



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XI  
Issue 270

# Nationalism

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of Life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain (Philippians 2:14-16).*

The English word “nation” is a translation of various Hebrew and Greek words (such as *goy* and *ethnos*) which are also used to translate such English words as “Gentiles” and “heathen.” The key to nationalism has to do with understanding its place in God’s plan. When one understands God’s purposes they are better able to know how to relate to them. Nationalism is a divine judgment upon mankind, introduced at Babel’s Tower (Genesis 10, 11), and is His instrument of vanity among the Gentiles, for truly “*the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing*” (Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25).



according to His will ... among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can restrain His hand ...” (Daniel 4:35). It is God Who rules “over all the kingdoms of the heathen” (II Chronicles 20:6).

We know that “*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), and in fact, “... **HE** is the great King over all the earth” (Psalms 47:2).

God rules over all nations, establishing their times and boundaries. The who, how, when and where are all determined by Him for His Own purposes.

[God] has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation (Act 17:26).

Nationalism is a further tool in God’s hand to subject mankind to vanity (Romans 8:20). Men look to governments for the answer to their problems, and even Christians try in vain to influence the predestined course of the Gentiles. The history of nationalism is one of successive failure. Hopes are raised for a “good” government, only to find that “evil” prevails again: one nation after another, one kingdom overthrowing another, one party defeating another, one cause overpowering another, all in vain cycles. God is at the center of it all, “*for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God*” (Romans 13:1). Pharaoh was God’s servant (Romans 9:17), as well as was Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1).

We must never forget that “... *the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will ...*” (Daniel 4:17, 25), and that “... *He does*

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## **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 law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I 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).

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).

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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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## From the Editor

Dear Saints,

### Human Government

In this issue of the *BSN* we are dealing with some truths related to human government. This is obviously not the first occasion in these pages that we have dealt with this subject. This is just a part of our ongoing contribution to the discussion of the role of nationalism in God's plan, and our relationship to it.

### Study

#### Our Individual Responsibility

*Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).*

Ultimately, it matters little what I think or share on this, or any other topic. What you desperately need to ask and know for yourself is, *What do the Scriptures say?*

I know that some of you share in my passion for the truth of God's Word. I believe that we should be men of the Scriptures. I believe that we should speak when the Scriptures speak, and remain silent when they remain silent. I believe that we should share the truth of the revelation of the Scriptures – *whatever they say* – whether or not it is comfortable, or whether or not it is popular, or whether or not it is culturally or religiously acceptable. The material of the *BSN* often runs contrary to Christendom's views. If God has determined to reveal His mind and will, we should be bold enough to proclaim it.

Over the past 20 years I have been bold enough (and vulnerable enough) to share what I believe – in print – open for criticism and correction. I welcome you sharing *your understanding* back to me. I would value your labor in the Word. If you have any specific questions about what I have written I would gladly attempt to answer them as best I can.

Until next week,

By God's grace,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



Thank you for the *Daily Email Goodies*, they are a big help for me and encouragement. I am Dutch and live in Papua New Guinea. My husband is a teacher at a school for Mission Kids. – *New Guinea*

*The Church in Ruins* has shed a lot of light on my studies of the Bible ... I would like to know how I may obtain multiple copies of your book to give to people I currently study and share with. – *AZ*

I look forward to reading the *Daily Email Goodies* that I receive from you, and today's was a home run. This is a great complement to my studies in Romans 6, 7 and 8 on my position in Him. What greater way to reinforce my position than to recognize that He is shaping me for His purposes regardless of what I see in the natural. Thanks Clyde for your building up of the Body. – *Email*

Greetings from the prairies of Illinois! Just wanted to let you know I have begun reading your book: *The Church in Ruins*, and just like *The Outsiders*, I can't put it down. I like the way you write ... You have that intellectual side but you communicate softly, is the way I see it. Friendly might be another way to put it ... Another great book that jumps right in to the meat of things ... I enjoy that. – *IL*

