



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume X
Issue 250

Back to Basics:

God 101

Part 1

HE KNOWS EVERYTHING - - HE IS ALL POWERFUL - - HE IS UNCHANGING

HE IS NOT A MAN - - HE IS GOD - - HE IS THE CREATOR

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Sadly, there are some who would teach of a god who somehow does not know all things, is not all powerful, is not sovereign, and is always changing his mind.

This may be a god of religion, but it is not the God of Scripture. We will go back to the basics, back to a scriptural foundation of the True and Living God.

GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING!

Some will assert that there is some kind of deficiency in God's knowledge; that He must learn things like a man. Yet regardless of what His creatures may assert, the God of Scriptures knows all things.

God's Knowledge Is Perfect

... *Him Who is perfect in knowledge* (Job 37:16).

God's Understanding Is Infinite

... *His understanding is infinite* (Psalms 147:5).

God Knows All Things

... *God ... knows all things* (1 John 3:20).

God Declares the End from the Beginning

... *I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning* (Isaiah 46:9-10).

God Declares Things Not Yet Done

... *I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and*



there is none like Me, ... declaring from ancient times the things that are not yet done (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Summation of God's Knowledge by Paul

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? ... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for the ages. Amen (Romans 11:33-36).

Did it ever occur to you that nothing ever occurred to God?

Regardless of what His finite creatures may have to say, the infinite God of Scripture is all knowing. Period. Rest in that.

GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL!

Then there are those who would teach of a god who somehow is not the sovereign of the universe – that he can't manage to do exactly what he wants to do, and that he is somehow actually subject to his creatures.

This, too, may be a god of religion, but it is not the God of Scripture. Purely and simply, regardless of what His creatures may assert, the God of Scripture is the absolute Sovereign of His Own universe.

God Is Almighty

... *I am the Almighty God ...* (Genesis 17:1).

(see **BASICS**, page 2343)

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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 (1 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 law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (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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BASICS (continued from page 2341)

... God Almighty ... (Genesis 28:3; 35:11; Exodus 6:3, etc.).

There Is Nothing too Hard for Almighty God

Is anything too hard for the LORD? (Genesis 18:14).

Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heaven and the earth by Your great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for You (Jeremiah 32:17).

He Does All that Pleases Him

My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Our God is in the heavens: He has done whatsoever He has pleased (Psalm 115:3).

God Is Sovereign in All of the Affairs of Men

Nebuchadnezzar was an earthly monarch who appeared to be a sovereign; but there is a Sovereign in heaven Who has all things under His control. Nebuchadnezzar would learn the great truth that,

... the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will ... (Daniel 4:17, 25).

... all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He does according to His will ... among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand ... (Daniel 4:35).

God's sovereignty over all of the affairs of men – even those who are “sovereign” – is taught throughout the Scriptures.

... Are not You God in heaven? Do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the heathen? In Your hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand You? (II Chronicles 20:6).

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turns it wherever He will (Proverbs 21:1).

In fact, it is God Who is the

... Great King over all the earth (Psalm 47:2).

God's Sovereign Power Extends Even to the Small Details of Our Daily Lives

And my days, all of them were written up on Your scroll; The days, they were formed when there was not one of them (Psalm 139:16).

He even keeps track of the number of hairs on your head!

But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows (Luke 12:7).

God's very title in Scripture is “El,” meaning “Subjector.” There are those who, refusing to glorify Him AS GOD, become vain in their imaginations and attempt to make God like unto themselves – thus becoming fools (Romans 1:21-23). They teach of a god who, somehow, has lost control of his universe. They present him as not knowing what will happen next, and as a result he is made in their minds to be in a constant state of attempting to play “catch up” with his creation.

Regardless of what His creatures may assert, the God of Scripture is the all-wise, all-powerful Sovereign of His Own universe. Period. Rest in that.

GOD IS UNCHANGING!

Sadly, there are also some who would teach of a god who, somehow, is ever-changing. They aspire to present him as not knowing the future, and making mere tentative plans, waiting to see what his creatures will do, so as to change his mind and will according to theirs.

