



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XIV
Issue 340

Introducing Paul

Part 1 of 3

by — Marvin W. Rice

The subject of this article is one that is greatly overlooked by many sincere Christians today. It is a sad thing when we, as believers, tend to be swayed by tradition, instead of searching the Scriptures and noting the things that differ in God's Word.

It is hoped that "Introducing Paul" might be of a great help to some of its readers. Let's take the time to consider these thoughts and to compare them with the Sacred Scriptures. I ask that all who read this might do so with an unbiased and open mind. We do not wish to sway the reader, but hope that these thoughts may be considered apart from tradition, and in view of God's Word. Let's see if these views are in accord with the Scriptures. We, as believers, need not be afraid of an unfamiliar teaching. Do as the Bereans did in Acts 17:10-12. They studied the Scriptures to see if [the] things [that they heard were] true.

Stephen, Phillip and others of the circumcision were called to proclaim the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, as were the twelve. This was not true with Saul. He was called to usher in a new dispensation and to proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (not His earthly ministry, as Jesus the Nazarene). He proclaimed Him as the Ascended, Risen, Glorified Christ of Glory to the Gentiles [as well as] the Jews and Kings.

GOD'S CHOSEN NATION

Throughout the Old Testament and into the New, we see Israel as God's chosen nation. Yet, in spite of this lofty position which they held in God's favor, they were not a God-fearing nation. While they were religious and pious, it was but a formality with most of them. Looking at their history, we see that their only contact with God was often through just one Prophet.

Look at the murmuring and complaining which took place during those years they were led through the wilderness. In the Gospels, the Scribes and Pharisees were merely a sect of religious pretenders, without sincerity of heart.

As we know, Israel was ruled by a religious leadership who were self-righteous law-keepers; living in strict accord with the Talmud, exacting strict compliance of the Law of Moses from their subjects, even though their hearts were not right with their God. Many times God brought Israel into bondage to the nations as a judgment, because they failed to seek the will and purpose of God. They had no desire to please Him. Instead, they had but a formality, pleasing their own gratifications instead of seeking to please their God.

A MESSIAH

It was to this disobedient nation that a Messiah was promised – and to this nation He came. The Lord Jesus was not born into a Priestly family of Israel. No, He did not come to any of the high and lofty ranks of Israel. He was born to a lowly couple: a couple who loved and feared God. He was born in humble circumstances.

Most of His life, He preferred those of lowly state – the common people of Israel. As He grew older and began teaching, He was hated by the religious leaders of the nation. Many attempts were made on His life. None were successful until God's appointed time had come. It was only when Jesus submitted Himself to them that they were able to crucify the very One [for] Whom they had

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XIV, No. 340 – April 17, 2012

This free weekly electronic 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 freedom from 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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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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Strictly Personal

Visit to VA

Recently a dear family, whom we met nearly three years ago, sent our family some money. The gracious gift included specific instructions:

Thanks so much for your ministry! Take this money and do something fun!

We used the money to make a trip to VA where we lived before moving to PA eight years ago. It was a weekend trip that gave us time to see our son Jason, daughter-in-law Brittney, and grandson Percival. We also attended a bluegrass concert while we were there – one of my favorite things to do! My dear brother André Sneidar, who lives near my son, was able to attend the concert with us – making it an extra special day.

Bluegrass Music

Those who listen to my audios probably have noticed I am eclectic in my music enjoyment, but they have also realized that bluegrass is my favorite genre. For as long as I can remember I have had a place in my heart for this music. Years ago we moved to central Virginia where it's a big part of the subculture. It seemed there were local bluegrass concerts most every weekend, sometimes multiple ones. Many were local groups, but most all of the nationally renowned groups would make a stop in the area from time to time. It was while being treated to tickets to these events by a local friend, George Parish, that I really came to enjoy and appreciate quality bluegrass music.

When we lived in the area my son, Clyde III, and I worked for a number of years as DJs at the

local AM radio station, WAMV, which of course played – as you probably could guess by now – country and bluegrass. This of course allowed us the opportunity to become more intimately acquainted with bluegrass, its roots, and many of the prominent singers and musicians.