Thank you so much for your *Daily Email Goodies* yesterday and today. I know that some thoughts from you impress each of your students differently, according to our individual needs and lacking in knowledge. This theme of "adoption" is by no means new to me, but the way you explain it brings it closer to home for me and gives greater understanding of our position as "sons" of the Father. These two Goodies will be added to my daily list of readings from you, as I need daily reminders. Father is slowly growing me through your leadership. Thanks to Father for making you, you! – *LA*

# Giving Thanks for Obama

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*I exhort therefore, that ... giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority ... (I Timothy 2:1-2).*

**G**od is at the center of all human activity – including human governments – for,

**HE** is the great King over all the earth (Psalms 47:2).

Therefore, whoever has authority is whom He has placed in power, for He

*Rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will ... (Daniel 4:17, 25);*

*For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God (Romans 13:1).*

Not only is whom He has chosen in power, but He directs their very heart as well, for,

*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).*

Therefore, for example, in the United States Obama is God's chosen vessel at this time. He is God's instrument, and our divinely ordained attitude towards him, as with Bush and Clinton before him, is to pray and give thanks for him:

*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all who are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (I Timothy 2:1-2).*

Interestingly enough, Paul wrote these words in the context of perhaps one of the most evil, corrupt, brutal rulers who ever lived.

Concerning the Roman Emperor Nero, James Stalker wrote,

He was a man who, in a bad world, had attained the eminence of being the very worst and meanest being in it – a man stained with every crime, the murder of his own mother, of his wives and of his best benefactors. – *Life of St. Paul*, pages 142-143

H.I. Hester, elaborating in his work *The Heart of the New Testament* (1964), wrote,

Rome had several tyrannical and corrupt emperors but Nero was the worst. He was immoral, vicious, selfish and despotically cruel. He came to the throne in A.D. 54 and ruled for fourteen years ... He will go down in history as one of the most despicable men ever to rule over a people ...

Historians are generally agreed that it was Nero who burned the city of Rome. He labored under the delusion that he was a genius in music and that his compositions would become immortal if only he had sufficient inspiration. Feeling that a great conflagration would provide the inspiration he had the city set on fire. It is said that he sat on an elevated porch overlooking the city and attempted to play the violin [lyre] as he watched the city burn. This fire broke out on July 19<sup>th</sup> in the year 64 and raged for six days. Much to the surprise of Nero there was a violent reaction among the people and he hastened to attach the blame for this on the Christians. Immediately thereafter serious persecution broke out against these Christian people. It took real courage to be a Christian now as they were granted no protection by the law. These Neronian persecutions were unspeakably horrible. Christian men and women were burned, were cast to wild beasts in the amphitheater to entertain the populace. "Nero lent his gardens for the purpose of exhibiting the tortures of the wretched victims, and at



night he illuminated his grounds by the flames of burning Christians” – Foakes-Jackson, *Rise of Gentile Christianity*, page 50. (page 330)

This was the context of Paul’s remarkable admonition to Timothy:

*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all who are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (I Timothy 2:1-2).*

Paul was exhorting that the saints give thanks for Nero! Absolutely amazing! Yet, when we think about it, why wouldn’t this be what Paul encouraged them to do, for did not Paul instruct them to give “*thanks always FOR all things*” (Ephesians 5:20)? Would this not have included Nero?

Paul clearly presents a spiritual attitude of thanksgiving: not just for “good” things, but for **all things** – and not just *IN* all things, but *FOR* all things. When we understand the great truth that “**all things are of God**” (II Corinthians 5:18), this is easy. When we embrace the fact that “*of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things*” (Romans 11:36), then we have no option but to thank Him “*for all things.*”

Thanking God for “*all things,*” surely includes “*all men.*” This is what Paul told Timothy, that the “*giving of thanks [should] be made for all men.*” Then, Paul is specific not to exclude, but to include “*kings, and all who are in authority.*” What does Paul then say that the results of such a disposition of thanksgiving would be?

*That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

Paul here is not speaking of civil or social peace. The issue here is not that there would be national peace, but that *our hearts* would be aligned with God and His purpose, thus bringing quietness and peace to our hearts, and to the disposition of our lives.

