# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Joy!

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 1138


# The Will of God and the Will of Man

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*by* — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



The *CV* uses the phrase "*the will of God*" 20 times. In *every* instance the Greek word for "*will*" is the noun θέλημα (*thelēma*, G2307).

The *CKC* defines *thelēma* as "that which is the subject of decision, choice or purpose." It carries the meaning of "determination" (*SEC*), "resolve; determined purpose; resultant choice" (*JMNT*).

A survey of the usage of *thelēma* reveals that it is not just God Who has a "will," but mankind as well – after all, we were made in the image of God. The difference is that God's will is *absolute and free,* while humanity's will is *relative and bound*.

It is revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures that the human will – its resolve, its determined purpose, its resultant choice – is but the human stage of the sovereign work of God.

> *A man's heart devises his way, yet Yahweh establishes his steps* (Proverbs 16:9, *CV*).

Thus, we find that the Greek Scriptures take the exact same word that it uses for the sovereign *"will"* of God – *thelēma* – and likewise uses it for the subordinate and subservient *"will"* of mankind.

Perhaps the most notable use of *thelēma* is from our Champion, the Christ.

> … *not My will* [***thelēma***], *but Thine, be done!* (Luke 22:42, *KJV*).

Further examples from Scripture of the will of mankind are many. Let's consider a few more.

The will of the people at Calvary:

> … *Yet Pilate gives Jesus up to their will* [***thelēma***] (Luke 23:25, *BSV*).

The will of a man toward his virgin:

> *Yet he who stands settled in his heart, having no necessity, yet has authority as to his own will* [***thelēma***], *and has decided this in his own heart (to be keeping his virgin) ideally will be doing* (I Corinthians 7:37, *CV*).

The will of Apollos:

> *Now concerning brother Apollos, I entreat him much that he may be coming to you with the brethren, and it was undoubtedly not his will* [***thelēma***] *that he should come now, yet he will come whenever he should* (continued on page 9529)


The Will of God and the Will of Man..... 9527
Holy and Flawless in His Sight..... 9531
Editor's Desk: The Study Bible Project – An In-Depth, Multi-Person, Multigenerational Work..... 9532
Too Mysterious to Understand ( quote: Liam McAllister)..... 9534

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Bible Student's Notebook™
*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*
ISSN: 1936-9360
Volume 46, No. 1138 – September 21, 2026
*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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*have an opportunity* (I Corinthians 16:12, *CV*).

The will of the flesh and of the comprehension:

> … *doing the will* [***thelēma***] *of the flesh and of the comprehension* … (Ephesians 2:3, *CV*).

The will of the Nations:

> … *the will* [***thelēma***] *of the Nations* … (I Peter 4:3, *YLT*).

The Greek noun *thelēma* is taken from the root verb θέλω (*thelō*, G2309), meaning "to form a decision, choice or purpose (*Concordant Keyword Concordance*), "to exercise the will, be inclined, or feel a desire/wish" (*SEC*).

The Greek verb *thelō* is used also of the sovereign *"will"* of God:

> … *whom He will* [***thelō***], *He is merciful, yet whom He will* [***thelō***], *He is hardening … Now if God, willing* [***thelō***] *to display His indignation* … (Romans 9:18, 22, *BSV*).

> *Who wills* [***thelō***] *that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the* truth (I Timothy 2:4, *CV*).

Yet, like *thelēma,* the verb *thelō* is used also of the subordinate and subservient *"will"* of mankind.

Since *thelō* is used 208 times in the Greek Scriptures, we will limit our consideration to a few examples of the will of Paul:

> … *For I am not willing* [***thelō***] *for you to be ignorant* … (Romans 11:25, *CV*).

> *For I will* [***thelō***] *all men to be as I myself also* … (I Corinthians 7:7, *BSV*).

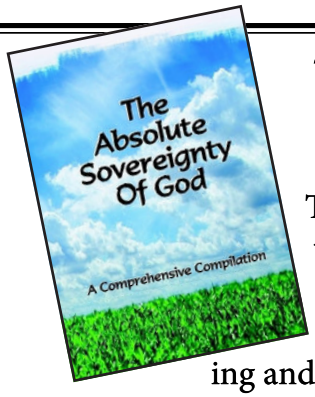
> *For I am aware that good is not making its home in me (that is, in my flesh), for to will* [***thelō***] *is lying beside me, yet to be effecting the ideal is not. For it is not the good that I will* [***thelō***] *that I am doing, but the evil that I am not willing* [***thelō***], *this I am putting into practice. Now if what I am not willing* [thelō], *this I am doing, it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin*[1] *which is making its home in me. Consequently, I am finding the law that, at my willing* [thelō] *to be doing the ideal, the evil is lying beside me* (Romans 7:18-21, *CV*).