Doyle Lawson & Quick Silver

Anyway, so of course you know, I made sure to plan our trip to Virginia on the weekend that my favorite group, *Doyle Lawson & Quick Silver*, would be in town! If you enjoy *great* bluegrass music, you must hear them live. They are absolutely amazing. I can't tell you how many times I have heard them, and for me, personally, it is the most enjoyable and entertaining musical experience. Every time I attend their concerts, I say to myself, "I can't believe I'm here, listening to this amazing music! The only thing that would make this better is if more people that I loved were here to enjoy this with me."

Doyle Lawson and his band are superb musicians, with a tight, crisp blend of instruments and voices. Add to that their occasional *a cappella* number, sweet dispositions, humor that keeps you laughing, clearly heard lyrics that touch your heart, and you thoroughly enjoy yourself. If they are ever anywhere near where you live, go to see them!

My Latest Book

I am thankful to announce the release of my next book, *Being OK with Not Being OK – Embracing God's Design for You – and Everyone You Know (and Don't Know)*. Ordering details can be found on the back page of this issue.

Until next week, my love to each of you!

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

PAUL (continued from front page)

waited and longed for so long – *their promised Messiah!*

Because of the hardness of their hearts they did not recognize Him when He came. He was rejected even before He was born. They had no room in the Inn. Soon there was an all-out effort to kill this, their Promised One; but God's time had not yet come – it would come later. Then these self-righteous leaders of Israel would succeed in their effort. Jesus called them “*workers of iniquity.*”

SAUL OF TARSUS

Saul of Tarsus was of this realm: a very religious person, a strict keeper of Moses' Law. He was anxious to please those Fathers of Israel which he so respected. We read of Saul's credentials in Philippians 3:5-6,

*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law, a **Pharisee** concerning zeal, persecuting the Church: touching the righteousness which is in the Law, **blameless.***

We also can see another account of Saul's own religious position and his background in Acts 22:3-5. Here he writes that he had sat and learned at the feet of Gamaliel. He was trained according to the strictest of the hereditary law. He was zealous for God with a great anxiety to please Him.

Because Saul longed to please God, and because he respected the religious elders of Israel, thinking that they were led by God and pleasing Him, Saul thought it only proper that he should follow the leadership of those over him. This would, surely, please his God.

Saul did not realize the great apostasy which was working in Israel, so He felt assured that whatever these religious leaders (including the priests) of Israel did or stood for, surely must be the right thing to do. The very ones whom Saul had on a pedestal had Jesus of Nazareth crucified. In spite of this, His followers were beginning to grow and were multiplying by leaps and bounds.

All of his life, Saul was so engrossed in the aspects of those leaders of the day that He was sure this new sect was contrary to the Law of Moses and against the God of Israel. So he set out to finish the job that those whom he held in such high esteem had started out to do – they crucified the leader. Now he would persecute the followers to rid the chosen nation of this – supposedly – new sect once and for all. In doing this he felt he would please God.

Saul had not been acquainted with the Lord when He was in the flesh, before His crucifixion; but he knew of Him and he saw His followers. Just as his elders had crucified the Lord Jesus, so now Saul was going to rid Israel of those followers of this One that Saul assumed to be an imposter. Paul said he persecuted them in ignorance:

But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief (I Timothy 1:13).

Before Acts 9, Saul was persecuting the believers to the worst extent (Acts 8:3). He was punishing them publicly. He was ravaging the followers of the Lord Jesus. He was having many of them put to death and condoning all other assassins, such as those who assassinated Stephen.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus had told the disciples two very important facts concerning the Holy Spirit. One was that when He went away He would send a Comforter (the Holy Spirit), and this Comforter would guide them into all truth.

Second, He said,

Whoever would blaspheme the Father, it would be forgiven him; and whoever blasphemed the Son, it would be forgiven him; but whoever blasphemed the Holy Spirit, it would NOT be forgiven him in this age, nor the one, which is impending [the millennial age] (Matthew 12:31-32).

When the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) was sent on the Day of Pentecost in power and great glory, glorifying their God and magnifying Christ, it was evident to all those present that something had happened to those followers of Jesus the Nazarene.

The onlookers didn't immediately know that those believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. They knew beyond a shadow of doubt that something had happened. Some thought that they were drunk with new wine, while others, coming from afar, heard them speak in their-own languages and marveled.

Others saw miracles wrought and great things done. Many heard marvelous declarations and saw the power of God demonstrated. This was the beginning of the operation of the Holy Spirit. This was the time (era), or office of the Holy Spirit; with miracles of power to follow.