No matter in which national system we find ourselves, we can remain calm, peaceful and happy,

knowing that Father is in absolute control. *THIS* is godly living. *THIS* is honest living – living in the truth that Father is completely in charge of all things. *THIS* “*godliness and honesty*” alone allows us to “*lead a quiet and peaceable life.*”

Many believers live in the turmoil created by the misjudging of the true source of “*all things.*” Government and politics are no exception. The political pundits agitate their spirits – displacing them from their God-given “*quiet and peaceable life.*” Do not give way to such a snare!

## ALL MEN

Listen to some of what Paul taught concerning “*all men.*”

- We are to Love “*All Men*”

*The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you (I Thessalonians 3:12).*

- We are to be Gentle to “*All Men*”

*The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men ... (II Timothy 2:24).*

- We are to Show Meekness to “*All Men*”

*To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men (Titus 3:2).*

- We are to Give Thanks for “*All Men*”

*I exhort therefore, that ... giving of thanks, be made for all men ... (I Timothy 2:1).*

Our disposition towards all men really reflects our disposition toward God. Paul could give thanks for Nero. Why not start by give thanks for Obama today? If it is heartfelt, it will bring a change of quietness and peace to your life.

That’s what the verses say.

# Zionism

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*You are not My people, and I will not be your God (Hosea 1:9).*

Israel was once God's "head" among the nations (Deuteronomy 28:13); but as she was warned, she is now the "tail" (28:44). Instead of imparting spiritual light to the nations, Israel is now blinded (Romans 11:25). God's divorce from Israel was prophesied by the Prophet Isaiah (50:1); nationally they are "Lo-Ammi" – **not** His people (Hosea 1:9). Israel fell and lost her divine favored-nation status, being temporarily cast away and scattered.

In God's current dispensation of grace, "the middle wall of partition" between the Jew and the Gentile has been broken down (Ephesians 2:14). There is now, therefore, before God, "no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Romans 10:12); as "God has concluded them all [all nations including Israel] in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32) and believing Jews **and** Gentiles are now being "reconciled ... to God in one body by the cross" (Ephesians 2:16).

The national vanity of the Gentiles now extends even to the modern-day state of Israel. Zionism is the Jewish practice of nationalism, involving the restoration and support of the Jewish state. There is no spiritual difference between Zionism and the nationalism of any other nation, but sadly many Christians are ignorant of this truth. One does not have to look far to find Christians supporting Zionism. It is not uncommon to see the display of the Israeli flag as some "spiritual" act, or even its display side-by-side with the so-called "Christian flag." Some Christians actively support Israel, even giving monetarily for the return of Jews to Palestine.

This article should *not* be construed as anti-Semitic (a prejudice against or hostility towards Jews). Neither the Jews, nor their national state, are intrinsically inferior to that of any other nation; but neither are they above any other nation – having any special national privilege before God as they had before – *at this time*. Instead, we seek to view them right where God currently has them: where there is "no difference." For the time being their fall has made them simply one of the nations. Their national status has temporarily been reduced to that of the Gentiles.

Yet make no mistake about it, God is *not* done with Israel. When He has completed His current work with the church, the Body of Christ, He Himself will restore His "beloved" (Romans 11:28) to her preeminent position as the "head," and "the nations shall come to [her] light, and kings to the brightness of [her] rising" (Isaiah 60:3). What a glorious day that will be for God's plan with the earth. To be ignorant of this important truth is to be "wise in your own conceits" (Romans 11:25).

However, in the meantime Israel has been reduced to the *vanity* of the Gentiles – which two thousand years of history clearly demonstrates. Support of national Israel has no more or less spiritual value than the support of national Barbados. Leave it to Christians to try to undo what God in His purpose has done. An understanding of the revelation given to Paul would save Christians from such vain zeal.

## The Power of Human "Free Will"?

**Is the power of our "free will" to damn ourselves for eternity really absolute, exceeding the power of God's "free will" to save us, His very Own property? "All souls are Mine" (Ezekiel 18:4). If so, who suffers most in eternal damnation: man? or God, Who loves man with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3)? – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.**

# All of Our Days Were Written in His Book

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*My days, all of them were written in Your book; the days, they were formed when there was not one of them (Psalm 139:16).*

**I**t is comforting to know that God knew me long before I was ever born. It is reassuring to understand that the details of my life on this very day were written in His book before I ever lived them. It is a cause of rest to my heart to know that He has designed the details of my life; that I am not living my life on my own, but that He is God – large and in charge – of all that this day, and every other one, brings forth.

