



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 37
Issue 914

Our Past, Present and Future

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Our Pre-Historic Past (Chosen)



Our Pleromatic Future (Celestial)



Our Problematic Present (Concealed)

*A*s believers during the Secret Administration we have a glorious past and future, while our present remains quite flawed and broken.

We have a *pre-historic* past.¹

Paul teaches us in Ephesians that we were chosen in Christ *before* the Disruption of the World. This means that our calling pre-dates the entrance of sin into the Universe. Therefore, sin has no bearing whatsoever on our calling and standing before God.

We were chosen in holiness and flawlessness, divinely designated *beforehand* for the place of a Son!

He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a Son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will (Ephesians 1:4-5, CV).



We have a *pleromatic* future.²

Our lot has been cast in Christ, Who is seated at God's right hand far above all the Heavens among the Celestials. This "seating" speaks of universal enthroned dominion, and as "*the Complement [Pleroma] of the One completing the All in all ... in the oncoming eons, He [will] be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus*" (Ephesians 1:23; 2:6-7).³

We have a *problematic* present.⁴

2. "Relating to the pleroma" (*Collins English Dictionary*); "Pertaining to the pleroma, or fullness of divine being" (*The Century Dictionary*).

For a full examination of this important topic, see:

— *The Pleroma: Paul's "Lost" Teaching (The Complement of Christ, of God, and of the Ages) — A Comprehensive Compilation* (see the [order form](#) under "Compilations").

3. See "The Righteous Rule of Reconciliation," [Bible Student's Notebook #913](#).

4. "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7), or better translated,

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1. We have a past that predates human history.

"According to God's purpose of the ages, the members of the Ecclesia are not historic, but prehistoric specimens of grace." — Dr. Vincent Bennett (1903-1981), [Our Calling in Christ](#), see [order form](#) under "Other Authors."

However, despite having such a rich and glorious past and future, we find ourselves, for now, being involuntarily subjected to vanity,⁵ brokenness⁶ and humiliation.⁷ We, who have a holy and flawless past and future, currently “appear in the guise of sinful humanity in order that God may be able to use us to display His grace to others (Ephesians 2:7)” (John H. Essex (1907-1991)).⁸

Our present subjection, against our will, is NOT who we actually are. Instead, we are justified: righteous and holy.⁹ What we’re currently experiencing is a *pre-*

“But humanity is born to misery, even as sparks of burning coal shoot aloft to fly” (CV).

5. *“For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily” (Romans 8:20, CV).*
6. *“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me” (Romans 7:20-21); or as The Message has it, “My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up.”*
7. *“Who will transfigure the **body of our humiliation**, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself” (Philippians 3:21, CV).*
8. *“The Completing of the All In All,” [Bible Student’s Notebook #839](#).*
9. For more information on this vital theme see the book:

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);

tense, or a guise as Essex so aptly called it. With Paul, we come to the realization that *“it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me”* (Romans 7:17, 20).

Our past and future are entirely unaffected by our present. In fact, instead of Christendom’s message of us having been *“dead IN trespasses and sins,”* *“dead IN sins,”* and *“being dead IN your sins”* (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13, KJV), Paul’s grand revelation is that we are instead *dead TO them.*

Notice how the *Concordant Version* accurately translates these three passages:

And you, being dead TO your offenses and sins
(Ephesians 2:1).¹⁰

– [Ultimate Liberation: Beyond Forgiveness \(The Justification from and of Sin\)](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (See [order form](#) under “Pilkington.”).

Also see these Biblical Resources videos:

- [Are You Forgiven or Justified?](#), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.;
- [The Justification of Sin](#), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

10. To which the *Nathaniel Scarlett Translation* (1798) agrees, *“Who are dead TO trespasses and sins.”*

- union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men 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

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For definitions of abbreviations/acronyms, see the [online key](#).

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We also being dead **TO** the offenses and the lusts (Ephesians 2:5).

You also being dead **TO** the offenses (Colossians 2:13).

A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) wrote concerning this prehistoric *deadness TO sin*,

We were chosen in Christ *before* the disruption of the world to be holy and flawless in His sight (Ephesians 1:4). *Our saintliness was ours in God's purpose long before we had sinned.* So it is with this grace also. When Christ died, we died with Him. When He was roused and vivified, we were in Him, and we ascended and sat down among the Celestials in Christ Jesus. Let us not blur this marvelous truth by imagining that all this occurs for each individual after becoming dead through sin, or in trespasses. Death is oblivion. **We were dead to everything before we were born.** All these high honors were ours *before* we could make or mar them. They are absolutely independent of our conduct.