Thousands were saved; the sick were healed; the dead were raised; God was glorified; the Lord Jesus was de-



clared as the Messiah to the people of Israel. The Holy Spirit of God was operating and dwelling in the hearts of the sons of men.

In Acts 7:55, we see where Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. These Jewish believers (often called the “*Circumcision*” believers) were full of the Holy Spirit – ALL of their works being of the Holy Spirit.

Saul was not dishonest or crooked. He was not wicked and ungodly. Instead, he was a deeply religious person fearing God, and greatly respecting the elders and elements of Israel. We saw earlier his credentials as outlined in the sacred Scriptures. Yet, in spite of his sincere desire to please God and the Fathers of Israel, he refers to himself as the chiefest of sinners.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (I Timothy 1:15).

SAUL A BLASPHEMER

In I Corinthians 15:9, he declares himself as one not competent to be called an apostle because he had persecuted the believers. One might ask why Paul referred to himself as the chiefest of sinners when he was so religiously involved with the rituals and ceremonies of Israel. The answer is simple. It was because, by his acts of persecution, he had committed *the unpardonable sin!* – the worst of all sins.

Even those who were guilty of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus could have been forgiven. We remember the Lord prayed for them,

Father forgive them, for they know not what they do
(Luke 23:34).

Saul did not have the hope of forgiveness as did the Lord’s murderers, neither in this age or in that which was to come; for he had blasphemed the Holy Spirit by persecuting those Spirit-filled believers of the Pentecostal era. He did so by the stand he took, the awesome position he filled as a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious one (I Timothy 1:13).

Thus he sealed his doom! His hate for the mighty works of the Holy Spirit caused him to persecute those spirit-filled believers of Israel. Saul believed this group of people to be foreign to the traditions of Israel. Thus he set about to carry out what his peers had begun – to eliminate this so-called sect from the nation of Israel.

Saul had received authority to pursue those Jews who fled Jerusalem to Gentile countries to escape persecution, so

he set out for Damascus to search for them.

Saul might have been struck dead, as he went to this Gentile city, because of his blasphemous attitude; the same as Ananias and Sapphira received the judgment of death because they lied to Peter, who also was filled with Holy Spirit. This was the same as lying directly to the Holy Spirit, having done it to the “least of these.”

The same was true with Saul. While he was not opposing the Holy Spirit directly, he was destroying those of the Holy Spirit. Jesus once said to the Scribes and Pharisees,

If you have done it to one of the least of these, you have done it unto Me (Matthew 25:40).

The same was true with Saul; since this was the era of the working of the Holy Spirit with signs and miracles resulting in multitudes being saved. If one of the least of these were ill-treated, it was the same as if the Holy Spirit was being ill-treated. *Saul had done just that!*

So the chance of Saul receiving judgment on the road to Damascus and being struck dead was *indeed* very great, [which] would have been in order for that time era.

A NEW ADMINISTRATION

But God, before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), had purposed to introduce, at a given time, an administration wherein, apart from the feeble efforts and shortcomings of man, God would display His vast *love*, lavishing it on mankind. Apart from man’s efforts, God displays His superabundant grace.

GRACE! Regardless of how deep and far reaching evil and wicked sin had become, no matter to what extent it went, *the grace of God would super-abound in quantities untold and to deeper depths and higher heights* than any evil and sin could ever begin to attain. Grace gushed on us to more than eliminate all sin, with *no* possibility for any sin to be considered *unpardonable* in this all-new administration – this Administration of Grace.

But where sin abounded grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20).

This new administration that God was about to bring in was more than *new*: It had been a *secret*, kept secret since the world began.

The revelation of a mystery which was kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25).



SAUL A CHOSEN VESSEL

Now it was about to be revealed to the worst enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was to be the one to unfold it to mankind. Saul, the Lord's enemy, was about to become acquainted with the One he opposed. He would instantly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He would proclaim Him to the world. The Administration of the Grace of God that was coming in was to include the Gentiles – not as proselytes of Israel, but *in spite of Israel*. Soon Israel, as a chosen nation, would be set aside and a new era would be made known to man – one wherein neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female would hold sway; an era wherein the grace of God would flow fluently, and man would be saved *apart* from his own efforts – all through Christ.

