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Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28
There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)
Volume 46
Issue 1136

The Glory of God Through a Telescope:

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Peeling Away the Onion that Is God

by — Mark D. Vogt



People back in the days of Adam, Abraham, Job or King Solomon had no access to the equipment that scientists use today to explore the heavenly spaces. Their only physical advantage was the fact that when they looked into the Heavens they didn't have to deal with light pollution from cities or other sources. They were able to discover and catalogue the different constellations, which in themselves told the redemption story. In this they were able to realize the vastness of God's creation and the glory of God and His work.

> *The Heavens are recounting the glory of El, and the atmosphere is telling the work of His hands. Day after day is uttering a saying, and night after night is disclosing knowledge. There is no audible saying, and there are no words; their voice is unheard. Yet into the entire earth their voice goes forth and into the ends of the habitance their declarations* (Psalms 19:1-4).

Relatively speaking, man was and is without excuse in not understanding that there is a God and that He created all that they saw because Father put a God consciousness in every human being. What they saw was His glory on display.

Today though, the scientific world has some extremely sophisticated instruments for observing the Heavens, for calculating distances, and for mathematically determining where a planet or star might be even without being able to observe it directly.

While this is not an article on astronomy it will serve us well to have a grasp on how big and extensive our Universes is, and in so doing, give us one more layer to peel away this onion that is God.

In order for us to begin to comprehend God's Universe, we need to set down some facts that scientists have unearthed in order to understand the space we occupy.

We first need to get a handle on the *vast* distances as we try to perceive them. Astronomers use the measurement of a light year to calculate distances in the Heavens. One light year is the distance that light travels in one of our calendar years. To begin with, light travels at a speed of 186,000 miles per second. To put this in some perspective, it takes light 8 minutes and 20 seconds to leave the Sun and travel 93 million miles (the distance between the Earth and Sun) before it gets to the Earth.

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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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If we were to set out to travel to the Sun in a spacecraft, it would need to accelerate to 17,000 to 18,000 miles per hour to escape Earth's gravity. It would take 228 days to get there but the space vehicle would burn up long before it reached the Sun.

To calculate a light year, we multiply these times (60 seconds X 60 minutes X 24 hours X 365 days) and we will come to the astounding figure that light travels 5.88 trillion miles a year. Therefore 5.88 trillion miles is the equivalent of one light year. Already our brains are being overloaded because we certainly can't begin to comprehend this great distance.

Let's go beyond our solar system and increase our perspective. Our solar system is contained within and is part of the Milky Way galaxy. Our galaxy is considered a large galaxy and contains between 100 billion to 400 billion stars. It is estimated that the diameter of the Milky Way is between 120,000 to 200,000 light years across. Think about that for a minute. It would take a parcel of light 120,000 to 200,000 years to get from one side of our galaxy to the other side. Are you beginning to absorb this?

Now let's widen our perspective even more – a great deal more. The Milky Way galaxy is part of the Laniakea super cluster of galaxies. A super cluster of galaxies is simply a group of galaxies that are, as the name implies, a cluster of galaxies grouped together. This super cluster is approximately 520 million light years across. And you thought the Milky Way galaxy was big. Let's think even bigger. There are estimates that there are about 10 million of these super clusters in the Universe.

If that isn't enough, try this on for size. There are an estimated 1 septillion stars in the universe. Never heard of a septillion? Neither did I until I did some research. One septillion is a 1 followed by twenty-four zeros. It would look like this written out. 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

> *The One counting the number of stars, He is calling them by their names. Great is our Lord and vast in vigor; As to His understanding, there is no enumeration of it* (Psalm 147:4-5).

Imagine naming one septillion stars, and having separate names for all of them, and then remembering each and every one of their names. Not only do we have stars, but the Universe is also made up of constellations, dark matter (so dark that no radiation escapes from it), black holes (so dense that nothing escapes them including light), asteroids, comets, other planets, neutrinos, quarks, photons and many other things found in the Heavens.

Science has proposed that the Universe is fundamentally composed of material that vibrates. There appears to be an energy that is pulsating throughout the Universe. Whether this is so or not it appears that, if true, then the only answer as to its existence has to be attributed to God Himself, since as Creator and Sustainer of His creation He is tasked with keeping everything together and running it.

What we are talking about is not that God is causing this vibration or energy, but that God Himself *is* that energy. He is not only omniscient, but He is omnipresent. God inhabits the entire creation, and if the Universe is vibrating with energy because of the presence of God in His Universe, this does not mean that He is the forest or the mountains for example, but that He occupies and is in that forest and in the mountains.