Such a slight inaccuracy in translation has robbed us of the grand truth of our death **TO** sin in His death. It has substituted the popular but erroneous “*dead IN trespasses and sins*” and applied it indiscriminately to all sinners, who are not in view in this connection at all.¹¹

We have an anchored past, chosen in holiness and perfection. We have a sure future, destined to manifest righteousness and glory. Our present state is but

11. [Rooted and Grounded in Love](#); A commentary on Ephesians, chapter 22 (edited excerpt), see [order form](#) under “Knoch.”

a role assumed on the stage of human history. We are presently *acting* as sinners, while indeed we are “*God's righteousness*” in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:21, CV).

Let us illustrate the point.

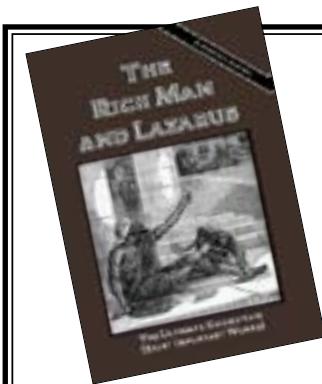
John Barron is an actor. He performs on stage as the villain, Brian Payne. He plays this character with amazing precision. The audience despises the character that he portrays. Truth be told, he detests his character as well.

Brian Payne was written by the playwright as a mean, spiteful, vicious and vindictive person: everything that John Barron is not. The fact of the matter is that John is a very kind and gracious soul, and his portrayal of the assigned role weighs quite heavily on him. It is extremely anguish for him, day after day, as he gets himself into character to depict the villain on stage.

As it is designed to be, those seeing John Barron on stage see only Brian Payne. The real John Barron remains hidden on stage. Only those who know him outside of the theater can truly know him as he is.

Now, make no mistake about this, John Barron is *not* Brian Payne – he only *portrays* him. John Barron is *not* two different people. He *doesn't* have two natures. He *doesn't* have two personalities. He's *not* schizophrenic. Who he actually is has *nothing* to do with his stage character at all, but rather the person he is *before* the curtain lifted, and *after* it falls.

So, let's be clear about this: he's John Barron, simply *playing the role* of Brian Payne – and he does a great job!



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328 pp., PB

See [order form](#) under “Compilations.”

Long before we performed the role of sinners on the stage of human history, our true nature and genuine person were firmly set – “*holy and flawless ... a Son.*” Much later we were thrust upon a stage and given the script of a “sinner” to play. This is a performance quite different from who we really are.

All humanity, believers and non-believers alike, are assigned their roles by God. English playwright William Shakespeare seemingly recognized this concept:

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)

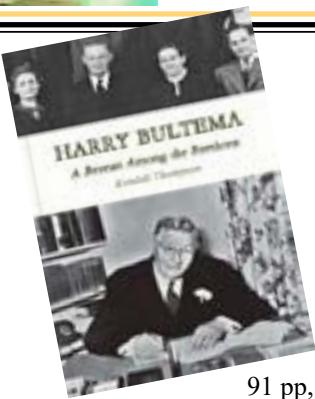
Ever since the curtain has risen on our character, we have played our role with the exactitude to which it was scripted, and to which it is directed by God. Yet, the character that we play is not really who we are, and who we actually are has *nothing* to do with the stage *at all* but the prehistoric calling that was ours *before* the curtain even lifted.

Now, make no mistake about this: we are *not* sinners – in the absolute sense – but *saints!* We only *portray* sinners on this earthly stage of the Divine drama.

We *don't* have two natures. We're *not* two different



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people, with two diverse personalities. We're *not* spiritually schizophrenic.¹² Who we actually are has *nothing* to do with our being staged as “sinners” at all. Who we are is who we were chosen to be *before* the curtain lifted, and *after* it falls.

One day the curtain will fall, and our role of sinner will have played its course. We will have given a performance of a lifetime, a role that will bring glorious accolades to the Playwright and Director, the Placer and Subjector. We'll leave the theater and go home – back to being who we really are!

For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the Sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation, that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the Children of God (Romans 8:19-21, CV).

The best is yet to come! **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Absolute and Relative; Identity; Pleroma; Pre-Historic; Saint; Sin; Sinner; Union

Minor: Justification; Two Natures

12. Long have believers labored under the false premise that within them resides “two natures.” For a refreshing, liberating, scriptural investigation of this key subject, see:

– [Exposé of the “Two Natures”](#) – A.E. Knoch (see [order form](#) under “Knoch”).

