



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 44
Issue 1086

Animals in God's Story

Chapter 9: The Party at the End

by – Steve Martin and Clyde Pilkington

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



It ends with a party.
Not a funeral. Not a courtroom.

Not a fiery pit or a list of who made it and who didn't.

No, the story that God has written wraps up in music, laughter and reunion.

All of creation will be there. Every tongue, every tribe, every species.

You. Me. Your grandmother. That long-lost friend. The baby you didn't get to hold long enough.

The neighbor who never went to church. The dog that slept at your feet.

The cat that sat with you in the dark. The horse that carried your child.

The lion. The lamb. The predator and the prey. The skeptic and the saint.

All. Means. **ALL**.

The curse will be broken. The pain reversed. The aching undone.

Because the God Who spoke galaxies into being is also the God Who refuses to leave a single thing broken.

Behold, I make all things new (Revelation 21:5).

THE ANIMALS WILL DANCE

Yes, even the animals.

The wolf and the lamb will share a meal. The lion will eat straw like an ox.

The cow and the bear will nap together, side by side.

Your pet will wag or purr or gallop into that party like they never aged a day.

No more fear. No more predators. No more suffering.

Just pure, wild joy.

The kind of joy that doesn't need words – just presence. Just nearness.

(continued on page 911)



Animals in God's Story, Chapter 9: The Party at the End	9109
God Doesn't Fix Broken Pieces – He Wrote Them In	9112
When Christianity Hijacks Who You Are	9114
Black Ink White Paper (poem)	9115
River Walk (poem)	9115
On the Road with Steve & Ella Mae	9115
Mark Vogt Milestone	9116
The Lash (quote, A.E. Knoch)	9116

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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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Just peace.

They'll be there.

Not as background characters, but as beloved members of the redeemed family of creation.

And their eyes – those eyes that you knew so well – will sparkle again.

PEOPLE WILL SING

And us? We'll sing. Not because we got it right. Not because we earned it.

But because we were carried. Because grace didn't let go. Because love had the final word.

Every person you thought was lost – found.
Every goodbye – undone.
Every grave – emptied.

This is what it was all leading to:

Not judgment. Not destruction. But joy.
A homecoming.
A celebration.

A gathering of all *souls* – fur-covered and flesh-covered – finally whole.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord
(Psalm 150:6).

NO MORE SHAME – NO MORE FEAR

The lies are over. The fear is finished.

No more sermons that scared you into obedience.
No more guilt about who didn't "make it."

Everyone makes it. Because grace makes sure of it.

You won't be looking around wondering who's missing. You'll be overwhelmed by who's there – *everyone!*

And you'll know – deep in your bones – that this is what you were made for.

THIS IS THE REAL GOSPEL

This is the gospel that no one warned you about.

The gospel that doesn't come with threats.

The gospel that doesn't divide us into winners and losers.

The gospel that makes sense of your love, your longing, your grief.

The gospel where the lion lies down with the lamb.

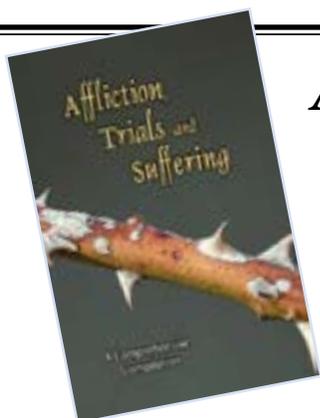
Where the shepherd carries every sheep – no matter how lost. Where nothing that God made is thrown away.

The Celebration Has Already Begun

You don't have to wait to feel it.

Every act of kindness ...
Every tear wiped away ...

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



Affliction, Trials and Suffering

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God Doesn't Fix Broken Pieces – He Wrote Them In

by – Steve Martin

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

There's a well-loved gospel song many of us grew up singing. It goes like this:

Pick up the broken pieces and bring them to the Lord ...

He will put you back together and make your life complete ...

It's sincere. It's comforting. And it's wrong.

Not entirely wrong – but wrong enough to miss the deeper, truer, more beautiful story that God is telling.

Let's be honest. Life *does* break. Dreams collapse. Plans fall apart. Hearts shatter. And when they do, this song offers a picture of us gathering up the scraps of our lives – sifting through the damage, trying to salvage what we can – so we can hand them to God and ask Him to fix what we've ruined.