The New Covenant

A Compilation

What is the New Covenant? With whom is this this covenant made? Are believer's today under this covenant? This work is a compilation from four dispensational authors: C.E. McLain, J. Eustace Mills, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., and Ed Stevens. 83 pages.

God is large and in charge (what an understatement) and He runs His universe with precision. In the Old Testament Nebuchadnezzar found this out in a most humbling way. One day the king was out on the veranda observing the things in his kingdom. He was very proud of what he had accomplished and attributed this success to himself. Unknown to him at the time, God began a process of humbling Nebuchadnezzar and teaching him a lesson that he never forgot.

The king spent seven years basically living outdoors in a field just as an animal, not being in his "right mind," growing his hair long as well as his fingernails and subsisting on what was available to him in the fields. At the end of seven years God returned him to what he was prior to this. In Daniel 4:34-35 Nebuchadnezzar says:

> *At the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to the Heavens, and my knowledge was returning to me. Then I blessed the Supreme, and I lauded and honored Him Who is living for the eon, since His jurisdiction is an eonian jurisdiction, and His Kingdom is with generation after generation. All those abiding on the Earth are reckoned as naught; according to His will He is doing with the army of the Heavens and with those abiding on the Earth. And there is no one who shall stay His hand and say to Him, "what have you done?"*

Isaiah says basically the same thing, only in a different way:

> *That they may know that from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is no one apart from Me; I am Yahweh, and there is no other. Former of light and Creator of darkness, Maker of good and Creator of evil, I, Yahweh, make all these things* (Isaiah 45:6-7).

These are things that science knows nothing about and cannot know anything about, for they are spiritually discerned. As an example, how would science explain Daniel 10:10-14? Daniel is in great turmoil for he had a great vision concerning his people Israel and he is troubled by it. He prays to God for an answer and God dispatches a messenger to him, but it takes this messenger 21 days to get to him because he was delayed for that amount of time by the Prince of Persia.

The Prince of Persia? Who is this? There was a country called Persia on the Earth at that time, but how could anyone living in Persia hinder a messenger from outer space sent from God?

The answer lies in the fact that there are celestial beings, having been created by God, who rule the Heavens in accord with God's consummate plan and purpose. They represent, or should I say, are represented on Earth by the nations that exist in this world. Unbeknownst by all unbelievers, and even by most "Christians," there are celestial beings, maybe trillions of them, who inhabit the Heavens while some of them actively influence what happens on Earth. As Job 15:15 declares, *"the Heavens are unclean,"* and they are unclean because evil exists out there.

Why are the Heavens unclean? Why is it this way?



Contrast: God's Plan for Evil and Sin

by — Steve Martin

Why would a good God create evil and sin?

CONTRAST explores the surprising biblical answer.

Through Scripture and careful word studies, it reveals how evil and sin are not outside of God's sovereign plan but serve a temporary purpose in revealing His goodness, wisdom, grace, and love.

A fresh perspective on one of the Bible's most challenging questions.

The answer lies in the fact that the Heavens became unclean when Satan and his followers were created (I John 3:8). God programed them this way. Satan's action on the Earth toward Adam, and Adam's subsequent failure, made the Earth unclean as well. This is all a part of God's plan.

> *For the rest, brethren mine, be invigorated in the Lord and in the might of His strength. Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary, for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials* (Ephesians 6:10-12).

This is written for *the Church which is His Body*. This is something which science cannot address, because those in the field of science are totally ignorant of it. They can't even ask the right questions because they are unaware of what is really going on in the Heavens.

In the May 2026 issue of *Astronomy Magazine*, the headline on the cover of the magazine reads "Is Anyone Out There?" Science has been grappling with that question for decades and they even have monitoring stations dedicated to looking for alien life.

Absolutely, there are beings out there, but the scientific community doesn't know that. They are looking for little green men from a far-off planet, not who or what is really out there. If only they would read and believe the Bible they would know, but that won't happen because Satan has blinded the minds of people so they can't know (II Corinthians 4:4).

But God has given us, who have been granted realization, the knowledge of what is going on and what will go on in the future. This understanding is a gift that keeps on giving, for what God is talking about is the revelation of His highest pinnacle of truth – the Secret of the Administration of Grace.

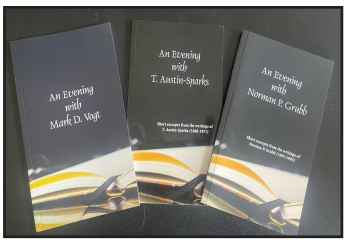
God has to give us this realization by peeling away the layers of Who He is in order to get to this truth. But the layers have to be peeled away one layer at a time to get to this point. God begins His revelation in the Old Testament as the hard-to-know, somewhat inscrutable and distant God for those patriarchs. As His revelation of Himself grows and grows, more layers are peeled away revealing more and more of Him.