Harry Bultema: A Berean Among the Brethren

by — Kendall Thompson

This is a biography of a significant figure in dispensational truth. Bultema was born in the Netherlands. Educated at Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI, he pastored Christian Reformed churches in Iowa and Michigan. Personal studies led him to the conclusion that there is a difference between Christ as King of Israel and Christ as Head of the Church, which resulted in his becoming a dispensationalist and in the

formation of the Berean Bible Church of Muskegon, MI, where he pastored for 31 years. He was a popular conference speaker in the United States and in the Netherlands. His desire to present the message of God's grace in print led him into a prolific writing ministry. In addition to the biography, this book includes a detailed appendix cataloging his 100+ written works.



“The Kingdom of God” and “The Kingdom of the Heavens”

by — Clyde L. Pilkinson, Jr.

Since the disruption of the world, creation has desperately needed the manifest re-establishment of divine order and righteous rule: *i.e.*, *The Kingdom of God*. This is the overall thrust of Scripture.

Our English word “kingdom” comes from two separate words, “king” and “dominion” – *i.e.*, a king’s dominion. It is the realm or sphere dominated by a ruler.¹

Most English versions likely use the word “*kingdom*,” since, at the time of early English translations, earthly “sovereigns” were primarily “kings” and thus their rule was a “*kingdom*.” Of course, this is also true concerning the place of Israel’s kings in the history and future of their government.

Some translations use alternate words for “*Kingdom*” in the phrase “*the Kingdom of God*.” Here are a few examples:

“*the Regency of God*” (DT);

“*the Realm of God*” (MNT);

1. Dusty Rhoades, *Paul and the Kingdom of God*, page 19.

“*the Reign of God*” (YLT);

“*the Sovereigndom of Elohim*” (EB).

This rich variety is tied to the Hebrew word *mamlâkâh* (מַמְלָכָה) meaning “dominion”² and the Greek word *basileia* (βασιλεία)³ meaning,

royalty, that is, (abstractly) rule, or (concretely) a realm;

royal dominion, including the power and form of government, with the territory and the kingdom (Bullinger⁴);

denoting sovereignty, royal power, dominion (Vine⁵).

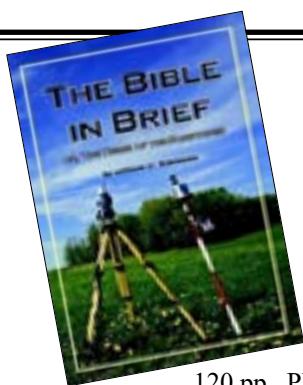
Consequently, some define *basileia* appropriately as

2. H4467 (SEC)

3. G932 (SEC)

4. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, page 433 (see [order form](#) under “Reference”).

5. Vine’s *Expository Dictionary*, page 624.



120 pp., PB

See [order form](#) under
“Other Authors.”

The Bible in Brief, or The Theme of the Scriptures

by — William C. Rebmann (1911-1973)

“A trip through the world’s best seller in one evening.”

— Unsearchable Riches Magazine, 1960

“A very fine summary of the entire theme and scope of the Scriptures.”

— Unsearchable Riches Magazine, 1950

“It is seldom that so helpful a book is issued on the theme of the Scriptures.

Indeed, it could not be written except by one who views the whole in the light of God’s grand consummation.” – A.E. Knoch

“government”⁶ or even “sovereignty.”⁷ “The Kingdom of God,” “The Government of God” and “the Sovereignty of God” all speak to the same manifest *dominion* of God over His creation.

Absolutely, God always has and always will be in control, even though most are currently unaware of His complete sovereignty over all.

Relatively, however, there are prophesied “seasons,” “times,” “days” and “ages in which His dominion will be unmistakably manifest to all. This is known as “the Kingdom of God.”

So, while God is always absolutely sovereign over the affairs of man, this truth is often hidden from the perception of mankind during “Man’s Day.” But in the “Day of Christ” this absolute sovereignty will inaugurate its abundant and unmistakable manifestation, continuing increasingly on through the “Lord’s Day,” and the “Day of God.”

The “Kingdom of God” encompasses all of God’s future manifest Government – Pre-Millennial, Millennial and Post-Millennial. It also includes the past preparatory stage completed during the time covered by the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, which was a preview and foretaste of the coming Kingdom.

