



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Joy

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

Volume 45
Issue 1104

The Bloody Truth

Chapter 20 – Hope that Can't Be Shaken

by – Stephen Hill

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

The world trades in fragile hopes – hopes tied to circumstances, personal performance, or human promises. These hopes rise and fall with headlines, bank balances, and the opinions of others. But the hope born from our Hero's work doesn't fluctuate. It is anchored in something unchangeable: the sovereign plan of God, completed in the shed blood, resurrection, ascension and glorification of His Son.



Who administers it is in full control of its results.

HOPE THAT WORKS IN THE NOW

True hope doesn't just point us to the end; it transforms how we live in the middle. Knowing that Christ's work is complete frees us from anxious striving. We can love without fear of loss, give without fear of lack, and endure without fear of defeat.

HOPE ROOTED IN CERTAINTY

Romans 8:30 says that those whom God calls, He also justifies; and those whom He justifies, He also glorifies. Notice the tense: it's spoken as if it's already done. In God's view, the entire process is settled. You aren't moving toward an uncertain finish line; you are walking out a victory already secured.

That means our hope isn't wishful thinking – it's *confident* expectation. We don't wonder whether the antidote will hold; we live knowing that it already has.

SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY

Because God is completely sovereign, nothing – no choice, no force, no apparent accident – can derail His purpose. Satan can tempt, distract and accuse, but he cannot alter the outcome. Every detail of history, from the rise and fall of empires to the smallest turn in your personal life, is woven into the plan that ends with Christ as Head over all.

This is why the antidote works – because the One

Our hope breathes courage into weary souls. It says, "You will see the fullness of what He has promised, because He has already secured it."

When you know the ending, you can endure the plot twists. When you trust the Author, you can rest even in the storm.

UNSHAKABLE PEOPLE IN A SHAKING WORLD

The world will shake. Nations will rage. Personal trials will come. But believers – joined to the Champion (see [BLOODY](#), page 9261)

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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 Sneider

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Firstborn: Exposing the Myth of Pre-existence

(A Synoptical Examination)

Steve Martin, Compilation Editor

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

Chapter 8 (of 10): The Power of Faith – Jesus' Exemplary Trust in God

One of the most stunning and overlooked truths in Scripture is what Paul calls “the faith of Christ.” Most theology skips over it, or worse, erases it by claiming that Jesus already knew everything in advance because of pre-existence. But the New Testament paints a very different picture: Jesus lived as a Man Who walked by faith. He trusted His Father completely – *not* because He carried some celestial memory, but because He read the Scriptures, believed them, and staked His life on them.



- He confessed total dependence: “I can do nothing of Myself” (John 5:30).
- He said that the miracles weren’t by His own power, but by the Father working through Him (John 14:10).

Everything He had, He received. Everything He did, He credited to His Father. That is real faith.

WHY PRE-EXISTENCE DESTROYS FAITH

This truth makes His journey breathtaking. And ironically, the doctrine of pre-existence – meant to glorify Him – actually strips away the very thing that makes His life remarkable: His faith.

Think about it. If Jesus had come from Heaven, already knowing the outcome, where’s the faith? Faith is truly faith only when the future is unseen. When there is sight, there is no faith.

If He knew from prior experience that death was temporary, then the cross required no trust. Clyde Pilkington puts it bluntly: “*The pre-existence of Christ makes a mockery of the very life of Christ.*” A preexistent Creator pretending to struggle isn’t inspiring – it’s theater.

But if Jesus was fully human, trusting His Father without special advantage, then His faith is extraordinary.

THE FAITH OF CHRIST

Jesus didn’t walk through life with supernatural foresight or immunity to fear. He wasn’t pretending. He wasn’t playacting faith.

- He prayed with loud cries and tears (Hebrews 5:7).
- He grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52).