### The Will of Paul

Finally, to illustrate the point further, Paul in I Corinthians 9:17 spoke concerning his evangel commission:

> *For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation is committed unto me* (*KJV*).

**1.** Here we capitalize "*Sin*," taking the lead from the *CV*, where of the 37 uses of the word "*sin*" found in Romans, it capitalizes it 26 times – to distinguish between sin (1) as a source, and sin (2) as an act (*i.e.,* cause and effect). The capitalized "*Sin*" is a personification: portraying it as an active, living agent that seizes opportunities, uses commandments to deceive, and puts people to death.For more information, see:"Sin vs Sins," Tidbits of Truth, *Bible Student's Notebook* 1059.


# *The Absolute Sovereignty of God*

*A Comprehensive Compilation*

This quintessential book victoriously celebrates and convincingly proclaims the absolute sovereignty of God. Sadly, religion has veiled the truth of the God of the Bible, making Him either an aloof deity, indifferent to the condition of the creation, or one who is at the worst cruel or at the least unloving and uncaring. Yet the loving Deity of Sacred Scripture always has had and will have sole and complete control over His entire creation. This ultimate collection of 100 works by 34 authors spans nearly 175 years. It is an extensive reference work that is essential for every library. 478 pages.

The word translated "*willingly*" here is ἑκών (*hekōn* G1635), meaning "unforced, voluntary, willing; of one's own will; of one's own accord" (*TGL*).

The issue was not if Paul would execute his commission or not, but whether he would do so willingly, or against his will. Either way, the stewardship would remain.

Look at how literal translations also render this verse:

> *If for willing this I do, a reward I have; if but unwilling, a stewardship I have been entrusted with* (*ED*).
>
> *For if willing I do this, I have a reward; and if unwillingly--with a stewardship I have been entrusted* (*YLT*).
>
> *For if I am engaging in this voluntarily, I have wages, yet if involuntarily, I have been entrusted with an administration* (*CV*).
>
> *For, if, by choice, this thing I am doing, I have, a reward; but, if not by choice, with a stewardship, have I been entrusted* (*REB*).

The issue has *never* been whether or not mankind has a will. Rather, the question is simply whether or not it is free. And it is obvious by these few examples that God's will is absolute, free and sovereign, and mankind's will is relative, bound and subordinate.

Indeed, God has written the Script of our lives – all of it – every chapter, every paragraph, every line, every word. Yet, there is the unique artistic stamp of individuality that an actor brings to a script to transform the written dialogue into a multi-dimensional person. The actor brings life to the character.

According to "The Actor's Art on Screen" (Ihunwo & Waribo, *Journal of Arts & Humanities*, Volume 10, Issue 09), an actor's performance of a script includes elements known as:

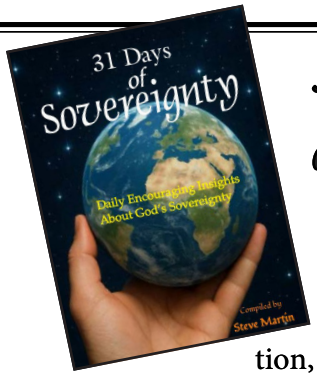
- Vocal Delivery: Inflection, pitch, pacing and tone.
- Physicality: Demeanor, posture, gestures and movement style.
- Subtext: Emotional reality and meaning behind the spoken words.
- Mannerisms: Distinctive habits or tics tailored to the character.
- Internal Life: The character's psychological motivations, history and secrets.

Thus, actors are not robots. Actors are like clay in the hand of the writer, director and producer of the script, who mold the actor into the desired performance. But an actor is not mere clay. The actor is a living person.

We, too, are much more than clay. We are living creations of God. So, while clay is such a beautiful and wonderful figure – as A.E. Knoch reminded us – *figures are not facts*. Figures of speech simply illustrate a particular point. They purely highlight a certain aspect of fact, but are not in and of themselves the fact.

> *For it is God Who is operating in you to will* [*thelō*] *as well as to work for the sake of His* de-

*(see WILL, page 9533)*




## *31 Days of Sovereignty: Daily Encouraging Insights About God's Sovereignty*

*A Devotional, compiled by* — Steve Martin

This book is a curated selection of 31 of the most powerful and insightful chapters from the book The Absolute Sovereignty of God: A Comprehensive Compilation, emphasizing God's complete sovereignty – His absolute control over all things. The goal of the book is to help readers overcome fear, guilt and pressure, and instead find peace in God's unwavering rule. It is hoped that these readings will inspire deeper trust and confidence in God's sovereignty, bringing comfort and re-assurance. 81 pages.

