



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VII  
Issue 164

### Horizoned-Off

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1).

In the very first verse of Paul’s letter to the Roman saints he employs an amazingly rich word: “separated.”

Of course “separated” is our English word. The word he actually used was “*aphorizo*.” This is a Greek compound word made up of “*apo*” (off) and “*horizo*” (horizon).

Paul is literally telling us that he had been horizoned-off by and for God.<sup>1</sup>

Noah Webster defines “horizon” as:

The line that terminates the view, when extended on the surface of the earth; or a great circle of the sphere, dividing the world into two parts or hemispheres; the upper hemisphere which is visible, and the lower which is hid ... The visible horizon is a lesser circle of the sphere, which divides the visible part of the sphere from the invisible. It is eastern or western; the eastern is that wherein the sun and stars rise; the western, that wherein they

set ... – American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828

Paul was cut off from his earlier horizon, from his sphere of life – from his former hemisphere – from his earlier point of view.

God separated him out from his old life and positioned him in the circumference of a new life – the circumference of Almighty God and His concerns.

Following Webster’s definition of the word horizon many rich truths can be brought to light.

1. “dividing the world into two parts or hemispheres”

The word “separate” has to do with division. Thus the King James Version also translates “*aphorizo*” as “divide” and “sever.”

Paul was divided, or severed from Israel – its law, its ceremony, its religion – counting them waste, or manure (“dung”).

(see HORIZON, page 1639)

1. “The Greek word for ‘separated’ in this passage contains the thought of ‘the horizon.’ Paul’s whole horizon was dominated by Christ. All his boundaries in life were determined by Him.” – John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, Moody (1969), page 13.

“*Aphorizo*’ – this word is composed of ‘*apo*,’ ‘away from’ and ‘*horizo*’ ‘to define or set bounds.’ The English reader will recognize the origin of the word ‘horizon.’” – Charles H. Welch, *The Berean Expositor*, Volume 37, Page 91.

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# Dear Truth Seekers,

## 1 Year Anniversary Weekly BSN

We began publishing the *Bible Student's Notebook*™ in 1989. Originally it was sporadically published. However, this current issue marks our one year anniversary of weekly publishing.

### Horizoned-Off

Our lead article in this issue is taken from Romans 1:1. The members of Christ's Body have been "*separated unto the gospel of God;*" or *horizoned-off* unto our Father's glorious world-wide, all-inclusive good news! Along with Paul, we have also been entrusted with an early enlightenment, of which all mankind will one day be made partakers. We are only the beginning place of God's wonderful plan!

### Personal Testimony

The last issue of the BSN was devoted to sharing with you a brief sketch of my own spiritual journey in truth – my personal *adventure of faith*.

In BSN #148 we began the first installment of a new feature, My Story: "*We Also Believe, and Therefore Speak*" (Testimonies of Believers). Our first testimony was from Ted McDivitt.

I encourage you to share your own stories with us. I am eager to publish as many as we can. Testimonies are (1) encouraging to those who have been down similar paths, (2) edifying to those who are now beginning to think of things in a different light, and (3) challenging to those who have not yet begun on such a course.

In this issue I am also sharing again; this time my personal, *scriptural* journey that brought me to embrace the *salvation of all*.

### First Snowfall

It is only Fall, and as I write this, the leaves are not all quite off the trees yet, but we have already had our first *beautiful* snowfall! On October 28-29 we received a nice little blanket of snow – 4 inches.

### New Grandbaby Has Come to See Grandpa!

Cindy, Clyde III and Nathan have all been to MO to see the new grandbaby Isabelle. We have had to take turns going to see her because of our family business. My turn is next; and I thought that I would already have been there by now! By the time you get this BSN I will be enjoying Isabelle and Emma her sister, as well as Susannah and Justin – right here in PA. They managed to arrange to come to see all of us for a 3-week visit. I'm in grandpa-bliss!

Until next week,

My love to each of you!



Clyde

## ***Bible Student's Notebook***™

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- 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 forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. 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."

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### PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

*Bible Student's Notebook*™

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010

bsn@studyshef.com

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

André Sneidar – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

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**HORIZON** (continued from page 1637)

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: **for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung**, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:7-8).

2. “the upper hemisphere which is visible, and the lower which is hid”

Paul had his eyes moved from the horizon of the visible by divine revelation. He saw the hidden things of God and was divinely commissioned to be the spokesman of them.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, **which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:8-9).

3. “which divides the visible part of the sphere from the invisible”

Paul also had his eyes opened by God to the invisible – “*things which are not seen.*” His sights were set on the heavenly realm of his calling – “*things above.*”

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at **the things which are not seen**: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (II Corinthians 4:18).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1).