6. The fundamental idea in the word *basileia* is “government.” Thus, that which is called “the Kingdom of God” is actually “the government of God.” – Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992), *Seed & Bread* #29
7. “The word *basileia* ... denotes sovereignty” ... “The Kingdom of God’ is the sovereignty of God” ... – E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (Appendix 112, 114)

The “Kingdom of the Heavens”⁸ is a reference to the Pre-Millennial portion. So, what we refer to as the Pre-Millennial Kingdom is specifically termed the “Kingdom of the Heavens,” and yet remains an integral part of the “Kingdom of God.”⁹

Therefore, when the “Kingdom of God” is mentioned in Scripture, we must always diligently consider the context to determine whether it is a reference to a specific segment of its expression (Pre-Millennial, Millennial, or Post-Millennial), or of all three portions as a whole.

The “Kingdom of God” concerns the manifestation of God’s sovereignty over all of His creation during the coming ages. This is inaugurated by the “Kingdom of the Heavens” on Earth, a prophetic reference to Daniel 2:44,

In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom.

This “Kingdom of the Heavens” is the pre-millennial subset of the “Kingdom of God,” dealing specifically with the introduction of Christ’s righteous rule *from* the Heavens, *over* the Earth, through the instrumentality of National Israel. This will be the period of Elijah’s and David’s prophesied ministry.

8. What the *King James Version* renders “the Kingdom of Heaven,” literal versions translate “the Kingdom of the Heavens” (CV, REB, LSV, +++ (along with DAR, PNB, etc.).
9. As confirmed by its usage in the Gospel of Matthew, as compared with the other Gospels (Mark, Luke, and John).



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So, when the “Kingdom of God” is spoken of during its inauguration period, it is in fact, more precisely, the “Kingdom of the Heavens” which is referred to. This can be clearly seen by the fact that these two terms are used interchangeably in the “Gospels.” While Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all refer to the “Kingdom of God,” it is Matthew’s gospel alone that refers to the “Kingdom of the Heavens.”¹⁰ Therefore, the Kingdom which they anticipated during this period was the Pre-Millennial Kingdom.

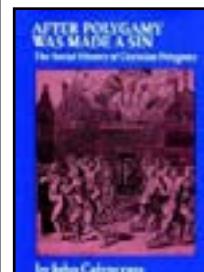
Charles Welch (1880-1967) observed the relationship between the “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of the Heavens.”

[“*The Kingdom of the Heavens*”] will be the fulfillment of the prayer “*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*” (Matthew 6:10). It will be the realization of the promise of Deuteronomy 11:21, “***the days of Heaven upon the Earth.***” ...

“*The Kingdom of God*” ... may be as limited in scope as the term “*the Kingdom of Heaven*,” but on the other hand it can be as universal as the sovereignty of God. ... There is nothing extraordinary about this double usage, for we exercise the same discretion in daily conversation. Writing to one person I might say, “I live in London,” but to another I might say, “I live in England.” There would be no contradiction; the only thing to remember would be that “Lon-

10.

<i>The Kingdom of the Heavens</i> Matthew	<i>The Kingdom of God</i> Mark-Luke-John
“ <i>the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand</i> ” (Matthew 3:2; 4:7; 10:7)	“ <i>the Kingdom of God is at hand</i> ” (Mark 1:15)
“ <i>Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of the Heavens</i> ” (Matthew 5:3)	“ <i>Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God</i> ” (Luke 6:20)
“ <i>enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens</i> ” (Matthew 5:20; 7:21 18:3; 19:23)	“ <i>enter into the Kingdom of God</i> ” (Mark 9:47; 10:23-25; Luke 18:24-25; John 3:5)
“ <i>sit down ... in the Kingdom of the Heavens</i> ” (Matthew 8:11)	“ <i>sit down in the Kingdom of God</i> ” (Luke 13:29)
“ <i>he that is least in the Kingdom of the Heavens is greater than he</i> ” (Matthew 11:11)	“ <i>he that is least in the Kingdom of God</i> ” (Luke 7:28)
“ <i>the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens</i> ” (Matthew 13:11)	“ <i>the mysteries of the Kingdom of God</i> ” (Luke 8:10; cf. Mark 4:11).



