



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Joy

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

Volume 45  
Issue 1106

# Firstborn: Exposing the Myth of Pre-existence

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

(A Synoptical Examination)

Steve Martin, Compilation Editor

## Chapter 10 (of 10): Embracing Truth – Humility, Love and Magnified Glory

This journey into Jesus' true origin isn't just an academic exercise. It's not about winning arguments or collecting theological footnotes. It's about clearing away the fog of tradition so that God's plan shines brighter, Christ's faithfulness is magnified, and we ourselves are invited into a more honest, humble walk of faith.



God's Word fits together with consistency. Truth never contradicts itself. If two interpretations collide, one of them is wrong.

### Humility and Openness

Breaking free from tradition requires humility. We've all been wrong before. And we'll all discover more blind spots along the way.

Understanding Jesus as the Man Who began at conception, trusted God perfectly, died in obedience, and was exalted in glory doesn't shrink Him – it magnifies Him. And it magnifies His Father all the more.

### The Call to Diligent Study

Truth seekers need a Berean spirit (Acts 17:10-11): examining the Scriptures daily, testing everything, refusing to settle for tradition or hearsay.

That means:

- **Follow the evidence.** Don't strip-mine verses. Read them in context – literary, cultural and historical.
- **Let the whole Bible speak.** No single verse tells the full story. Every piece has to fit the puzzle.
- **Interpret clearly.** Use explicit passages to shed light on the obscure, never the other way around.
- **Remember, context is king.** Who's speaking? Who's listening? What era? What message? These things matter.

- **Challenge assumptions.** Don't assume that you're right just because you've always believed something.
- **Expose your biases.** Pride will hold you hostage. Humility will set you free.
- **Read out of the Word, not into it.** Tradition blinds us when we project our theology onto the text instead of letting the text speak.

Clyde Pilkington once said, "The number one thing" [\(continued on page 9273\)](#)

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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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that prevents a man from coming into the truth is the assumption that he knows the truth.” That’s why humility is essential.

### Truth Is Always Consistent

The Bible is not a patchwork of contradictions. It’s a unified story authored by a perfect God.

- **Truth is logical.** Lies fall apart under scrutiny.
- **Scripture is a puzzle where every piece perfectly fits.** If two verses seem to clash, we haven’t seen them rightly yet.
- **Logos, at its root, is connected to logic.** God’s Word is not irrational – it’s coherent, consistent, trustworthy.

### Love and Grace in the Search

But truth-seeking without love is dangerous. Paul reminds us that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

- **No crusader mentality.** Don’t weaponize doctrine.
- **Extend grace.** Not everyone sees at the same pace. Many are blinded by tradition, not malice.
- **Seek common ground.** We don’t have to break fellowship over every disagreement. Unity in Christ matters more than scoring theological points.

Too many debates are marked by anger, fear, and immaturity. Let’s be different. Let’s walk in grace.

### Magnifying God and Christ

This perspective doesn’t rob Christ of glory – it magnifies Him.

- **God remains the sole Creator.** He stretched out the Heavens alone (Isaiah 44:24). He shares His glory with no one (Isaiah 42:8).
- **Jesus’ sacrifice is real.** His victory wasn’t divine theater. It was a Man trusting God to the very end. That makes His obedience breathtakingly meaningful.
- **Christ is relatable.** He is our High Priest, tested like us in every way, blazing the trail as the first glorified Human (Hebrews 12:2). His exaltation was not a return to divinity but the glorification of humanity.

### Conclusion: Truth That Frees

By stripping away the myth of pre-existence, we don’t lose Christ – we find Him more clearly. We see Him as He really was: the Man of faith, the obedient Son, the exalted Lord. And we see His Father in His rightful place: the one God, the sole Creator, the Author of it all.

This is not about *less* glory. It’s about *magnified* glory – for both the Father and the Son. A glory rooted not in tradition or philosophy, but in the plain testimony of Scripture. **BSN**

#### TOPICS:

**Major:** Context; Jesus Christ; Preexistence; Study; Truth  
**Minor:** Grace; Humility; Love; Tradition



## *Was Jesus Christ Alive Before His Life on Earth Began? A Critical Look at the Supposed Preexistence of Christ*

by — Aaron Welch

Paul was exact in his statement that “*there is one God, the Father ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ*” (I Corinthians 8:6, *Concordant*). The only absolute God is the Father, and He has no equals. The Lord Jesus Christ is a part of His creation; the Spirit is an expression

meaning God’s spirit.