“Set your affection on **things above**, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

4. “the eastern is that wherein the sun and stars rise; the western, that wherein they set”

The horizon is also associated with the contrasts of day and night, light and darkness.

Paul was separated from the darkness of this Adamic world and brought into the glorious light of God’s full revelation of righteousness.

“Ye are all the **children of light**, and the **children of the day**: we are **not of the night, nor of darkness** (I Thessalonians 5:5).

By revelation from God, Paul opened up new divinely-appointed horizons for mankind. God’s masterful plan for mankind was fully revealed through His servant Paul.

We, like Paul, have been cut off from our former horizon, from our former sphere – or hemisphere. God has horizoned us out from our former identity and horizoned us into full identity in Christ – in a circumference of a new life – in the circumference of a loving Father and His concerns.

We now see God in a whole new way; in an entirely different sphere. We, in turn, see ourselves and all those around us in a completely fresh, vibrant light – Sonlight to be precise.

“For God, who commanded the **light to shine out of darkness**, hath shined in our hearts, to give the **light of the knowledge of the glory of God** in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ,

(see **HORIZON**, page 1644)

# My Journey to Universal Reconciliation

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

**M**y own journey of coming to see God's total victory over sin in His universe began some 23 years ago when I first embraced the distinct ministry and message of Paul. It caused me to look at everything new. I began to reevaluate everything that I have ever been taught. *Universal Reconciliation* was one of the things that came across my study path. The subject seemed so confusing to my mind, because of all that I had been taught concerning eternal conscious torment from a child. And of course, when you are busy with "the ministry" like I was at that time, trying to keep "the machine" going steady, there is little time, opportunity and encouragement to think very far "outside the box." So, for about 10 of those years I just kept this whole doctrine on "the back burner." I would "get to it" one day.

It was not until about 13 years ago, when I resigned from the pastorate, that I was really "free" (in many ways!) to seriously study the doctrine. It took me quite a long time to sort through all my baggage and through what the Bible actually taught.

What follows is a short personal narrative that catalogs the initial Scriptures that captivated my attention toward the truth that God would save all of His creation.

## ROMANS 5:18

The first passage that really got my attention was Romans 5:18:

*"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."*

I noticed the same "all men" that judgment came upon, were the *EXACT SAME* "all men" upon whom the free gift came. The first was produced by Adam, the second by Jesus Christ. The result of the first

was "condemnation," and the result of the second was "justification."

## I CORINTHIANS 15:22

I then saw that this was also the teaching of Paul in I Corinthians 15:22:

*"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*

I saw that the "all" that die in Adam are the *EXACT SAME* "all" who will be made alive in Jesus Christ. I realized the passage did not say what I thought it meant, "all that are in Christ shall be made alive." I saw that it said, "even so in Christ shall **all** be made alive." I found my heart rejoicing! Paul was teaching that God will have the ultimate victory in winning His whole creation back to Himself.

## II CORINTHIANS 5:19

Then there was Paul's contention of *world reconciliation* in II Corinthians 5:19:

*"To wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling the world** unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation."*

God was in Christ, "reconciling the world" unto Himself. I thought, "Could the full revelation of God's work in Christ have been made any clearer than what Paul wrote here?" I could see that Paul's Gospel taught that God's plan included *all* of His creation. It was not just a potential *everyman gospel*. It is in reality *good news* for everyman.

I was slowly beginning to realize that what Paul was teaching was that the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ was for everyman – not potentially, but effectually.

## SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

I was seeing the great truth that Jesus Christ “**taketh away** the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He did not make the arrangements that the sin of the world could be taken away. Instead, *He does it*. If it is taken away, it is no longer an issue. Paul echoes this truth:

“To wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation**” (II Corinthians 5:19).

I realized that the satisfaction of sin’s debt was secured by Jesus Christ for “**the whole world.**”

“And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of **the whole world**” (I John 2:2).

It was becoming clear to me that “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23) and not hell as I had been taught; that death was a penalty that Christ paid for all. That was Paul’s gospel, “*that Christ **died** for our sins*” (I Corinthians 15:6), so that “*He by the grace of God should taste death for **every man***” (Hebrews 2:9). I had to reflect, “Did the Lord Jesus Christ actually die for **every man**? Did He actually pay the penalty for **every man**?”

If what the Scriptures taught was true (and surely it is!), how could man be held responsible for a debt that has *already been fully paid* on his behalf? Would there not be a duplication of indebtedness if sinners were required to make a payment for sin that the Lord Jesus Christ had already made? Would there not be double jeopardy, if the sinner were held responsible? If anyone would have to pay for their own sin, then it could not be possible that our Lord actually suffered substitutionally on their account.