This also may be religion's god, but it is not the God of Scripture. We will go back to the basics; back to a scriptural foundation of the true and living God.

Regardless of what His creatures may assert, the God of Scripture is the all-wise, all-powerful, **unchanging** Sovereign of His Own universe.

God Is Always the Same

... They shall be changed, but You are the same, and Your years shall have no end (Psalm 102:27).

God Does Not Change

I am the LORD, I change not (Malachi 3:6).

There Is No Variableness with God

... The Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17).

God Does not Change His Mind

God is not a man, that He should fail; neither the son of man, that He should repent: has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19).

The Strength of Israel will not fail nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent (I Samuel 15:29).

Regardless of what His finite creatures may have to say, the infinite God of Scripture is unchanging. Period. Rest in that.

GOD IS NOT A MAN!

God is not a man (Numbers 23:19).

He is not a man (I Samuel 15:29).

Many try to make out God to be like themselves. Refusing to glorify Him “AS GOD,” they become vain in their imaginations, attempting to change “*the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man*” (Romans 1:21-23). Sadly, they even try to rally Scriptures for their cause.

The Scriptures that they misuse are those that utilize the *figure of speech* known as *Condescension*. Unless we recognize this important *figure of speech*, we will end up making absurd and ridiculous assertions – leaving us with a “god” who is greatly less than the True God of Scripture.

For example, Genesis 3:9 (“*Adam ... Where are you?*”) could be misused to show that God is ignorant, or blind. Did God really not know where Adam was? Of course not – it’s just a *figure of speech*. God never lost track of Adam!

In Genesis 4:9-10 God asks Cain, “*Where is Abel your brother?*” and “*What have you done?*” Does this mean that God needs glasses? Did God really not know where Abel was? Did he not know what Cain had done? Certainly not – He knew *exactly* what had transpired!

Genesis 8:1 tells us that “*God remembered Noah.*” This could be misused to teach that God is forgetful, along with Genesis 19:29 (“*God remembered Abraham*”) and Genesis 30:22 (“*And God remembered Rachel*”). Had God forgotten them, and then, thankfully, remembered them? Is God getting forgetful? Maybe He’s senile, or perhaps just too busy trying to stay on top of things? Absolutely not: all of these are further examples of the *figure of speech*, *Condescension*.

Genesis 22:12 (“*for now I know*”) could be misused to argue that God did not know what was in Abraham’s heart until Abraham had taken action. Did not God know all along what was in Abraham’s heart? Surely He did, for,

... For the LORD searches ALL hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts (I Chronicles 28:9).

... For man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart (I Samuel 16:7).

O LORD of hosts, Who ... sees the heart (Jeremiah 20:12).

... You, Lord, Who knows the hearts of all men (Acts 1:24).

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13).

If someone tries to tell you that God somehow did not know what was in Abraham’s heart beforehand, don’t believe a word of it. God knew exactly what was in Abraham’s heart all along. Abraham’s heart was being tested for the benefit of Abraham; and God spoke to him in terms with which Abraham was familiar. God was affirming Abraham’s faithfulness.

In Exodus 4:2 God asks Moses, “*What is that in your hand?*” Really, did God not even know what was in Moses’ hand? Could He not quite make it out? Or, was it something He had not seen before? Did Moses need to teach God what a rod was? Did Moses have to say, “Oh, it’s a branch that I broke off of that tree over there that You made”?

See how carried away we can get when we try to make literal what was intended by God to be a simple *figure of speech*? See what happens when we abandon the ABSOLUTE for the RELATIVE viewpoint? We end up with a “god” who doesn’t have the “eyes to see” or the “knowledge” to recognize a rod in Moses’ hand.

Early on in Scripture, God establishes the ABSOLUTE truth of Who He is.

He **is** “EL” (God) the “Subjector” (e.g. Genesis 4:19).

He **is** the “Almighty God” (Genesis 17:1).

He **is** “perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16).

These are the ABSOLUTE truths about God. Having firmly established Who He is *absolutely*, He is also free to *relate* to man – to *condescend* to him in a RELATIVE sense – to present Himself in a human way.