This exceptional work embraces the truth of “*the man Christ Jesus*” (I Timothy 2:5), exposing the traditional orthodox position known as the “pre-existence of Christ,” a creed vitally connected with Christendom’s teaching of the Trinity. The “pre-existence of Christ” does great dishonor to both the Father and His Son, diminishing the true glory that belong uniquely to each.

# The Bloody Truth

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

## Chapter 21 – In “Others’ Words”

by – Stephen Hill

Many teachers of the past – both recent and distant – held the same view set forth in this book, and quotes from these men are provided below for your thoughtful consideration.



**A.E. Knoch** said, “Blood atones, not because it appeases God, but because it covers the sinner with life, shielding him from death,” and, “To suppose that God must be placated by blood is to slander His love. It is man who needs the blood, not God.”

**Vladimir Gelesnoff** said, “Christ saves us, not from God, but from sin and death. God is never against us, for He gives His own Son. The blood speaks of life poured out to annul death.” He also wrote, “The victim’s blood was a divine provision ... not a payment to appease divine anger.”

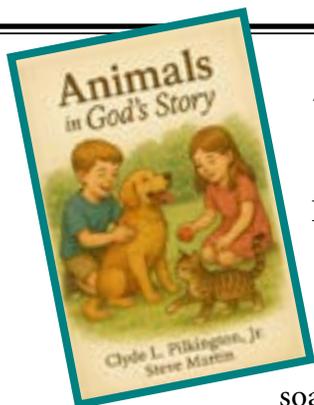
**Charles Welch** said, “The shedding of blood is related to access, cleansing and life. There is no suggestion

that God’s wrath required satisfaction by blood. Rather, blood fits us to draw near.” Regarding Ephesians 2, Welch also wrote, “The blood brings nigh. This is the essence of reconciliation – nearness by life given, not appeasement.”

**E.W. Bullinger** said, “The blood of Christ is the great antidote: cleansing us continually, dealing with sin in all its forms, not satisfying God’s wrath but removing sin’s defilement.” Regarding Romans 6:23, Bullinger wrote, “Sin earns death; grace gives life. The blood of Christ is the channel by which life flows.”

**Ireaneus (2<sup>nd</sup> century)** wrote in *Against Heresies*, “He destroyed death, bringing life to light. By His blood we are renewed, not because God required it, but because death required conquering.”

**Origen (3<sup>rd</sup> century)** wrote in his *Commentary on Romans* that “Christ gave His soul as a ransom for



## Animals in God's Story

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.

many; this was not a price paid to the Father, but a healing remedy against the power of death."

**Gregory of Nyssa (4<sup>th</sup> century)** wrote in *Great Catechism*, "The blood of Christ was the ransom not paid to the Father, but to death itself, that He might free those held captive."

**John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century)** wrote in *Homilies on Hebrews*, "The blood shows the lovingkindness of the Lord, for He gave not another's blood ... that He might draw us to Himself."

**Gregory Nazianzen (4<sup>th</sup> century)** wrote in *Oration 45, On Holy Pascha*, "The blood was not given as a price, but as a cleansing, that He might wash away the filth of sin."

**Cyril of Alexandria (5<sup>th</sup> century)** wrote in his *Commentary on John*, "The blood of Christ was given for life, for it is the blood of Him who is Life itself. By it we are preserved, healed and sanctified."

**Martin Luther**, in his *Lectures on Galatians*, stated, "Christ took upon Himself our sins and our death. His blood is the life that swallows up death. God did not need the blood; we did."

**James D.G. Dunn**, a New Testament scholar, argued in *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, "Paul does not present Christ's death as a transaction to placate God, but as the decisive act in which sin and death were dealt their fatal blow."

**N.T. Wright**, in *The Day the Revolution Began*, wrote, "The cross was not about satisfying a wrathful deity. It was about God in Christ exhausting sin and death in order to inaugurate new creation."

**F.F. Bruce**, in his *Commentary on Hebrews*, wrote, "The blood of Christ cleanses the conscience, not because God required blood to appease His anger, but because life poured out removes the stain of sin and overcomes the power of death."

**C.H. Dodd**, in *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, argues, "The biblical concept of propitiation is not placating an angry God, but the removal of sin which estranges man from God. It is expiation, a cleansing."

**George Eldon Ladd**, in *A Theology of the New Testament*, said, "Atonement in Paul is directed not toward appeasing God but toward overcoming the enslaving powers of sin and death."

**Richard Bauckham** said, "God's judgment is not His giving vent to wrath, but His putting the world right. The cross reveals that [Christ] does so by bearing sin and undoing its power."

