



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Joy!

Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 45
Issue 1122

There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Can We Really Be Enemies of God?

Rethinking Estrangement Through the Lens of Grace, Sovereignty, and the Fatherhood of God

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

by — Steve Martin

For many of us, the idea that we were once “enemies of God” sits deep in the spiritual background, shaping how we see ourselves – and how we imagine that God sees us. It’s a heavy label. It implies hostility, distance and a relationship gone wrong.



Grace isn’t God changing His mind about us. Grace is God revealing His true mind about us.

Grace is joy, favor, kindness – God’s heart overflowing toward His creation. Grace doesn’t start at the cross; it begins in God’s nature. The cross didn’t turn enemies into friends – it revealed that we were loved long before we knew it.

But what if we misunderstood it? What if we felt like enemies – while God never did?

Paul writes in Colossians 1:21,

And you, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension ...

– meaning, in your mind, in your understanding. Not enemies in reality – but in perception.

Not enemies by nature – but by misunderstanding.

Not enemies because God turned against us – but because we assumed He had. And that changes everything.

GRACE MEANS THAT GOD WAS NEVER AGAINST US

Religion has long taught that grace is God softening His anger, easing His judgment, or deciding – sometimes reluctantly – to show mercy to undeserving people. But Scripture paints a much brighter picture.

We imagined that we were enemies, but God stayed a Father from the beginning.

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY LEAVES NO ROOM FOR A HOSTILE HUMANITY

If God is truly sovereign – Who absolutely, purposefully, lovingly authored the story of creation – then the idea that humanity could posture itself as a genuine threat or adversary collapses.

How can clay be an “enemy” of the Potter? How can a script oppose its Writer? How can creation derail the Creator’s intention?

(continued on page 9401)

Can We Really Be Enemies of God?	9399
Right Division, Part 18: The Book of Revelation	9402
Our Mailbox	9405
Reader’s Question Box #85: Should we still call on people to believe?	9406
A Strange God (quote: Mark Twain)	9406

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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 joy (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 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).

We're just presenters, not persuaders. – Steve Martin

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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We can misunderstand Him. We can fear Him. We can run from Him – like Adam hiding in the trees – but none of this changes His posture.

Our estrangement was internal. Our alienation was emotional. Our sense of enmity was imagined, not actual.

A sovereign God is not vulnerable to rebellion. His children's confusion does not undo a sovereign Father.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD MEANS THAT WE WERE NEVER OUTCASTS

Jesus didn't come to convince God to love us. Jesus came to show us the Father we never truly believed in.

If God truly is the Father of all (Ephesians 4:6), then the "enemy" language *cannot* mean that God ever saw us as opponents. What kind of father views his confused, hurting, fearful child as an enemy?

No – Fatherhood reshapes the whole story:

- We were estranged, but not rejected.
- We were lost, but never abandoned.
- We were afraid, but never unloved.
- We misunderstood Him, but He never misunderstood us.

Jesus didn't reconcile God to man. God was never estranged. Jesus reconciled man to God – by showing us the Father's heart.

WE THOUGHT THAT WE WERE ENEMIES – BECAUSE WE DIDN'T KNOW LOVE YET

Paul's phrase "*enemies in comprehension*" tells the truth about our condition before grace breaks through:

- We didn't know Him. We didn't trust Him.
- We projected our shame and fear onto Him.
- We assumed that He was angry, disappointed and distant.
- We felt unworthy. We felt condemned. We felt like orphans.

And orphans often assume that everyone – including God – is against them. But that was our perception, *not* His reality.

God's view of us has *always* been grounded in His purpose and love. Our view of Him was shaded by fear, guilt and the stories that religion told us.

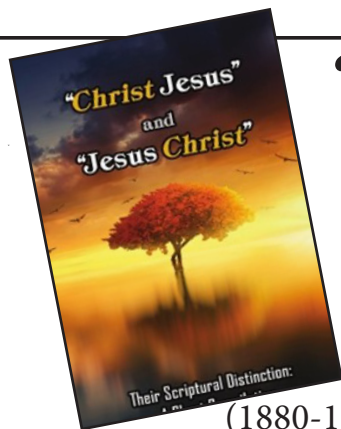
Grace doesn't change God's heart. *Grace changes our understanding of His heart.*

THE CROSS IS THE END OF THE ILLUSION OF ENMITY

The cross didn't turn enemies into sons.