Condescension (or “Anthropopatheia” as it is also known) is the *figure of speech* used in the Scriptures where purely human qualities are attributed to God. E.W. Bullinger, in one of his most monumental works, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, catalogued in detail over 200 distinct figures, several having 30 or 40 varieties. *Condescension* is one of the important *figures of speech* which he defines. (He also deals with this in his *Companion Bible* and in its Appendix.)

A.E. Knoch wrote concerning *Condescension*,

When God is spoken of as if He were human, or were a part of His creation, this is done in His *Condescension*, so that He may reveal Himself in terms within the range of human perception. – *Figures of Speech*

God condescends and speaks in human timeframes, in human terms, and with the human perspectives. This is how He relates to us.

Seth Tipton speaks of *Condescension* in some detail.

We have to keep in mind, first of all, that *God is not a man*. This seems obvious, but we need always to remind ourselves of it, especially as God often *condescends* in Scripture to speak of Himself in the terms of a man ...

Having established this absolute truth early in Scripture (ABSOLUTE truth as opposed to RELATIVE truth), God can now give Himself human attributes to help humans understand Him. This is a figure of speech known as *Condescension*. When God is spoken of as if He were human ... this is done in His condescension, so that He can reveal Himself in terms within the range of human perception. ... These descriptions are God lowering Himself to a human level (condescension), for human benefit, that humans might grasp something about Him. We easily get off track when we confuse His *condescension* with His ABSOLUTE being. ... Don't confuse the two!

Occasionally, God even condescends to ignorance. Consider Genesis 3:9, when God asks Adam, "*Where are you?*" Did God really not know where Adam was?

Or consider Genesis 4:9-10 when God asks Cain, "*Where is Abel your brother?*" and "*What have you done?*" Would we entertain for a moment the idea that either sinful Adam or wicked Cain were able to inform the Deity of something He didn't know? No. This is God *condescending* to reveal Himself within the sphere of His creatures' experience. In this case, it was God employing *condescension* to bring both Adam and Cain to a stinging awareness of their crimes. Of course God knew where Adam was. Of course He knew where Abel was, and what had happened to him. Otherwise, He would not be God. I John 3:20 says, "*God knows everything.*" But He asked these questions for the sake of His creatures ...

Compare God's dealing with Adam and Cain to the parent asking the frosting-faced child, "Have you been into the mixing bowl?" It is not wrong for a parent to assume ignorance when child-training warrants it; thus also with God and His children.

God Does Not Change His Mind

We read absolute truth in I Samuel 15:29.

The Eminence of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.

The key part of this verse is, "*He is not a man.*" Whenever God disassociates Himself from humanity (and therefore is not apt to employ *condescension*), we glimpse His ABSOLUTE and ultimate nature. Absolutely and ultimately, then (apart from His having to reveal Himself in the sensual realm), God does not change His mind. Of this you can be assured. Let this truth calm you and fill you

with confidence in the sovereignty and wisdom and the knowledge of God.

If ours was a God Who could be pulled this way or that by the whims of men, what God would we have? No God! If ours was a God Who made mistakes, or said hasty things He didn't mean, or abandoned "Plan A" for "Plan B," or admitted to error before the "wise" courts of humanity, how could we trust Him? We couldn't! Can even Christians (wonderful, spiritual, all-knowing people that they are) talk God into sending rain, for instance, a minute before He intends to send it? No ... what a horrifying universe it would be if the diabolical Christian doctrine of "prayer changes things" were true. Prayer and repentance never change God, thank God for that. True prayer and repentance is that which conforms to the divine will – not the other way around.

God Assumes Change as a Form of Condescension

Now we are able to read verses like Jeremiah 26:13 and Jonah 3:10, and understand God's methods with man in the light of His ultimate nature.

Jeremiah 26:13 says,

Now therefore, amend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will change His mind about the misfortune which He has pronounced against you."

Jonah 3:10 says,

When God saw their deeds, that they [the Ninevites] turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

In both of these cases (as in the cases of Adam and Cain), God is dealing with disobedient children, and is justified in speaking to them in the terms of children, for their ultimate good. As far as the Israelites and the Ninevites are concerned, God will change His mind if they do a certain thing. Yet as far as God is concerned, God never changes His mind (I Samuel 15:29). One perception is from the *viewpoint of men*, the other from the *divine viewpoint*.

