



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume IX
Issue 208

Handfuls of Purpose

Thoughts on Various Topics, Part 2

(taken from Daily Email Goodies)

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them ... (Ruth 2:16).

A CREATION WITH NO CREATOR?

For every house is built by some man; but He Who built all things is God” (Hebrews 3:4).



Years ago I remember standing at the bottom of the Empire State Building in New York City. I became dizzy trying to look up to the top of it. It and structures like it are simply amazing feats of design and construction.

Imagine if I had inquired with its management as to who the designer and builder was and that they responded to me with all seriousness and sincerity that there wasn't any, that it has just evolved there over millions and millions of years, and through many iterational stages of existence – presto – the Empire State Building now appears in its present form as a result of the evolutionary process.

My sons sell and repair laptop computers. These machines are amazing. Frankly I do not know what I would do without mine. When someone inquired of one of my sons as to who made a laptop they were interested in purchasing, suppose they responded that there was no manufacturer; that it had just evolved in the repair shop.

When I was a teenager I worked for a summer

as a stripper. Now before we go too far here, you should know that I was stripping the paint from airplanes so that they could be repainted. Suppose I asked who had made the particular airplane on which I was working and the answer was, “no one,” that it had just evolved.

The daily newspaper is delivered to my home each morning before it is yet light outside. Suppose I wanted to contact the publisher, just to have the paper-carrier tell me that there was none, and that the paper just evolved each morning, and he simply just delivered it.

That after eons of evolution the newspaper now appears with columns filled with words, sentences, paragraphs and articles, with the current date – all typeset and making sense, that told stories of current events – is irrational beyond seriousness!

All of these are absolutely absurd propositions – totally beyond reason. A man would be a fool to suggest any of these; a man would be a fool to accept them.

The very idea that such a complex machine as an aircraft does not have a designer and manufacturer – no one in their right mind would entertain such silliness!



Yet there is a world full of greater wonders than the Empire State Building, a laptop computer, an airplane, and the newspaper. Take our human body for example: it far exceeds the grandeur and complexity of any of these things. If these other things demand a designer and maker, we demand one even more. Look all around us. Everywhere is evidence which demands a Creator: flowers, birds, rainbows, sun, moon, stars – just to name a few.

It is impossible to have a building without a builder. It is impossible to have a creation without a Creator.

For every house is built by some man; but He that built all things is God (Hebrews 3:4).

This is why the Psalmist wrote of the POWERFUL testimony of creation:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world ... (Psalm 19:1-4).

Little wonder the Psalmist also penned,

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God ... (Psalm 14:1).

FAITH: THE GIFT OF GOD

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

All Things Are of God

... He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, "What are You doing?" (Daniel 4:35).

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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)

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This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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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.

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For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen (Romans 11:36).

... The purpose of Him Who works all things after the counsel of His Own will (Ephesians 1:11).

God Is the Source of Faith in Believers

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ ... to believe on Him ... (Philippians 1:29).

... According as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith (Romans 12:3).

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God Is the Source of the Current Unbelief in Unbelievers

Therefore He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens (Romans 9:18).

According as it is written, "God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;" unto this day (Romans 11:8).

For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all (Romans 11:32).

God Will Be the Source of Faith in All

According as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith (Romans 12:3).

... He has given assurance [faith] unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

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

THE POWER IN YOU

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:16-20).

Sometimes people misunderstand God's present purpose in the dispensation of grace. They think that God is far removed from day-to-day activities of this planet and that He is not operating on earth today. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Available Power

... To be strengthened ... (:16)

It is God's will that the believer be strong (Ephesians 6:10).

Awesome Means

... with might ... (:16)

This word is also translated (Strong's Greek Lexicon #1411) as "miracle" and "miracles" in the King James Version. We're talking about the power of God.

Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (Colossians 1:11).

Amazing Place

... in the inner man (:16)

Not the outward man, where we often place the focus of our attention. Saints, more often than not, have a real preoccupation with sight. When believers learn the secret of this available inner strength they can endure tremendous difficulties and work under severe handicaps (Philippians 4:13).

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

The goal is that the life of Christ can be manifested in our flesh (II Corinthians 4:6-18). Now *that's* power!

Activating Agent

... by His Spirit ... (:16)

For it is God Who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

... When you received the Word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Astonishing Measure

... according to the power that works in us ... (:20)

God's mighty power is at work in you – in an astonishing measure!

... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which

He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His Own right hand in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:19-20).

God is busy at work. We are His workmanship. God's power is at work in you. It is God's plan to use you! He will accomplish His plan!

WISDOM

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding (Proverbs 4:7).

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom is the appropriate application of truth that has been stored in our soul. Noah Webster (1828) defines the English word *wisdom* as “the right use or exercise of knowledge.” Spiros Zodhiates defines the Greek word as “skill in the affairs of life ... forming the best plans and selecting the best means, including the idea of sound judgment and good sense ... a skill and carefulness in dealing with one's own resources.”