It's a nice sentiment. But it makes two false assumptions:

1. **It assumes that the brokenness was outside of God's plan;**

2. **It assumes that it's our job to bring the pieces to Him.**

But what if the broken pieces weren't outside of His plan at all? What if they *were* the plan?

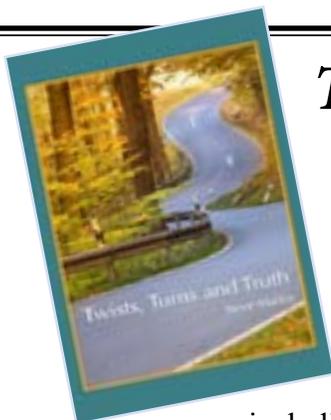
What if every shattered hope, every failed plan, every storm and shadow has already been written – on purpose – into the script of your life by a God Who sees the end from the beginning?

What if the Author of your story *orchestrated* the cracks and collapses to create something more glorious than your original “success” ever could have?

That changes everything.

GOD'S STORY DOESN'T NEED TO BE FIXED – IT NEEDS TO BE FINISHED

When we act like we've messed up the story and now need God to repair it, we unintentionally cast Him



Twists, Turns and Truth

by — Steve Martin

Steve is an author and host known for his insightful contributions to the Bible Student's Notebook and his engaging YouTube series, “Freedom Journey” and “Interviews with Steve.”

Raised in a conservative Mennonite community, Steve embarked on a transformative journey of understanding and embracing unconditional love. This revelation led him to question and reject many traditional Christian doctrines,

including the hell doctrine.

Steve's passion lies in sharing the message of freedom through grace, a concept he believes is for everyone. Beyond his writing and online presence, Steve is a devoted husband to Ella Mae, a proud father of three children, a loving grandfather to 11 grandchildren, and a great-grandfather to little River.

59 pages

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



as a divine janitor – someone we call in when we've made a mess. But God isn't reactive. He's not patching up things after the fact.

He's the sovereign Author of *every* scene. Even the hard ones.

Romans 11:36 says, "Out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory." That means *nothing* – not your failures, not your heartbreak, not even your doubt – was outside of His design. It all came *out of Him*. It's all going *through Him*. And it will all return *to Him* – restored, redeemed, rejoiced.

You don't bring your broken pieces to God. He *gave* them to you.

And He hasn't just planned a vague recovery – He's written a *sequel*.

THE SEQUEL WILL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING

God's not trying to rewind your story back to the "good old days." He's moving it forward – toward a dazzling, joy-filled finale where the broken things finally make sense. The tears, the detours, the damage – they're not side notes.

They're plot points.

And the sequel? It's already written.

It's the part where everything sad comes untrue. Where everything lost is found. Where every crack reveals the glory inside.

That's the promise: not just a God Who fixes what we've wrecked – but a God who *authored the wreckage* to reveal His love, His grace, and His plan to become *ALL in all* (I Corinthians 15:28).

So no, friend, don't gather up the shards of your past in shame and bring them to God hoping for a repair.

Instead, sit down in awe and realize:

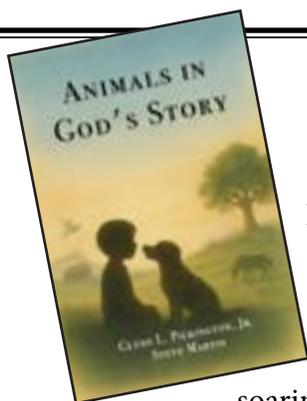
The broken pieces are part of the masterpiece.

They belong. They're beautiful. And the best is still to come.

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: Brokenness; Consummation; Sequel; Sovereignty
Minor: Grace; Love



Animals in God's Story (Pre-publication notice)

by — Steve Martin & Clyde Pilkington

Have you ever wondered why God made animals? What role do they play in the grand story He's telling? Are they simply background scenery – or is there something more?

Animals in God's Story invites you on a journey through Scripture and nature to discover how animals reflect the heart of their Creator. From loyal dogs to soaring doves, from lions in prophetic visions to a donkey that speaks, this book uncovers the often-overlooked ways animals have always been a part of God's redemptive plan.

You'll explore:

- Why animals were created and what they reveal about God's nature.
- How animals are used in Scripture to teach, warn, comfort and guide.
- The significance of animals in the coming restoration of all things.
- What it means that God's care extends beyond people to all creation.

