



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XII  
Issue 286

# Who Is in Charge Here?

by – Dan Sheridan

There is only one God. This God is the great Creator of the entire universe. The world did not evolve. The teaching of evolution is an attempt to eliminate the first cause and trace the existence of everything to nothingness, and thus, have a world of meaninglessness. If man can get rid of the idea of God, they can give their own meaning to this world, and to their own existence, and thus, become their own “saviors” – in short, their own gods.



ence to the Bible's Nimrod (Genesis 10).

### THE GOD OF HISTORY

Yet, when we come to the Bible, we have a clear concept of God and His purposes.

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1).*

This is where the world went wrong. The knowledge of God was well established after the world's great flood, but that knowledge was corrupted into an image of corruptible man, and, it went downhill from there. Man-kind professed that they were wise, and in doing that, they were fooled, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible human being and flying creatures and quadrupeds and reptiles.

Creation has its origin in God, and thus, it derives its meaning from God. Creation is the place where the God of the Scriptures is going to display Who He is, and His plans for His creatures. There is nothing in creation – from the first hour of its existence, down through its entire history, until its ultimate consummation in the distant future – that is unimportant. Creation has its origin in God, and it all leads back to God.

*Then comes the end ... that God may be All in all (I Corinthians 15:20-28).*

Many of the past civilizations had their versions of creation and the flood. These versions mix the truth of the creation and the flood with wild myths of warring gods. This was the corruption spoken of by Paul in Romans chapter 1. The gods of these civilizations are no different than man: full of envy, murder and strife. These accounts do not, and cannot explain why the universe was created, or, why the flood came. These gods had no real purpose, and they were not in control of the universe. Everything was left to chance.

God said through His prophet Isaiah,

*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, **Declaring the end from the beginning,** and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isaiah 46:9-10).*

The ancient Sumerian creation epic depicted the creation of the heavens and the earth as the result of a battle between the high god of the Sumerian pantheon (originally Anu, then Enlil, later Ninurta, Marduk, Asshur) and a dragon named Tiamat. This depiction appears in a later version where the god Marduk was credited as the defater of the dragon and creator of the heavens and Earth. Marduk, a mighty warrior god, may have been a refer-

(see *Who*, page 2635)

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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).

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

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**WHO** (continued from front page)

The God of the Scriptures has not left anything to chance. He is not at war with some enemy who can outsmart Him or wreck His plans. From the beginning of creation, until its consummation, God is “*working all things according to the counsel of His Own will.*” He is not consulting with us, nor watching the latest election polls, and neither is He on the lookout for an enemy who can wreck His plans. He is using all, the evil and the good, to bring about a wonderful conclusion at the end.

Now, this is where *you* come in! Yes, you, my reader.

### WHO AM I?

It is easy to feel lost in the crowd. With the billions of people on the earth today, and with all of the people who lived and died in the past, it is very easy to feel insignificant.

Yet each one of us was put here by God. He put us here and is carrying out each detail of His plan. The details of our birth, the date, time, the number of hairs on our head, where we would live, go to school, who our friends would be, what kind of job we would do, and more, were *all* planned by God. God did not create the universe and then leave it to run on its own. He is the Creator. He is sustaining His creation, and He will bring His creation to a successful conclusion and goal. Read that paragraph again. Seriously, read it.

Do you still feel lost in the crowd? Or, having read that last paragraph, at least twice, did you sense that God came out of some distant corner of the universe, no longer as a disinterested spectator, but as One Who is very close to you? The God Who created the entire universe, Who has arranged all of the details of history since it was created, from the smallest molecule, to the largest star cluster, has you in mind. Do not feel lost in the crowd. Do not think that your life and existence are insignificant. I know it sounds cliché, but, *God has a plan for you!*

### LET'S BACK UP

Since God *is* the Creator, and He *is* arranging all of the details of His creation, did you ever wonder why things are the way they are? We look around us, and what do we see? We see a world that is mixed with life and death, joy and sorrow, corruption, and violence; and it seems that the bad stuff far exceeds the good. Why do we have to follow a hearse to the cemetery to bury a loved one? Why do people suffer? Why are there wars? These and a million other questions come to mind.

