Collection – Expanded Edition

A collection consisting of Eleven Important Works:

This is the definitive collection by 11 authors spanning over 170 years. Authors include: E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), Alan Burns (1884-1929), Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992), Ivan L. Burgener, Dan Kraemer, B. Davies, Joseph E. Kirk (1903-1974), J.F. Witherell, Andre Piet, A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), and William B. Screws (1884-1961).

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

The Rich Man and Lazarus

(Luke 16:19-31)

by — Andrew Maclarty

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

Key Points:

The parable is not literal..... 9072
The Dead Are Not Alive..... 9072

[Paul Anchored Hope in Resurrection..... 9073](#)
[A Literal Reading Contradicts God's Justice and Character... 9074](#)

To set this passage in its context we should note that it was given during the ministry of the Lord Jesus to Israel. He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill. At no point did He ever change or suspend even the smallest part of the legislation given to Israel through Moses.

The situation portrayed is based on the teaching by Plato on the theme of the Universe, which had spread through most of the cultured world and was widely accepted, because it seemed to give a moral basis for a corrupt society. It should not have been accepted in Israel.

The briefest glance will show that the story contradicts the teaching of the law, and other Old Testament teaching. This alone is enough to show that it is not a literal story, and this much would be apparent to the hearers of the Lord Jesus. Knowing that it was not literal, they would look instead for the intended meaning of our Lord.

A FIGURE OF SPEECH

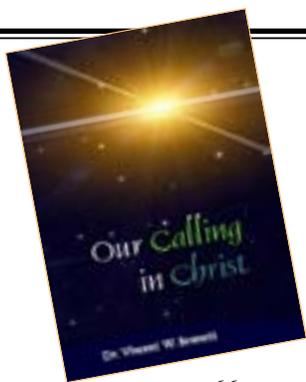
When we read or hear something that is not true, we understand it as a *figure of speech*. But if so, what sort

of figure is this story? It is a figure called *Admission* in which we temporarily admit a thing in order to deny it.

A brief example of this is when we might say something like, "If you are going to live a long time, you must choose your parents very carefully." Or, we might say, "When better music is written, Beethoven will write it." Both of these examples could be expanded into a story to make greater clarity and emphasis, and in both examples we have temporarily admitted a matter while denying it.

THE BIGGEST LIE EVER TOLD

The popular understanding of this story requires us to presume that the dead are still alive. This notion is found in almost every religion in the world – yet is entirely absent from the Scriptures. Only once in the inspired Word of God do we find the words, "You shall not die" and it is highly significant to note who spoke them, and in what circumstances – "And Satan said 'Ye shall not surely die.'" This must surely rank as the biggest lie ever told.



66 pages

Our Calling in Christ

by — Dr. Vincent W. Bennett (1903-1981)

This rich study, encouraging and enlightening, is a brief survey of Paul's glorious revelation found in Ephesians chapter 1 and a portion of chapter 2. Bennett, an Englishman who came out of the Dutch Reformed Church, was a graduate of Cliff College (Sheffield, England), Moody Bible Institute and McCormick Presbyterian Seminary (Chicago). He was an active Bible conference speaker, the Assistant to the President of Wheaton College, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Waukegan, IL, Grace Tabernacle in Muskegon, MI (a few blocks from Harry Bultema who was at the Berean Church), and university pastor at John Brown University (Siloam Springs, AR). See [order form](#) under "Other Authors."

God gave the law to Israel, through the hands of Moses. First the "Ten Commandments," and later the delineations or statutes which covered every aspect of life. The law gave rewards – those who kept its precepts would live a long time. Their days would be lengthened in the land that God gave to Israel for a tenancy. There they would prosper, their land would produce bountifully. There they would dwell securely, free from drought, famine, wars and disease. So long as the law was observed, so long would God's blessings be bestowed on them. This teaching is clear in Deuteronomy.

But the wicked would not prosper. Their days would not be prolonged, and if they continued in their wickedness, the diseases of Egypt would cling to them.

Before we leave the Old Testament there are some other Scriptures that we should note.

In death there is no remembrance of You ... In the unseen, who shall acclaim You? (Psalm 6:5).

The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

It is evident that the Old Testament Scriptures know nothing of the notion of the immortality of the soul. But what of the New Testament – is anything different said there?

PAUL STAKED EVERYTHING ON RESURRECTION

We have already noted that the Lord Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill. He accepted the authority of the Old Testament, quoted from it, upheld it as God's witness to Israel. Are there any other Scriptures to note in the "New Testament"? We now turn to I Corinthians 15:16, 32.