It was simple, He either *did* die **for** all, or He *did not* die **for** all. He was either every man’s substitute, or not. If He was every man’s substitute, then the work of redemption is obviously done and complete. If the debt was paid, and men must make their own payment, we have a double liability. God would be requiring a double payment.

Whose Savior was Christ anyway? Just believers only? or the entire world’s? I was seeing clearly now that He was “*the Savior of the world*” (John 4:42) – not the *potential* Savior of the world, but was indeed, and in all actuality, “**the Savior of the world.**” He could not be the Savior of the World if He did not actually – in fact – save the world.

I was now realizing that Jesus Christ was in full truth “*the Savior of all men*” (I Timothy 4:10).<sup>1</sup> Paul did not say that He was *potentially* the Savior of all men, but that “*He **is** the Savior of all men.*” He is in fact their Savior. If words mean anything, He could not be their Savior if He did not save them. Yet Paul taught clearly that He is the “*Savior of all men*” because He **will** save all men.<sup>2</sup>

After all, Christ did not die for believers.

“Christ died for **the ungodly**” (Romans 5:6).

“While we were **yet sinners**, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

The Lord Jesus Christ did not die for believers. He died for the ungodly, for sinners. That is indeed an every-man redemptive work!

I came to realize that I had always been taught to confuse God’s current visible work with His finished product. Yet, eventually, my studies led me to the conclusion that it would only be in the ages to come that God would manifest to all creation His full plan and include them in it.

What a joy for me to see that God would not lose the majority of all His creation to sin. He would indeed redeem them all. He would have the final victory over sin!

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1. Both the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are referred to in the Scriptures as “Savior.” The father planned salvation and then executed it in His Son - for, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (II Corinthians 5:19).
  2. The phrase, “*especially of those that believe,*” is a specialty clause. Those of us who trust Christ now, here in this life, have the added benefit of being saved from a life of emptiness, vanity, hopelessness, and despair. We are saved unto Divine life at *this present time* – a *SPECIAL* salvation!

## HELL

Then, of course, there was my consideration of the subject of *hell* itself. Since Paul was God's spokesman for us today, I obviously knew I should consult his teaching when considering this important subject. I was in for a great surprise. I had never stopped to consider that Paul, our Apostle, *never once* even used the word *hell*. He didn't use the word *hell* in any recorded messages from the Book of Acts. He didn't use the word *hell* in any of his epistles. Not once!

I thought, "How could this possibly be? How could Paul have conducted his entire teaching ministry – one that brought glory to God – and yet never even once had used the word *hell*? Wasn't the traditional, orthodox doctrine of *hell* at the very foundation of our creeds?"

How could Paul have been so negligent? How could he have gone through his entire ministry forgetting to use such a crucial word? What was up with that?

Or, was it possible that Paul understood something I didn't?

Then I considered Paul's declaration found in the Book of Acts:

*"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel of God**" (Acts 20:26-27).*

The plain and simple fact was that Paul was *not* negligent in his teaching ministry. Here was a passage that made that clear. Paul said he was "*pure from the blood of all men,*" because he had declared "*all the counsel of God*" – a counsel which obviously *did not* include *hell* at all. Period!

Wasn't Paul presented as our present pattern (I Timothy 1:15-16)? Didn't Paul tell us to follow him (I Corinthians 4:15-17; 11:1; Philippians 3:17)?

Didn't Paul tell us to "*Hold fast the **form of sound words**, which thou hast **heard of me**, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*" (II Timothy 1:13)?

Did I hear *hell* from Paul? Was it a *Pauline* form of *sound words*?

Had I been duped into accepting a religious tradition contrary to the sound scriptural teachings of our Apostle?

Wouldn't I be Pauline, if I like Paul, also excluded *hell* from my teaching?

Or, more pointedly, could I possibly be truly Pauline in my teaching if I continued the use of a theological system that includes the traditional *hell*?

Why would I not just follow my Apostle in teaching a pure grace gospel that had no place for, nor need of a religious *hell*?

How could Paul, the Apostle, *never* use the word *hell* and yet have declared "*all the counsel of God*"? How could he have been "*pure from the blood of all men*" without ever *once* using the word *hell*? I saw that I had been bewildered here because I had been steeped in the traditions of men, and not in the traditions of Paul.

*"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thessalonians 2:15).*

I was to hold Paul's traditions, "*whether by **word**, or **our epistle**.*" Holding to Paul's very words and epistles removed *hell* from my teaching.<sup>3</sup>

## THE LAKE OF FIRE

Then there is the "*Lake of Fire*," defined by the Scriptures as "*the second death*." How clear this was to me now, that the "*Lake of Fire*" is a *death* – "*the second death*." Yet I knew something else as well that Paul taught me: that the last enemy that God would destroy is *death*.