The etymology of our English word *wisdom* is: “wise” + “dom.” “Wise” means discerning, prudent; and “dom” is a suffix meaning the condition or domain of. Thus, wisdom is the condition of being discerning, a dominion of prudence.

How Do We Obtain Wisdom?

(1) We obtain wisdom by studying and filling our hearts with God's Word.

*O how love I Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You through Your commandments have made me **wiser** than my enemies: for they are ever with me. I have **more understanding** than all my teachers: for Your testimonies are my meditation. I **understand** more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts (Psalm 119:97-100).*

And that from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you **wise** unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:15).

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all **wisdom**; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16).

- (2) We obtain wisdom by acquiring wise counsel.

A **wise** man will hear, and will increase **learning**; and a man of **understanding** shall attain unto **wise counsels** (Proverbs 1:5; remember, counsel is only as good as its source! – c.f. Psalm 1:1).

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the **multitude of counselors** there is safety (Proverbs 11:14).

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkens unto counsel is **wise** (Proverbs 12:15).

He that **walks with wise men** shall be **wise**: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed (Proverbs 13:20).

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the **multitude of counselors** they are established (Proverbs 15:22).

Hear counsel and receive instruction, that you may be **wise** in your latter end (Proverbs 19:20; c.f. Titus 2:23 – imagine the pool of collected wisdom discerning members of Christ's Body could be to one another).

- (3) We obtain wisdom by taking advantage of the circumstances of life.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might **learn** Your statutes (Psalm 119:71).

But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to **discern** both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Some believers, who understand the special message which was committed to Paul, question where the *Gospel of John* fits into the dispensational layout. Is this Gospel a "Gentile" gospel written to the Body of Christ or is it distinctly Jewish as are the synoptic Gospels?

The **SUBJECT** of the *Gospel of John*

The subject of the *Gospel of John* is the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul gives us vital information concerning this short portion of His history:

*Now I say that Jesus Christ **was a minister of the circumcision** for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers* (Romans 15:8).

The *Gospel of John* records this ministry of Jesus Christ. It is a ministry which was limited to the nation of Israel (Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; John 4:22).

The **PURPOSE** of the *Gospel of John*

The purpose of this Gospel is clearly shown:

*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is **the Christ, the Son of God**; and that believing you might have life through His name* (John 20:30-31). ▶

The stated purpose was to present Jesus as the Messiah (or Christ). This was accomplished through the recording of signs. Signs are Israel's birthright (Exodus 4:8). They belong to her: "We see not **our** signs ..." (Psalm 74:9); "For the Jews require a sign ..." (I Corinthians 1:22).

Paul's ministry to the Body of Christ was not one of the signs for which Israel was looking (II Corinthians 4:18). Paul in his epistles focuses his presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ, not on the fact that He was Israel's Messiah, but rather that He is the Head of the Body (Colossians 1:18).

The **CONTENT** of the *Gospel of John*

The content (*i.e.*, doctrine, or teachings) of the *Gospel of John* is identical to the recorded Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is distinctly Jewish. This runs contrary to what many believe and teach; that John's is somehow a Gentile Gospel. The Gospel often recognized as "most Jewish" is Matthew where we find Christ presented as King, but compare the following list of words and the number of times which they are used in each Gospel:

<u>Word</u>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>John</u>
Jew	0	2
Jews	5	64
Jews'	0	4
Jewry	0	1
Circumcise	0	1
Circumcision	0	2
Messiah	0	2
King	9	15

The *Gospel of John* is distinctly Jewish in its subject, purpose and content. As the Scofield Reference Bible (page 1252) so aptly puts it:

In his (Paul's) writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.

GOD'S MERCY VESSELS

*And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the **vessels of mercy**, which He had before prepared unto glory* (Romans 9:23).

There is a lot of hurt in this world; a lot of sorrow, a lot of injustice, a lot of anger, a lot of disappointment, a lot of pain. This world is in dire need of God's mercy.

The word "mercy" is defined by Noah Webster as:

That benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender better than he deserves; the disposition that tempers justice, and induces an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries, and to forbear punishment ... In this sense, there is perhaps no word in our language precisely synonymous with mercy. That which comes nearest to it is grace. It implies benevolence, tenderness, mildness, pity or compassion, and clemency, but exercised only towards offenders. – *The American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828

Vessels are simply containers. As "*vessels of mercy*" we are the containers of God's mercy. Divine mercy is resident on the earth – in us! This divine mercy that God has placed in us is wonderful beyond words; unceasingly refreshing, untiringly selfless.

As containers of this divine treasure, the mercy is not "ours." It does not originate from us, nor is it designed solely for us. Instead, the true source of this mercy is our Father, and is primarily resident in us for the benefit of those around us. This is the nature of vessels.

Take a bowl of fruit for instance. The fruit is not produced by the container; nor is the fruit "for" its benefit, "for" its consumption. Instead, it is simply an instrument for the fruit's availability.