In *condescending* to the Ninevites, for example (telling them through Jonah the prophet, "*Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown,*" Jonah 3:4), God causes their repentance, the very thing He had in mind all along. God never did intend to overthrow Nineveh, but He is justified in assuming the role of One Who would overthrow it, because this resulted in a greater good, that is, in the repentance of the Ninevites. God is not playing games, He is blessing His creatures. That God assumed the role of One Who would overthrow Nineveh was the means to His will (that is, *condescension*; He never willed to overthrow Nineveh), not His will itself (absolute; that the Ninevites would repent).

The Law

God did the same type of thing with the law. In Exodus 32:8, shortly after the law came down from Sinai, God said, concerning Israel, “*They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them.*” In some places in the Hebrew Scriptures God actually comes across puzzled, surprised, and even frustrated at the failure of His people to accomplish law. Could God ever be frustrated? No. He only assumed these roles (*condescension* again), for the sake of His people. It was absolutely essential to His intention for Israel (and the world) that law fail, thus making room for a Savior through Whom He would reveal His heart. For this to work effectively, however, Israel had to honestly think and believe that they could do law. For God’s ultimate intention to work as well as it did (the intention that Israel and a universe be saved by the might of His hand, by the blood of His cross), it was essential that His people be ignorant of that very plan – for a season.

We know through Paul in Romans 8:3 that the law was impossible to the flesh. We know through Paul in Romans 8:20 that the law came that the offense should proliferate. We know through Paul in Galatians 2:16 that no flesh could be justified by law, even if it wanted to. Did not God know these things way back at Sinai? Of course He did. Then why didn’t He let on that He did? It was for the sake of His ultimate goal. His plan for humanity was determined before there was a humanity, for He is the One Who is “*declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’*” (Isaiah 46:10). Can you see now how patient and longsuffering God is in the gradual unfolding of His wise counsels?

Israel as a nation

Jesus said in Matthew 23:37,

Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings – and you will not!

This is our Lord *condescending* to the viewpoint of man. Had the people received Him then, the kingdom would have come apart from His suffering and death. This, of course, could not have been, seeing as He was “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8). Besides, what blessings would the nations have had, apart from Israel’s apostasy? None (Romans 11:12). Jerusalem had to reject Him then, and He knew that. Yet He speaks from the viewpoint of a man here (I believe Jesus is actually suffering, He actually feels the pangs of rejection), yet for the benefit of man. Through this saying, man sees his own faults and is moved to repentance. Have the ultimate counsels of God been annulled? Never. Instead, THE ABSOLUTE COUNSELS OF GOD STAND, and they are these:

God gives them [Israel] a spirit of stupor, eyes not to be observing, and ears not to be hearing, till this very day (Romans 11:8).

Callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering (Romans 11:25).

In their offense is salvation to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy (Romans 11:11).

Now if their offense is the world’s riches and their discomfiture the nations’ riches, how much rather that which fills them! (Romans 11:12).

For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead? (Romans 11:15).

And thus all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written (Romans 11:25-26).

Regardless of what man says about God to the contrary, God is *NOT* a man! Period. Rest in that!

God Is God!

This may seem so basic that it goes without saying; but over and over in Scripture God reasserts His Godhood. The reason? There are those who would teach of a “god” who is somehow something less than “God.”

... **I am God** ... (Genesis 35:11; 46:3; Psalm 46:10; 50:7; Isaiah 43:12; 45:22; 46:9; Ezekiel 28:9; Hosea 11:9).

In five of these passages the Hebrew word **El** is used for God. In four of them it is the word **Elohim**. God is the **El** of Scripture. **El** is used over 200 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and means “Subjector.” This is the title that describes God **as** GOD!

El is also the root word for **Elohim**, the powerful word used most often as the title of God. E.W. Bullinger had done great service to the Body of Christ in his extensive studies on the names of God in his work *Divine Names and Titles* (available from StudyShelf.com). The following is an abridged look at **El** and **Elohim** from *Bullinger’s Companion Bible Appendices*, #4.