The Four Days of Scripture (A Compilation)

The Bible speaks of four different days in the sense of long periods of time. Each one of these days marks a separate and distinct period of time. These are not meaningless expressions. They are: (1) “*Man’s Day*,” (2) “*The Day of Christ*,” (3) “*The Day of the Lord*,” and (4) “*The Day of God*.” The good workmen will identify the four days, and then “*rightly divide*” them (II Timothy 2:15).

This is a composite work from seven authors: Tom L. Ballinger (1931-2022), Dr. Robert A. Hadden (1868-1939), David R. Hettema, Dr. C.E. McLain (1909-1990), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., W.B. Screws (1884-1961) and Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992).

GETHSEMANE AND THE CROSS

The garden strips away any illusions. Jesus fell to the ground, overwhelmed with grief, praying for the cup to pass. He didn't want to suffer. He didn't want to die. That's not a preexistent being rehearsing a part – that's a man wrestling with fear.

And yet, He said: *“Not My will, but Yours be done.”* That's trust.

The cross was no less real. Humiliation, mockery, pain, abandonment. And still He clung to His Father's promise all the way to death. Hebrews 12:2 says He endured *“for the joy set before Him”* – not a reexperienced glory behind Him. He didn't reach back to a memory of divine majesty. He looked forward to a *glory He hadn't yet received*.

He believed God. That's faith.

THE “MEMORY LOSS” PATCH

Some try to rescue pre-existence by suggesting that Jesus lost His memories of Heaven, only to regain them later. But Scripture never says this. It's pure assumption.

And it doesn't even solve the problem. If Jesus slowly regained memories of a prehistoric past, then His need for faith would shrink as His knowledge grew. Yet the Scriptures show the opposite: His faith never wavered. He poured Himself out (Philippians 2:7) – not in Heaven, but here, as a Man.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR US

Here's why this truth is so powerful: a pre-existent being is unrelatable. How do you imitate a preexistent being pretending to be human? You can't. But you can follow the Man Christ Jesus – the One Who trusted, obeyed and endured by faith – even unto death.

That's Paul's point. Jesus is the Firstfruits (I Corinthians 15:20), the Trailblazer (Hebrews 12:2). He's the Prototype of what God intends for all of us. His resurrection wasn't a return of a preexistent being to a prior glory – it was the glorification of humanity.

And this means that His story isn't out of reach. It's our future, too.

THE MAGNIFIED GLORY OF HIS FAITH

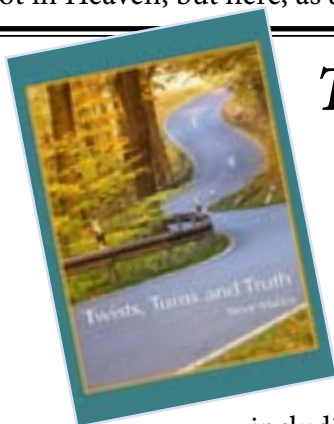
When we strip away the layers of tradition, what shines brightest is Jesus' faith. He trusted when everything screamed otherwise. He obeyed when it cost Him everything. He believed His Father's Word and held on to a future joy *that He hadn't yet tasted*.

That's why God exalted Him. That's why He is Lord. And that's why His story is so stunning: not because He lived as a disguised deity, but because He lived as the faithful man – the Son Who trusted, obeyed and was glorified. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Faith of Christ; Glory; Preexistence

Minor: Cross; Firstfruits; Scripture



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.

Creation and Agnosticism

Bible Student's Courses

Course 2: Creation / Unit 2: Creation Repudiates Satanic Philosophies / Lesson 4: Creation and Agnosticism

by — Mark D. Vogt

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

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 1:1).

Agnosticism, like atheism, is one of the philosophies that Satan uses to challenge the truth of God and His creation. While similar in some ways to atheism, **agnosticism** takes a different route. Instead of outright denying that God exists, it **claims that the truth about God's existence is unknowable**.



things no one could really verify. Agnosticism, in his view, was a kind of intellectual honesty: admitting ignorance rather than pretending certainty.