Is God seeing all of this? I will answer, yes, and much more. We said that God is the originator of this universe and all that is in it, and that He is not like the gods of mythology who are busy fighting enemies and trying to gain control of their universe. So then, why do we see all of these terrible things in the world? If God is in control, why is there suffering?

The answer to that question is very simple, and may not, at first, satisfy you. However, let me ask for your patience and your ability to reflect on what I am about to say before you pass judgment. The reason that there is sin and death in the world is so that we can know what it is like to be without God, so that we can truly appreciate what it will be like to be with Him. Please read that last sentence again.

A reunion of a mother and daughter may prove my point. The separation produced a longing and intensified the reunion.

There are really only two options of belief. The first is to believe that there is no God, and that everything in the world is meaningless. The years of suffering and war have no meaning and all we can do is to hope for the best. That is one belief. Or, we can believe that there *is* a God, and that all of these horrible things have a purpose and, one day, God is going to undo all of this suffering, and we will look back and see how necessary it was.

Please pause here. Reflect on what I just said to you. Seriously reflect. Then come back.

### A GARDEN

Welcome back.

When God created man, He put Him into a beautiful garden and provided him with everything he needed. He also provided him with a gorgeous complement, Eve. God, having put Adam in the garden, gave Him one simple command. The command consisted of not eating from one tree. If he ate from it, he would surely bring death into the world and all of the other evils that come with it – fighting, suffering, starvation, mass murders, bills, hospital beds and rush hour traffic. Now, I do not know about you, but I ask, why? Why do that, God? Why not just let Adam and Eve live in the garden, happy, with no disease, arguments, rush hour traffic or death? What in the world is wrong with eating from a tree? It's just fruit!

As I think about my questions, I realize something. Adam had no history. I can easily look back at the Garden of ►

Eden and say, “Let’s go back there. – but I can only say this because I am here, outside of the Garden, and experiencing disease, pain, funerals and rush hour traffic. I have a history! I can appreciate what Adam had, but Adam *couldn’t*. Adam could not look back and ever recall a sense of lack. When Adam was created, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and then Adam opened his eyes to a beautiful creation. He was born full grown and intelligent. He had such great reasoning powers that he could name every animal in creation. I can imagine the moment he became conscious. He opened his eyes, he heard his Creator’s voice, and was shown around the Garden by God. You and I can’t really understand that experience. We can’t understand what it’s like to have our first conscious thought as an adult in a perfect world; but neither could Adam know about our experience when he was in the Garden. Adam did not have a history of suffering to appreciate what he had. I have read Genesis 2-3 probably over 100 times, and I never recall Adam ever singing praises to God, thanking God for such a great carefree life, appreciating God, or praying to God. Why? Because Adam never knew what it was like to be without God.

Adam’s first outburst of praise was when God brought Eve to him. Adam had walked around the garden with the animals, but he had no complement. God said that it was not good for the man to be alone. Then once Adam saw that beautiful, naked woman stand before him, he knew that it was better now! His lack of a complement in the past heightened the joy of receiving a complement. God could have created the woman at the same time as the man, but He didn’t. He purposely made man in a state that was not good, so that He could provide a solution that the man would appreciate, and the end result would be praise to the Creator. Love delights in responsive love! The background of lack was needed for this mutual love. This is true of all human relationships as well. In human relationships absence makes the heart grow fonder. Our closest friends are the ones with whom we’ve had to go through some trial, with whom we have sweat, cried and shared our troubles. We love and appreciate them.

We can never know love, unless we know hatred. We can’t know peace, unless we know war. We can’t know life, unless we know death. We can’t experience reconciliation, unless we know alienation. Consequently, we can never know the love of God unless we, as sinners, see God sending His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to die for our sins. In other words, we can’t know God as our Savior, unless we are sinners. We have a history.

This is why Adam never uttered a word of praise or appreciation. He did not know anything else! This is why

we are born sinners and live in a world of corruption and violence: so that we can have evil in our history, with the purpose that, when it is all over, we can have real fellowship with God and with each other! History is the most important ingredient in God’s purpose.