So, what does this mean for us who have been given the highest revelation of Father? What does this mean for us in the future? In our vivification we will have a body like Christ's (Philippians 3:20-21).

How long did it take Christ after His resurrection to ascend to the Father who is above all heavens? We will be able to travel that fast in our resurrection. Our inheritance, our allotment is in the Heavens (Ephesians 1:7-11, 23).

Our ministry now is to administer to the fellow believers as well as be witnesses to these celestial beings to whom we will minister in the future as Christ's emissaries, being used to reconcile these celestial beings back to God.

We are part of THE Christ, the complement of Christ, even as He is the complement of God. By extension then, we are the complement, or that which fills up God and makes Him complete. How can God need completing? Because All came out of Him (Romans 11:36), therefore all must *(see LAYERS, last page)*



(More to come.)

"An Evening with …" Series

An Evening with Mark D. Vogt
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These small pocketbooks, intended to introduce readers to an author through a selection of gleanings, are designed to be enjoyed in a single evening.



Editor's Desk

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At the Core of the Study Bible Project

Expanded Literal Translation (*ELT*)

THE *Expanded Literal Translation* (*ELT*) is at the core of the **Study Bible Project**. It is a fresh English translation of the Greek New Testament that seeks to reproduce the wording and structure of the original text as consistently and transparently as possible. Its purpose is not literary elegance, but to provide readers with a closer view of the underlying Greek for study and analysis.

Readability

The ***ELT*** does not prioritize easy-to-read, idiomatic English over strict adherence to the wording of the Greek text. As a result, it may initially read somewhat awkwardly, but becomes increasingly natural as the reader grows accustomed to its translation approach. Consistency and concordancy take precedence over literary style.

Audience

Dedicated to accuracy, the ***ELT*** is intentionally literal and technical. Because it prioritizes precision over readability, it is designed primarily for serious students of Scripture rather than casual readers.

Method

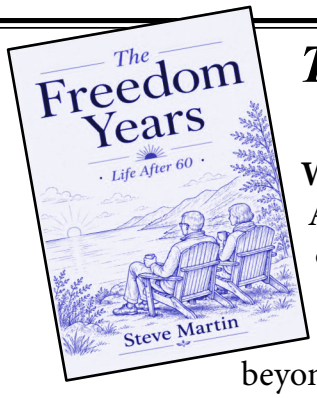
The ***ELT*** seeks a one-to-one correspondence between the Greek and English texts. Every English "word" (that is, each unit separated by spaces, including hyphenated forms) represents a single Greek word, unless it appears in subscript.

Hyphens are used to represent Greek compound words, to preserve etymological components, or when a single Greek word requires multiple English elements to convey its meaning.

Greek Texts

The ***ELT*** follows a nonpartisan, evidence-based approach to Greek textual criticism. Rather than giving automatic preference to any one manuscript tradition – whether the Textus Receptus, Byzantine, or Alexandrian text – it evaluates each textual variant individually on its own merits.

The "oldest" extant manuscripts are not necessarily the most accurately dated, nor does age alone guarantee textual superiority. Likewise, "majority" manuscripts may simply reflect the repeated copying of an early but imperfect pattern. Each variant is therefore examined independently rather than ac-



The Freedom Years: Life After 60

by — Steve Martin

What if your greatest freedom comes later in life?

As we grow older, it's easy to look back with regret, grief, or unanswered questions. But what if your story has never been hanging by a thread?

In *The Freedom Years,* Steve Martin shares the discoveries that transformed his own life: there are no wasted years, no forgotten tears, and no chapter beyond the care of a loving Father.

Filled with personal stories and quiet reflections, this book invites you to lay down fear, embrace gratitude, and enjoy the life you've been given.

Welcome to the Freedom Years.

cepted because of its manuscript family or traditional standing.

Transliterations

Although transliterations can occasionally be useful, the ***ELT*** generally avoids them whenever they carry traditional theological associations that may obscure the underlying meaning of the Greek text. Whenever practical, Greek words are translated rather than merely transferred into English letters.

Resources

The ***ELT*** relies heavily upon original-language tools, including interlinears, lexicons, and etymological research. These resources help ground translation decisions in linguistic evidence rather than inherited doctrinal traditions or conventional English renderings, thereby reducing the danger of circular definitions.

Strength

No single translation should be accepted uncritically – including the ***ELT***. Every translation reflects interpretive decisions and should be examined in the light of the biblical text itself.