**Scot McKnight** declared, "The metaphors of atonement are many, but each points to the same reality: God's love confronting the powers of sin and death and overcoming them."

(see **BLOODY**, last page)



## Biblical Resources

Training today's ecclesia for tomorrow's celestial assignments.  
Highlighting important video playlists for the edification of the saints.

Biblical Resources is a dedicated space for the co-laborers of Bible Student's Press to share our current collective journey. It is intended to be a place of education and edification in an atmosphere of freedom, love, joy and peace.

### **Sovereignty of God**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXXxM1xuIaqsSVUtxVVsviDecxaXfZryb>

# Rocky

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

by – Bob Evelyn

We had to say goodbye to Rocky. Having Rocky with us for nearly 13 years was a blessing, and he was most certainly a part of our family.



When he was younger and full of energy, he would race me from my office to the house and then wait for me at the back door with a few barks (mostly to clear Ginger out of my path). If I strayed in another direction he would race back to me, attempting to herd me in the right direction.

Rocky was a working dog. Not one to want to stray on his own or run with Ginger (our other dog), he always stayed close – because he was always on duty.

When Jill took him for walks, he was the protector. If anyone got too close, a growl would keep them at bay. As for me, he was my guardian – my herd dog. Yes, border collies are herd dogs by nature, and since we didn't have sheep, he herded me. From our back door to my office in the back yard was my path. Rocky led the way every trip I made, to and from the office. If I headed toward the gate, he barked and got in my path to turn me back. If I veered off to go anywhere except my office, he barked and got me back on course. If he was laying in the living room and saw me get my shoes on, he was up and on alert – usually standing by the front door to be sure I didn't go there. Only the back door, toward my office, was my designated path. And if he was on the porch with us, if I tried to go over the gate to go down the steps, I felt his snout on my leg, and a firm bark, to herd me back.

What held him back from being a herder of sheep and eligible for the stock dog trials – a competition for herd dogs to show their skills in herding a flock of sheep – was his propensity for nipping you just a bit – every now and then – to keep you on track. That's instant disqualification in the dog trial competition. For me it was just an occasional, casual nip to remind me I was straying off course.



Rocky loved working. Until he got older and not as able to get around, he loved going to our “farm” about 25 minutes away. He always stayed close to me. When I mowed, or cut with my chain saw, or trimmed with my weed trimmer, or chipped away at a stump with my axe, or dragged some branches to the burn pile – he always “helped.” He got so close in helping that I had to pay close attention so as not to chop off his nose with my axe, or clip him with my weed trimmer. And once or twice when I was dragging branches, he actually helped by pulling in the right direction. Usually, though, I felt a bit of extra weight in the branches I dragged, as he pulled in the opposite direction.

He loved the farm, and especially along the creek where he played a game of splashing at the water and trying to catch it in his mouth. Over and over and over he did this. And if you watered plants, he loved the occasional spray as he caught the water in his mouth. When Jill picked wild blackberries, he also picked some for himself, despite the thorny branches.

He liked cold weather and never minded the snow. When I shoveled, he always tried to catch the snow when I threw it off to the side. He was so well insulated that he would sometimes lie there as the snow accumulated on him – and it wouldn't melt but just keep accumulating.

Rocky did have his idiosyn-

crasies. Every time a siren was heard (and we have a lot of emergency vehicle traffic in our town), Rocky would howl in sympathy with the siren. If there was a storm coming, we would need to get him into the house quickly, as he developed the habit of tearing siding off of our home, presumably attempting to get into the house. (We have many pieces of siding and trim that still bear his tooth marks as a reminder, and a few were ripped off entirely.)

Rocky was not food-motivated. He ate well, but if I walked past him to go back to my office, or anyplace other than back into the house, he left his food behind to come to my side and to be sure I stayed on track.

He had a variety of barks for various instances – a standard bark when another dog had the audacity to walk past our home, a short yip if he wanted to come in the house, or (more often) if he thought it was time for me to return to work in my office. And at times he made noises that were very close to human speech and probably were – if only I could understand what he was saying.

Every evening when Jill and I settled in to close out the evening with one or two hours of relaxing TV shows, the dogs would join us and spend time with us while chewing on some dog chews. Rocky loved

this TV time.

In the morning, if I was first out of bed, I would walk into the living room where Rocky would be lying on the floor. His tail would begin to wag and I would get down on the floor beside him, my face close to his. He would just lay back and let me give him a hug, and immediately thereafter he would jump to his feet ready to guide me to the door and out to my office. He was a faithful friend, and my work buddy.