## A FAMILY FACES DEATH

There is one example in the Scriptures that I want to tell you about to illustrate what we have been saying. In the gospel of John, chapter 11, there is a story about a man named Lazarus. Lazarus had two sisters, Mary and Martha. One day Lazarus became very sick. His two sisters sent for the Lord Jesus to come to them. They knew that He could heal Lazarus.

*Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.”*

The Lord loved Lazarus. It must have been common knowledge that Lazarus had a special place in the Lord’s heart. The sisters did not say, “Lazarus is sick,” but, “*He whom Thou lovest is sick.*”

*When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”*

Here the Lord shows the real reason for the sickness. The sickness was going to lead to God’s glory. This is true of all sickness and death. This is the needed background for God to display His glory and the glory of His Son.

We would think that since the Lord loved Lazarus so much, He was going to run to his side and take care of him – but what does He do?

*When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was.*

The Lord stayed away! This must have been very painful for these two sisters, not to mention Lazarus who was suffering. I can see Martha looking out the window in nervous anxiety, wondering where her Lord was. “Where is He? He knows that Lazarus is sick! What is taking Him so long? We are really hurting; we need Him to help us.” Yet, He didn’t come, and Lazarus breathed his last and died.

We have all experienced this kind of pain. “Where is our Lord? We know that He loves us. So why do we have to wait so long? Is the Lord indifferent?” No, He is not. Rather, He delays because the glory of God and of His

Son is at stake, and this is for our highest good. I know it does not feel that way when we go through it. I am sure Martha, Mary and Lazarus did not think that the delay was for their highest good while they were suffering.

The Lord Jesus finally showed up on the scene after Lazarus had been dead for four days! Not only did the Lord not show up when Lazarus was sick, He did not even attend the funeral of the one He loved. Can you imagine what went through the mind of those sisters and their friends?

So, finally, here comes the friend of the family, days late, and Martha sees Him and says,

*Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

Do you think she was angry? Do we get angry when the Lord does not do what we ask in situations like this? What about Mary? What did she say?

*Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."*

What about the crowd that was gathered to mourn with Martha and Mary? What did they say?

*And some of them said, "Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"*

There it is again. "Where were you? You could have prevented this. Lord, why, oh why?" We all have the very same questions. You, I, Mary, Martha and the crowd are all alike.

*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, **He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled**, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" They said unto Him, "Lord, come and see." **Jesus wept**. Then said the Jews, "Behold how He loved him!" And some of them said, "Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone." Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." Jesus saith unto her, "Said I not unto thee,*

*that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see **the glory of God?**" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, **that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.**" And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

If Lazarus did not die, we would have never seen the Lord weep. The shortest verse in the Bible is, "Jesus wept." He was not indifferent. If the Lord had healed sick Lazarus, He would have demonstrated pure power; but allowing death to take its course, He demonstrated His love and sympathy. Death brought out His love even more. God hates sin, He hates death; but these are part of the necessary background to display His love. The Lord could have prevented all of the problems in the world, but He didn't. He is not indifferent, but He weeps.

Imagine the emotions and joy that took place when Lazarus got up! Imagine the hugs and kisses. This brought glory to God. This scene in John 11 will take place on a wider scale in the future, for

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

Imagine the reunion we will have one day. It will be said, "Look how much He loved us!"

## IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is only one God. He is in total control of every detail of His universe. Every detail, the evil and the good, have meaning and purpose. Then, in the end, when evil has served its purpose, God will eliminate it. We, His creatures, will be alive and happy, and will have a greater joy than Adam ever had. We will all one day wake up in the end. Just like Adam, when he had his first conscious moment, and was shown around the garden by God, even so we, we will all be made alive at the consummation, and be shown around our eternal home. Yes, we will be happier than Adam ever was. When we see our final home in the end, we will appreciate it, we will praise Him! For we had a history.

# A Gentle Heart

by – J.R. Miller (1840-1912)

By the meekness and **gentleness** of Christ (I Corinthians 10:1).

The fruit of the Spirit is ... **gentleness** (Galatians 5:22).

Let your gentleness be evident to all (Philippians 4:5).

Be completely humble and **gentle**; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2).

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion,

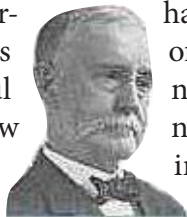
kindness, humility, **gentleness** and patience (Colossians 3:12).