In this era, the son of God no longer is in the flesh of humiliation and rejection, but is in the lofty position as the risen, ascended, glorified Son of God, the *Christ of Glory*. Israel is not in the *limelight* of God during *this* era. *Israel has been put into abeyance until this new administration has been completed*. It is then, that God will resume His purpose with Israel; and bring about all of His promises to them. In the meantime, while they are in abeyance (out of God's limelight), we see something new taking place in the plan of God. This new Era of Grace is now to be proclaimed by God's chosen vessel; and that *chosen vessel was none other than Saul of Tarsus*.

He is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).

Instead of Saul receiving judgment and instant death, as Ananias and Sapphira had, Saul was halted by an overwhelming brilliance of the glory of the Son of God, the One Whom he had been persecuting. *The Lord Jesus revealed Himself to Saul*. In the presence of this glorious splendor of the Son of God, Saul lost all of his strength and fell to the ground prostrate, as did Daniel when the angel of the Lord appeared to him as recorded in the book of Daniel. There in the radiance of this awesome brightness of our Lord Jesus Christ, Saul, for the first time in his life, met Jesus Whom he had been persecuting.

Saul lost all of his fight and animosity, recognizing that this visit was one that was of a supernatural, celestial quality. It didn't take Saul long to acknowledge this visitor as "Lord," for immediately he inquired, "*Who are You, Lord?*" (Acts 9:5).

Saul acclaimed Him Lord. When the Lord responded with "*I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting,*" it didn't take Saul long to lose all doubt and immediately believe this glorious One to be the Son of God and the same One Who was crucified by his elders. Saul immediately became of an obedient nature and asked "*Lord, what would You have me to do?*" (:6).

According to Peter's gospel, Saul had sinned away his day of salvation and brought his own doom. He rejected the Lord Jesus – proclaiming Him to be an imposter – and had persecuted many followers of the Lord Jesus. He had blasphemed the Holy Spirit by his acts, but he now became the recipient of having all his sins eliminated through God's grace in the New Era (dispensation). His eyes were opened instantly. Grace took care of Saul's terrible sins and blasphemy – past, present and future. When Jesus, "*the Christ of Glory,*" appeared to Saul and saved him, a *new era* was introduced. Saul was the first one saved.

As we have stated, Saul of Tarsus was without hope according to that which was given to the disciples by Jesus before His crucifixion, and what had been made known to them through the Holy Spirit after Pentecost. Yet when Christ Jesus made His marvelous, astounding visit to Saul outside of Jerusalem, outside the land, in Gentile country for the first in the history of the creation of man, the all super-abounding unlimited grace, of the living God was lavished on Saul. He was the first one – with no limitations, no requirement, nothing excluded – with grace gushed on him to more than cover every possible sin in Saul's life.

A NEW CREATION

Saul, now, was a completely new man – the first person to become a member of the new creation. This new creation is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. Saul was baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3). Here he experienced dying to the old humanity (Romans 6:2). He experienced being entombed with Christ, coming forth a new man. Oh, the grand and glorious far reaching grace of God that came forth that day, never before experienced by a human being! This grace even eliminated the offenses of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, even though he once rejected Jesus, the Holy Son of God.

This all-reaching grace of God caused Saul to no longer reject, but to believe in this One, Jesus the Christ, with all of his heart. In spite of Saul's misgiving and doubt, God, through His precious Son, saved Saul of Tarsus.

Words could never describe what Saul experienced that day and the days to come. He, who once had committed the

unpardonable sin, was a now a saved man because of a new era; and was a choice instrument of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SAUL A PATTERN

*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, **that in me first** Jesus Christ might show for all longsuffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life (I Timothy 1:16).*

Saul was the absolute first person ever to receive such a display of grace. He was the first son to be saved in this Administration of Grace. He was the first member in the Body of Christ.

In grace, as we know it today, even the unpardonable sin no longer exists. No one could be worse than Saul. None ever could be in a worse position for salvation than Saul, no matter how bad their sin. The grace that overwhelmingly exceeds all of Saul's sins will reach far beyond any sin of any other person in the generations to follow.

He was not just a pattern for us to see his doomed position, but for God to display, through His Son Jesus Christ, the glories of the riches of His grace and His vast love with which He loves all creation. His vast love surpasses all love that man has ever known; such love that He gave His Son for our salvation. This grand and awesome love of God is reflected in the love that His Son manifested on the cross by His giving Himself for us. This great love is displayed in this grace of God that so overwhelms every believer since Paul's conversion. It was through this great love that God had purposed before the world began.