# Holy and Flawless in His Sight

*by* — Steve Martin

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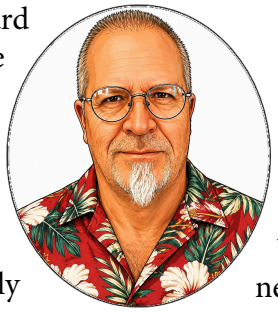
*According as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love …* (Ephesians 1:4-5, CV).



Paul isn't describing a goal toward which we must strive. This verse isn't about *how we behave* – it's about *how* ***God*** *beholds.*

When we read that we are *"holy and flawless,"* most of us instinctively measure that by our daily experience. We immediately think, "Well, I'm definitely not flawless. I lose my temper, I struggle with doubt, I fail again and again."

But Paul isn't talking about your performance. He's talking about your *placement.*

## Before the Disruption

Notice the timing:

Before you ever took a breath, before you ever failed or succeeded, before Adam ever fell, before sin ever entered the story – God had already chosen you in Christ.

This was no afterthought or emergency plan. It was His purpose *"before the disruption of the world."*

In other words, God's view of you was settled before the destruction of the world – and nothing that happened after that can undo it.

Your identity was formed in the perfection of Christ, not in the corruption of Adam.

## In His Sight

The phrase *"in His sight"* doesn't mean, "when you get your act together." It means, "*from* ***His*** *eternal perspective.*"

You may look in the mirror and see weakness, inconsistency, and the long shadows of failure – but God looks through the lens of His Son. He sees you in Christ, not in yourself.

From that view, you are already what He designed you to be: holy, flawless, beloved.

> *For you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:3).

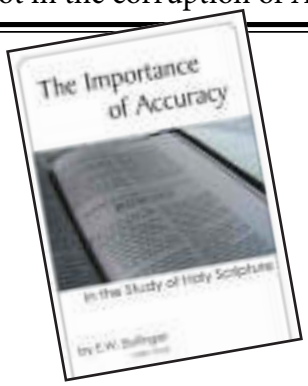
This is not an ideal to be reached; it's a reality to be realized.

## Living in Two Realities

In our natural experience, we live in time – a realm of process, growth and imperfection. But in God's sight, we exist in the timeless – a realm of completion, wholeness and rest.

In time, we're still learning who we are.
In eternity, we already *are* who He made us to be.

*(see Flawless, last page)*




## *The Importance of Accuracy in the Study of the Holy Scriptures*

*by* — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

Error in premise equals error in conclusion. In this work Bullinger stresses the critical importance of accuracy when it comes to the study of Scripture. 56 pages, paperback.

# Editor's Desk

## The Study Bible Project

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## An In-Depth, Multi-Person, Multigenerational Work

*by* — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

### Our Vision

The ***Study Bible Project*** is laying the foundation for a comprehensive Bible study resource designed to serve serious students of Scripture for generations to come.

Like our readers and fellow laborers, we eagerly desire to release this work as quickly as possible. Yet the importance of this undertaking demands that it never be rushed. Our highest priority is **accuracy over speed.** We are committed to producing a work that is as careful, thorough and faithful to the original Scriptures as our present realization and abilities allow.

From the outset, we recognize that completing the entire Bible – or even the New Testament – will require the combined efforts of many workers across multiple generations.

### Building from the Right Foundation

Every aspect of this project is being approached with great care. We are intentionally refusing to take inherited interpretations or traditional renderings for granted. Instead, we are reexamining every detail in an effort to establish the strongest possible foundation and avoid simply perpetuating long-standing errors.