EL is essentially **the Almighty**. **EL** is **Elohim** in all His strength and power. **El** is God the Omnipotent. **Elohim** is God the **Creator** putting His omnipotence into operation. **Eloah** is God Who wills and orders all, and Who is to be the one object of the worship of His people. **El** is the God Who **knows** all (first occurrence Genesis 14:18-22) and sees all (Genesis 16:13) and that **performs** all things for His people (Psalm 57:2); and in Whom all the Divine attributes are concentrated.

ELOHIM occurs 2,700 times. Its first occurrence connects it with **creation**, and gives it its essential meaning as **the Creator**. It indicates His relation to mankind as His **creatures**. **Elohim** is indicated (in the *Authorized Version*) by ordinary small type, “God.”

ELOAH is **Elohim**, Who is to be worshipped. **Eloah** is God in connection with His **Will** rather than His power. The first occurrence associates this name with worship (Deuteronomy 32:15, 17). Hence it is the title used whenever the contrast (latent or expressed) is with false gods or idols. **Eloah** is essentially “*the living God*” in contrast to inanimate idols.

ELYON first occurs in Genesis 14:18 with **El**, and is rendered “*the most high (God)*.” It is **El** and **Elohim**, not as the powerful **Creator**, but as “*the possessor of heaven and earth*.” It is **Elyon**, as possessor of the earth, Who divides the nations “*their inheritance*.” In Psalm 83:18, He is “*over all the earth*.” The title occurs 36 times.

(El) SHADDAI is in every instance translated “*Almighty*,” and is indicated by small capital letters (“*ALMIGHTY*”). It is God (**El**), not as the source of strength, but of **grace**; not as **Creator**, but as the **Giver**. **Shaddai** is the All-Bountiful. This title does not refer to His **creative** power, but to His power to **supply** all the needs of His people. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 17:1, and is used to show Abraham that He Who called him out to walk alone before Him could supply all his need. Even so it is the title used in II Corinthians 6:18, where we are called to “*come out*” in separation from the world. It is always used in connection with **El**.

Regardless of what man says about God to the contrary, God **is** GOD! Period. Rest in that.

GOD IS THE CREATOR!

In the beginning God ... (Genesis 1:1).

God is the Creator. There once was nothing – except for God. Just God, alone.

God started with a blank slate, an empty canvas. God created the entire universe out of HIMSELF. He simply spoke and the worlds were in existence. So EVERYTHING is “*out of God*” – obviously, there is no other choice.

Out of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL things (Romans 11:36).

Everything is out of God. Every effect must have a cause. He is the First Cause. He is the Great Cause. He is the Ultimate Cause. “*In the beginning God ...*” (Genesis 1:1).

We must learn this first if we will learn anything. We must

start our doctrine with God, for He is the beginning of EVERYTHING.

We must start LARGE (with God) and then work toward the minute details (with ourselves). If God is not our starting place of understanding, and we have as our start ourselves (and the minute details of our lives), we will end up humanistic and evolutionary; we will be man-centered and world-conscious – placing our focus on the relative aspect of life. If, however, we start out our study of the Scriptures LARGE, with God, we will be God-centered and God-conscious – having our focus firmly anchored in the absolute aspect of life.

If there was once nothing but God, then of course ALL is *out of God*. Fundamental Christendom seems to have no trouble with God the Creator out of Whom are ALL things, if it is restricted to His initial creation – the moon, the stars, the world, etc.; but get past that initial creation and they quickly become humanistic and evolutionary in their thinking. To them ALL is *out of God* in creation, but quickly things change and now somehow “all is out of man.”

Think for a moment of that computer in front of you. It is “out of God.” How else could it be? Where did all of the materials ultimately come from, except from the storehouse of His creation? Moreover, where did the intellect come from to invent the many technologies that converge to make it work, but from the “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” minds of God’s creation?

How else could it be? Remember, there was nothing – ABSOLUTELY NOTHING – and **then** God said, “*Let there be ...*” The computer on which this *Bible Student’s Notebook* is produced is just the continuation of His mighty work. “*For out of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL things*” (Romans 11:36).