We are God's mercy vessels. We do not create the mercy; we do not horde the mercy. Instead, we are the Father's vessels of mercy to those around us – for their consumption. Let's never forget this amazing truth!

Ray Prinzing (1927-2005) spoke of this when he wrote,

God's mercy vessels minister His love, without condemnation, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them,*" but rather, proclaiming the grace of God which reconciles *all* to Himself. – *Daily Overcoming*

As we walk through our daily lives there will be ample opportunities to be God's channels of mercy; being merciful, gracious, kind, tender, loving, and compassionate. We are God's refreshment to the weary world. Dare to simply be who God has made you to be and spread a little mercy around.

THE THRONE OF GRACE

Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

A throne is a place of reigning. God sits on a throne. The "*Throne of God*" is known as one of "*glory*" (Jeremiah 14:21) and "*majesty*" (Hebrews 8:1). Surely every believer has thought of these aspects of God's reigning – it is glorious and majestic.

What Is Reigning Forth from God's Throne?

Not only is the magnitude of God's Throne glorious and majestic, our text reveals that its very nature is that of "*Grace*." Such an amazing revelation, that God's glorious and majestic reign is one of "*Grace*" – "*the Throne of Grace*."

How many truly know that "*Grace*" is the genuine

character of the Divine Throne? Many probably think of God's Throne as a "*Throne of Wrath*," but there is no such terminology to be found in God's Word. Instead we find that His is "*the Throne of Grace*."

How Do We Approach God's Throne?

Oh, how our view of God has been skewed! God's Throne is a place unto which we can "*come boldly*." Is your view of the Father one that allows you the *boldness* to come unto His throne? Or, when you think of His Throne, do you think of timidly, shamefully, fearfully cowering before it? How desperately does such a perception need divine adjustment!

What Do We Receive from God's Throne?

How many know that God's Throne actually radiates with His undiluted "*grace*" and "*mercy*"? Not only do we see that God's Throne is one of "*Grace*," and unto which we can "*come boldly*," but we also learn that it is there – at His Throne – where we "*obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*."

The fact is, we are a needy people. We have been so designed by our Creator. What did you think such needy ones would get from the Throne of God? Wrath? No, it's not the "*Throne of Wrath*," but the "*Throne of Grace*" where we find our Father's endless "*mercy*" and boundless "*grace*"!

What a Father! What a Throne! What Grace and Mercy!

QUESTIONS THAT GENDER STRIFES

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes (II Timothy 2:24).

From this verse we know that there needs to be some care applied to the area of questions. Questions are a great way to learn and glean from others. Questions are also good in the ►

context of teaching. Paul often used the method of questioning, to move from point to point in his instruction.

But questions can also gender strife. Questions that are not related to the two areas just mentioned are referred to as “*doting about questions*,” which Paul warned would lead to “*envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings*” (I Timothy 6:4).

These contentious questions are characterized by Paul as foolish and unlearned. These are questions that have no foundation of knowledge. Their underlying purpose is to be contentious.

So Paul’s point is clear – there are some questions that are simply to be *avoided*. They only lead to strife, argument and debate. These have no place in our ministry of the Lord. Paul says that “*debate*” is among the works of “*unrighteousness*”:

*Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, **debate**, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (Romans 1:29-30).*

*For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as you would not: lest there be **debates**, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults (II Corinthians 12:20).*

We are called to live and share the truth in meekness, gentleness, kindness, and longsuffering. We must not allow ourselves to be drawn into conduct unbecoming of sons of God. We simply will not debate the truth we have seen; for if it is indeed the truth it is not up for debate.

UNUTTERED, UNCEASING PRAYER

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which

cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).

We can find true rest from our weaknesses, cares and weariness in quiet faith, living in recognition of His constant presence in our lives – a place of faith-rest in Him. It is our position and privilege to live simply, moment-by-moment, in His ever-abiding life, living as who He has made us “*in the Beloved*.” Then, even our most endearing “*intercession*” is only unspoken cries (unuttered *groanings*) coming out of our Father’s Spirit living and breathing within us.

With such provision from our Father, we can simply enjoy Him daily, as His dear children, “*accepted in the Beloved*.” We can simply “*be still, and know that He is God*” (Psalm 46:10). We can experience the reality of a faith-rest that knows God as Father – in *every* circumstance and in *every* situation.

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen (Romans 11:36).

In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who works all things after the counsel of His Own will (Ephesians 1:11).

Then, and only then, can we truly realize the exhortation of Paul to,

Pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17).

The traditional concept of prayer is flawed by a very narrow religious definition. It is identified by specific religious formulas, ceremonies, rites, rituals and duties. Instead, for the believer, prayer is simply the very life of God living out through our own spirit and being, in loving union with the Father by the “*the communion*” (II Corinthians 13:14) and “*supplication*” (Ephesians 6:18) of His Spirit, “*continuing instant in prayer*” (Romans 12:12).

Prayer is simply acknowledging, enjoying and living in the fellowship and communion of the Father’s ever-abiding presence; His very breath in our frail earthen vessels. Enjoy Him!