It revealed that sons had been living like enemies in their own minds. At the cross, God confronts the world with an unforgettable truth:

[\(see ENEMIES, page 9404\)](#)



“Christ Jesus” and “Jesus Christ” – Their Scriptural Distinction

Most students of Scripture know nothing of the distinction between “Christ Jesus” and “Jesus Christ.” What an eye-opening discovery such a finding is! Authors include: E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) and Charles H. Welch (1880-1967). 32 pages.

Right Division

(An Overview of *Dispensational Truth*)

Part 18

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

by — Mark D. Vogt

A Brief Survey of the Greek Scriptures: The Circumcision Epistles – *The Book of Revelation* ISRAEL'S PLACE IN GOD'S PLAN

The *Book of Revelation*, like the other Circumcision writings, belongs entirely within the prophetic program of Israel. It is not written to the Nations, nor to “*the Church, which is His Body*.” Any reference to the Nations, or to the world at large, appears only in connection with Israel’s destiny and her covenantal dealings with God.

John, the writer of *Revelation*, was one of Israel’s Twelve Apostles and stood among the closest of Christ’s earthly companions. His ministry, as Galatians 2:7-9 makes clear, was limited to the Circumcision – to Israel.

THE CHARACTER OF THE BOOK

Revelation is among the most symbolic books of Scripture. It is rich with figures of speech – symbols, metaphors and similes – all of which must be understood within their prophetic context.

When the events foretold in *Revelation* begin to unfold, believing Israel will be spiritually equipped to understand them. God Himself will supply the faith and illumination needed for the faithful remnant to discern His hand in those days.

Although *Revelation* stands last in the canon of Scripture, it was not the final book written. The completion of God’s Word came through Paul. In Colossians 1:25, Paul boldly declares that he was commissioned to “*complete the Word of God*.”

The term “*complete*” means to fill up or bring to its full measure. Thus, Paul’s epistles of *Ephesians* and *Colossians* form the capstone of divine revelation. They reveal the Secret Administration, the high calling of “*the Church, which is His Body*,” and the final unfolding of God’s purpose “*before the disruption of the world*.” Therefore, *Revelation* must be understood as *preceding* Paul’s completion of the Scriptures.

THE PROPHETIC THRUST OF REVELATION

The very title of the book, taken from the opening words in 1:1, defines its theme: “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*” (KJV), or “*The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*” (CV).

The word *unveiling* (Greek: *apokalupsis*) means a disclosure or manifestation of something once hidden but now made known. John writes that “*these things must come to pass swiftly*.” The word “*swiftly*”



Be Likeminded

by — Daniel Andersen

Christ is the basis of Christian unity, and when Paul exhorts believers to be “*likeminded*” he is not entreating them to comply with the same code or creed, or to conform to the same confession or catechism. Rather he is appealing to them to accept others as Christ, Himself, accepts them. 54 pages, paperback.

does not indicate immediacy from John's standpoint, but rapidity once the appointed time begins.

The book primarily concerns Israel's experience under the rule of the Antichrist during Daniel's seventieth week – the time commonly called “the Tribulation.” Its Jewish nature appears from the opening chapter, where John writes that Christ “*makes us kings and priests*” (Revelation 1:6). This echoes Exodus 19:5-6, where God promised Israel that obedience would make her “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*”

Under the law, Israel's blessings depended upon obedience. Obedience brought reward, disobedience brought a curse. In contrast, under the present administration of grace, we are blessed *apart from works*, for God has already acted on our behalf in Christ. Our obedience today is not a requirement for blessing but a joyful response to grace.

THE LORD'S DAY IN REVELATION

In Revelation 1:10, John declares that he was “*in spirit, in the Lord's Day.*” Scripture speaks of several “days” in God's plan:

1. **Man's Day** – the present time in which humanity presumes control (I Corinthians 4:3).
2. **The Day of Christ** – when Christ rules *from* Heaven and His Body is manifested with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

3. **The Day of the Lord** – when Christ returns physically to Earth to reign and fulfill Israel's covenants (the setting of Revelation).
4. **The Day of God** – the consummation of all eons, when God dwells with mankind and becomes “*All in all*” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Thus, the setting of *Revelation* is “*the Lord's Day*” – that great prophetic period in which the Messiah assumes His earthly throne and brings judgment and restoration to Israel and the Nations.