One advantage of the ***ELT*** is its independence from established academic traditions. Rather than assuming conventional conclusions, each translation decision is reexamined from the ground up.

Working outside of formal linguistic institutions encourages continual reexamination of assumptions that scholars may accept without question. While this approach requires careful research and humility, it also allows longstanding traditions to be revisited and overlooked details to be reconsidered. This independence is viewed not as a liability, but as one of the distinctive strengths of the ***ELT***.



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Topics:
Major: Editor's Desk; Expanded Literal Translation (ELT); Study Bible Project



Thanks for making your materials available – I recently discovered your online store and have been very pleased with everything I've ordered so far. – ***AZ***

Your works are my primary source for study and enrichment. – ***OH***

There really are no treasures more precious to me than the revelations from our Father and His Son through a myriad of truth seekers made available from Study Shelf. – ***IN***

The *Bible Student's Courses* are well put together! – ***AL***

I would like to receive your daily emails from the *Bible Students Notebook*. I agree with your doctrinal approach and the salvation and reconciliation of all. Please put me on your permanent email list. – ***New Zealand***

I believe that Steve is a wonderful addition to the work, and as Clyde's assistant, Clyde can give more of his attention to the Study Bible which I know many of us are waiting to get our hands on with bated breath. – ***CA***

Thank you for your tireless work to reveal to us the whole Truth. – ***TX***

Keep going toward the truth of our Lord. My cousin and I have a book-of-the-month [club]. We chose one of your books a month and every Sunday night we speak about the readings. We grow together in love of the truth in our Christ. Thank you for sharing what God has revealed to you, and now us! – ***PA***

(*see Mail, next page*)

Layers (*continued from page 9515*)

come back to Him.

Is anything too hard for God?

> *Alas, my Lord Yahweh! Behold, You Yourself made the Heavens and the Earth by Your great vigor and by Your outstretched arm; nothing at all is too marvelous for You …* (Jeremiah 32:17)

Only in Ephesians and Colossians do we find this pinnacle of truth, about *the Church which is His Body* and the reconciliation of the Heavenly spaces and the beings up there. Only in Ephesians and Colossians do we read of God's plan to reconcile the Heavens back to Himself. This is and will be our mission field.

All came out of Him (not *ex-nihlo* which is a fancy theological theory which says that God created all things out of nothing). This is contrary to Romans 11:36, *"for* ***out of Him,*** *and through Him and to Him is all."* This means that all will come back to Him Who gave it. We are the recipients of His JOY, and we don't have to do anything to receive it, earn it, or work for it. Just enjoy the ride, since your destination is sure – because God doesn't miss.

Enjoy this layer that God has peeled away. BSN

Upcoming installment: "The Glory of God Through a Microscope"

Topics:
Major: Creation; Glory; God; Heavens;
Minor: Celestials; Telescope

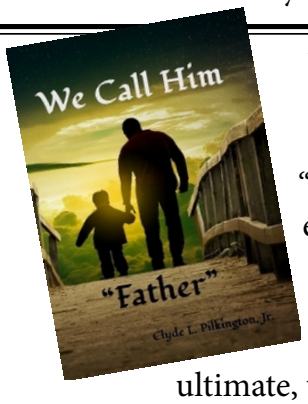
Mail (*continued from previous page*)

I read lots of books and few enlighten me about God's Word. Yours give me new insights. – ***OH***

I also want to give you a bit more background about why I appreciate your online bookstore. I was introduced to the *Concordant Version* of the Bible through one of my friends when I was a teenager, because his grandmother was one of the translators. I have followed the Concordant Publishing Concern for the past few decades and subscribed to *Unsearchable Riches*. …

Your work is the closest modern equivalent of the teaching of A.E. Knoch, etc, of which I'm aware, and I'm very happy to be able to invest in the additional resources as I'm able. I just happened to find an advertisement for Study Shelf in a book that I had ordered (Custance's *Without Form and Void*) which led me to your website. You've clearly put a lot of effort into both collecting earlier materials as well as your own writing, and I'm thankful for that and reading all of the books with great interest. – ***AZ*** BSN

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts.
– William Shakespeare (1564-1616)



We Call Him "Father"

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"One God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:6, Concordant Version). Jesus Christ came to reveal God's true identity and nature as "Father." This was an advanced revelation concerning God, super-abounding that of any previous one. With radical boldness Christ called Him "Father," and Paul pressed this glorious truth to its grand ultimate, that God was the "Father of all." 31 chapters, 21 appendixes. Second Edition (2023). 276 pages.