We are thankful to begin where we believe the foundation is most critical: **the epistles of the Secret Administration (*One Body Bible*).**

### What the Project Includes

The ***Study Bible Project*** is much more than a study Bible. It is a comprehensive study system that includes:

- Extensive verse-by-verse study notes
- A Greek-English Wordbook (GEW)
- An Analytical Compendium doctrinal manual (AC)
- A Glossary of Terms (GoT)
- A Selected Word Families appendix (SWF)
- Two new Bible translations:
  - ***Expanded Literal Translation (ELT):*** a hyper-literal translation designed for detailed study
  - ***Bible Student's Version (BSV):*** a clear, modern translation built upon the same research

Together, these resources are designed to provide students with an integrated and comprehensive un-




## *His Grandest Glories: Studies in Colossians*

*by* — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Christ and His highest honors come before us in Colossians, even as the saints and their celestial blessings are the theme of Ephesians. There the transcendent truths of the present secret administration were set forth as they affect the believers among the nations, who become peers of an election out of Israel in spiritual, supernal dignities. Here these tremendous truths are a halo on the brow of Christ. His glories as the Messiah of Israel on the earth are magnified to universal dimensions. All is created in Him in the beginning, and all is reconciled in Him at the consummation. 114 pages, facsimile paperback.

derstanding of Scripture.

### A Lifetime Work

As the scope of this project has become increasingly apparent, so has the realization of its magnitude. If our present team is able to complete the Secret Administration epistles (*One Body Bible*) during our lifetime, it will represent a monumental accomplishment.

This work is far greater than any one individual – or even one generation. Our objective is simply to advance it as far as possible during our own period of service. If God has ordained the work to continue beyond us, it will require additional laborers and future generations to carry it forward.

### Continuing Growth Through Annual Releases

Rather than waiting until every portion is complete, our plan is to make the Study Bible available in installments.

Following the initial release, we anticipate publishing **annual editions** that will include:

- Newly completed sections
- Ongoing revisions and refinements
- Expanded study notes and reference materials

In this way, readers can benefit steadily from the work while also participating in its continual growth and development.

### Sharing the Journey

Even as the project progresses, we are making its findings immediately available through a variety of ongoing resources, including:

- The Biblical Resources YouTube channel
- The weekly Bible Student's Notebook
- Individual study manuals in the Findings from the Bible Study Project series

Our desire is not only to produce a Study Bible, but to invest in generations of Bible students by providing accurate, carefully researched tools that will continue to grow and mature for years to come. BSN

**Topics:**
**Major:** Editor's Desk; Study Bible Project
*Minor:* Growth; Study

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***Will*** *(continued from page 9530)*

light (Philippians 2:13, *CV*).

While a piece of pottery surely can be used, it can never be said to *"will as well as work for the sake of His delight."* Philippians 2:13 speaks of the operation of Divine Infusion in the out-called of creation.

BSN

Topics:
Major: Sovereignty; Will
*Minor:* Figures of Speech; Philippians 2:13




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.

**Pre-Expectancy** (playlist)
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXXxM1xuIaqtUjVD2MG3y1vX05VNozxnU

**Flawless** (continued from page 9531)

That's why Paul can say that we are seated together with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), even while we're still walking around in mortal bodies.

God doesn't speak in probabilities; He speaks in finished realities.

## Holy and Flawless – Because *He* Is

We are not holy because of what we've done.
We are holy because of where we are – in Christ.

We are not flawless because we live perfectly.
We are flawless because we are joined to Perfection Himself.

This holiness isn't something you grow into; it's something you wake up to.

As your awareness grows, your experience begins to align with His perspective – but your identity has never changed.

> *For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified* (Hebrews 10:14).

You are holy and flawless in His sight *now.* Not someday. Not when you overcome enough. Not when your faith feels strong enough. ***Now.***

Because grace doesn't wait for your progress to declare your position.

## In Love

And don't miss the last two words of the verse: "*in love.*" That's not merely the atmosphere in which He sees you – it's the reason He chose you. *Everything* that God does is rooted in love. Love is not His reaction to our goodness; it's His reason for our existence.

To be holy and flawless in His sight means to be seen through the eyes of love – a love that cannot be earned, diminished or lost.

## The View that Changes Everything

The more we begin to see ourselves as *He* sees us, the less we live out of guilt and striving, and the more we live out of rest and gratitude.

Grace transforms – not by telling you to become something new, but by showing you what you've already been all along: chosen, complete and radiant in His sight.

> *You are complete in Him, Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority* (Colossians 2:10).

BSN

**Topics:**
**Major:** Grace; Holy; Identity; Love; Sovereignty
*Minor:* Calling; Realization

> "Too mysterious to understand" is the oldest excuse in religion for avoiding looking at what Scripture text actually says.
>
> – Liam McAllister





***The Divine Activation of Faith and the Myth of Free Will***

*by* — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

a What is faith? Who is a believer? Is faith a matter of human choice, or is it gift from God? Do those who have faith understand and believe everything correctly? Or, do they experience areas or degrees of unbelief? Can one be weak or strong in faith? Is there room in faith for growth? These are among the important questions that are considered in this work. 72 pages.