For, if the dead are not being roused, neither has Christ been roused. Now if Christ has not been roused, vain is your faith – you are still in your sins! Consequently those also, who are put to repose in Christ perished. ... If the dead are not being roused, we may be eating and drinking, for tomorrow we are dying.

What Paul is saying here amounts to, "If there is no resurrection, there is nothing beyond the grave. Death is the final end."

Let us now look at the two figures in the story. Orthodox religion, in order to make any justice, is forced to interpret the rich man as being wicked, while Lazarus is a good man. Yet the rich man was clothed in purple and cambric, symbolic of righteousness and good works. He enjoyed the law's rewards of good health, food and wellbeing. Lazarus, however, was a beggar. He had been cast at the rich man's portal.

Moses had told Israel that those who forsook the law, to them the diseases of Egypt would cling: Lazarus had ulcers which the curs licked. Note that it was Lazarus who died first, not the rich man. This was a sign of the law's judgment, for the wicked would not prolong their days.

Also, whenever we read of a man of great age under the law we read of a righteous man.

ABRAHAM'S TEACHING

In the unseen¹ the rich man lifting his eyes sees Abraham from afar, and Lazarus in his bosom. He was able to shout, so it could not have been all that far. Does this mean that those in "Abraham's Bosom" will be able to watch the suffering of those in "hell," and converse with them? Lazarus was in "Abraham's Bosom." If this is a literal story, how many more could be accommodated by Abraham?

Abraham is asked, not to bring about the release of the rich man, but to send Lazarus to cool his tongue. The request is met with an answer which orthodox religion has great difficulty explaining.

Son, remember you got your good things in your life, and Lazarus likewise evil things. Yet now here, he is being consoled, yet you are in pain.

This is not the teaching of Scripture. The notion that because you have had a happy life you must suffer in another is foreign to the Scriptures, and contradic-

1. "Unseen" is the correct meaning of the Greek "hades" used here. The Psalmist, speaking prophetically of the Lord Jesus, says, "Thou wilt not be forsaking My soul in the unseen."

tory both to the letter and to the spirit of the law. This unjust explanation shows once more that we are not looking at a literal event.

Up to this point, all that is necessary to the popular teaching of “hell” torment has been said, and if this story was only to illustrate a warning, no more is necessary. But the story continues: the rich man requests that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brethren, lest they also go to the same place of torment. Abraham replies, “They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them” – to which the rich man remarks, “No, father Abraham, but if someone should be going to them from the dead, they will be repenting.”

The teaching of the whole story is found in the next sentence. Abraham replies,

If Moses and the prophets they are not hearing, neither will they be persuaded if someone should be rising from among the dead.

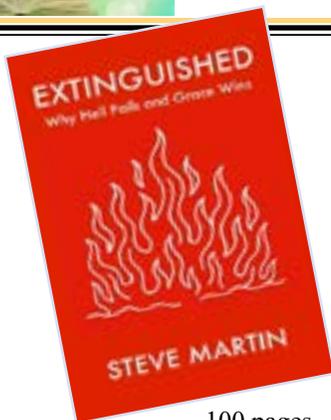
Moses and the prophets indeed spoke about obedience to the law. They also warned of the law’s vengeance on the wicked – but if this story is literal, why did Moses not also warn Israel about the fearful place of torment? There is ample warning about the consequences of disobedience elsewhere in Old Testament Scripture.

SUMMARY

In summary, (1) the law will not allow this to be a



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Extinguished: Why Hell Fails and Grace Wins

by — Steve Martin

You probably know the story. There’s a God Who loves you. But If you don’t love Him back in time, He’ll burn you forever. End of story. That’s what many of us were taught. Somewhere between Sunday School and adult Bible study, it became the unshakable doctrine: *Eternal hell. Endless torment. No second chances.*

But something deep in your gut always whispered: This doesn’t sound like good news. If that sounds like you, this is the book for you! 100 pages.

literal story. When we realize (2) that the dead are dead and know not anything, this precludes it being a literal story. Examination of the details (3) also shows that it cannot be a literal story, for if one part is literal, so must be the rest, and (4) our dawning realization of the wisdom, love and righteousness of God and the triumph of His wisdom and righteousness will not allow a literal interpretation. **BSN**

— Grace & Truth Magazine

(edited)

Topics:

Major: Abraham’s Bosom; Hell; Rich Man and Lazarus

Minor: Death; Grave; Unseen

ANIMALS (continued from page 9071)

But here’s what I believe:

God doesn’t forget what He breathes life into.