We were **gentle** among you, like a mother caring for her little children (I Thessalonians 2:7).

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and **gentleness** (I Timothy 6:11).

The Lord's servant must be **gentle** towards all (II Timothy 2:24).

**M**any a person owes his victory in sorrow or in trial – to the gentleness which came to him in some helpful form through the gentleness of another. We know not who, of those we meet any day, need the help which our gentleness could give. Life is not easy. Its *duties* are hard. Its *burdens* are heavy. Life's strain never relaxes. There is no truce in life's battle. There are countless antagonisms. Life's rivalries and competitions are sharp, and often times deadly.



have missed the prize of living. In the midst of all of our duties, cares, trials, joys, sorrows, if we are not day-by-day growing in sweetness, in gentleness, in patience, in meekness, in unselfishness, in thoughtfulness, and in all of the branches of love, we are not learning the great lesson in this school of life.

We can never miss in showering gentleness. There is no day when it will be untimely; there is no place where it will not find welcome. It will harm no one – and it may save someone from despair.

As one might drop a handful of spices into a pot of brackish water, and therewith sweeten the waters, so is gentleness in the world's unloving, unkindly life.

We may learn the finest arts – music, painting, sculpture, poetry; or may master the noblest sciences; or by means of reading, study, travel and converse with refined people, may attain the best culture. Yet if, in all of this, we do not learn the gentleness of love, we

I plead for love's gentleness. Nothing else will take its place. As Moses' face shone after being with God, so our faces should carry the warmth and glow of gentleness into ordinary places. What we learn of love, we should practice in our life in the world, in the midst of its strifes, rivalries, competitions, frictions and manifold trials and testings.

We must never forget that true faith – in its practical outworking – is love. Some people think that faith is *mere orthodoxy of belief* – that he who has a good creed is truly a man of faith. We must remember that the Pharisees had a good creed, and were orthodox; yet we have our Lord's testimony that their religion did not please God. It was self-righteous, and unmerciful.

Others think that true faith consists in the observance of forms of worship. If they are always at church on Sundays and other church meetings, if they attend to all of the ordinances, and follow all of the rules – they are people of faith. Yet sometimes they are not easy people with whom to live. They are censorious, dictatorial, judges of others, exacting, severe in manner, harsh in speech.

The practical outworking of faith is love. Doctrines which do not become *a life of gentleness* in character and disposition, in speech and in conduct, are not fruitful doctrines. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, “*You shall love ...*” “*The one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments are all summed up by this: Love your neighbor as yourself.*”

Gentleness does not come naturally. We find it hard to be gentle always, and to all kinds of people. We can be gentle on sunny days; but when the harsh north wind blows, we grow fretful and lose our sweetness. We are gracious and sweet to those who are gracious

to us; but when people are rude to us, when they treat us unkindly, when they seem unworthy of our love, it is not so easy to be gentle to them.

We must learn to be gentle, just as Paul *learned to be content* whatever his condition was. It is as hard to learn always to be *gentle* as it is to learn always to be *contented*. It will take time for God to teach us, but it is a lesson that *must* be learned. Mere *human* gentleness is not enough. We need more than training and self-discipline. The *golden threads* must be divinely woven into the texture of our lives. The gentleness which the Scripture holds up is too high for any mere attainment. We need that God shall work it in us as “*the fruit of the Spirit is gentleness.*” God Himself puts on our canvas the touches of beauty which our own unskilled hands cannot produce!

*Your gentleness has made me great* (Psalm 18:35).

1896



I have read your *Daily Email Goodies* for a while now, and had to let you know how much this one encouraged me today. For the past 4-5 years I have sensed the Lord calling me to a solitary walk with Him without the constant fellowship or companionship of many others. One by one He has removed those I felt dependent on through a variety of circumstances. While this has been frightening at times to me, I have and am currently finding Him to be a most faithful Friend and source of daily strength. Many thanks for sharing your heart with us through the *Daily Email Goodies*. – **FL**

Your booklet *Paul's Neglected Message* is great! All should know about it! Keep up the great work! – **IL**

Thanks so much for the gift of your words about our wonderful and loving GOD! Your *Daily Email Goodies* are a comfort! – **VA**