According to His Own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Timothy 1:9).

In this Administration (often referred to as a Dispensation) God would show forth to the entire universe, a most glorious display of His wondrous love and grace. Through the operation of this new Administration, He will make manifest the glories of Christ, His beloved Son.

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in One all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth; even in Him (Ephesians 1:9-10).

(To be continued.)

August Sacramento Gathering

There will be another time of fellowship and study in Sacramento, CA, this year. It will be held August 3-5 at the Holiday Inn Express (2224 Auburn Blvd).

Teachers will include: Dan Sheridan, Martin Zender, Tony Nungesser and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Here is the planned schedule:

Friday Night, August 3rd

There will be a dinner and get together at the home of Charles Rutsch. The address is 6737 Steele Oak Ln, Carmichael, CA; 95608. This is open to all who wish to attend.

Saturday, August 4th

The conference begins in the hotel at 9:00 am and ends at 9:00 pm with breaks for lunch and dinner.

Sunday, August 5th

The conference resumes at 9:00 am and ends at 6:00 pm.

For additional information, please contact:

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I received my order last week, thank you. My wife and I are enjoying the books. ... Thank you again so much for your website. I was raised in a Catholic home and then went to a couple of other churches before I realized that "church" and organized religion wasn't what I was looking for. My wife was a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses for about 18 years and had gotten most of her teaching from the Watchtower organization before leaving it. She is very appreciative of the study materials on your site and the general message they express since she had misgivings about many of the teachings she had been exposed to as a JW in recent years. – *Canada*

Thank you for the sound and helpful e-mails and now broadcast messages. At this particular time in my life many things are being addressed, many changes must now be implemented and all the help and encouragement to walk in unity comes through these messages that Father is providing through your acts of loving service to fellow believers.

Thank you all so much, this is a wonderful blessing to a single believer in a family of unbelief and turmoil. Your work is a tool used by our Farther to encourage growth and edify my sad heart! Just wanted you to know how special it is in my walk and life right now!

I know happiness comes from His Spirit, and sadness only lasts for a short time, [and] is only due to circumstances of this earth-bound life. [T]he joy of looking forward must remain a

priority when surrounded with pain and suffering, it is like a ray of sunshine after a terrible storm – you just can't block the light out with its blessed relief! – *Australia*

As Father graciously grants me further perceptions while in the midst of elevated periods of infirmities, my heart is opened at its broadest to you. It is becoming ever so obvious that Father is directing me to offer you words of encouragement out of necessity.

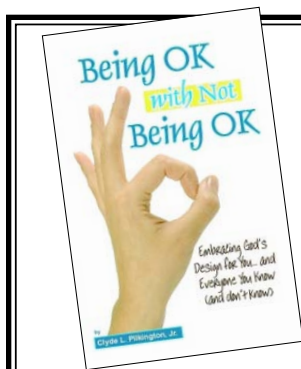
Increasingly, I see the value in the work given to you. You are touching so many lives and "watering" so many "spirits." The more time I spend in your personal writings, the more I find that is "new" to me or given to me with greater understanding. I am just one example of the results of your labors – and it is on-going.

For many years, studying with others, often so deep and intellectual, left me in frustration and with a feeling of "inadequacy in the Lord." I even felt "unworthy" due to my inability to grasp much of what they are teaching. Please don't think I am knocking or being negatively critical. They have a "great place" in Father's grace for this era.

You, my brother, have translated for me much of what they teach in a way that I can grasp and make my own. So successfully, I might add, that now I can read from their materials and actually get more of their meaning. (I am still lost in all the mechanics of grammar and Greek translations that prove so much for those with that ability, but thankfully, this no longer intimidates me.)

As simply as I can state it, you have been given the ability to take what seems complicated in Scripture and make it plain for those of us with limited intellect. This is by no means a put-down on myself or others. Father has need of all He calls and gives different gifts as He chooses – this I understand and am at peace with.

The point I'm trying to make is that your ministry is special, needed, and appreciated. May Father open many more doors for you. – *LA*



Being OK with Not Being OK – Embracing God's Design for You ... and Everyone You Know (and Don't Know)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

For now, you're broken, and you aren't going to be "fixed." Granted, you may have some days that are better than others, some circumstances that seem to indicate that you are "OK," but the wearisome cycle simply will recur.

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