After Polygamy Was Made a Sin

The Social History of Christian Polygamy

by — John Cairncross

260 pp., PB

(See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”)

Cairncross contends in this fascinating historical analysis that it was when the Church became centered in Rome that “polygamy” became a “sin.” Based on rigorous research he demonstrates however that there is a strong underground polygamous Christian tradition, including support from such prominent figures as Milton, Newton, Spinoza and others.

don,” like the “Kingdom of Heaven,” is more limited than “England,” which is like the “Kingdom of God.”

... There are spheres in “*the Kingdom of God*” which “*the Kingdom of Heaven*” can never embrace.¹¹

With the setting aside of Israel in Acts 28:28 the “Kingdom of God,” along with its subset “Kingdom of the Heavens,” is now in abeyance. Therefore, it is important that we distinguish between the “Kingdom of God” and God’s present purpose in the *Secret Administration*.¹² A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) reminds us that,

The kingdom on the Earth will be called “*the Kingdom of the Heavens*” and will be a *heavenly* kingdom. But the allotment in Ephesians is not merely *heavenly* but *in Heaven*. ...

Truth becomes error of the most insidious kind when applied to an eon or age to which it does not belong. To teach that “*the Kingdom of the Heavens*” is in force now with all its powers and blessings is prolific of the most disastrous effects. It nullifies the Word of God. In the next eon it will be blessed fact.¹³ **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: The Kingdom of God; The Kingdom of Heaven; Pre-Millennial Kingdom

Minor: Israel; Right Division

11. [An Alphabetical Analysis](#), p. 231-232 (see [order form](#) under “Welch”).

12. For a greater look at the Secret Administration see our extensive work [The Administration of the Secret](#) at StudyShelf.com (see [order form](#) under “Compilations”).

13. [Unsearchable Riches](#) (Vol. 5, 1913; Vol. 12, 1921).



Thanks for animating God's Word of Truth the way you do [[Bible Basics](#)]. So thorough in so little time. Efficiently and perfectly explained. – **Canada**

I am grateful for what you have done for me. Your work for our Lord is most admirable. – **OH**

Different directions have been taken, but still, and I've told folks, you were a father in the faith to me and I'm very thankful for that. – **VA**

[In [BSN #912 - The Out Resurrection](#)] I Loved how you positioned Philippians after Acts 28 yet before the Mystery revelation. Seems to be the perfect spot for it. – **SD**

Man, the "Body" article and the "Gabriel's Prophecy Analyzed" article [[BSN #908](#)] ... wow these are so very encouraging. I know that you understand the truth explained in these, but this is insight-gaining stuff. If you got your mind around this a while back, let me encourage you to get excited again about how this revolutionizes your Biblical approach. ... Thanks for faithfully sharing your insight, dear friend. – **IN**

I ordered your book [The Salvation of All](#) a couple of months ago ... and read thru it 4 times in a single

week. I feel like I know you already, you did a great job making the case from Scripture. I was raised a Baptist all my life, but maybe 10 years ago I left my local church after ... discovering right division. ...

But I digress. I never felt comfortable with eternity in hell for unbelievers, and your logical presentation was a real blessing. [Your book] truly paints a more believable picture of our heavenly Father, helps [us] to understand His divine plan for mankind as you have summarized. He is love and will deserve all the glory and praise in the end. It is cool to see that many old-time folks were in on this, and that is the reason I ordered some additional books on the subject. – **FL**

I've been listening to your videos. ... I've been blessed by your messages. ... Thank you for your study and work in the edification of the body of Christ. – **MD**

I started watching you in conference videos a few years ago. So much was revealed to me through those teachings. Three years ago, I came into the understanding of Paul's evangel. – **MO**

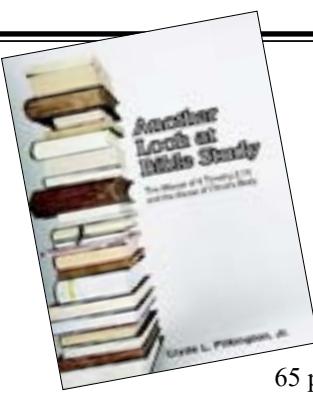
[Romans 13 & Current Human Government](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. was an excellent read. I purchased his [World Affairs](#) back when it came out and loved it, but my views on Romans 13 changed as did Clyde's. I would gladly repurchase *World Affairs* and read an updated edition. – **TN**

You have unburied great treasures and collected them all into one place! – **NC**

BSN

Another Look at "Bible Study"

The Misuse of II Timothy 2:15 and the Abuse of Christ's Body
by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



65 pp, PB

See [order form](#) under
"Clyde Pilkington."

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