This book is for anyone who's ever felt a deep connection with a pet, marveled at wildlife, or sensed that animals know more than we give them credit for. It's a gentle, grace-filled reminder that animals are not just part of God's world – they're part of His story.



When Christianity Hijacks Who You Are

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

by — Steve Martin

Let's not sugarcoat it:

Christianity doesn't want the real you. It wants the version it can control. It wants you obedient. Predictable. Molded.

And to get that, it demands something sacred: Your identity; your individuality; your instincts; your creativity; your voice.

In much of Christianity, being *yourself* is seen as a problem to fix. You're told to crucify your personality, distrust your desires, and suffocate your uniqueness – because "self" is sinful. Questioning is rebellion. And standing out? That's pride.

So, you learn to shrink. To fake it. To silence the parts of you that don't "fit." Wear the costume. Speak the lingo. Pray the prayers. Swallow the doubt. Raise your hands on cue and smile like it's all okay.

But here's the lie: That "self" you're supposed to kill? That's the one that God designed.

Christianity teaches you to trade your true self for a sanitized, acceptable version – one that fits the system, keeps the peace, and stays in line.

But in the process, you lose something precious: the freedom to be fully, honestly human.

And that's where the *real* gospel breaks the chains.

God isn't asking you to erase yourself: He's liberating you to *become yourself*, not a clone. Not a caricature. Not a puppet on a pew. But the one He wrote long before He breathed life into you.

The problem was never your individuality. It was the system that taught you to be ashamed of it.

You don't have to surrender your identity to walk with God. In fact, walking with Him is the only way to finally get it back.

Jesus didn't come to create better behaved people. He came to set captives free. And that includes the parts of you that Christianity told you to hide.

So, step out of the mold. Burn the costume.

And remember: You weren't made to fit in a pew.

You were made to reflect the image of a wildly creative, fiercely loving, limitlessly free God.

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: Believer's Walk; Christianity; Freedom

Minor: Identification; Love



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Black Ink White Paper

A Poem, by — Darson Buckner

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All you will do, whether good or evil,
Was designed by God and not the devil.

If the paper is black and ink is too,
What could you then read and
how could you view?

Take the story of Job and what he said,
God did send evil, is what we have read.

If every little thing was good down here,
The goodness of God would be quite unclear.

Does not both good and evil come from the Lord?
Job told the truth, his life was restored.

God knows the plans He has for me and you,
Hope for the future, and prosper us too.

If we were writing on a white paper,
White ink would be like writing with vapor.

BSN

River Walk

A poem, by — Jeff Bohlender

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



There is a river that makes glad,
The heavenly sons, of their heavenly Dad.

Heavy contenders we become,
pulling down bulwarks, one by
one.

Even in sorrow, heaviness great,
All it can do is increase the weight.

Thoughts raised against the knowledge of God,
don't stand a chance where our feet have trod. BSN

On the Road with Steve & Ella Mae



Steve & Ella Mae Martin's Cross-Country Trip



Steve reading his new children's book, *Always Loved*, to his grandkids ▶

ANIMALS (continued from page 911)

Every wagging tail and warm embrace ...
Every glimpse of undeserved love – It’s all a preview.

The party has already started in the heart of God.
And soon – so soon – we’ll all be there.

Every voice in harmony. Every creature at peace.
Every soul at home.

Not one missing. Not one lost.

Because this is what God always planned. And He
always gets what He wants.

So go ahead and laugh. Sing. Dance. Rest.

You’re going to see them again. All of them.

And when you do? You’ll know:

This is the party that grace built.

And *everyone’s* invited. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Animals; Creation; Gospel; Grace; Love; Pets; Salvation
of All

Minor: Peace; Suffering



Steve & Ella Mae visiting Scott & Sherrie Duncan, and
John & Marcy Money Penny (Denver CO)

MARK VOGT: MILESTONE



Our Beloved Co-Laborer Mark Vogt Reaches His
Milestone of 75 Years

**WE ALL HAVE
FAULTS AND HARBOR
ERROR, AND IT WILL BE-
COMES ANY OF US TO USE
THE LASH UPON ANOTHER
WHO IS IN OUR LORD’S SER-
VICE, HOWEVER MUCH HE
MAY SEEM TO MERIT IT IN OUR
OPINION.**

– A.E. KNOCH (1874-1965)



***The Lake of
Fire & The
Consummation***

by — Warren Young Kimball
(1909-2002)

52 pages, PB (See [order form](#) under “Other
Authors.”)