THE CONSUMMATION OF REVELATION

The closing scenes of *Revelation* usher in the *Eon of the Eons* – the fifth and final eon, corresponding to “*the Day of God.*” Here, God tabernacles with humanity and His purpose reaches its grand fulfillment: “*that God may be All in all.*”

Following the millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be released for a brief season to stir one final rebellion. This revolt will be swiftly crushed, and all enemies will be subjected beneath Christ's feet. Then begins the endless reign of God – the consummation of all His counsels.

SUMMARY

Internal and external evidence alike identify *Revelation* as a Circumcision writing. Its prophecies con-

[\(see REVELATION, next page\)](#)



Seven Things I Misunderstood About Prophecy

(An Exposé of Evangelical Prophetic Interpretation)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Early in his life and ministry, what the author knew and taught about the themes found in this book were simply what he had learned since childhood: traditional Evangelical Christian prophetic interpretation. However, in time he would come to see things quite differently. In this work he shares with the reader things that he had misunderstood, and after fifty years of personal Scripture study, what he now understands: realizations that have brought him great peace. IMPORTANT NOTICE: This work is extracted from the author's larger work *Things I Misunderstood*, and can also be found in the compilation, *Rightly Dividing Israel's Prophetic Kingdom*. 166 pages.

"ENEMIES" (continued from page 9401)

"You were never my enemy. You only thought you were. Here is My Son – My image – My love poured out. See Me rightly. Come home in your mind."

The cross is not appeasement. It is awakening.

**WE WERE NEVER ENEMIES – WE WERE
ESTRANGED CHILDREN**

The gospel is not a story of God being reconciled to humanity. It's the story of humanity finally discovering Who God has been all along:

- A Father.
- A Lover of His creation.
- A Sovereign Author writing a story of restoration.
- A God Who loses nothing and wastes nothing.

We misunderstood Him. We misjudged His intentions.

Fear is what we feel because we don't clearly see God's real face. We projected fear onto His face.

But His face never changed.

REVELATION (continued from previous page)

cern Israel's covenant relationship with God, her purification, and her ultimate restoration as a kingdom of priests in the Earth. During this time, the *Barrier Wall* (Ephesians 2:14) once again stands erect. All divine dealings with the Nations flow through Israel,

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

So, can we *really* be enemies of God? No, not in any ultimate or actual sense.

In the relative sense,

- We can feel like enemies.
- We can believe we're enemies.
- We can live in estrangement, shame or fear.

But in the absolute, God has never recognized us as anything less than His children – beloved, desired, destined for glory.

The gospel invites us into a new comprehension:

- See yourself as God has always seen you.
- See God as He truly is.

Let the illusion of enmity fall away. And when it does, joy steps in – because grace finally makes sense. **BSN**

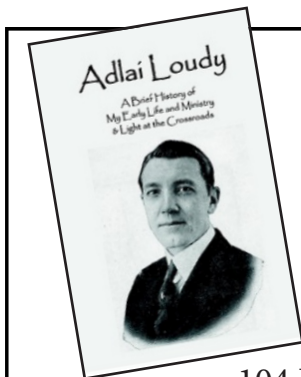
TOPICS:

Major: Cross; Enemies; Father; Grace; Joy; Love; Perception; Sovereignty
Minor: Image; Jesus Christ; Reconciliation; Religion

for she is God's appointed channel of blessing and restorative judgment in the prophetic Earth. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Circumcision Writings; Day of the Lord; Millennial Kingdom; Right Division; Revelation, Book of
Minor: Consummation; Days; Prophecy



Adlai Loudy

*A Brief History of My Early Life and Ministry &
Light at the Crossroads*

by — Adlai Loudy

A memorial history of Loudy's early ministry as well as his work in Fairview Crossroads, SC and Pulaski, VA, etc. Facsimile. Paperback, 104 Pages.



[Concerning the [Study Bible Project](#)] Father's always on time. We know you will serve the Lord as He has written your script.

Ever since I learned that Father has written the script of our lives, I'm reminded of the many times those words, "it is written," have been included in God's Word (John 6:45; Galatians 3:10; Matthew 26:24; Mark 14:21; Luke 19:46 – to cite just a few).

Admittedly I don't understand some of the things in His script that He has written, and in fact it is difficult to get my head around many of the senseless acts that transpire in this world. Even so, if Papa is sovereign, and I know that He is, then I don't have to understand all of the nuances of His Logos. I just have to be faithful to the faith He has granted to me to trust Him in everything.