But in doing so, **agnosticism becomes a belief in the unknowable** – and that belief has consequences.

WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM?

Agnosticism says, “*Maybe God exists. Maybe He doesn’t. We just can’t know for sure.*”

Unlike the atheist who says, “**there is no God**,” the agnostic says, “**I don’t know – and no one else does either.**”

The word *agnostic* was coined in the 1800s by British biologist T.H. Huxley, who used it to describe people like himself – those who believed that certainty about God was out of reach. He observed that religious people often spoke with total confidence about

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT FOR AGNOSTICISM

One modern thinker, **Robin Le Poidevin**, summarized the argument like this:

1. There’s no solid reason to say that **theism** (belief in God) is more likely than atheism. There’s also no solid reason to say that **atheism** is more likely than theism. Therefore, neither position is provable. Therefore, **agnosticism is true** – we simply can’t know.



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Grace Is Joy

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXXxM1xuIaqvhRUKwZ1jbFh2Vc029rjsv>

It sounds reasonable. But there are two major problems with this position.

Problem #1: Everyone Believes in Something

Even if someone claims not to believe in God, they **still believe in something**:

- Themselves
- Science
- Logic
- The unknown – or, in this case, **the unknowable**.

But this doesn't match how we treat truth in other areas of life. For example, the average person believes in atomic theory – even though most have never looked through an electron microscope to see it for themselves. Why? Because trustworthy sources agree on it. It's observable, consistent and demonstrable.

Likewise, **God has made Himself observable** – not in a lab, but in the **Universe itself**:

The heavens declare the glory of God ... (Psalm 19:1).

Creation is shouting the truth – it's in your face.

Problem #2: God Is the One Doing the Blinding

Scripture tells us a sobering truth: **People don't reject God because He hasn't revealed Himself**. They reject Him because **God has chosen to blind them – for now**.

Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again, "He has blinded their eyes and caloused their heart ..." (John 12:39-40).

Just as God blinded **Israel**, He also blinds **the Nations** – not because He is cruel, but because it fits into His plan.

This is not arbitrary. God has **reasons** for everything He does, even if we don't fully understand them. His reasons are rooted in **His love, His timing, and His glory**.

THE REALITY OF CONTRAST

God uses **contrast** to teach us:

- Light and dark
- Sight and blindness
- Faith and unbelief
- Knowledge and ignorance

Agnosticism, like atheism, provides the **contrast** against which **faith will shine**.

Satan uses agnosticism to **blur the picture**, to dull the awareness that God placed in every heart. And yet, that awareness is still there – deep in the conscience of every person, even if it's buried beneath doubt, pain or human reasoning.

CREATION IS THE EVIDENCE

God doesn't need to defend His existence. He already **declared it** in creation.

In the beginning, God created ... (Genesis 1:1).

The Heavens declare the glory of God ... (Psalm 19:1).

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard ... (Psalm 19:3).



The Mystery of Evil

by — Joseph Wilson Williams (1874-1963)

The greatest mystery about evil is God's relation to it. That makes it perplexing, at the same time that it is painful. It is the purpose of these pages to ease the pain and dispel the perplexity, through understanding. Williams was an associate of A.E. Knoch.

Creation is **universal evidence**, and it's *always* speaking.

Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge (Psalm 19:2, HCSB).

If a person cannot see God in creation, it's not because the evidence isn't there – it's because **God** is using blindness for a season.

FINAL THOUGHT: BELIEF WILL COME

Agnosticism is *not* the final word. It's a temporary condition.

Everyone *will* believe – eventually.

BLOODY (continued from page 9255)

– are unshakable, not because of inner strength, but because of the One holding them. Hope rooted in Him cannot be stolen, diluted or broken.

The antidote doesn't just remove the disease – it secures the patient forever. And in that truth, we live as people whose hope is not a gamble, but a guarantee.