He doesn’t throw away what He called good.

And He’s never finished writing the story of a soul – whether it walks on two legs or four.

So if you’ve ever loved a dog like family, or held a cat through the night and whispered, “You’re safe ...” – you weren’t being soft.

You were being like God. **BSN**

Topics:

Major: Animals; Companionship; Grace; Love; Pets

Minor: Comfort; Salvation of All; Soul

The View from Above: Embracing Chaos Without Being Crushed by It

— Steve Martin

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

Key Points:

Life's chaos is gut-wrenching and painful..... 9075
We live in dual realities—pain below, peace above..... 9075

The view from above is a gift, not a reward..... 9075
[Our role is to share that view with others..... 9076](#)

Chaos is real. Not the poetic kind. Not the kind that looks good in a motivational meme.

I'm talking about real-life chaos – the kind that knocks the wind out of you. The kind that shows up as a hospital visit, a broken relationship, an empty bank account, or a gnawing grief that doesn't let go.

It's everywhere. And yet ...

In the middle of it all, we're called to do something that feels almost absurd:

Set your mind on things above.

Not as a way to escape. Not to pretend that the chaos isn't happening. But to *see* the chaos from a completely different angle: a *divine* one.

DUAL REALITIES

Let's be honest: we're weak. Fragile. Vulnerable. And we're not ashamed to admit it.

We're living in these temporary, bruised bodies, trying to walk through disaster, disappointment, loss and grief. And yet somehow, through the Spirit of God, we've been given something astonishing – a kind of *out-of-body perspective*.

We can look at the mess around us and know – *actually know* – that this isn't the end of the story.

We're not here to escape suffering through denial. We're here to walk through it with hope.

Why? Because we've seen something most people haven't. We've been shown the ending.

And it's beautiful.

THE ENDING CHANGES EVERYTHING

God will be All in all.
The chaos will collapse into peace.
The grief will be swallowed up by joy.
The story ends in restoration, not destruction.

That's what we see from above. And that view – that divine perspective – is what allows us to keep breathing when life gets suffocating.

But let's be clear: it doesn't make the pain go away.

It just means that we don't walk through it alone – or blind.

SHARING THE VIEW

Imagine facing this life without that heavenly lens.

No understanding of grace.
No awareness of God's plan.
No assurance that the mess has meaning.

That's where most people live – confused, afraid, bitter, hopeless. They're trapped in the chaos without a clue that there's a higher view available.

But we've been gifted that view.

That's not a flex. It's not a badge of spiritual superiority. It's a *gift*. Pure grace. No room for boasting. We didn't climb up to heaven. Heaven came to us.

And that changes how we show up in the world.

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.

We don't just hunker down and wait for the chaos to pass. We *enter into it* with others. We listen. We cry. We stay. And when the time is right, we speak – gently, honestly, hopefully.

We share the view.

A FINAL REMINDER

Never forget this:

The view from above is not a private treasure. It's a divine vantage point, given so that we can lift others up.

We didn't earn it.
We don't deserve it.
But we've got it.

So, while chaos rages, we set our minds above:

Not to escape, but to engage.

Not to avoid the pain, but to walk through it with grace.

Not to boast, but to bless.

Because one day, when all is made new, and God is All in all, we'll look back on the chaos and realize:

It wasn't chaos after all.

It was a perfectly written story – seen too early, from too low.

And grace was the thread holding it all together.

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: Chaos; Grace; Peace; Suffering; Trials

Minor: Consummation; Hope

THERE ISN'T A SINGLE MOMENT IN ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR ENTIRE LIFE WHEN YOU HAVE SURPRISED OR DISAPPOINTED YOUR FATHER. WHY? BECAUSE FATHER PLANNED EVERY MOMENT, EVERY CHOICE, EVERY ACTION OF YOUR ENTIRE LIFE BEFORE YOU EVEN TOOK YOUR FIRST BREATH (PSALM 139:16).
— JOHN MONEYPENNY



69 pages

The Seven Administrations:

The Basic Dispensations of Scripture

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Throughout Scripture we are presented with various administrations. These administrations, sometimes called “dispensations,” or “economies,” are divine managements, stewardships or households. They are the organization and implementation of a specific divine purpose.

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

This is an introductory look at the seven basic administrations in Scripture. Grasping the overall scope of these will greatly assist us in understanding the Scriptures. Such an awareness of our place in the Divine plan can save us from much confusion, heartache and despair. Extensive endnotes. Overview chart.