Somehow man is deceived into thinking that he is the captain of his own ship, the lord of his own life, the god of his own little universe, and the master of his own fate. This is the sad situation of the humanistic mindset that in folly and vanity attempts to displace the God of Scripture from His rightful place as God.

As we have already learned, God is **THE El**, the “*Subjector*.” Man is in the height of his folly and vanity when he assumes that somehow there is even one minute detail that is outside of **El’s** (God’s) subjection. This is *His* universe, and it belongs to no other.

Of course, somehow Christendom thinks that all of this breaks down with the subject of evil, and their theology becomes evolutionary.

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and CREATE EVIL: I the LORD do ALL THESE THINGS (Isaiah 45:7).

A.E. Knoch writes of this in his profound book, *The Problem of Evil and the Judgments of God*.

We only condemn ourselves as theological evolutionists when we trace sin back to a creature and refuse to acknowledge the Creator. Many who do not spare the shortsightedness of science and condemn its labored efforts to banish God from His Own universe, are practicing the same deception when confronted with the origin of sin ...

Current Miltonian effusions regarding Satan's primeval perfection and his subsequent fall are not to be found anywhere in the Word of God. "*The devil sinneth from the beginning*" (I John 3:8) ...

We have, then, a creature, called an Adversary and Satan, and to him the Scriptures trace back all sin. Our inquiry is now narrowed down to the question whether this one is really a creature, or *self-created* – in fact, another god, such as the Zoroastrian religion worshipped. If he is not self-existent we are shut up to his creation by the hand of God ...

Was it God's intention that sin should have invaded the universe, or was it due to an error on His part? ...

If God created Satan perfect, and his defection was a surprise and a disappointment to God, then there is no use in hiding behind mere words. He failed. He started out to make a flawless creature who turned out bad. There is no one else to charge with this failure but God. But this is all wrong, *for God never fails, or sins*.

Sin has an essential, though transient, part in God's purpose. God made due preparation for it before it came. The Lamb was slain before the disruption of the world. Creation may reveal some aspects of God's power and wisdom, but His love can be displayed only where sin has sown the seed of hate. There can be no Savior apart from sin. There can be no reconciliation apart from enmity. God locks up all together in stubbornness that He should be merciful to all [Romans 11:32]. – page 9

We must ever remember that God is God, and as God, He "*works all things after the counsel of His Own will*" (Ephesians 1:11) – He is "*operating all in accord with the counsel of His will*" (CLNT) – ALL things, even evil.

God is *El*, and He is responsible for all of His creation. This is what creatorship, headship and fatherhood – about being GOD – are all about.

Regardless of what man says about God to the contrary, God **is** the responsible Creator of His universe, out of Whom are all things! He has never lost control of His universe. His is LARGE and in CHARGE. Period. Rest in that.

(to be continued)

THE OUTSIDERS' TOUR

I could be coming YOUR way!



Following Paul's method of ministry, I will be beginning an on-going series of trips across the country (and perhaps beyond) to meet with our beloved readers in their homes. Each trip will be a journey to a particular section of the country, visiting and spending each night in a different home.

The purpose of these trips is for the mutual edification of believers in Paul's gospel (evangel). It would be a time of personal fellowship, teaching, and answering questions. Depending on the desires of our hosts, these evenings could be either a very personal time with you (and those in your house), or they could be an opportunity to invite family and friends to your home (or other location of your choice) for an informal sharing of the wonderfully liberating message committed to Paul, our apostle.

As always, our general theme will be centered in the *correct cutting* (or *right division*) of the Word of Truth, and the glorious consummation of all things in Christ (resulting in the salvation of all God's creation). The specific subjects dealt with in each home could be quite varied, at the direction of our host, depending upon the need or interest of those present.

I would love to hear from you if you are interested in hosting me during one of my trips. I will need to plan each trip by grouping visits together along a general route towards the furthest point in a certain direction. After hearing from a few of you, I will get back to you individually to work on a mutually suitable date.

I can hardly wait to see you!

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