*"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:25-26).*

3. See *The Salvation of ALL: Creation's Final Destination – A Biblical Look at Universal Reconciliation, Chapter 3, "Paul's Teachings on Hell;"* Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Press, 2008.

The last enemy God will destroy is death. This would definitely include the “*Lake of Fire*” since it is a death – “*the second death.*” The only way to “destroy” death is by **resurrection!**

## FAITH

Don’t get me wrong: I still believed that God required faith; but I had come to believe that He would bring His entire creation to that place of faith, in His *Own* good time and way.

The real question was not really whether or not some do not believe; it was simply one of timing. All would eventually be brought to belief by their Creator, although not all in *this* lifetime.

How had I made death the end of God’s grace and mercy? It became clear to me that not all will be saved by pure “faith,” but that it will take “sight” for some to believe.

## THOMAS

Two great examples of this readily came to mind. “Doubting Thomas” was one.

*“The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe”* (John 20:25).

To which Jesus Christ responded:

*“Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”* (John 20:27-29).

Jesus said that Thomas believed by sight. “*Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed.*” He goes on to say, “*blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*”

Those of us who believe by simple faith are the Firstfruit of God’s full harvest. We will enjoy the First Resurrection; but this does not exclude the rest of creation, who are awaiting our manifestation (“*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*” – Romans 8:19).

Paul, the Apostle was another great example. Paul did not believe by simple faith. Rather, it took the “Damascus Road experience” to bring him to Christ. Both Thomas and Saul met the resurrected Christ! Oh, the extent that God will go through to reach man! He was much less limited than I was in His evangelism! He could and would pull out all the stops.

## PAUL

Paul says that his salvation is a pattern for those who should believe “*hereafter,*” i.e., after the close of this present dispensation. This salvation shows forth all the longsuffering of God toward the salvation of all men.

*“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (I Timothy 1:15-17).

None in the Dispensation of Grace is saved after this “pattern” of Paul. However, “*them which should hereafter believe on Him*” will see “*a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun.*” They will come into the presence of the resurrected Son of God, and will with Paul call Him Lord.<sup>4</sup>

*“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,*

4. See *The Salvation of ALL: Creation’s Final Destination – A Biblical Look at Universal Reconciliation, Chapter 9*, “Paul The Pattern of Salvation for the Unbeliever,” Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student’s Press, 2008.

to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10).

This confession that Jesus Christ is Lord can only be the work of the Holy Spirit!

“... No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (I Corinthians 12:3).

Just reflecting on these two examples of Thomas and Paul, how can God directly intervene in the faith of some individuals by giving them sight experience for their faith, while denying this to the multitudes? Is this fair and just, coming from a God who is no respecter of men? Or are we missing a key ingredient in our understanding of God, His love and His will?

I came to believe that I had misunderstood divine judgment in the Bible. I had seen it as an end, instead of a means to an end.

God is surely a God of judgment. This cannot be denied; but that is not the essence of *WHO* He is.

“God is love” (I John 4:8, 16).

“Charity [love] never faileth” (I Corinthians 13:8).

Love is not just one of His attributes: it is Him, and it never fails. More succinctly, *God* never fails! Therefore, God’s judgment is ever subject to His love. He punishes mankind, just as a father does his children, because He loves them. Yet His punishment will be effective in bringing His creation to Himself. Divine judgment is never an end in itself, but a means to an end – and a glorious end at that!

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*HORIZON* (continued from page 1639)

Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to **light** through the gospel” (II Timothy 1:9-10).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in **light**, Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:” (Colossians 1:12-13).

We, along with Paul, have been “separated unto

The majority of mankind today is lost and blind; but those of us who have *first* trusted Christ (the Firstfruits, Ephesians 1:12) are a part of the Firstfruits of Christ (Romans 8:23). We are but the beginning. God will reap the rest of His creation, and be “*all in all*.”<sup>3</sup>

I will close with the following wonderful verses. I hope these brief thoughts will prove to be encouraging to others in their own studies.

“And when **all things** shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be **All in all**” (I Corinthians 15:28).

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together **in one all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Ephesians 1:10).

“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him **to reconcile all things unto Himself**; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20).

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(A more detailed study of this subject can be found in the book, *The Salvation of ALL: Creation’s Final Destination – A Biblical Look at Universal Reconciliation*, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student’s Press, 2008.)

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the gospel of God.” We have been *horizoned-off* unto His glorious world-wide, all-inclusive, good news!

Now, along with Paul, we have also been entrusted with this early enlightenment, of which all mankind will one day partake. We are just the beginning of God’s horizoned-off ones!

“... **The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world**” (John 1:9).

■