After all, He is the God Who is,

*... declaring the end from the beginning ...  
and ... from ancient times the things that are  
not yet done (Isaiah 46:9-10).*

It is a great relief to recognize that we can neither disappoint Him nor surprise Him as we live out our day; for He alone is the Author of our lives, the Sovereign Scribe Who has masterfully crafted the script of our days upon the pages of His epic work.

We are not self-made: we are God-made. We are “His workmanship,” “His achievement” (Ephesians 2:10), and of course,

*Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the ages (Acts 15:18).*

We can rejoice today that we are His, and that He is fully in charge of our days.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28).*

Little wonder the Psalmist wrote:

*I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Your works; and that my soul knows right well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. My days, all of them were written in Your book; the days, they were formed when there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with You (Psalm 139:14-18).*

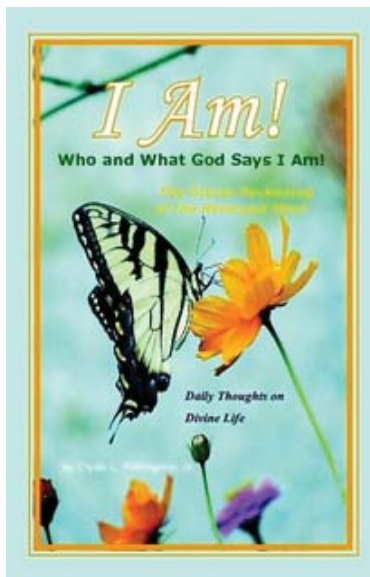
## Opposition to God's Will

**We are not worried, as once we were, by the awful opposition to God's will, nor do we fear for the fulfillment of His purpose. The flood tide of evil and sin, however contrary it may be to His will, is essential and indispensable to His ultimate intention. He is the great Alchemist Who will transmute everything into glorious gold by contact with the accursed tree.**

– A.E. Knoch, *The Problem of Evil*

# I Am... Who and What God Says I Am!

## *The Divine Reckoning of the Renewed Mind*



People are always talking about their attempts to discover their true selves – their efforts trying to “find themselves.” The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ needs to find out who they really are. This doesn’t need to be such a difficult search. All that is really needed is a careful look at the Scriptures, and a simple faith in the words of who and what God says that we are. God knows who we are; all we need to do is to believe Him.

This book catalogs the Divine Record of who and what God says you are. It is a short encyclopedia of faith; the *truth* about *you*. It is the truth about you, simply because it is God Who has said it. God has spoken these truths concerning you – the *real* you.

Believe His record! Refuse to be a shell of a person, pushed into a mold of Adamic conformity. Be the *real* unique you whom God has designed you to be. Refuse to be bullied out of your divinely designed identity that our Father has given you.

Understanding and believing these glorious truths will allow you the freedom to be at rest.

### **You are who and what God says that you are!**

One of the most powerful and convicting works that has come across my desk in a long time. Wow, do I have a much different perspective regarding who and what I am. – *VT*

Far too many believers in Christ have never heard or truly realized this message. If they did it would set them free and bring the peace they often spend years seeking. Great stuff! – *OH*

Marvelous truths. – *TX*

Very excellent indeed! – *CA*

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## **God's Ultimate Intention**

**It is of the utmost value, especially in times of stress and distress, to realize the purpose of the eons. Too many, who think of the matter at all, wonder why God allows conditions so opposed to His apparent will, and why He does not interfere to set things right ... As a result He appears to be either helpless or heartless, and all confidence in Him vanishes. But when we see that all is in accord with His ultimate [will], and carries out His intention, we are comforted and assured, and view the course of human history in a new and glorious light. Moreover, the men of prominence, who play the part assigned to them without realizing it themselves, will be viewed with sympathy instead of being judged with harshness. To us they may appear monstrous or out of their minds, but let us remember that they are playing a part assigned to them by Another.**

– A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Studies in the Book of Daniel*, page 10