*I Am Who and What Father Says I Am* is a real hit here in Holland. The word is spreading! – **Netherlands**

I just read your *Daily Email Goodie* today. I hadn't read many of them, if I'm honest, and today I just made the time. As He typically does, God spoke through this one. I am continually amazed at how accurate God can be in initiating events for my better. This is exactly what I have needed to hear for weeks, even months. I feel so much like Moses, for I know that God is calling me to step out in faith; but I also am very familiar with that fear that tells me “I can't.” I realized today that this belief doesn't matter, because “God can.” – **MO**

I thank Father for the way He processes thoughts in you, for us! (More than I could “*ask or think,*” Ephesians 3:20!) I read your book *Suffering: God's Forgotten Gift*. I wonder how many believers are in the boat I was in. To enjoy the life Father has given us in the midst of our sufferings is a message that cannot be addressed too often! You have taught me that understanding our sufferings in our daily walk is crucial for our relationship with Father. Without it we are left with doubts and misgivings. This book, which Father gave to you for us, needs to be in the hands of every believer! – **LA**

# Bragging on God and His Son!

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord* (I Corinthians 1:31).

*He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord* (II Corinthians 10:17).

Religion loves to brag on itself and its own accomplishments. Thus, a man who “gets religion” delights in bragging on himself and all that he has done “for the Lord.” Just listen to the religious talk, and you will soon hear all of the wonderful things that they have done.



it comes from God.

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

*For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he should think; but to think soberly, 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).

Paul, too, once had been a bragger. He boasted in himself and in his religion – that is, until he met the risen Lord Jesus Christ. He then realized “that no flesh should boast in His presence” (I Corinthians 1:29). He then came to count all of his bragging in self-righteousness and self-effort as a “loss” (Philippians 3:8), bragging only in the work of “our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14).

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded” (Romans 3:27); for it is “not of works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:9).

Even in the area of *faith*, man attempts to be a self-bragger. Faith, however, does not originate with man; rather,

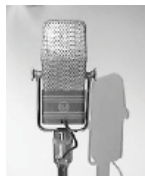
The measure of a man is in his boasting. What is it about which we brag? That we may, with Paul, make a lifetime of bragging on God and His Son, and the glorious accomplishments of Their matchless work.

## Bible Student's Radio

### INITIAL RESPONSES

As this BSN goes out, we have issued 20 of our new audio teachings. All of them can be heard at:

[www.BibleStudentsRadio.com](http://www.BibleStudentsRadio.com)



I'm really enjoying your bite-size audio studies. It is a format perfectly fit for me. I can't always read, but I can almost always listen. – **Netherlands**

Simply wonderful! Every member of the modern clergy should hear these wonderful talks. The music at the close of the audio is also very enjoyable. Your audios are definitely what people need to hear. – **Australia**

Responses thus far have been encouraging. We thought that we would share a few initial responses with you.

Love it! – **OH**

Awesome! – **OR**

Heavenly. – **NY**

Just superb. – **Australia**  
Great audio lessons! – **AR**

A blessing! – **TX**

Excellent! – **NM**

Great communicator! – **WI**

This facet of the ministry will “touch” many. – **VA**

I just want to say thank you for sharing words of life. – **UT**

Wonderful! I hope you never decide to give up the audio. – **LA**

Your words are filled with strength, premised upon biblical wisdom. – **OH**

I wanted you to know that I love the concept and format of your audio programs. I really believe that you are on to something special. The mix of music into your program, and not just any music but music pertaining to the message, is unique and an added blessing to the message delivered. – **CA**

So many times I just wished to hear your voice and receive your loving words. Now we have this! I'm sure in the remaining days I will listen to this message many times, especially in the wee hours of the morning when I'm dealing with my afflictions. I pray that others will absorb this rich message of Father's truth and receive peace from it as I have. – **LA**

I just got done listening to your audio on I Corinthians 10:13 and wanted you to know how much it ministered to me. A few weeks ago I taped this verse to my kitchen cabinet so that I could read it often. ... Thank you so much for your amazing emails and audio studies. – **CO**

Your writings and audios continue to bring blessing and understanding! Word and sound in combination – a wonderful tool. – **OK**