The Joy & Peace reading was something I've never closely envisioned or realized. Talk about our Father of glory giving enlightenment & revelations of His glorious glories ... Very exciting how our Father is bringing along the Study Bible Project – slowly but surely is always best. – **NH**

I am 84 years old and am a 1963 graduate of Wheaton College. This is a 30-year old "Thank You!" I have been overwhelmed by your ministry – thrilled

beyond words with the truths that I have learned from you over the years. – **CA**

I've watched all of your videos on YouTube regarding *The Undoing of Adam*. I am in agreement with your interpretation of Romans 5:18 and I Corinthians 15:22. – **TX**

Wishing and praying for you as you continue the important work on your Study Bible. I am so happy that Steve Martin has taken the position to assist you and André! – **GA**

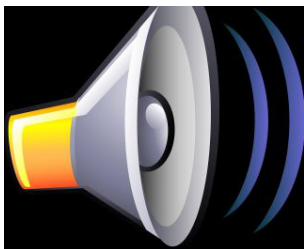
You're certainly crushing it. I loved the last conference videos on [YouTube](#) (as always). And the "crew" you've assembled (Steve, Stephen, Mark, André) certainly is doing fantastic work. Love each and every one of them and their contributions. ...

I watched the great news on YouTube about Steve becoming your assistant to free you up for your [Study Bible Project](#). Wonderful. May Father bless you in this endeavor. It is such a great idea. – **Germany**

My life is being completely changed because of the truth. Questions I have had my whole life are being explained and I am not in bondage anymore to religion.

I feel like a whole, new, person in Christ, seated with Him at the right hand of the Father. There are no words to express my heart or my joy.

And Thank YOU is not enough. I just don't even know how to tell you what the truth you so clearly give has done for my life! May God please keep you keeping on! – **VA** **BSN**



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Reader's Question Box #85

Should we still call on people to believe?

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

by — André Sneidar

Q: Should we call on people to believe? Do they have a choice in their salvation? Thank you so much for your great articles. I have grown so much from your ministries. Thank you.

A: Thanks for your question. I'll try to provide a short answer to your question.

1. God has already provided for the salvation of *all*. Thus, none will be lost and consigned to a mythical hell. Therefore, there is no need or requirement to ask people to believe. That is totally God's province. He "*calls whom He wills ...*" No one has a "choice" in their salvation, since it's already been determined by God through Christ's work at Calvary that ALL are saved.
2. God has been giving faith and a realization of their salvation to some, while the rest are temporarily blinded.
3. Sharing the Message is never wrong. So, freely share it with whoever is interested. Trust God to work His plan: we are under no burden of obligation to "save" anyone or "get them saved" (since it's already a done deal), thus we are freed from the guilt of that whole "expectation" to "perform."
4. Finally, it's a matter of God's calling. There's nothing we can say or do to get someone to believe, as it's all in God's "wheelhouse" – or His determina-

tion of whom He calls and when.

I hope that this is helpful in your studies in the pursuit of truth. **BSN**

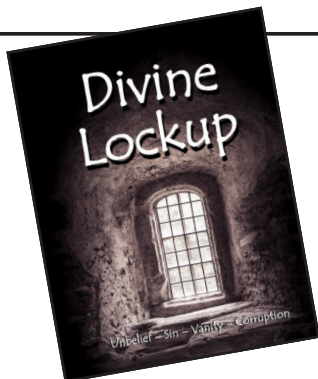
TOPICS:

Major: Calling; Salvation of All; Sovereignty

Minor: Hell

STRANGE A GOD WHO MOUTHS GOLDEN RULES AND FORGIVENESS, THEN INVENTED HELL; WHO MOUTHS MORALS TO OTHER PEOPLE AND HAS NONE HIMSELF; WHO FROWNS UPON CRIMES YET COMMITS THEM ALL; WHO CREATED MAN WITHOUT INVITATION, THEN TRIES TO SHUFFLE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAN'S ACTS UPON MAN, INSTEAD OF HONORABLY PLACING IT WHERE IT BELONGS, UPON HIMSELF; AND FINALLY WITH ALTOGETHER DIVINE OBTUSENESS, INVITES THIS POOR, ABUSED SLAVE TO WORSHIP HIM!

– MARK TWAIN (1835 -1910)



Divine Lockup

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

This work deals scripturally with God's sovereignty in the midst of humanity's current condition of, and future deliverance from, unbelief, sin, vanity and corruption. Without question, for all creation, the best is yet to come.