When God lifts the veil, every eye will see, and every heart will understand. No more doubt. No more speculation.

For the Earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

That's the future. That's the end of agnosticism.

And that's why we can **rest in God's timing** – even when others can't see Him yet. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Agnosticism; Atheism; Blindness; Creation; Truth

Minor: Contrast; Faith; Sovereignty

Chapter 20 Key Takeaways

- *Our hope is certain because the outcome is already secured.*
- *God's sovereignty ensures nothing can derail His plan.*
- *True hope transforms how we live here and now.*

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: Antidote; Expectation; Hope; Security; Sovereignty; Substitution

Minor: Blood; Hero; Victory



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Friday

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Saturday

8:30 Free continental breakfast (hotel)

9:00 - 12:00 Teaching Sessions

12:00 - 1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 4:15 Teaching Sessions

PLEASE RSVP your attendance (seating is limited – even if you made room reservations)

For more information, contact Steve Martin at 610-909-9285 or biblestudentsnotebook@gmail.com



I have been reading your work for about three years now. My story is the same as so many other people. I grew up in a charismatic church, terrified to my core my whole life. I turned to drinking very regularly for relief for about 15 years. Five years ago, I quit and started to really face some of this stuff. I was in a dark place until one day, while on a field trip with my son, I opened up my *Daily Email Goodie*, and in it was an article about God being the source of everything, absolutely everything, and that day my eyes were opened. Everything changed. I started to live again. I have studied things from your website and books. I won't lie, some of it still scares me, but day by day the fear fades. – **WI**

I love this video: [“Grace” Can’t Possibly Mean “Unmerited Favor”](#).

It was all good but the last few minutes I thought you really knocked it out of the park. “Unmerited favor” sits well with those who think we’re guilty. But we know sin was never man’s idea, it was God’s.

Love this ... “We are His offspring, after all we are His Workmanship” and ... “His workmanship is unworthy? His workmanship lacks merit?” I love your provocative way of teaching.

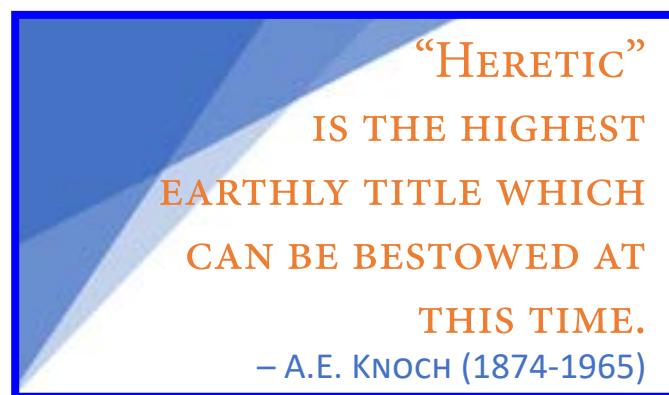
It seems as though we are creatures who like to mea-

sure things either by exalting ourselves or abasing ourselves due to either pride or guilt. When it comes to the “unmerited favor” doctrine we always drank the Kool-Aid because it paired well with our guilt. It made us feel good. “I’m guilty” (lie 1), so let’s say that the definition of grace is God’s “unmerited favor” (lie 2). It’s interesting how the one lie fathered the other, isn’t it?

Saying grace was God’s “unmerited favor” was really a self-taught cutdown to help save our erroneous guilty conscience. I say erroneous because we were never guilty and we’ve always been and always will be incredibly priceless to God. ... **WI**

I respect what you have done. I see why you left the “organized” ministry. There is more to it than rightly dividing Paul’s ministry from that of the 12 Apostles – it’s also dividing his early ministry from his later ministry, e.g. II Thessalonians from Ephesians and Colossians.

I also do not want to be witnessing and proclaiming eternal conscious torment (ECT) if that is not the truth. And if not, then what horrible character assassination do we engage in against God when we do that. – **VA** **BSN**



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!