Mornings are now a bit emptier. Our dog Ginger misses Rocky, and I miss him. As I look around the yard on the way to my office, I see all the places he would dash past me, or where he would lay attentively waiting for me to come out of the office. I can see him in my mind – racing me, herding me, waiting for my next move.

As you can see, Rocky’s presence in our lives was huge. And since he was never far from me, I miss him a lot!

God only shared with us in the Scriptures the destiny of humanity when this life has ended, providing little information on the animal kingdom. Maybe this is because animals cannot read.



## 2026 Annual Bible Conference

Friday, March 20–Sunday, March 22, 2026

### Location (Pittsburgh, PA area)

Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Beaver Falls  
2801 Darlington Road  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Special Lodging Rate for the Conference: \$95 each night

**Reserve Discounted Room Now:** (Darla Butcher, 724-581-5273)

### Schedule: [Click here](#) for meeting agenda

#### Friday

6:00 PM - Dinner and Fellowship

#### Saturday

6:00 Free continental breakfast (hotel)

9:00 - 11:00 Teaching Sessions

11:30 - 1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 4:15 Teaching Sessions

6:00 Dinner and Fellowship

#### Sunday

6:00 Free continental breakfast (hotel)

9:00 - 11:45 Testimonies and Teaching Sessions

11:45 - Closing and goodbye

**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](mailto:biblestudentsnotebook@gmail.com)

Or maybe it's because animals are so trusting and so fully dependent, they trust always in the good, and therefore they simply trust that their Creator will provide for them. Maybe that's good enough!

I know that He is a God of love and that He acts always with a purpose consistent with His character of love. Knowing this about Him, and knowing that He created our Rocky with a soul, a personality, and the breath of life ... I know that our Rocky will live again.

I think about the day when the Lord returns to reign upon the Earth. We are told He will ride from Heaven on a white horse (Revelation 19:11) and that His armies that follow Him will also be riding white horses (Revelation

19:14). Horses with celestial bodies, galloping down from Heaven.

This is enough for me to know that animals, too, will receive spiritual bodies, and that Rocky will one day live again, along with our other pet family members.

Until then, sleep well Rocky. Thank you for loving us, and for being such a big part of our lives! We look forward to the day of resurrection when you are in our midst once again! **BSN**

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Animals; Death; Life; Pets

**Minor:** Restoration; Resurrection; Salvation of All

**BLOODY** (continued from page 9275)

**Kallistos Ware**, an Eastern Orthodox theologian, stated, "Christ's death was not a penalty paid but a victory achieved, a death through which death itself was trampled down."

**Athanasias** famously declared, "What was not assumed was not healed. Christ had to be fully man to heal mankind."

Since blood equals life and the problem is death, the only logical reading is **Blood = God's antidote**. The "payment to God" view is foreign both to Hebrew thought and early Christian voices, and even modern day scholars challenge its validity.

**Chapter 21 Key Takeaways**

- ▶ Many early and modern voices reject wrath-appeasement theories.

- ▶ The consistent theme is blood as life and antidote.
- ▶ The antidote view stands more in continuity with historic thought than PSA, which has become more popular. **BSN**

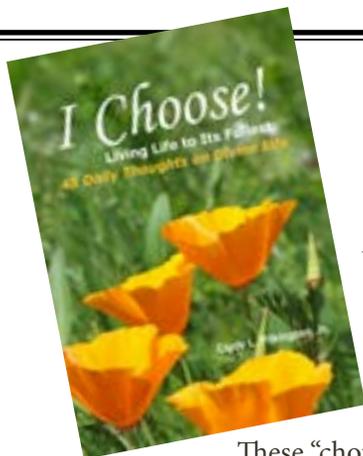
**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Antidote; Blood; Death; Life; Love; Sin

**Minor:** Atonement; Cross; Grace

LET US STRIVE  
AGAINST THE TEMP-  
TATION TO CONFORM THE  
TEXT OF SCRIPTURE TO  
OUR UNDERSTANDING OF IT.

– A.E. KNOCH (1874-1965)



## *I Choose! Living Life to Its Fullest*

Forty-Eight Daily Thoughts on Divine Life

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

You are alive! Yet not just alive, but alive with the very life of God! Don't allow your "What if ..." imaginations of the past or the future to lay claim to the present that God has given you. Allow the objective, unchanging truth of who God has made you in the Lord Jesus Christ to transform your mind and life as you take this spiritual journey of "I Choose."

These "choices" are not to be confused with so-called "free will." At the close of the book the author will reveal that our "choices" are nothing short of God's sovereign decree in our lives.